

# The Public Eye

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## *Pulling Up the Ladder:* The Anti-Immigrant Backlash

“Many persons who have spoken and written in favor of restriction of immigration, have laid great stress upon the evils to society arising from immigration. They have claimed that disease, pauperism, crime and vice have been greatly increased through the incoming of the immigrants. Perhaps no other phase of the question has aroused so keen feeling, and yet perhaps on no other phase of the question has there been so little accurate information.”

—JENK AND LAUCK: 40

BY DOUG BRUGGE

These words, written in 1912 by Jeremiah Jenks and W. Jett Lauck, who had been part of the United States Immigration Commission, sound surprisingly contemporary. In 1995, there is a popular argument that immigrants are responsible for many, if not all, of the problems facing our country. This theme has been struck before in US history. It has arisen now in part because right-wing organizations have promoted immigrants as a group targeted for blame. For example, an organization prominent in this right-wing campaign, The American Immigration Control Foundation (AICF), in a 1992 mailing lists immigrants as the culprits behind high taxes, wasted welfare dollars, lost jobs, high costs for education, and rising crime. The AICF claims that immigrants are driving up health care costs by grabbing free care while also bringing disease into the US. Interestingly, subsequent versions of the same letter, sent out the following year, reduce their claim of 13 million illegal immigrants to 6-8 million, a number still higher than that cited by *Time Magazine* as no more

than 5 million. As Jenk and Lauck conclude in the above quote, the debate is still characterized more by angry talk than by facts. (*Nelan:11*)

An important ingredient in the success of the right's anti-immigrant campaign is its ability to deflect anger about the negative effects of the current U.S. “economic restructuring” onto the scapegoat of immigrants. This tactic nests within a larger goal of capturing political gain by exploiting a popular issue. This is nothing new, but rather a practice rooted in a long-standing history of reaction to immigration, nurtured today by a cluster of right-wing political organizations dedicated to this single issue.

### THE HISTORY OF US IMMIGRATION

It is impossible to understand the current wave of anti-immigrant sentiment, without some historical perspective. Indeed, excepting the Native American population, it is often said that the U.S. is a nation of immigrants. Certainly, the role of cheap immigrant labor has been critical in building the U.S. economy. Immigration has been both voluntary and forced. In early U.S. history, territorial

and economic expansion was a magnet for persons fleeing poverty and political repression. There was also forced immigration in the form of the slave trade and the annexation of one half of Mexico by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, at the end of the Mexican-American War. This, not traditional immigration, is the reason that a significant number of Chicanos in the Southwest live in the U.S. rather than in Mexico.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, territorial expansion was no longer a major force fueling immigration. The new magnet was the industrial revolution, which was in full swing and in need of labor. Today, as the U.S. is going through another economic shift to a service and information-based economy with global reach, immigration is once again a factor.

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The U.S. has historically had a complex reaction to immigration. On the one hand, immigrants have been crucial to U.S. economic progress at certain junctures in our economic development. On the other, there has been considerable hate and anger directed toward immigrants, based on xenophobia, religious prejudice, and fear that immigrants will take jobs from native-born workers. It is revealing to take a brief look at some of this history of immigration as told by Howard Zinn in *A People's History of the United States*.

In his description of the colonies in the 1700's, Zinn notes that the colonies grew quickly as English settlers and Black slaves were joined by Scottish, Irish and German immigrants. Immigration was causing the larger cities to double and triple in size, but often urban poverty grew apace. "As Boston grew, from 1687 to 1770, the percentage of adult males who were poor ...[who] owned no property, doubled from 14 percent of adult males to 29 percent. And the loss of property meant loss of voting rights." Indeed this often-romanticized period of U.S. history was a time of far harsher immigration conditions than those of today.

Civil War era immigration occurred in an even more hostile environment. The Contract Labor Law of 1864 allowed

companies to sign contracts with foreign workers in return for a pledge of twelve months' wages. This allowed employers during the Civil war not only to recruit very cheap labor, but also strike-breakers. Predictably this resulted in conflict. "Italians were imported into the bituminous coal area around Pittsburgh in 1874 to replace striking miners. This led to the killing of three Italians, to trials in which the jurors of the community exonerated the strikers, and bitter feelings between Italians and other organized workers." It is interesting to note that there was no definition of United States citizenship in the Constitution until the 14th Amendment was added in 1868. A definition was needed, in part to counteract the Dred Scott decision, which held that slaves were not citizens. (Pear:1994)

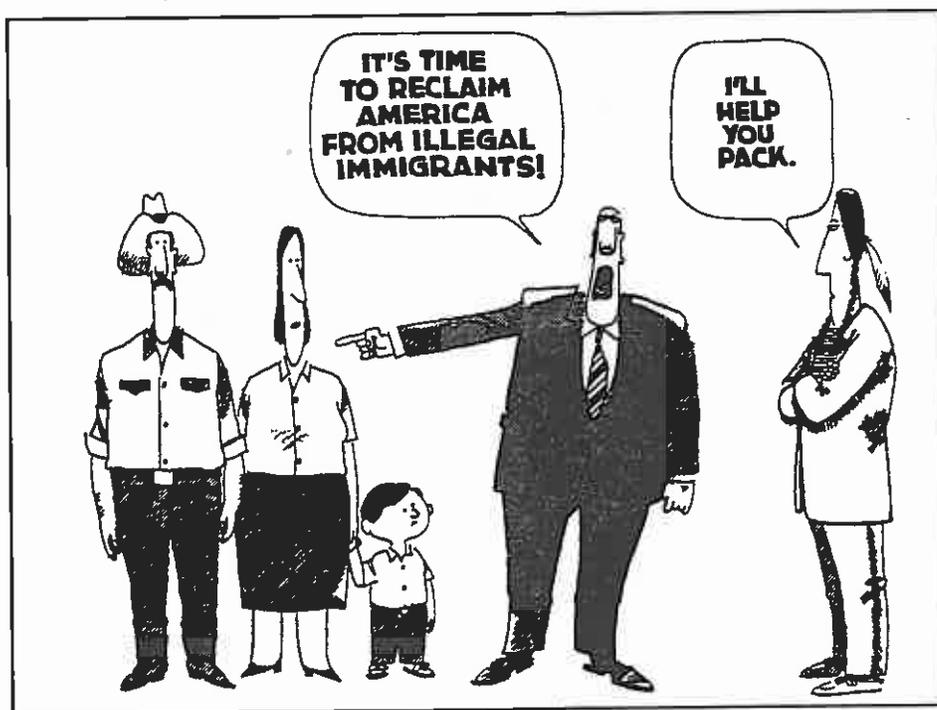
At the turn of the century, the immigrant population had changed from largely Irish and German to Eastern and Southern European and Russian, many of whom were Jewish. Zinn again describes the impact well, citing the role of immigration of different ethnic groups as contributing to the fragmentation of the working class. He discusses how the previous wave of Irish immigrants resented Jews coming into their neighborhoods. At this time there was also the added fear that immigrants would

bring with them socialist ideas that would undermine the principles of this country. (Zinn:1980)

While nationality, religion, and political ideology were the main basis for resentment of immigrants in urban areas during the first half of the nineteenth century, race was the issue when Chinese immigrants arrived, brought in to fill a labor gap, then later to work as construction workers on the railroads in the 1860's. Indeed the first anti-immigrant law, passed in California, targeted the Chinese. In 1882, the U.S. passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which was not repealed until 1943. Even then, immigration quotas for Chinese were only raised above 105 per year by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The late 1800's were difficult for Chinese in the U.S.—the growing trade union movement based part of it's organizing strategy on advocating deportation of Chinese immigrants. Race riots on the West coast were the response of angry whites who blamed Chinese for their woes. (Daniels: 1988)

In 1917 and again in 1942, the U.S. initiated guest labor programs, commonly known as the Bracero programs, that brought Mexican workers into the Southwest to work as non-citizen farm workers and fill an alleged labor shortage. Up to half a million workers were enrolled in the program at its height. The flow of undocumented Mexicans grew during this time, prompting a government effort to stem the tide by "drying out the wetbacks"—an effort to convert undocumented immigrants into Braceros. When that failed, "Operation Wetback" was launched with the deployment of a military style border patrol. The Bracero programs effectively exposed thousands of poor Mexicans to the wealth of the United States and contributed to immigration pressure. It also displaced Chicanos from rural agricultural jobs, fueling their exodus to urban centers. (Briggs:225-226 and Garcia y Griego: 58-65)

The role of racism in anti-immigrant sentiment seemed to have dimmed by the late 1970's, at least according to Lawrence Fuchs, who served for two years as director of the Select Commis-



sion on Immigration and Refugee Policy. Commenting on hearings held by his Committee in twelve major cities from 1979 through 1980, Fuchs states that "racism [against immigrants] was not nearly as powerful a force as it once was." (*Fuchs:290*) Fuchs attributes this decline in anti-immigrant racism to the civil rights movement and an expansion of the spirit of pluralism that it forced. This optimistic reading of U.S. tolerance for ethnic, racial, and religious diversity parallels the optimism of that period.

Intolerance, however, was just below the surface of American politics. The appearance of a hospitable melting pot that had an accepting attitude toward immigrants proved illusory. It took only the arrival of immigrants who were politically unwelcome, such as those fleeing the repression in El Salvador, for government policies of exclusion to become explicit again. As in the case of El Salvador, immigration has sometimes followed a pattern of growth from parts of the world in which the U.S. is heavily involved militarily or economically. In recent years immigration has increased from South East Asia and the Central America/Caribbean region. This sometimes results from granting entry for persons fleeing official enemies of the U.S., such as Cuba or Vietnam, but also draws people from countries allied with the U.S., such as the Philippines, Hong Kong or El Salvador. It is likely that as global trade relationships grow through treaties such as NAFTA, the coming period will prompt greater immigration.

#### THE CONTEMPORARY ANTI-IMMIGRANT CAMPAIGN

Right-wing anti-immigration groups have placed the 1965 Immigration Act at the center of a campaign to promote anti-immigrant sentiment in the 1980's and 1990's. In the 1965 Act, Congress repudiated the infamous 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, which followed 1920's-era legislation in parceling out immigrants' visas based on country of origin. Under the banner of humanitarian values, Congress decided to allocate visas primarily on the grounds

of kinship. The 1965 law states that 20% of all numerically-restricted visas will be allocated for skilled workers and 6% for refugees, with the remainder split among various family-oriented preference categories. Importantly, spouses, dependent children, and parents of U.S. citizens were exempted from any numerical limits. (*Reason:45*) It is this provision that particularly drew the wrath of the right.

In the 1980's, anti-immigrant sentiment grew during the debate over immigration reform. Supporters of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 argued that immigrants were stealing jobs and draining the economy, and that political turmoil in Mexico and Central America would spill over into the U.S.. Defenders of immigrants argued that immigrants are, in fact, a positive force in the American workforce and that the U.S. is historically a nation of immigrants. The final law, authored by Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyoming) and Rep. Romano Mazzoli (D-Kentucky) and promoted by the Reagan White House, was intended to shut the door on further flow of illegal immigrants, while ostensibly supporting immigrants by offering "legalized" status to undocumented immigrants already in the U.S.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act contains sanctions against employers who hire illegal immigrants and provisions for "guest workers" who are allowed to work in the U.S., but are denied rights or benefits. (The "guest worker" provisions were touted by Pete Wilson, then a Senator from California.) Although many immigrants entered the legal citizenship process, despite significant obstacles, the law laid the basis for the current debate over how to effectively seal the border. Further, the guest worker program has contributed to the flow of immigrant workers to the U.S. who have no possibility of becoming citizens.

The most recent piece of major legislation on the issue, The Immigration Act of 1990, reaffirms the centrality of family reunification, which has been the touchstone of U.S. immigration policy since 1965. However, the concept of family reunification is now under attack.

A list of the organizations working to oppose immigration is an indication of the strength of the anti-immigrant movement. (*See the following page.*)

#### EXTREMISTS FUND ANTI-IMMIGRANT GROUPS

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) is directly tied to more virulent racists by the funding it has received from the Pioneer Fund. Between 1985 and 1989 the Pioneer Fund provided eight grants totaling \$295,000 to FAIR, and three grants totaling \$80,000 to the American Immigration Control Foundation. Pioneer Fund documents indicate that FAIR received another \$150,000 in 1992, making it the largest recipient of Pioneer grants that year. (*The Pioneer Fund Inc.*) And FAIR clearly has no qualms about receiving such funding. The Pioneer Fund also funded *The Bell Curve*.

It is also of note that heiress Cordelia Scaiffe May supports FAIR, US English, the Center for Immigration Studies, and others to the tune of \$2.5 million. May's political agenda is made clearer by her foundation's underwriting in 1983 of the distribution of *The Camp of the Saints* by Jean Raspail, a book in which immigrants from the Third World invade Europe and destroy its civilization. (*Crawford:28*) Raspail's novel was the emotional touch stone for a recent article in the *Atlantic Monthly* titled, "Must It Be the Rest Against the West?" in which the authors ultimately propose rather pragmatic solutions in response to the global division between rich and poor that they perceive as "dwarf[ing] every other issue in global affairs." (*Connelly and Kennedy:79*)

*The Atlantic Monthly* article quotes directly from *The Camp of the Saints*, a copy of which they obtained from the American Immigration Control Foundation. It is instructive to read even a short passage from that book. It describes the masses threatening the white, and naturally civilized world as, "All the kinky-haired, swarthy-skinned, long-despised phantoms; all the teeming ants toiling for the white man's comfort; all the swill men and sweepers, the troglodytes, the stinking drudges,

## Organizations Working to Oppose Immigration

### AMERICAN IMMIGRATION CONTROL FOUNDATION (AICF)

Founded in 1983, AICF is a Virginia-based advocacy group that publishes *Border Watch*, a monthly publication that is prominent within anti-immigrant circles with a reported circulation of 200,000. AICF also distributes *Camp of the Saints*, by Jean Raspail. As of 1991, its budget was over \$1 million.

### AMERICANS FOR IMMIGRATION CONTROL (AIC)

A lobbying group based outside Washington, D.C., AIC claims it is the "largest citizen action lobby registered to represent your interests in Washington against uncontrolled immigration."

### AMERICANS FOR BORDER CONTROL (ABC)

ABC was established by Harold Ezell, former western states commissioner of the INS, to push for the employer sanctions that became part of the 1987 immigration reform. Ezell has been a key spokesperson for the so-called "Save Our State" initiative. ABC was involved in the vigilante-style "Light Up the Border" actions in San Diego several years ago." (*Novick:14*)

### CARRYING CAPACITY NETWORK (CCN)

CCN is known for publishing "The Net National Costs of Immigration in 1993" by Donald Huddle, Professor of Economics at Rice University in Texas. In 1994, The Urban Institute published a rebuttal to Huddle entitled "Immigrants and Taxes: A Reappraisal of Huddle's 'The Cost of Immigrants.'" This report reviews Huddle's methodology for estimating revenues generated by immigrants, reveals the logical and conceptual errors in Huddle's report, and develops new estimates of revenues generated by immigrants.

### COUNCIL FOR INTER-AMERICAN SECURITY

Among its publications is a report called "On Creating A Hispanic America: A Nation Within A Nation?" published in 1985 that charges that Hispanic leaders intend to establish a separate nation within the U.S. This organization was the source of much of Reagan's Latin American policy, and has ties to Rev. Sun Myung Moon.

### ENGLISH FIRST

English First, founded in 1986, seeks to pass English Only amendments at the state and federal level and claims a membership of 100,000. By 1991 it had raised and spent \$7.1 million, according to lobbying reports filed with the U.S. Senate. English First is considered politically to the right of US English. Its president, Larry Pratt, "runs several operations that compete with more established lobbies: Gun Owners of America, a National Rifle Association look-alike; US Border Control, a counterpart of FAIR; and the [anti-choice] Committee to Protect the Family." (*Crawford:268n*) Pratt was also Secretary of the Board of Directors of The Council for Inter-American Security. The English First strategy is to move all 50 state legislatures to pass English Only laws in preparation for a 3/4 majority needed for ratification of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

### NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH (NPG)

Teaneck, New Jersey-based NPG, founded in 1972, is more flawed by encoded racism than Zero Population Growth. Donald Huddle writes frequently for its newsletter, *The NPG Forum*. NPG promotes an "optimum US population size" that would be achieved by severely reducing immigration and using financial incentives to reduce fertility in the general population.

### THE CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES (CIS)

CIS with a budget of \$2.9 million was founded in 1985 and is based in Washington, D.C. A think tank that specializes in projecting the dire future effects of immigration, it publishes a quarterly journal *Immigration Review*. *CIS Backgrounders* and *CIS Papers*, as well as frequent appearances before Congress, make the organization a factor in influencing public policy.

### THE FEDERATION FOR AMERICAN IMMIGRATION REFORM (FAIR)

One of the most prominent right-wing anti-immigrant groups is The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), based in Washington, D.C. FAIR was founded in 1978 by John Tanton, when he left the organization Zero Population Growth. Tanton, a key figure in the anti-immigrant movement, also helped to found US English to push for making English the official language of the U.S., and co-authored a 1994 book titled *The Immigration Invasion*. FAIR played a central role in promoting legislative action in the 1980's. In the words of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (an unrelated FAIR), "no group has enjoyed more exposure than [FAIR]....The Federation, led by spokesperson and Executive Director Dan Stein, often appears in national media unopposed." They go on to note that FAIR spokespersons appear in the media as experts on immigration reform rather than one side of a contentious debate. Their budget for 1995 was \$3.5 million and they claim a membership of 70,000.

### THE PIONEER FUND

The New York-based Pioneer Fund was founded in 1937 by Harry Laughlin, who advocated sending American Blacks back to Africa, and who promoted the work of Nazi eugenicists in Germany. Laughlin received an honorary degree from Heidelberg University in 1936 to honor his contribu-

tions to Nazi eugenics, and was decorated by Hitler in 1937. (*Conniff:24; Quigley, 1995*) Today the Pioneer Fund continues to fund eugenics projects, which it defines to include immigration. The Pioneer Fund's charter states that it is, "committed to the proposition that people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds are, on the basis of their heredity, inherently unequal." (*U. of Delaware:7*)

### US ENGLISH

US English, a national organization, was co-founded in 1983 by John Tanton and S. I. Hayakawa "to defend the public interest in the growing debate on bilingualism and biculturalism." Tanton chaired US English until he departed after a scandalous memo was leaked. They have an annual budget of over \$6 million and claim a membership of 611,000. A high profile Board of Advisors includes former U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater. US English has been involved in lobbying state by state and at the federal level for English to be declared the official language of the U.S. They have opposed Federal laws mandating bilingual education, and recently protested the printing of Spanish language documents by the Social Security Administration.

### ZERO POPULATION GROWTH (ZPG)

A generally liberal organization with dubious relationships with more racist groups, Zero Population Growth was founded in 1968 and is based in Washington, D.C. It has a budget of \$2.9 million and has 55,000 members. FAIR and other right-wing groups are still listed as signatories to their mission. John Tanton, ZPG's President in the mid-1970's, has left the organization, but has not been repudiated.

the swivel-hipped menials, the womenless wretches, the lung-spewing hackers..." These "five billion growling human beings" are threatening the "seven hundred million whites." (*Connolly and Kennedy:66*)

### IMMIGRATION, TODAY AND YESTERDAY

Today there is a tendency to revise history, to extol the virtues of past immigration, specifically that which includes our ancestors, while saying that now the country is full and can hold no more. But as we have seen, the pattern of resistance to immigration was, if anything, more severe during earlier waves of arrivals. Indeed immigration today does not equal, in absolute numbers, the peak of entries around 1910. And immigration as immigrants per 1,000 residents of the US (the rate) is several times lower than at any time during the period 1850-1930. (*Simon: 161-162*)

Anti-immigrant groups have had to endorse historical immigration because the vast majority of non-native U.S. citizens are descended from immigrants. What they do not state directly, but imply in cleverly constructed arguments, is the one thing that clearly is different today. In 1900 85% of immigrants came from Europe (only 2.5% came from Latin America and Asia combined). In 1990, Latin and Asian immigrants accounted for more than two-thirds of all immigrants. Indeed, the population of Hispanics in the U.S. is projected to reach 80 million by the middle of the next century, while the Asian population will rise to about 40 million. (*U.S. Census Bureau*)

The U.S. has been a majority white country and immigrant labor in the early part of this century was white, although, as we have seen, ethnic, national and religious distinctions were critical in that time as the basis for defining immigrants as different, inferior morally and intellectually and, thus, threatening. The current influx from Third World countries faces the added dimension of race, a powerful factor throughout U.S. history. Thus the current sentiment is as much the political

twin of the racist history of exclusion of the Chinese as it is the resistance to white immigration.

The recent U.S. military action in Haiti is yet another sign of the depth of impact that race has on immigration policy. Haitian immigrants have been widely and falsely disparaged as bringing AIDS into the U.S. President Clinton, however, promised fair treatment for Haitian refugees during his campaign, only to renege on that promise once in office. When intense economic sanctions failed to force the Haitian military junta out and the flow of boat people continued, pressure mounted to do something and Clinton sent in the troops. In the process, the issue of halting immigration of poor black people was elevated to the level of national security.

### THE MESSAGE OF THE RIGHT WING

Dan Stein, Executive Director of FAIR, writes that a public consensus has emerged "in the face of Haitian boats, the World Trade Center bombing, Chinese boats, international immigrant-smuggling and crime syndicates, persistent illegal immigration from Mexico and high profile tales of immigrant-related welfare rip-offs." Stein states that in the face of this assault we need to cut the total number of immigrants, legal and illegal; "the country needs a break to absorb and handle its critical social and internal problems....We have to limit immigration significantly to preserve the nation." (*Stein:9B*)

In its advertisements in mainstream magazines, FAIR claims that "nowhere are the effects of out-of-control immigration more acutely felt than in the labor market. The original intent of our nation's immigration laws...was to protect the American Worker." In their mailings, FAIR plays on fears by telling a story of Mexicans crossing the U.S. border, "with the sole intention of having a child who is automatically an American citizen." In a brochure, FAIR writes, "[t]oday's challenges are very different from those faced by earlier generations. We no longer have a vast

frontier to tame. In fact, we must protect shrinking forests, wetlands and farm lands....We no longer need to encourage an influx of new workers as we did to fuel the industrial revolution."

Overall, the message of the anti-immigrant forces is that things have changed. At one time immigration was a good thing for this country, but no more. There is, in this view, no longer enough to go around and immigrants are cutting into the share of what could be had by good patriotic Americans. Furthermore, anti-immigrant advocates raise the specter of new immigrants failing to assimilate and forcing their culture on everyone else. A prospect that, they argue, could lead to separatist scenarios like the disaster in what was once Yugoslavia.

For instance, *Chronicles*, a rightist monthly cultural magazine, devoted its June, 1993 issue to the subject of cultural breakdown in the U.S. resulting from immigration. The cover, a cartoon depiction of the Statue of Liberty, features immigrant characters (with pointed ears to indicate their demon status) clawing their way to the top of the statue, whose face is grimacing in pain and alarm. The thrust of the issue's article is the dual threat of cultural adulteration of the Anglo-Saxon American heritage and the overwhelming inferiority of Third World alternative cultures. Feature writer Thomas Fleming writes, "Arab and Pakistani terrorists, Nigerian con artists, Oriental and South American drug lords, Russian gangsters—all are introducing their particular brands of cultural enrichment into an already fragmented United States that increasingly resembles Bosnia more than the America I grew up in." This message pervades not just right-wing anti-immigrant rhetoric, but the mainstream media and the rhetoric of both political parties.

#### PUBLIC OPINION IS AGAINST IMMIGRANTS

**T**oday public opinion has been swayed by such arguments, and the enormous access that anti-immigrant organizations have to the national media. A *Business Week*/Harris Poll in 1992 found that

while 59% of those surveyed thought historically immigration has been good for the US, 69% of non-blacks and 53% of blacks thought present-day immigration was bad. Among the reasons cited were taking jobs away from American workers (>60%) and using more than their fair share of government services (about 60%). (*Business Week*:119) Black views may be prompted by different reasons than those of whites, since it is likely that Blacks are resentful of the success of recent immigrants appearing to overtake them economically, while whites see immigrants threatening what they already have.

There is a clear lack of a sense of the history of immigration in the current outcry. Nothing so exemplifies the lack of historical connection than a recent story in the *Boston Globe* New Hampshire Edition, headlined "Son of Immigrants Offers English Bill." The legislation offered by Bernard Raynowska, a state representative from New Hampshire and of Lithuanian descent, would restrict the state's use of bilingual ballots or forms. While Raynowska's father came up the hard way after immigrating, his son now feels, "[i]n the year 2000 we're all going to be speaking Spanish, dressing Spanish [sic] and eating Spanish food." (*Kittredge:NHI*) A letter to the editor in the November 10, 1991 *Tampa Times* echoes that sentiment when the writer recalls, through rose colored glasses, his experience with immigrants in an earlier era. "There was no special consideration given those people, and their children required little time to become proficient in English." (*Wells*)

What are the actual statistics to back up this anti-immigrant rhetoric? In fact, less than 1.5 percent of the U.S. population is undocumented, according to the U.S. Census. One quarter of immigrants in the U.S. are undocumented. Most of these do not sneak across the border, but arrive legally and stay beyond the expiration of their visas. Only one-third of undocumented immigrants come from Mexico. (*Houston Chronicle*, 8/14/94)

Nothing is as fiercely contested or as wildly divergent in their conclusions as studies on the impact of immigration on the economy. Anti-immigrant orga-

nizations point to a study by Dr. Donald Huddle that shows that immigrants cost the U.S. \$44 billion more than they contributed in 1993. Immigrant advocates point to The Urban Institute study that shows that immigrants contributed from \$25 to \$35 billion more than they took out in 1992. (*Passel:7*) A study by Los Angeles County found

**"There is a clear lack of a sense of the history of immigration in the current out-cry."**

that immigrants cost the county almost \$1 billion, but give back four times that amount in taxes. The problem, however, for Los Angeles County is that the taxes go to the federal government instead of the county. (*Kadetsky:421*) *Business Week* estimated that immigrants pay \$70.3 billion in taxes and receive \$5 billion annually in welfare benefits, and another \$11.5 billion in primary and secondary education benefits. ("Immigrants: How They're Helping The Economy," *Business Week*, July 13, 1992)

The Urban Institute reviewed a number of recent studies that "document" the draining effect of immigrants on the U.S. economy in order to find underlying biases. They found that the studies vary in quality, but "the results invariably overstate the negative impact of immigrants for the following reasons: 1) they systematically understate tax collections from immigrants, 2) they systematically overstate service costs for immigrants, 3) none credit immigrants for the impact of immigrant-owned businesses or the full economic benefit generated by consumer spending from immigrants, 4) job displacement impact and costs are overstated, 5) they omit that parallel computations for natives that, when done, show natives use more in services than they pay in taxes too, and 6) the size of the immigrant population—particularly the undocumented

immigrant population—tends to be overstated.” (*Passel:2*)

### THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE AND THE ISSUE OF RACE

It is helpful to take a step back and consider the development of race as a concept. Race is intimately associated with both the development of the U.S. and with immigration policy. This is not surprising since this country was built on dislocation of the indigenous population and the enslavement of Africans. Such deeds are hard to justify against persons that you hold as equals. In the 19th century the dominant view was that Africans, Asians, and Native Americans were separate and inferior species. This was based variously on interpretation of the Christian scriptures and on “scientific” comparisons of cranial capacity.

“Louis Agassiz, the greatest biologist of mid-nineteenth-century America, argued that God had created blacks and whites as separate species.” (*Gould:243*) On the other hand, head measurements, “matched every good Yankee’s prejudice—whites on top, Indians in the middle, and blacks on the bottom; and, among whites, Teutons and Anglo-Saxons on top, Jews in the middle and Hindus on the bottom.” (*Gould:53-54*) Drawings showing that African’s heads appeared half-way between those of whites and chimpanzees were common.

Actually race is an artificial construct. Andrew Hacker writes, “there is no consensus when it comes to defining ‘race,’ the term has been applied to a diversity of groups. The Irish have been called a race...as have Jews and Hindus...In the United States, what people mean by ‘race’ is usually straightforward and clear, given the principal division into black and white. Yet...not all Americans fit into a racial designation.” Most obviously racial designations usually include Hispanic as an option despite the fact that Hispanic covers many races. On another level for most Asians and Hispanics, “images of their identities are almost wholly national” Chinese or Japanese; Puerto Rican or Mexican for example. (*Hacker:5-6*)

In the early part of this century the terrain of defining racial differences

shifted to measurement of IQ, and this was used to justify differential restriction of peoples in immigration. These tests, in particular those by psychologist, “R. M. Yerkes, who persuaded the army to test 1.75 million men in World War I, thus establish(ed) the supposedly objective data that vindicated hereditarian claims and led to the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924, with its low ceiling for lands suffering the blight of poor genes.” (*Gould:157*)

In the 1970’s the Pioneer Fund underwrote research by William Shockley and Arthur Jensen, who set the next stage for the IQ and race issue. They proclaimed that blacks have lower IQ’s than whites. It is not surprising to note the resurgence once again of this idea in the publication of *The Bell Curve* in 1994 by conservative social scientist Charles Murray and the late Harvard Professor Richard Herrnstein. The book develops an argument that intelligence is largely hereditary. Since blacks score below whites on such tests, this leads the authors to draw conclusions such as, “ending welfare to discourage births among low-IQ women, changing immigration laws to favor the capable and rolling back most job discrimination laws.” (*Lacayo:67*)

It is bitterly ironic that this was published in the same year that the movie “Forest Gump” was a smash hit by showing the basic humanity and common sense wisdom of a low IQ white man. *The Bell Curve* has been reviewed by sociologist Christopher Jencks as, “highly selective in the evidence they present and in their interpretation of ambiguous statistics.” And psychologist Richard Nisbett states that their work “wouldn’t be accepted by an academic journal—it’s that bad.” (*Beardsley:14*)

Indeed along with the political climate there already “is a police state that has developed in the south-western United States since the 1980’s. No person, no citizen is free to travel without the scrutiny of the Border Patrol,” writes Leslie Marmon Silko of the Laguna Pueblo after describing her personal harassment at the hands of the Border Patrol in New Mexico. (*Silko:414*) Significantly, undocumented immigrants

from Latin America are primarily, “Native Americans or mestizos (mixed-bloods) from Mexico and Guatemala,” often driven out by government repression backed by the US government while “economic refugees from Cuba (mostly white) and from the former Soviet Union (all white) are admitted to the U.S. ‘legally.’” (*Forbes:21*)

### THE REPUBLICAN PARTY’S USE OF ANTI-IMMIGRANT THEMES

The Republican Party has scapegoated immigrants for some time, but now immigration has moved to the center of the Party’s agenda and has become a platform to advance its political fortunes. David Nyhan, writing in *The Boston Globe*, points to California Governor Pete Wilson’s reelection campaign as the flash point of the rise of immigrants as an official enemy in the Republican’s electoral strategy. Nyhan writes, “Wilson looked done in by a combination of recession...defense cuts, population growth, job loss...and a plague of natural calamities...and the Los Angeles riots.” Then Wilson found a way to invigorate his political prospects. “He pursued an increasingly harsh policy toward illegal immigrants and was reinforced at nearly every turn of the media page by the increasingly polarized electorate.” Nyhan accurately predicted that Wilson’s reelection, “will nationalize the anti-immigrant debate, which is becoming the most incendiary issue in presidential megastates like Texas, Florida and New York.” (*Nyhan:17*) Indeed, Wilson is now a candidate for the 1996 Republican Presidential nomination, and is promoting California’s anti-immigrant policies as a national “solution.”

In fact, the new Republican Congress, rallying behind The Contract With America, has recently taken up immigration. HR4, The Personal Responsibility Act, would withdraw the safety net from virtually all immigrants, legal and illegal, who are not citizens by excluding them from 60 listed programs. Excepting only emergency medical services, the Republicans call for cutting off Medicaid, food stamps, welfare, school children’s meals and immuniza-

tions, housing loans, job training, higher education assistance, and child care to this population of tax paying people who have done nothing illegal. (*National Immigration Law Center, "Personal Responsibility Act," 1995 Fact Sheet*)

This would fundamentally shift the relationship between citizens and legal immigrants. Historically, immigrants have been viewed as future citizens. That link between immigrant status and citizenship potential would be broken by the Personal Responsibility Act, accomplishing a major goal of the right-wing anti-immigrant forces. Clearly, "public animosity to illegal aliens has been spilling over into the attitudes toward legal migrants". (*Pear:5*)

With liberal and progressive organizations weak at this time, anti-immigrant views are raising the fear of "others" who are "different." This sort of scapegoating—explaining away fears and social problems by blaming an unpopular group—has proved an effective strategy in dividing people and confusing them about the source of their problems. Further, the Republican claim that The Personal Responsibility Act would save the voters \$21 billion over five years masks the vindictive and short-sighted nature of the bill with a promise of tax-saving budget reduction.

#### PROPOSITION 187 IN CALIFORNIA

Closely linked to the 1994 gubernatorial election in California is proposition 187, a statewide referendum that is a paradigm of the state-level strategy of the anti-immigrant movement. When the voters of California approved Proposition 187 by a margin of 59 to 41 percent, they mandated that teachers, doctors, social workers and police check the immigration status of all persons seeking access to public education and health services from publicly funded agencies, and deny services to those in the U.S. illegally. The voters who voted in the 1994 election were 80% white, despite the fact that 45% of California's potential voters are people of color, and despite widespread protests from the Latino community.

The proposition, championed by

an organization called Save our State (SOS), was promoted as a cure-all that will reverse the many crises facing California. Despite the possibility that the initiative could cost the state \$15 billion in federal funding because it violates federal privacy and eligibility laws, it enjoys widespread support. While Gov. Wilson staked his successful reelection bid on endorsing the initiative, prominent Democratic elected officials voiced only muted opposition, and offered up their own plans to strengthen the Border Patrol.

Elizabeth Kadetsky has analyzed the organization behind California's anti-immigrant movement. She finds that SOS itself is, "a ragtag movement replete with registered Greens, Democrats, Perotists, distributors of New Age healing products and leaders of the Republican Party." There is little question that SOS has a grassroots base that "right-wing figures have shown up to exploit." Among key financial backers are Rob Hurtt, a millionaire who helped bankroll the Christian right's campaign for the state legislature, and state legislator Don Rogers who is associated with the white supremacist Christian Identity movement. But SOS raised most of its modest budget from small donations. While FAIR and SOS did not work together, FAIR did endorse the measure and was linked to the issue by Alan Nelson, a former INS director under Reagan, who later wrote anti-immigrant legislation in California for FAIR before writing proposition 187. Kadetsky finds that "SOS's visible advocates personify either fringe populism or cynical manipulation of public sentiment for political gain." (*Kadetsky:418*)

After the passage of Proposition 187, reports of discrimination against Hispanics have been rampant. The Hispanic Mayor of Pomona was stopped by the INS and told to prove his citizenship. In Bell Gardens a teacher asked students for their immigration papers. In Los Angeles a bus driver yelled at passengers that they could no longer speak Spanish or Armenian. And a car accident victim was denied emergency services when he couldn't prove his legal status, to name just a few. Columnist Jose Armas called this, "one of the most

hate-charged laws ever passed" and called for support of the growing boycott of California products, tourist and convention visits. (*Armas:B-3*)

Groundwork for Proposition 187 was laid in 1986 by Proposition 63, a successful referendum to make English the official language of the state. A local affiliate of US English, the California English Campaign, led the campaign in California. US English provided the campaign with between \$800,000 and \$900,000 for the initial signature drive, and continued to heavily fund them throughout the campaign. Other national organizations collaborated to coordinate the campaign, with US English taking the lead. It was an early use of the statewide referendum to tap anti-immigrant sentiment and was a precursor to 187. (*Defeating English Only, n.d.*)

#### ENGLISH ONLY AS A LINCHPIN OF ANTI-IMMIGRANT HATE

Language is a key issue in the immigration debate. At the same time that there is concern that students are not learning second languages, there are attempts to make sure that young immigrants do not retain their native language. A plausible explanation is that immigrants have the wrong language: Spanish, rather than French or German. The opposition to "other" languages seems to reflect both disdain of foreign cultures and fear of the loss of English as the dominant U.S. language, and is closely associated with the racist aspects of immigrant bashing.

The language issue is often falsely framed as a concern that immigrants are not learning English and not integrating into society. In fact, immigrants today are learning English as rapidly as previous generations of immigrants, despite longer and longer waiting lists for English classes due to government cutbacks. The hidden political agenda of English Only advocates is clear in their attacks on bilingual education and bilingual ballots. When English Only laws have passed, it has emboldened employers to restrict non-English languages at work and cities to outlaw commercial signs in various languages. It has fueled anti-immigrant sentiment, extending to

citizens, legal residents, and the undocumented alike, as long as they "look like immigrants."

**"[T]he immigrant  
is the one getting the  
blame for whatever  
the social ill is."**

—BARBARA JORDAN

The danger of official English initiatives comes from their subtlety and ability to win over middle Americans who are unaware of the larger agenda. In fact, US English is a flagship organization of the right's anti-immigrant campaign. Because US English is occasionally characterized as seeking to designate a state or national language that is no more threatening than an official bird or flower, liberals are sometimes puzzled or shocked to read claims that the English Only movement is racist.

John Tanton wrote a memo in 1988 that dirtied the clean public image that US English has sought to maintain. In the memo, Tanton writes, "[a]s Whites see their power and control over their lives declining, will they simply go quietly into the night?...Will Latin Americans bring with them the tradition of the mordida (bribe)?" And, "[o]n the demographic point: perhaps this is the first instance in which those with their pants up are going to get caught by those with their pants down!" (Tanton) The ensuing uproar led to the resignation of then-director Linda Chavez and board member Walter Cronkite.

U.S. English has made a strong comeback in the wake of that crisis. They have hundreds of thousands of members across the U.S. thanks to their ability to reach huge numbers of persons through mass mailings, and they can point to some 17 states that have passed official English laws. Their prime objective today is to change the U.S. Constitution and they have legislation that has gathered some support in Congress. In addition they have continued to oppose transitional bilingual education.

**IMMIGRATION AND  
THE NEW ECONOMY**

One aspect of economic restructuring today involves a shift from local or national economies to a global economy. U.S. business is moving freely without being tied to local labor forces; consequently corporations are relocating overseas to find cheaper labor and lax environmental laws. The rise of an information- and service-based economy has contributed significantly to the dislocation of workers, since it generates a two tier class structure of low income jobs for most and high income jobs for the few with the right skills and knowledge. The low paying jobs that are being created are often jobs that new immigrants are willing to take but are unacceptable to middle class workers who are seeking jobs that allow a more affluent and secure lifestyle.

Since 1972 real average weekly earnings have fallen 18.6%. Blacks have been particularly hard hit, seeing their family income plummet by one-third since 1973. (*Economic Notes: July*) On the other hand, in just one year, from 1992 to 1993, after-tax corporate profits increased by more than \$44 billion. (*Economic Notes: June*) Between 1960 and 1988, manufacturing employment fell from 26% to less than 19% of civilian employment, while jobs in the service providing industries (including transportation, real estate, wholesale and retail trade, service, finance, and public utilities) climbed from 56% to 70%. (*OECD:1991*) This has caused an uncharacteristically large-scale displacement of millions of blue collar middle class workers as well as professionals and middle managers. (*Mead:71; Business Week:119*)

Displaced workers, along with others who fear for their livelihood, are fertile ground in which to sow anti-immigrant sentiment, since angry and frustrated people often seek some target on which to blame their problems. The right wing has organized and manipulated such anger and resentment and turned it away from corporations and directed it against the government, decrying high taxes and the inability of the

State to solve problems such as social deterioration, homelessness, crime and violence. In addition to the target of "failed liberal policies," immigrants make a convenient scapegoat and a very tangible target for people's anger. Racial prejudice is often an encoded part of the message.

Right-wing populist themes are particularly effective at attracting working people disenchanted with the system. A cartoon in the October 1993 issue of *Border Watch*, a publication of the American Immigration Control Foundation, depicts "U.S. Business Interests, Inc." as being pro-immigration. "We hire aliens cheap," reads a sign in the cartoon, implying that U.S. corporate interests are promoting immigration and costing U.S. workers their jobs. Under the headline, "Immigration Takes Jobs from Americans," an April, 1994 issue of *Border Watch* claims that native born workers are being displaced from both janitorial jobs and white collar professional positions. An anonymous letter in *Border Watch*, identified as from a worker, captures the anti-immigrant sentiment: "[w]hen the Mexicans get powerful enough in a job situation, they kick out the "gringos" so their buddies can take over..." The anonymous writer goes on, "Just wait until they can work their way up the economic ladder, and middle class Americans will feel the sting of Mexican racism." (*January 1993:6*)

**THE AMBIVALENCE OF LIBERALS**

Republicans and Democrats are not cleanly divided on the issue of immigration. Ideological positions on the issue are murky, among other reasons because the economic and political problems we are facing were created by both dominant political parties, thus a popular scapegoat is useful to both. Gregory Defreitas, writing in *Dollars and Sense*, identifies an example of ideological divergence within conservatism; Nativist Republicans want to curtail or stop immigration, while conservative libertarians endorse open borders. On the liberal side, a significant number of unionists and environmentalists see immigration as a threat to jobs

and the environment. (*Defreitas:34*)

It is the issues of jobs and the environment that provide the right's anti-immigrant campaign its strongest entree into mainstream attitudes. An indication of the success of this argument is the adoption by the Sierra Club in California of immigration restriction as an environmental cause. Population control is a related issue that can give the anti-immigrant message an acceptable mainstream spin.

The Carrying Capacity Network (CCN) specifically includes "immigration limitation" as a part of this agenda. Among the "Initiatives & Resources" offered in a 1994 publication of the CCN are an incongruous mix of ecology and anti-immigrant titles. These include "American Solar Energy Society," "Immigrants, Your Community, and US Immigration Policy," "Planned Parenthood," and "The Ordeal of Immigration in Wausau."

On the National Board of Advisors of the CCN are the names Anne and Paul Ehrlich, important figures in population control circles. They recently outlined their version of the relation of environment, population growth, and immigration limitation in the January 1991 issue of "The NPG Forum," published by Negative Population Growth. First they claim that the U.S. is actually the most overpopulated nation in the world because we have a greater per capita environmental impact than any other nation. They conclude that, "[t]he first step, of course, is for the United States to adopt a population policy designed to halt population growth and begin a gradual population decline." (*Ehrlich and Ehrlich:3*)

Naturally, immigration restrictions are a part of the Ehrlichs' plan. Although they consider immigration to add "important variety to our population," they worry that to maintain "reasonable" immigration rates will mean that others will have to pay too high a price in terms of restricting their family size. Ultimately they view immigration as environmentally destructive because immigrants come from poor nations where they consume little, only to, "quickly acquire American superconsuming habits." They also bring unfor-

tunate "reproductive habits" that go against the grain of population control. They conclude that, "[t]he immigration issue is extremely complex and ethically difficult, but it must be faced," if we are ever to reach the "optimum" U.S. population size of "around 75 million people." (*Ehrlich and Ehrlich:4*) Since this is less than a third of our current population it raises the question of where all the rest of us will go.

Negative Population Growth has outlined the history of growing competition for jobs in the U.S. They tie the problem to the effort to "bring Blacks into the economic and social mainstream." They point out that the addition of Blacks to the workforce after the civil rights movement was compounded by the baby boom and the influx of young women into the paid labor force. The answer? Limits on immigration and "reducing unwanted pregnancy among the poor" stand out to NPG. (*NPG:1*) Thus they put a liberal spin on the anti-immigrant debate, trying to align civil rights and feminist activists with anti-immigrant themes.

Former Congresswoman, Barbara Jordan, who is head of the 1994 Commission on Immigration Reform is at the more moderate end of the debate. Nonetheless, she recommends cutting immigration and limiting family reunification. To her credit she has argued for depoliticizing the discussion. Says Jordan, "Now when economic conditions become a little stringent we look around for someone to blame. Right now, the immigrant is the one getting the blame for whatever the social ill is." She goes on to ask, "[n]ow, if we are what we claim to be in our mottoes, then why don't we reinforce our identity as an accepting and caring people and try to deal reasonably and rationally with the real issues?" (*Broder:Wash. Post, Oct. 4, 1994*)

The ambivalence of liberals over the issue of immigration has allowed the views of the political right to become the mainstream. As has been said earlier, liberals were part of setting economic policy, and can no more explain away what they have done than can the right. Upper level workers, primarily white and unionized, are often a base for

liberalism's themes of tolerance and diversity, but are not immune from lapses of racism and have blamed "foreigners," such as the Japanese, for economic problems in the past. In fact there has been a recent shift from Japan-bashing and Buy American efforts to blaming immigrants. Further, because relatively few recent immigrants are voters and immigrants do not have their own PAC's, they are not widely feared or respected by liberals in the electoral arena.

## FINAL WORDS

**A** competitive mentality and a sense of increasingly scarce resources create a fertile soil for anti-immigrant advocates who raise the fear that newcomers will take your job, your home, and your culture—things very central to a secure life. Fear is very real, and the decline in the economic position of the average American is an understandable motivator for fear. But to blame immigrants as the source of that decline is to scapegoat an easy, unpopular target and divert responsibility from more culpable parties. Unfortunately, the message that immigrants are the problem has been all too successful.

*Doug Brugge is an occupational and environmental health scientist who serves on the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts English Plus Coalition, and co-chairs Unity Boston, a multiracial, grassroots political organization.*

*Write or call for footnotes to this article.*

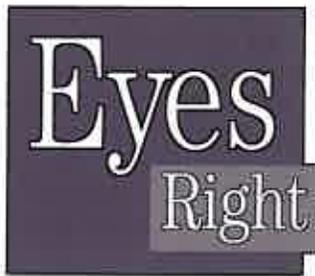
## US OUT OF UNI

Not all the corks that are popping are in celebration of the UN's fiftieth birthday. A significant portion of the militia and patriot movement embraces the idea that UN troops are poised to invade the US and establish a New World Order under a One World Global Government. This fear of the UN developed from a basic tenet of conservatism against statism and collectivism. When combined with a conspiracist worldview, the result is the fear that all attempts at building world cooperation and peace are actually part of a secret plan by sinister elites to control the world. They claim true patriots will see the government as being run by traitors poised to betray national sovereignty and hand over the nation to their allies in the UN who will seize control using the blue-helmeted UN forces, probably flown in on black helicopters.

According to Birch Society lore, there is an unbroken conspiracy linking the Illuminati, the French Revolution, the rise of Marxism and Communism, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the United Nations. Moreover, because liberals provide the cover for the gradual process of collectivisms they and their allies are actually traitors against the government.

The goal is "one-world socialist government." [JBS/BB p. 113] It is these mythical collectivist traitors that the militias now believe control the government. "The United Nations Conspiracy" by Robert W. Lee, published by the John Birch Society imprint Wester Islands in 1981, typifies the writing that links the rise of communism with international bankers, Wall Street, wealthy elites and key networks such as the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission.

While the fear of the UN is rooted in a history of anti-elite conspiracism, the degree of anti-Semitism



is a matter of individual interpretation as to who really is behind the age-old plot. It is a small step for some to take themes of secret manipulation and append them to historic anti-Semitism. This theme often emerges in the lore of the Christian Patriot movement, and is modified for use by Lyndon LaRouche. LaRouche organizers have been working with Nation of Islam speakers to stage forums where the Masonic conspiracy is being revived with clear anti-

Semitic overtones such as alleging that the Ku Klux Klan and B'nai B'rith are different arms of the same Masonic conspiracy.

A continuing dilemma for social justice activists is that the paranoid right interpretation of history has a false radical ring to its claim that wealthy elites control the society; but theirs is a reactionary individualist analysis based on bad people doing bad things rather than a progressive institutional analysis that challenges the underlying economic and political system.

## UN ON THE BRAIN

Currently the UN is the hot button issue for a number of reactionary groups and politicians. In a fundraising letter for the American Conservative Union, US Rep. Phil Crane (R-IL) argues that placing US forces under UN commanders from foreign countries is "dangerous and potentially treasonous strategy" that gives away our national security and endangers "American lives and sovereignty."

Beverly LaHaye in the June 1995 issue of the Concerned Women for America magazine *Family Voice*, predicts that radical feminists will continue to destroy nations around the world by creating social problems at meetings such as the upcoming Fourth UN World Conference of Women. LaHaye singles out US NGO delegate Bella Abzug for promoting a "one-world socialist agenda."

Pat Robertson continues his insensitivity toward anti-Semitic rhetoric in a letter dated April 20, 1995. Answering a question "concerning the United Nations and New World Order," Robertson writes "Many people join you in asking, 'What can be done?' I believe an informed coalition of evangelicals, pro-family Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and other people who love America and love God can ultimately win control of our government from the small groups of internationalist bankers who have dominated the foreign policy of our nation for some time."

## ILLUMINATI: NEW WORLD ORDER PLAYING CARDS

Given the current cultural fixation with both conspiracy theories and role-playing trading card games, it was inevitable that someone would merge the two. Steve Jackson Games has produced *Illuminati: New World Order* playing cards, where different factions of the Illuminati (represented by cards with backs showing a puppetmaster's hand pulling strings) are manipulating society through front groups (represented by cards with backs showing puppets dancing on those strings). Amazingly, the cards are produced with a wry wit and sense of humor that makes the game a sophisticated political satire that implicitly pokes fun at people who take conspiracy theory too seriously. The instruction manual, for instance, is titled "World Domination Handbook," and contains the warning "You've always known it. Secret conspiracies are everywhere. They are out to get you—unless you get them first." A full factory set comes with 451 cards, but two player starter sets with two 55 card decks can get you started on a campaign to rule the world, but watch out for the Weather Satellite card which can add 10 bonus points to Tornado, Hurricane and Rain of Frogs cards in play! Find them at local trading card and comic book stores, or ask a fourteen-year-old.

## To the Editor

### To the Editors:

We write out of deep concern that *The Public Eye* has promoted anti-Semitism in the September 1994 issue, which contains an outright attack on "anti-Semitism" or substitutes euphemisms for its proper usage. The victims of anti-Semitism—Jews—see no need to change the term. Nor do historians and other scholars. There is a good Yiddish word for *The Public Eye's* belief that it should tell Jews how to describe their own oppression—"chutzpah."

We are astonished that you started your discussion of the word "anti-Semitism" by claiming that "Semites historically were a group of peoples from what is now the Middle East." As you must know, the term "anti-Semite" was coined by Wilhelm Marr in 1879, and it targeted only Jews, not Arabs, let alone "Babylonians, Assyrians, Aramaens, Canaanites and Phoenicians," as you suggest.

The word "Semite" has nothing to do with race, or even ethnicity, but with language. The word "anti-Semite" has little to do with the word "Semite"—except to anti-Semites.

Your reluctance to use the word "anti-Semitism" appears to derive from the erroneous claim that "Because Arabs are Semites, too, people who are prejudiced against only Jews cannot be anti-Semitic." In our eyes this is semantic and wrongheaded drivel. The term "anti-Semitism" has never had any target but Jews.

To use the term "anti-Jewish," as *The Public Eye* suggests, is to rewrite the lexicon of anti-Semitism after-the-fact. This is intellectually unjustifiable, deeply offensive and, by disconnecting key events in Jewish history from the terms used to describe them, in and of itself a form of historical denial.

You write that "some critics object to the term anti-Semitism because it is a euphemism, or because it reinforces the inaccurate idea that all Jews are linked by a biological racial connection." Jews, of course, are a people, not a race; but two paragraphs down you actually re-

sort to promoting and articulating racial myths about Jews when you cite Matthew Lyons positively as arguing that, "Israeli Law codifies 'racial exclusivism' because it places Jews in a privileged status over other peoples."

Lyons apparently believes that the Israeli Law of Return is racist. But it cannot be "racist" as it allows people of all "races," including those from Africa, Europe and elsewhere, to emigrate to Israel. Like the immigrations laws of France, Spain, the United States and just about every other nation, the Israeli Law of Return is selective. Why pick on the one state that has Jews, and the one movement of self-determination that is tied to Jews? This smacks of anti-Semitism.

It has been the unfortunate experience of the Jewish community that those who do not use the word of choice, anti-Semitism, tend to be people who relativize or diminish the phenomenon for political reasons. That tendency was on full display in the September 1994 issue of *The Public Eye*. For example, you chastise the American Jewish Committee (AJC) for its publication "Anti-Zionism: The Sophisticated Anti-Semitism" as using "the charge of anti-Semitism ... to isolate political critics of Israeli government policies or U.S. support for Israel." Many groups highly critical of Israeli policy—including New Jewish Agenda—distributed the AJC report as a careful expose of anti-Semitism masquerading as anti-Zionism on the left. And, while we certainly agree that the main danger of anti-Semitism comes from the right rather than the left, that does not mean that anti-Semitism on the left is to be ignored or downplayed.

What exactly do you mean when you write that "Zionism is not the answer for confronting anti-Jewish bigotry;" it flows from the Jewish religion and experience and is a manifestation of the historical connection between Judaism—an inextricably land-linked religion—and the land of Israel. Zionism means nothing more than the right of Israel to exist. Period. If someone has a problem with the simple concept that

Jews, like every other people on the planet, have the right to self-determination, that is anti-Semitism. Inventing politically motivated terms to place one's language outside the definition of prejudice is an old trick—one that we would expect *The Public Eye* to expose, rather than perpetuate.

In our view, the only people who can gain by this assault on history are the anti-Semites.

Very truly yours,

—Kenneth S. Stern,  
American Jewish Committee

Leonard Zeskin,  
Institute for Research and  
Education on Human Rights

Daniel Levitas,  
former Executive Director,  
Center for Democratic Renewal

### The Editors' Response

We can understand that readers of our September 1994 issue's sidebar titled "Anti-Semitism in a Word" might think that we were advocating ending the use of the term anti-Semitism. At times there was a lack of clarity in our intent that could result in such a conclusion. We take responsibility for that and want to state unequivocally that neither *The Public Eye* nor any of us at Political Research Associates are advocating suspending the use of the term anti-Semitism to describe bigotry against Jews.

In response to the challenge that our definition of Semitic people is inaccurate, we stand by the copy as written. Of course anti-Semitism in its current usage (a usage coined by Wilhelm Marr in 1879) refers to bigotry against Jews only. The word Semitic, however, was originally used to describe a language group which included Jews among others. In this we feel we were clear.

On the criticism of Matthew Lyons' use of the term "racial exclusivism" to describe some Israeli policies, we agree that this term promotes misunderstanding. The term was drawn from a lengthy

interview with Lyons, in which he discussed the ambiguity of the term race and the fact that it is in many respects a socially constructed concept. The term "racial exclusivism" should only be used to describe Israeli policies if accompanied by this larger discussion, which was not the case in the sidebar. For that reason, we agree that the term is incorrect as quoted. Without the further explanation it requires, it contradicts other statements made in the sidebar.

Finally, people of goodwill can and do disagree over whether anti-Zionism is the same as anti-Semitism. We certainly acknowledge that for many Jews this is a painful point of disagreement. PRA has always tried to be sensitive to the pain of those who advocate Zionism and who see anti-Zionism as anti-Semitism. We do not, however, necessarily equate the two and feel that it is inaccurate to do so. To disagree with a pamphlet authored by Ken Stern, whom we regard as an expert on anti-Semitism, does not in any way imply a lack of respect for his work.

Specifically, it is the pamphlet *Anti-Zionism, The Sophisticated Anti-Semitism* that we cited with mild criticism. Stern argues, by using historical incidents to make his case, that to be anti-Zionist is to be viciously anti-Semitic. He grounds his case in U.N. Resolution 3379. An unequivocal assumption prevails—that to oppose Zionism is to support the U.N. Resolution, which is to say that the State of Israel should not be allowed to exist and

should be driven into the sea. If that were true, then the title of the pamphlet would follow.

Stern never considers that a critique of Israel's political policies—for instance, by those who for years advocated a two-state solution and subsequent peace accords based on mutual concessions—could be motivated by anything other than anti-Semitism. Erased is the possibility that one might see it as in Israel's self-interest to pursue peace and compromise. No critique of the way that Israel has pursued Zionism is allowed by Stern. But is it really not possible to oppose Zionism as Israel practiced it for years and not be an anti-Semite? We know many people who have done so and are not.

We do not see why it should be illegitimate to question the title of a pamphlet if one feels that the argument made in the pamphlet does not prove the truth of the title. The pamphlet was not titled: "How Anti-Zionism Has/Can Be Used to Promote or Mask Anti-Semitism." or "Why U.N. Resolution 3379 is Anti-Semitic." These are titles that accurately reflect the case made by the pamphlet.

Stern's condemnation of all who oppose Zionism in any respect as anti-Semitic is, in our opinion, an overstatement of the case for Zionism. We were not, in *The Public Eye's* discussion of the term anti-Semitism, discussing U.N. Resolution 3379.

*For copies of the full correspondence, write to The Public Eye.*

## GEORGE SELDES 1890-1995

Journalist George Seldes has died at the age of 104. A major figure in early press criticism, he excoriated the tendency of the press to avoid articles that might criticize the practices of their advertisers. Seldes was one of the century's leading anti-fascists and wrote a critical biography of Mussolini, *Sandust Caesar*, in 1935, and followed with *Facts and Fascism* in 1943.

Seldes combined a crusty intellect with a soft heart, and until recently would entertain visitors to his Vermont hillside home with stories of his exploits punctuated by sips from his trademark martini. Some of us were inspired by these visits, and all of us who read his books and articles are inspired by his example. He will be remembered.

—Chip Berlet

## ARTHUR J. KROPP 1957-1995

Political Research Associates and *The Public Eye* would like to express our sympathy to the People For The American Way family on the death of their Director, Arthur Kropp. We have lost an effective and valued colleague.

## The Public Eye

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# Racial Privilege, Racial Threat

Garrett Hardin

## Living Within Limits: Ecology, Economics and Population Taboos

Oxford University Press, 1993

Tomas Almaguer

## Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California

University of California Press, 1994

Comparing these two books is both frustrating and enlightening. Garret Hardin's *Living Within Limits: Ecology, Economics and Population Taboos*, though written in turgid, obscure prose, is a sophisticated attack on immigration that spans philosophical and sociological arguments. He argues for people to think communally and act socially in the service of the planet, which is threatened by overpopulation. It is when Hardin gets into his specific definition of justice that we see beyond his vision of a healthy planet to his formula for population limitation.

Hardin is not a simple right-wing advocate of the slash-and-burn wise use movement. He doesn't see the earth as at the service of the needs of mankind. Nor is he a radical environmentalist, who sees humans as subservient to the earth; nor a traditional environmentalist who calls for balance between man and the earth.

Instead his analysis of the need to control population growth rests on a bizarre combination of: 1) blatant self-interest and 2) hard-headed advocacy of draconian policies toward some humans. He calls this perspective "ecological conservatism."

Ultimately, Hardin fails to convince the reader of the need for strictly enforced population control measures, let alone the racially discriminatory and social Darwinist measures that he proposes. For instance, Hardin argues for more rigid national boundaries, and against global solutions to environmen-

tal and economic problems. He promotes capitalism in its unfettered form, because under pure capitalism, people are motivated to limit the size of their families. It is the welfare state that unbalances the natural order of free market capitalism.

Using misleading diagrams and mathematical formulas, out-of-context literary quotations, and neo-Malthusian population control arguments, Hardin argues against Medicare, disaster relief, farm subsidies, bilingual education, and other social services at the local, federal, and especially global levels.

Although Hardin cloaks these themes in mild language, sometimes they are not so subtle. The echo of past programs of racial control can be seen in quotes such as: "If human beings insist on interfering with the natural mortality of the young in a community that has overshot the carrying capacity, they must balance this policy by making aid to the poor contingent upon adoption of fertility-reducing measures (such as sterilization)." (p.164)

Elsewhere he is equally clear: "Thinking about the needs of [Third World] poor people, most of us can agree that two goals are desirable: to make the people more comfortable, and to bring their population growth to a halt." (p.176)

Thus, Hardin's proposed solution to poverty is, in so many words, to prevent the poor from receiving too much humanitarian aid and to prevent them from bearing children.

The sexism in Hardin's book is equally reprehensible, and of a variety some might have incorrectly supposed long extinct. Hardin writes: "Numerous national surveys of women's expressed desires shows [*sic*] that the average woman wants a family that is greater than the number needed to produce zero population growth...We need to devise acceptable ways of influencing the desires of women in the light of community needs." (p.258) We can only guess what these "acceptable ways" of influencing women's desires—as

opposed to unacceptable ones—might be.

Though an acknowledged, if controversial, scholar, Hardin does not recognize some basic and established facts of ecology and human population, especially that human life is far more valued in economically depressed regions and that human consumption in these regions is confined within more reasonable limits than that of the unbridled first world. Hardin's book falls prey to two frequent and slippery traps of population control arguments: 1) he confuses overpopulation with over-consumption, and 2) he confuses overpopulation with under-development.

On one hand, he blames poor people for problems more logically associated with the consumption patterns and environmental destruction of the corporate first world. On the other, he blames poor people for the existence of poverty, rather than blaming patterns of economic and social development and distribution that privilege certain groups in select geographical locations, and keep wages depressed and living conditions poor in others.

Hardin's assertions are nothing new or surprising. The pseudo-scientific justification for the elimination of social service programs and the promotion of government-imposed population control of *Living Within Limits* is on the rise. The racial implications of these policies are clear. Third World peoples, with their refusal to limit population, are a danger to the First World. Hardin's book fits into a growing body of conservative ecology-based views that blame people of color, women, immigrants, and Third World nations for the world's economic, social, and environmental ills.

*Living Within Limits* is worth reading in that it represents a sophisticated exercise in environmental and ecological thought that targets the wrong sources of contemporary problems. In his claim to "seek a global mean," Hardin singles out the poor of the Third World as the threat to that mean. His arguments are part of a school of

xenophobic thinking that needs to be passionately resisted.

Tomas Almaguer's *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* is a sociological account of race relations in California. The author's research shows how economic, political, and cultural factors work to "sort out" communities by race, creating shifting hierarchies. The central thread that runs throughout *Racial Fault Lines* is how the factors which defined racial difference, dividing and uniting various groups, worked primarily to the advantage of whites.

Almaguer writes: "White Californians repeatedly claimed primary access to privileged positions within the system of production and effectively thwarted attempts by the nonwhite population to compete with them on an equal footing...Racial status clearly shaped each group's life chances and served as the primary basis for determining whether one was granted access to different strata within the new class structure." (p.14)

In *Racial Fault Lines*, Tomas Almaguer presents a challenging portrait of late nineteenth-century California and provides a challenge to common sense ways of thinking about race and race relations. Almaguer successfully incorporates a range of archival materials—from popular folk songs of the 1840s to media coverage of the 1903 Japanese-Mexican Labor Alliance trial—and covers an impressive scope of historical and geographical territory, including an examination of Ventura County and documentation of military campaigns against the California Indians. He analyzes a wide range of factors which continue to contribute to the system of racial inequality we are faced with today, not only in California but in the US as a whole.

Using models for analyzing race relations borrowed from authors such as Michael Omi and Ronald Takaki, Almaguer demonstrates that each racialized group's specific relationship to the dominant white population was the result of a unique combination of cultural, economic, and political factors. Almaguer focuses on California's Mexican, Native American, Chinese and

Japanese populations to show that race relations were subject to change over time and circumstance. His research often reveals unexpected twists in how race affected people's social and political status.

As an example, Almaguer writes that: "Although Mexicans were legally accorded the same rights as free white persons, actual extension of these privileges to all segments of this population was quite another matter...They were often denied their legal rights by being categorized as Indians." (p.57)

While Almaguer is adept at differing between California's varied ethnic populations, he is also careful to note similarities. For while each racial or ethnic group occupied a different position, they shared a common subordination to the dominating white population.

Almaguer is also attentive to the role that culture and social distance played in determining the shape of nineteenth-century California race relations. In a discussion of kinship and miscegenation taboos, Almaguer writes: "Unlike blacks, Indians, or Asians, Mexicans were the only ethnic population that Anglos deemed worthy to formally marry...These marriages [between white men and upper-class Mexican women] provided strategic access to land held by the old [Ranchero] elite." (p.59) In pointing out these kinds of relationships, the book calls attention to the ways in which race pervades every level of social interaction. It also demonstrates a direct link between attitudes towards intermarriage and economic systems.

*Racial Fault Lines* presents new ways of looking at race in general and at California in particular. It fills in crucial missing pieces of the puzzle of historical and contemporary race relations. The information contained in often-erased histories of communities of color is key to understanding and solving problems of the current period, in which race remains the primary defining element of US politics, economics, and culture.

As an effort to elaborate an emerging model of how race works, *Racial Fault Lines* shows that there is possibility for changing existing patterns of racism by demonstrating racial hierarchies

are not historically fixed, but instead shift according to different circumstances. Although Almaguer's text is often dense and dry and is clearly written for an academic audience, these limitations do not lessen the importance of his book as an important contribution to an understanding of race relations today.

—Homay King

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## Eye Lashes

"But following the turn of the 20th century, Communism (the Judeo-Bolsheviks of Russia) and other diabolical movements and philosophies—Fabian socialism, materialism, atheism, and secular humanism—would, like malignant parasites, establish themselves in America. Even our presidents, beginning with Franklin Roosevelt, would begin using the resources of this nation to finance and support our foreign enemies, particularly the Communist and Zionist movements."

—The Militia News, Collector's Edition 94

### LIMERICK

Xenophobia, the venomous adder.  
Old immigrants pull up the ladder.  
Selfish fear and division,  
Scapegoating derision.  
Lady Liberty couldn't be sadder.

## THE PUBLIC EYE Resources

American Friends Service Committee's Immigration Law Enforcement Monitoring Project is a great source for material that examines the multiple and complex effects of specific border policies. To obtain copies of reports write to ILEMP/AFSC 3522 Polk, Houston, TX 77003.

Derechos Humanos para los Inmigrantes/Immigrant Rights and Wrongs is an excellent organizing manual that provides both analysis and strategies for challenging immigrant scapegoating. Although written in response to California's Proposition 187, the lessons are applicable on a national as well as global level. Copies are available for \$5 from Labor/Community Strategy Center, The Wiltern Center, 3780 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 1200, Los Angeles, CA 90010. Tel. (213) 387-2800.

Human Rights Watch/Americas has issued a report on the abuses along the US border with Mexico committed by the Border Patrol (the enforcement division of the Immigration and Naturalization Services). The report is available for \$5.00 from Human Rights Watch, Publications Department, 485 Fifth Avenue, NY, NY 10017-6104.

*Immigrants and Taxes: A Reappraisal of Huddle's "The Cost of Immigrants"* by Jeffrey S. Passel is a statistics-packed rebuttal to Donald Huddle's much touted report. Also of note are the reports from the Program for Research on Immigration Policy. To obtain a complete list of their

materials, write to Publications Office, The Urban Institute, PO Box 7273, Dept. C, Washington, DC 20044. Tel.: (202) 857-8687.

The Interhemispheric Education Resource Center has a number of publications dealing with North/South issues, most of which relate to immigration issues. For more info, write IERC, PO Box 4506, Albuquerque, NM, 87196. Tel.: (505) 842-8288

*Issues Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 3, published by the National Council for Research on Women, focuses their third edition on immigration. Well organized and thorough, the issue contains interviews with researchers, policy specialists, funders and practitioners, as well as listings of key sources and organizations. To obtain a copy, write: The NCRW, 530 Broadway at Spring Street, 10th Floor, NY, NY 10012-3920

The National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild has a number of projects including: the Central American Refugee Defense Fund, the Visa Denial Project, commissions that address a variety of specific issues, plus the quarterly *Immigration Newsletter*. National Immigration Project, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108. Tel.: (617) 227-9727.

The March/April 1995 issue of *Poverty and Race* focusses on immigration. Of particular interest are Tactaquin's piece

"An International Perspective on Migration" and an article by Ong and Valenzuela on the thorny issue of jobs competition between immigrants and Blacks. To obtain a copy of this issue or to subscribe to this consistently excellent newsletter write to Poverty & Race Research Action Council, 1711 Connecticut Ave. NW #207, Washington, DC, 20009, or call: (202) 387-9887.

*RACEFILE*, the bi-monthly magazine of the Applied Research Center, is an invaluable source for news articles on racial issues that are culled from the press and informed by ARC's rigorous analysis. Several issues have had anti-immigrant attacks as their focus and virtually all issues contain something on it. For more information contact: The Applied Research Center, 25 Embarcadero Cove, Oakland, CA 94606.

Michael Novick has written an excellent analysis of organizing strategies used by pro-immigrant activists in California in the November/December 1994 issue of *ThirdForce*. For more information contact: The Center for Third World Organizing, 1218 East 21st Street, Oakland, CA 94606. Tel.: (510) 533-7583.

Look for a forthcoming report on immigration by Demetrios Papademetriou of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. To inquire call C.E.I.P (202) 862-7900.

# The Public Eye

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