

A Manifesto: In Defense of 'Current Americans'

by John Patrick Zmirak

In a recent press conference, William Bennett (speaking, no doubt, for his overworked ghost writer) condemned Pat Buchanan and people who share his beliefs about immigration as "dirty, rotten" and "ungrateful." Now, it is one thing to argue the economic merits of immigration policy, citing evidence — such as Messrs. Bennett, Kemp, Wallop and Abraham did recently in *The Wall Street Journal* (Feb. 29, 1996, "A Manifesto for Immigration"). That is how conservatives fight for their beliefs. It is quite another matter for Bennett and his allies to employ McCarthyite tactics — wielding innuendo, code-words, and guilt by association — to blacken the moral reputations of those who oppose their policy preferences. That is how conservatives fight.

I wish to address head-on the central claim of neoconservative anti-nationalists: the notion that it is morally wrong for Euro-Americans to oppose immigration flows for racial, ethnic, cultural or religious reasons. (Neoconservatives do not voice any objections to Japanese who wish to maintain an Asian major-

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ity in Japan, or Jamaicans who wish to retain black rule on their island — or indeed, to Mexicans who resist Guatemalan, Cuban and Honduran immigration using tactics that would land an American INS officer in prison along with Stacey Koons and James Earl Ray.) This demographic question — not the integrity of the welfare system, or labor competition, or environmental damage — is the real issue at the heart of the immigration debate.

To Establish the Facts

First, Euro-Americans will be a minority in this country by the middle of the next century, solely because of immigration. African-Americans will remain a minority, but will decline from the single most important minority — with special moral, historical claims on the government — to one group among many minorities, all clamoring for recognition.

Second, no other group will take the place of whites as a dominant majority. There will be no dominant majority, but rather a vast parliament of ethnicities at wildly different degrees of assimilation, English-language fluency, education and skills. Certainly, given the continuation of current family-reunification policies, most of these immigrants will come from impoverished nations

with high birth rates and low educational levels. We will have imported tens of millions of people from a hundred nations, all to compete for the very low-skill jobs that even now are disappearing, leaving undereducated natives jobless. In the absence of a majority culture, assimilation will become harder and more incomplete; to what culture should newcomers assimilate? Internet? Virtual reality? Disney Español?

Third, both Euro-Americans and African-Americans will see their political influence, cultural power, and economic well-being suffer, as other groups from political blocs discriminate in their own favor and establish policies suited to their own cultural traditions and preferences. Imagine the current tensions between blacks and Koreans in Los Angeles, or between Anglos and Cubans in Miami, multiplied by dozens of new ethnicities in nearly every American city. The two historically central groups, black and white, who by their sheer numbers have shed most of the blood and done most of the hard work that built this country, will find themselves dispossessed of the cultural benefits their ancestors earned. These centered around the English language, British liberties, and the whole complex of Anglo-American political culture, to which African-Americans are also rightful heirs. The immigrants —

simply by arriving and not by any ill-will or intrinsic inferiority, but simply because of their vast numbers and great variety — will deprive Euro- and African-Americans of many important civic goods. Also injured will be Latino- and Asian-Americans who are already here and have successfully assimilated to the current Anglo culture.

Looking at the Next America

Perhaps the dispossessed groups will find the new America exciting and cosmopolitan. Historical experience — that of the Celts in Britain, the Cherokees in Georgia, the Tutsis in Rwanda, the Aborigines in Australia — suggest otherwise. The story of marginalized majorities is nowhere a happy one. Even neo-conservatives such as Dinesh D'Souza recognize the problems implied by racial fragmentation, and recommend the unlikely solution of large-scale intermarriage. We must destroy the races in order to save them, it seems.

In this bright, future, neoconservative New Inner City on a Hill, who will enjoy cultural dominance? Overall, no one, since there will not be a majority culture in the projected polyglot United States. But within the increasingly fragmented society that survives this permanent cultural revolution there will be local elites centered around ethnicity who will squabble with neighboring elites, impose their ways on local minorities, and in general act in accordance with flawed human nature. And any study of human nature (we paleoconservatives refer to this

study as "history" and recommend it highly to neoconservatives) suggests that ethnic groups in a single polity strive always and everywhere to dominate other ethnic groups, a struggle which only abates when there is a clear, unquestioned majority — and which re-ignites when that group wanes. Thus the growing Catholic minority in Northern Ireland, the burgeoning Palestinian minority in Israeli territory, the new Albanian majority in Kosovo — each becomes truly problematic as it grows in numbers and challenges the status quo. We will learn anew this lesson on a continental scale.

"Those of us of any race who are here legally [can] assert our right to close our borders for the sake of ...a functional nation."

To recognize this law of human nature is not to assert the superiority of one's own group according to some objective, Enlightenment scale of human value. Why resort to such nonsense? Throw out the I.Q. tests and the phrenology charts onto the same ash heap as the Afrocentric history texts and Bennett's *The Book of Virtues*. We current Americans, those of us of every race who are here legally, have no need of such dishonest or irrelevant ideological constructs to assert our right to

close our borders for the sake of maintaining a functional nation. It is our prerogative and we choose to exercise it. Period.

Similarly, those Euro- and African Americans who fought to close the borders from 1921-1924 were well within their rights, even if some of them used impolite rhetoric. They and their ancestors had fought to build America, and owned a vital stake in it. My grandfather, Patric Zmirak, and his ancestors had fought to build Habsburg Croatia, and had a vital stake in that. By choosing in 1916 to leave the land on which he had a moral claim, and asking to enter a country *on which he had absolutely none*, Grandpa Zmirak was asking the heirs of Thomas Jefferson and Frederick Douglass for a favor. It was within their rights to refuse. I am grateful that they did not.

But they did have to draw a line, to weigh the advantages of cheap immigrant labor against the dangers of political extremism and ethnic separatism posed by massive numbers of poor Southern Europeans with no experience of democracy or liberty, and perhaps at some point to close the borders. I am grateful that they did.

I would show little gratitude now if I took the fact of my immigrant heritage as warrant for wantonly destroying the very country that was kind enough to allow my grandfather to share its bounty; subjecting the children of those welcoming citizens, and mine, (and Dinesh D'Souza's) to the fate of the Lebanese Maronites, the Welsh, the Bosnians, the Zulus and the Afrikaners. □

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

in the popular mind when Fairchild wrote. Fairchild presented 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

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

formed something that 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