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Niall Ferguson, Vladimir Putin, E.O. Wilson, Thaddeus Stevens

THE NEW IMMIGRANTS

THE IMAGES of today's poor, hardworking illegal immigrants (Ashley Pettus, "End of the Melting Pot?" May-June, page 44) excite our natural sympathies and are poignant reminders of earlier periods of immigration. However, absorbing large numbers of the poor and little-educated into our society today is much more burdensome and disruptive than it was in our country's past, when our public benefits were much smaller, the standard of living and average education of our citizens was much lower, and most jobs required unskilled labor.

To the extent that there are public policy reasons for immigration, it would be of greater benefit to existing American citizens to select more educated and skilled immigrants as needed. They would add much more to the economic output of the country, pay much more in taxes, and use public services to a much smaller degree than our typical illegal immigrants. The more educated and skilled would also assimilate more easily, on the average.

If we do not stop their entry, our poor illegal immigrants can only greatly increase in number, so powerful are the incentives to come here. It is contradictory and nonsensical policy to make great and very costly efforts to eradicate poverty in this country and import much more poverty at the same time.

PETER A. SCHULKIN, Ph.D. '70
Cambria, Calif.

YOUR ARTICLE reflects the standard East Coast bias, mixing legal immigrants with illegal criminal aliens. Every minute that an illegal alien is in the United States, he or she is stealing something—jobs, property, lives, food, welfare aid. To call an illegal



alien an undocumented worker is like calling a drug dealer an unlicensed pharmacist.

If you live near the border, as I do (and not in Cambridge limo-land), you can see the theft and destruction caused daily by the millions of illegal criminal aliens. We need to build a wall along the southern border and shut down the influx of illegals, and then prevent sleazy employers from giving jobs to illegals.

PARK WEAVER, M.B.A. '60
La Mesa, Calif.

THIS ARTICLE is really pretty appalling. It presents largely the anti-immigrant view, relegating the overwhelming majority view among scholars to a few paragraphs at the end. In fact, literally thousands of studies have shown that the "new immigrants" assimilate faster than the old ones and rise about as fast. More irritating are the photographs accompanying the article. I could probably find, with heavy searching, conditions like those shown for Mexican immigrants, but it would take work. I could much

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MAGAZINE

more easily find Mexican immigrants in large, beautiful, well-kept suburban houses. I could fairly easily find mansions.

I taught for 40 years at an overwhelmingly immigrant school. Almost all my students at University of California, Riverside, were first- or second-generation immigrants. They could almost never speak their heritage languages, and were immersed in southern California kid culture. On average, they outperformed the multigenerational-American students. More than 95 percent of Californian East Asian second-generation immigrants get to college sooner or later. The figure is lower for Hispanics, but is rapidly closing on white Anglo figures.

This bit of racist propaganda (I refer especially to the photographs) is too unsavory to let stand. You owe your readers an apology.

E.N. ANDERSON '62
Lake Forest Park, Wash.

POLITICIANS, academics, and generals wishing to camouflage problems frequently gussy them up and call them "challenges." The subtitle of your article, "The new wave of immigrants presents new challenges," is a case in point.

A Google search using "immigrants challenges" returns 1,190,000 hits. This strongly suggests that a million "challenges" have become a giant problem facing this country. Certainly the accompanying pictures suggest we have a population explosion in the making.

Perhaps when *Harvard Magazine* does its

PRIZE PIECES

CASE, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, conferred a silver medal in its alumni magazine "Best Articles of the Year" competition on deputy editor Craig Lambert's March-April 2006 cover story on behavioral economics. Leddecky Undergraduate Fellow John A. La Rue '07 won a bronze medal for his January-February 2006 column on the College's dorm crew—unprecedented recognition for a student writer. And contributor Debra B. Ruder won the American Medical Writers Association 2007 Martin Award for writing for lay audiences for her January-February 2006 feature, "Life Lessons." We salute this talented trio.

~The Editors

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requisite issue on the greening of America, it can explain how the nation can make strides toward sustainability as we balloon to the one billion people the Census Bureau projects by the end of this century.

TIM AARONSON
El Cerrito, Calif.

HISTORIAN OF EMPIRE

EXCELLENT ARTICLE (“The Global Empire of Niall Ferguson,” by Janet Tassel, May-June, page 33). Very useful. American politicians and their advisors, regardless of party, should read it and won’t—a pity. National attention deficit disorder is truly our greatest liability and will be our downfall. Without a doubt.

ROBERT SPRINKEL, M.B.A. ’59
President, Leaders for Liberty Institute
Sacramento, Calif.

THE IMPORTANT question is what kind of world order is now optimal and achievable. The answer is more likely to come from the social and behavioral sciences than from history. Historians are overly concerned with defending or attacking past human actions. My concern—developed as an army officer in World War II, in postwar military government, and in a half-century in book publishing—is with building a better social order worldwide.

JOHN M. PICKERING, M.B.A. ’43
Albuquerque, N.M.

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER JR.

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER and my husband, Tom Campion, were two of the few Democrats in the class of 1938. At their fifth reunion, Arthur gave a talk in praise of FDR. Some classmates even booed. The cool historian remained unfazed.

At their fifty-fifth reunion, Arthur began his talk by saying, “Before we all depart for that great library in the sky....” I like to think the learned, witty star of Harvard ’38 is enjoying his new library card.

NARDI REEDER CAMPION
Lebanon, N.H.

RUSSIAN—AND U.S.—INSTINCTS

PROFESSOR TIMOTHY COLTON (“The Enigmatic Mr. Putin,” May-June, page 40) provides a very perceptive and excellent review of Russia and Putin. The significant final sentence is: “We will have a modest chance to influence Russia’s developmental choices, if this time around we can imagine a place for it in the global

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“For me, giving back
is primary, and the
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- Michael Cooper AB '57,
LLB '60



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community in which its worst instincts are restrained and its best instincts are encouraged.” To this I would like to add three words: “and our own.”

J. RICHARD WARBASSE, M.D. '54
Westover, Md.

IT'S CIVILIANS WHO CHOOSE

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that a drawing of a U.S. Army officer with hawk and dove accompanied Harbour Fraser Hodder's otherwise informative “Willing to War” (May-June, page 15). Unless I missed the coup d'état, in the United States democratically elected *civilian* leaders make the decisions to take our nation to war. *Civilian* leaders also generally lead high-level negotiations on behalf of our country. When will this misconception end that suggests that America's military chooses America's wars?

RALPH L. ERICKSON, M.D., M.P.H. '89
Columbia, Md.

SANGER DIDN'T SAY THAT

IN YOUR EXCERPT, “An Earlier Bid for Mastery,” of a book by Michael J. Sandel (May-June, page 25), Sandel quotes my grandmother, Margaret Sanger, as saying, “More children from the fit, less from the unfit—that is the chief issue of birth control.” My grandmother never said this. The quote comes from a 1919 editorial in *Amer-*

ican Medicine that followed an article by my grandmother. This quotation has been falsely attributed to Margaret Sanger for decades. One would have thought that Bass professor of government Sandel and your editors would have checked the original source material. Is that what they supposedly teach at Harvard?

ALEXANDER SANGER
Chair, International Planned Parenthood Council
New York City

RELIGION REQUIRED?

IT IS REMARKABLE that scientists such as E.O. Wilson, who have spent their professional lives devoted to a respect for truth, are able to set aside this devotion when they express themselves outside their areas of expertise. According to Sarah Coakley (“Twin Passions,” May-June, page 22), Wilson believes that only “religious wonder” or “spiritual rhetoric” will make possible the mobilization of humanity to support the environment.

If this means anything, it means that only religious people, where “religious” suggests adherence to existing religions, will be able to lead the world to environmental salvation. This belief runs counter to the fact that the most religious countries in the developed world, such as the United States, have not been leaders in the awakening of society to environmental dangers. For example, in a recent Yale study of environmental performance, New Zealand was ranked first, followed by Sweden, Finland, the Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom. This “[clearly reflected] the seriousness with which each of these countries' governments takes environmental policy.” The United States ranked twenty-eighth.

I could agree that materialism alone is unlikely to inspire unselfish, forward-looking behavior. Thus, employing revised definitions, it might be possible to show that environmentalism does require a spiritual revival. But if so, this revival will have little connection with what is commonly meant by “religious.”

RAYMOND D. GASTIL '53, Ph.D. '58
Deep River, Conn.

POWERFUL SEMINARS

I WAS SO PLEASED to read about the resurgence of the Freshman Seminars program (“Harvard by the Numbers,” May-June, page 59). In the fall of 1972, I was lucky enough to enroll in Visual and

Environmental Studies professor Albert Alcalay's “Art, Animation, and Architecture of the 20th Century,” and that experience completely changed my Harvard trajectory. Alcalay was a great, huge-hearted character: an expressive Holocaust survivor, a reputable “action painter,” and an inspiring mentor to his eager band of perspiring freshmen and women. His energy and inspiration convinced me to be a visual studies concentrator, even though I had come to Harvard intending to major in music.

I salute the Freshman Seminar program and hope it continues to provide unexpected perspectives to freshmen.

ROBERT KRAFT '76
President, Fox Music
Beverly Hills

SPEAKING ILL OF THE DEAD

CAN YOU DETERMINE the source of the otherwise presumably apocryphal quote in Castle Freeman's “Vita” on Wendell Phillips (May-June, page 38), in which Freeman mentions “one elderly Beacon Hill gentleman” as the fount of the acerbic observation that “he did not plan to attend the funeral of Wendell Phillips [but] wished it known that he approved of it.”

I fear this is a common observation whose source is a wisp in the mists of history. It is redolent of the staple witticism, as might be asked of an alumnus after a Harvard loss, “What did you think of the team's execution?” and the response, “I'm in favor of it.”

More interesting is the following statement made at the death of the yet fiercer abolitionist (and Dartmouth graduate) Thaddeus Stevens. Stevens was the House manager of Andrew Johnson's impeachment trial and the author or coauthor of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. In many ways, Stevens was Phillips's public analogue. The following statement of his college roommate reveals, among much else,

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ERRATA

THE EDITORS are grateful to readers for pointing out these reporting errors in the May-June issue. Bovine growth hormone (“Modern Milk,” page 11) is not fed to cows but “is given by subcutaneous injection at biweekly intervals,” Robert J. Collier writes. Rupert Pole's cabin, where he lived with Anaïs Nin (“The College Pump,” page 80), was not in the Sierra Madres, Jerome M. Garchik, J.D. '70, observes. It was in Sierra Madre, a town north of Pasadena in the San Gabriel mountains. Arthur D. Levin '54, M.B.A. '60, notes that Frances D. Fergusson, Ph.D. '73, received her undergraduate degree in 1965 from Wellesley, not Harvard. Jean Higgins writes that a sidebar on ice hockey on page 73 refers to the “Patty Kazmeier Award,” but the correct spelling is “Kazmaier.” In “Keeping the Vibes” (page 63), Milman Parry's first name was given an extra “l.”

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LETTERS

the greatly discordant sensibilities of those who were abolitionists and those who were not. Asked to contribute a brief obituary to be submitted to the college magazine, Joseph Tracy wrote:

"Perhaps I knew him quite as well as any person who was in the College with him...He was then inordinately ambitious, bitterly envious of all who outranked him as scholars, and utterly unprincipled. He showed no uncommon mental power, except in extemporaneous debate....He indulged in no expensive vices, because he could not afford them, and because his ambition so absorbed him, that he had little taste for anything that did not promise to gratify it....It seems proper that the *Dartmouth* should take some notice of him, and that notice should be prepared by some one who never knew him so thoroughly as I have done."

ROGER EVANS, J.D. '77
Dallas

Castle Freeman replies: Mr. Evans is probably right that the tart remark in my closing sentence has something of the "staple witticism" about it; but I confess it wasn't a staple for me. I thought it was a clever sally that perfectly summed up Phillips's ambivalent relationship with his aristocratic milieu, which was an important part of his life. I don't know who is supposed to have said it. I took the line from Irving H. Bartlett's admirable biography, *Wendell Phillips: Brahmin Radical* (Beacon Press, 1961, page 398). Bartlett cites it to Moncure Conway's *Autobiography*, in an edition published in London in 1914.

I must not fail to observe a mistake I made in connection with this same passage. Bartlett says the sardonic gent who commented on Phillips's funeral was "a well known Concord squire." I put him on Beacon Hill. I don't think that slip affects the point; but it ought to be noted. Even today, Beacon Hill is no doubt clever enough without having to import wit from the suburbs.

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