

The Melting Pot — Then and Now

Tracking the idea through the 20th century

Review essay
by Brent Nelson

In the history of ideas those which have the longest life are often not carefully articulated concepts but only images or metaphors. When they were pungently new, they were ideas that seized the imagination of the people. Years later the dead metaphors are still carried about in their cultural baggage.

Most tenacious in its hold upon the American mass mind has been the dead (because it is no longer visualized) metaphor of the Melting Pot. The "melting-pot" was first given currency in 1908 by Israel Zangwill's thus-named drama.

Henry Pratt Fairchild, professor of sociology at New York

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University, in his book *The Melting-Pot Mistake*, published in 1926, noted that the "melting pot" was a symbol for which there was a need. It expressed a faith and a hope, according to which, in Fairchild's words, "America is a Melting-Pot. Into it are being poured representatives of all the world's peoples. Within its magic confines there is being formed something that

The Melting Pot Mistake

By Henry Pratt Fairchild

New York: Arno Press, 1977
226 pages, \$23.95
ISBN-0-405-09949-5



Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City (2nd edition)

By Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan
Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1970

is not only uniform and homogeneous but also finer than any of the separate ingredients. The nations of the world are being forged into a new and choicer nation, the United States" (p.10).

Although Zangwill himself later repudiated his early work by becoming a Zionist, the symbol of the Melting Pot was still alive in the popular mind when Fairchild wrote. Fairchild pre-

sented it as a fact, however, that "We know now that the Melting-Pot did not melt, but we are not entirely sure why," and expressed doubt that "so complicated a phenomenon as assimilation can be adequately represented by any symbol at all" (p.12).

Fairchild, writing only two years after the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, was still aware of the need to convince a segment, perhaps a majority, of his readership of the need for immigration restriction. A later reader, however, can profitably read Fairchild not for what he writes about the explicit failure of the Melting Pot, but by observing certain implicit assumptions which inform his work from its beginning. Foremost among these is the assumption that there is no break in the continuity of stages of development from primitive man to races, and from races to nationalities. All stages of development emerge from nature, in a continuing and continuous evolution.

Even while Fairchild wrote, this assumption of continuity was under attack by the school of Franz Boas, a cultural anthropologist. The success of the Boasians in establishing a new implicit assumption in the social sciences — an assumption (not to be questioned) that there is a radical break between

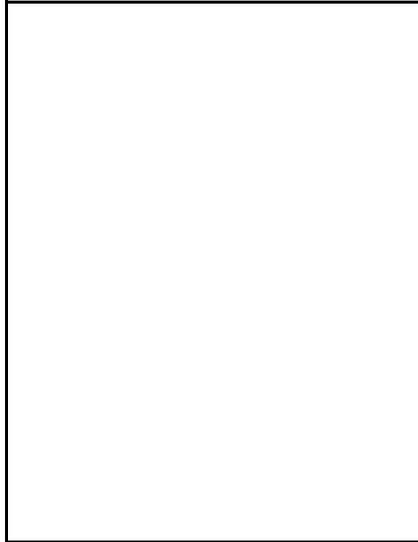
man in nature and man in culture — has been fully chronicled by Carl Degler in his *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Today's reader, raised to honor the Boasian assumption, may find Fairchild to be perplexing and perhaps disturbing reading.

Fairchild considers in a lengthy chapter "The Factor of Race," beginning with a portrayal of primitive man, whose physical features "resembled much more closely those of a gorilla or chimpanzee than a modern civilized man" (p.15). Today, this primordial origin is rarely cited *in social science* as significant to an understanding of the origin of society. It is assumed that society begins with primitive culture, and that primitive culture represents a definitive break from nature. It has been left to the sociobiologists, representatives of *the physical science* of biology, to re-examine social origins from an evolutionary standpoint.

While Fairchild notes that man is unique in spreading over the surface of the whole earth "without losing his specific unity," he believes that varieties, or races, although they are something less than species, are nonetheless important: "The primary basis of group unity is therefore racial" (p.21). Fairchild recognizes "yellow, brown, black, red, and white races," (p.22) roughly one for each continent. Within the white race, he recognizes Nordic, Alpine, and Mediterranean races (pp.43, 64, 94-102, 109-110). A significant

section of his book (pp.94-106) is an attempt to assess the relative contributions of these three races to the American population.

Fairchild urges caution in making judgments about racial differences: "Just what the truly racial features of intellect, disposition, temperament, and emotion may be is still almost



Henry Pratt Fairchild, 1880-1956

terra incognita." Nonetheless, whatever may be the results of research into this unknown territory, "there seems to be little room for doubt that these psychical contrasts play a much more important part in impeding harmonious action between groups than the external or narrowly physical aspects" (p.32). This means that "the period of race contact," resulting from "the pressure of population," is one of "race conflict" (p.35).

Fairchild, however, is far from being the kind of racial determinist that Count de Gobineau, for example, is often caricatured as having been (*Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*, Paris: 1853). Fairchild

notes that "Race is inherited, nationality is acquired" (p.42) and concludes that "as man has moved upward along his distinctly human pathway the influence of race upon his activities has steadily decreased in relative importance while that of nationality has correspondingly increased" (p.51).

The racial factor is not, however, annulled by that of nationality. On the contrary, the unity of nationality is threatened by racial disunity: "The essence of national coherence is a sufficient degree of recognized likeness and community of interest in the great activities of group life to inspire a yearning for 'togetherness.' ...a manifestation of the 'we-feeling' as contrasted with the 'you-feeling.'" The latter becomes excessively strong where racial differences are most stark: "William Graham Sumner used to tell his students at Yale that the United States had no claim to the name of nation because of the presence of so large a negro population, the implication being that between the white and colored races there exist such lively recognitions of dissimilarity that they can never establish the degree of common feeling necessary to true nationality" (pp.53-54).

Fairchild does not refer to "racism," a term not in use when he wrote, but does define "race prejudice" — "The trouble with the customary application of the term 'race prejudice' is that a very large part of what it is made to refer to is neither racial nor prejudice. Taking the latter fault first, a prejudice in the strict sense is a pre-judgment, that is,

a judgment made in advance of the evidence. Now the state of mind usually alluded to is not a judgment, but a feeling, and it does not arise in advance of the evidence. The evidence consists of the traits of a person recognized to be of another race. The feeling is a feeling of revulsion or withdrawal that arises spontaneously under these conditions. It may vary in intensity and perhaps in quality according to the circumstances, that is, according to the sort of association, contact, or relationship that is involved in the meeting" (p.68-69).

Nation versus Nationality

Fairchild stresses "a clear distinction between the concepts of 'nationality' and 'nation'" (p.52). He uses the latter term in a sense which is rather uncommon today: "A true nation arises when such a group as has been described realizes its aspiration, that is, when a nationality achieves the political control of the geographical area upon which it dwells" (p.53). As examples of nationalities which have failed to accomplish this, Fairchild cites the "submerged nationalities" of Eastern Europe.

Nationalities can perish if they are submerged for a long period of time and lack essential unifying ingredients: "[W]hen a nationality, for whatsoever reason, has only a few well-established common traits, it is essential that these should be of a fundamental character, including at least two or three out of the following list: language, religion, political ideas, basic moral code, family institution, class feelings"

(pp.55-56). A common language and religion kept the Greek nationality alive during centuries of Turkish domination.

Fairchild recognizes an evolutionary factor in the survival of nationalities which socio-biologists, fifty years later, defined as "inclusive fitness": "Sympathy toward the in-group and antipathy toward the out-group may be regarded as universal human traits" (p.59). "...in the competition of life between groups, altruism, patriotism, and social efficiency have survival value, and since these factors have been essential to the development of civilization the motive which underlies them, group sympathy, may be considered as having had a distinct usefulness" (p.61).

Applying these criteria to early America, Fairchild sees a nationality emergent in the colonies long before the war for independence: "Quite early the colonists recognized the dangers inherent in too great numbers of foreigners, and in some cases attempted to limit their admission by various means" (p.87). Even after other nationality groups began to enter the U.S. in significant numbers, they were generally of predominantly Nordic race. Hence, "the immigration problem in the United States was not a racial problem previous to the year 1882" (p.105).

An influx of Alpine and Mediterranean elements came after 1882. "[B]eginning about 1882, the immigration problem in the United States has become increasingly a racial problem in two distinct ways, first by altering profoundly the Nordic pre-

dominance in the American population, and second by introducing various new elements which, while of uncertain volume, are so radically different from any of the old ingredients that even small quantities are deeply significant" (p.112). The latter include "the Hebrews" (p.111).

The Immigration Act of 1924 used nationality as the closest practical approximation to race. It was discriminatory, but "it was recognized that quotas based on foreign-born residents exclusively were illogical and themselves discriminatory against the old stock. It was realized that the native population had at least as good a right as foreigners to be considered in determining the composition of the immigration of the future" (pp.132-133).

The Question of Assimilation

At the midpoint of his book, Fairchild considers what assimilation has been in process, how it has been effected, and how it relates to the melting pot ideal. The latter represents a total assimilation since "A melting pot is not an end in itself. The purpose of a melting pot is to get the heterogeneous substances into a form of unity and fluidity. But the great questions remain: What kind of a substance are you going to have when the fusion is complete? And what are you going to do with it?" (p.120).

Most evidently, the melting pot fails where languages and religions are involved. Two or more languages or religions never "melt" into one new language or one new religion (pp.144-145). "The process by

which a nationality preserves its unity while admitting representatives of outside nationalities is properly termed 'assimilation'" (p.136). But "the attempt to mix nationalities must result not in a new type of composite nationality but in the destruction of all nationality. No one of the components can survive the process if it is carried too far. This is the outstanding fallacy of the melting pot. It applies a figure that is appropriate only in the racial sense to a problem that is preponderantly national. It represents unification in terms of a process which, for the greater part of the task of unification, will not work. If the truth were otherwise in this matter the history of the Balkans would have been very different from what it has been. ...The inhabitants of this unfortunate area are broken up into incompatible groups not by racial differentiations — most of which they would be quite unable to detect — but by languages, religions, customs, social habits, and ... traditional group loyalties" (pp.150-151).

In the final analysis, assimilation contradicts the melting pot ideal because, in assimilation, "The traits of foreign nationality which the immigrant brings with him are not to be mixed or interwoven. They are to be abandoned" (p.154). The melting pot, on the contrary, absorbs all characteristics, preserving them in a formless mass which represents a melting down of most or all of the characteristics of nationality.

"Americanization"

Fairchild gives considerable attention to a critique of a con-

cept seldom invoked today: Americanization.¹ Criticizing the Americanization efforts of his own day, he sees in them the error of equating information with national allegiance. Americanization sees assimilation as only an educational process, a voluntary process, "much like the act of conversion in an old-fashioned revival" (p.169-170).

Other flaws of the early Americanization movement included an assumption that the fact of immigration indicates a desire to assimilate: "Unfortunately, the truth is that the feature of the American nationality which operates as the chief drawing card in the great majority of cases among the recent immigrants is the opportunity to make money" (p.175). This observation is even more relevant after seventy years. Indeed, it is now almost incontestable.

Fairchild answers, as follows, the objection, still current at the end of the twentieth century, that an American nationality cannot be defined because only the American Indians are true Americans: "To say that the Indians are the only true Americans means that what constitutes an American is ancient residence upon a certain territory, which was not even called American until after the white men discovered it. ...According to this clever saying America is a piece of land, and nothing more" (pp.199-200).

America, however, is "not merely an aggregation of people" (p.200), but "something more than a governmental organization" (p.201). It is "a nationality, and fortunately also a nation. America is a spiritual

reality. It is a body of ideas and ideals, traditions, beliefs, customs, habits, institutions, standards, loyalties, a whole complex of cultural and moral values" (p.201).

Again, Fairchild stresses that race, while antecedent to nationality, is not superseded by it: "There can be no doubt that the founders of America expected it and intended it to be a white man's country,... The calmness with which they closed their eyes to the presence of the Negroes in this white man's country did not alter their intentions any more than it provided an escape from the difficulties involved. There can also be no doubt that if America is to remain a stable nation it must continue to be a white man's country for an indefinite period to come. We have enough grounds of disunion and disruption without adding the irremediable one of deep racial antagonisms. An exclusion policy toward all non-white groups is wholly defensible in theory and practice, however questionable may have been the immediate means by which this policy has been put into effect at successive periods in our history" (p.240).

Toward the end of his book, Fairchild takes note of factors which have now grown in weight at the end of the twentieth century. He concludes that "The discussion thus far has rested on the assumption that the importance of national unity is axiomatic. ...But there is a notable body of public thought, all the more influential because it parades under the guise of liberalism, that questions the validity of this axiom" (p.247). Nonethe-

less, Fairchild gives no evidence of any awareness that the assumption of national unity would come under increasingly effective attack. He also refers to "Walker's law" that "the ultimate outcome of unrestricted immigration is a progressive deterioration of the standard until no difference of *economic level* exists between our population and that of the most degraded communities abroad" (p.252). This, read now, seems to be a premonition of the two-fold impact of unrestricted immigration and free trade upon the living standards of the great mass of Americans who are non-supervisory employees.

Finally, in the last paragraph of his book, Fairchild suggests that had the Immigration Act of 1924 not been enacted, the melting pot might have worked all too well to destroy national unity because "what was being melted in the great Melting Pot, losing all form and symmetry, all beauty and character, all nobility and usefulness, was the American nationality itself" (p.261). The melting pot was a mistake, not a failure. Had it succeeded, it would have destroyed the American nationality.

Failure of the Melting Pot

Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, in the preface to their 1963 book *Beyond the Melting Pot*, confirm that the melting pot has failed: "The point about the melting pot, as we say later, is that it did not happen. At least not in New York and *mutatis mutandis*, in those parts of America which

resemble New York." The unmelted ingredients, as gathered in New York City, are "the Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish" cited in the subtitle to *Beyond the Melting Pot*, which is a sociological survey of each separate group. Nowhere in this survey, however, do the authors suggest that the outcome of the melting process, had it happened, would have been a mistake. The cardinal assumption of Glazer and Moynihan about the melting pot, then, is something quite other than that of Fairchild.

Similarly, Glazer and Moynihan begin with another assumption directly contrary to that of Fairchild. They are Boasians, making no reference to physical anthropology and but little reference to cultural anthropology. If race is found to be significant, as in the case of the Negroes, this is due to historical (i.e., cultural) happenstance (or, more appropriately, misfortune). The evolutionary paradigm (species/ races/ nationalities/ nations) which Fairchild brings to all points of his study is invoked not even implicitly by Glazer and Moynihan.

Glazer and Moynihan are also, unlike Fairchild, agnostic about the definition of an American nationality. They conclude only that "Religion and race define the next stage in the evolution of the American peoples. But the American nationality is still forming: its processes are mysterious, and the final form, if there is ever to be a final form, is as yet unknown" (p.315). Evidently, they see no incongruence between the existence of American *peoples*, as opposed

to an American *people*, and an American nationality. Fairchild, of course, sees the two as mutually exclusive.

The authors find that "the word 'American' was an unambiguous reference to nationality only when it was applied to a relatively homogeneous social body consisting of immigrants from the British Isles, with relatively small numbers from nearby European countries" (p.15). With later immigration, it came to mean in legal terms a citizen, but socially it had lost its identifying power. "In the United States it became a slogan, a political gesture, sometimes an evasion, but not a matter-of-course, concrete social description of a person. Just as in certain languages a word cannot stand alone but needs some particle to indicate its function, so in the United States the word 'American' does not stand by itself. If it does, it bears the additional meaning of patriot, 'authentic' American, critic and opponent of 'foreign' ideologies" (p.15).

The authors see the American *peoples* molded into as many different social-political forms: "The ethnic group in American society became not a survival from the age of mass immigration but a new social form" (p.16). "Ethnic groups then, even after distinctive language, customs, and culture are lost, as they largely were in the second generation, and even more fully in the third generation, are continually recreated by new experiences in America" (p.17).

On the basis of their study of ethnic groups in New York

City, the authors conclude that ethnic groups have become "interest groups" (p.17). These groups resist assimilation in the sense in which Fairchild uses the term: "Conceivably the fact that one's origins can become only a memory suggests the general direction for ethnic groups in the United States — toward assimilation and absorption into a homogeneous American mass. And yet, ...it is hard to see in the New York of the 1960s just how this comes about. Time alone does not dissolve the groups if they are not close to the Anglo-Saxon center. Color marks off a group, regardless of time; and perhaps most significantly, the 'majority' group, to which assimilation should occur, has taken on the color of an ethnic group, too. To what does one assimilate in modern America?" (p.20).

and Moynihan measure the assimilation of their five subject groups by applying to them the yardstick of socio-economic status. Their leading and implicit assumption is that any group's failure to attain median socio-economic status must be explained. Any such shortfall is evidence of a societal failure, a failure of assimilation. This assumption is, of course, the basis for affirmative action and other racial preferences, programs implemented only a few years after the authors wrote. Glazer, therefore, in writing of "the Negroes," is slightly in advance of his time when he concludes that "the strictly legal approach to [racial] discrimination will have to be supplemented with new approaches" (p.41).

It now seems a wonder that the authors register concern that "In 1960 in the New York metropolitan area a quarter of

Negro families were headed by women" (p.50). Today, when two-thirds of all African-American births are to unwed mothers, it seems to be a wild daydream to hope that one could ever again be able

to report such a statistic.

Although Glazer and Moynihan wrote more than a third of a century ago, the problems they address often seem to be unchanged. Thus, Glazer devotes considerable attention to Negro-Jewish tensions (pp.71-77), which have certainly not subsided. Of the inhabitants of Harlem, Glazer notes that "They lack only the ultimate power of expropriation, but if they did, Jewish and other white

business might fare as badly in Harlem as the American investments in Mexican oil, or in Cuba" (p.74).

Another familiar problem is the slowing down of assimilation among Hispanics. The authors note that the ease with which Puerto Ricans can migrate from their island to New York and vice versa is a deterrent to assimilation and a new factor in ethnic history (p.100). In response, "The city government on its part encourages city employees to learn Spanish, and issues many announcements to the general public in both languages. Conceivably this will change, but Spanish already has a much stronger official position in New York than either Italian or Yiddish ever had. This is one influence of the closeness of the island, physically, politically, and culturally" (p.101).

In the case of two groups, there are remarkable differences between their circumstances in 1963 and in 1996. Glazer writes about the first of these, the Jews, as he writes about all other groups save the Irish, who are the subjects of Moynihan's contribution.

Glazer observes that "Inter-marriage, an important sign of integration, remains low among Jews. The 1957 sample census showed that about 3½ per cent of married Jews were married to non-Jews, and the proportion is possibly even lower in New York" (p.160). Glazer cites a study in New Haven showing no increase in intermarriage since 1930, "although in this period the Jews of New Haven became much more acculturated and

"Although Glazer and Moynihan wrote almost a third of a century ago, the problems they address often seem to be unchanged."

For Glazer and Moynihan, again unlike Fairchild, this question must remain a rhetorical one. They remain agnostic about the most central of questions. In their words, "this book ... is inevitably filled with judgments, yet the central judgment — an over-all evaluation of the meaning of American heterogeneity — we have tried to avoid, because we would not know how to make it" (p.21).

In default, therefore, Glazer

prosperous. This pattern sharply distinguishes the Jews of the United States from those of other countries in which Jews have achieved wealth and social position, such as Holland, Germany, Austria, and Hungary in the twenties. There the intermarriage rates were phenomenally high" (p.160).

Much has changed in this regard since Glazer wrote. Now, rates of exogamy among American Jews are close to 50 percent. This high rate of physical assimilation brings the American Jewish experience more into parallel with that of central Europe. High rates of exogamy would seem to guarantee the total assimilation of a group, but in the case of the Jews their rejection as a group by their central European hosts followed the period, the 1920s, when seemingly they had won complete acceptance. In this respect, the Jewish experience calls into question the entire concept of what assimilation means.

Moynihan concludes that "The relative failure of the Irish to rise socially seems on the surface to be part of a general Catholic failure" (p.258). Moynihan's understanding of "a general Catholic failure," found corroboration as late as 1972 in Michael Novak's *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics*. In 1974, however, it was abruptly overturned when Andrew Greeley, a Jesuit sociologist, published, in his *Ethnicity in the United States: A Preliminary Reconnaissance*, his findings that Irish Catholics and other white Catholic groups earned average incomes higher than those of

most white Protestant nationality groups.

White Protestants are mentioned but rarely in *Beyond the Melting Pot*, and are the subject of one wildly inaccurate prophecy: "The white Protestants are a distinct ethnic group in New York, one that has probably passed its low point and will now begin to grow in numbers and probably also in influence" (p. 314). Doubtless, this, at least in part, reflected the belief that mediating figures similar to John Lindsay would emerge in the city's political future. Such was not to be.

Glazer and Moynihan's conclusion attempts to define why the melting pot failed. Their reason remains ill-defined, however conjectural: "We may argue whether it was 'nature' that returned to frustrate continually the imminent creation of a single American nationality. The fact is that in every generation, throughout the history of the American republic, the merging of the varying streams of population differentiated from one another by origin, religion, outlook, has seemed to lie just ahead—a generation, perhaps, in the future. This continual deferral of the final smelting of the different ingredients ... into a seamless national web ... suggests that we must search for some systematic and general causes for this American pattern of subnationalities; ... some central tendency in the national ethos which structures people, whether those coming in afresh or the descendants of those who have been here for generations, into groups of different status and character" (pp.290-291)

"...ethnicity and nationality are rather important factors..."

Whatever this "central tendency in the national ethos" may be, the authors do not further define it. The simplest answer, of course, was one that was repugnant to the creed of the New Frontier; i.e., that ethnicity and nationality are rather more powerful as factors than liberal thinkers had supposed them to be. This was the warning which Fairchild attempted to communicate. It is the conclusion, admittedly supported by a third of a century of hindsight, of William Pfaff in his *The Wrath of Nations: Civilization and the Furies of Nationalism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

Any attempt at the end of the century to revive the melting pot metaphor must be a feeble one. Under another name, "Trans-America,"—which is an adaptation of Randolph Bourne's 1916 vision of "Transnational America"—Michael Lind seems to be making such an attempt. Lind's *The Next American Nation* (New York: The Free Press, 1995)² bravely affects to look to the future, but it offers little more than yet another refurbishing of the melting pot ideal. Other authors, still fond of metaphor, have written of "the American salad bowl" or "the American mosaic." Lawrence Fuchs, a political scientist, wrote of *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity, and the Civic Culture* (Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press,

1990).

Lind's seems to be a faith, despite all, in the civic culture. That culture, in turn, is reducible to nothing more than a belief in continuing socio-economic advancement for all, just something to keep everyone busy and out of trouble, something like Gatsby's "the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us." Everyone must be kept running, never allowed to linger, to think, perhaps to wonder where, if anywhere, it all might be headed. Disbelief, even lingering, might lead to a dispersal of the multicultural herd into contending packs. In a multicultural society, the civic culture can only function if it is minimal in the commitment which it implies, a promise of bare civility rather than a loyalty to civilization.

Meanwhile, the meltdown of American nationality, of which Fairchild warned, proceeds apace. □

¹See an article on Americanization by Otis Graham, Jr. and Elizabeth Koed in *The Social Contract*, Vol.IV, No.2, p.98.

²*The Next American Nation* was reviewed by William Chip in *The Social Contract*, Vol.VI, No.2, Winter 1995-96, p.148. There is an additional review by David Payne in this issue, p.231.

[Editor's note: Also on this topic: *Assimilation in American Life* by Milton Gordon, New York: Oxford Press, 1964.]

When the lifeboat is overloaded

Our nation's first immigration law in 1882 specified that nobody would be allowed into our country if that individual expected a free ride. Anybody expecting to live off public money was turned away. Not anymore. The United States has become a deluxe retirement home for the elderly of other countries.

Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation has discovered that most of the one million non-citizens in the United States are living off you. Forty-five percent of all elderly immigrants in California are getting cash from you. Among Russian immigrants, 66 percent are taking your money.

At today's rate of immigration, there will be 3 million non-citizen immigrants costing you — over the next ten years — \$328 billion. Publications that are widely distributed among immigrants in all languages tell them how to get your money.

Homegrown Americans expect parents to provide for their own children, yet immigrant families can bring immigrant elderly to the United States and expect taxpayers to support them.

The triage law of the sea prescribes a legal limit for the number of people in each lifeboat. Any others seeking to fight their way aboard must be refused — in any way necessary — in order to keep the lifeboat afloat.

Economics Professor George Borjas computes the cost of jobs lost to foreign-born workers to be \$133 billion a year.

Dr. Donald Huddle of Rice University projects the net cost of legal immigration will exceed \$400 billion in the next decade. And this figure is in excess of any taxes that employed immigrants might pay.

Those who contend that mass immigration is an economic asset do not compute all the costs of services rendered free to immigrants. Also, they omit the children of immigrants from their fiscal analyses.

A Roper Poll reveals that 54 percent of Americans want annual immigration to be less than 100,000. But each year — as more immigrants, legal and other, arrive — the homegrown Americans in the lifeboat will be further outnumbered, out-shouted and overwhelmed.

It seems inhospitable — cruel — to turn others away. But when our own Ship of State is sinking in a sea of red ink, the alternative to triage is Titanic.

— Paul Harvey, April 9, 1996.

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