

Chapter 1

A Nation of Nations

ON MAY 11, 1831, ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, A YOUNG French aristocrat, disembarked in the bustling harbor of New York City. He had crossed the ocean to try to understand the implications for European civilization of the new experiment in democracy on the far side of the Atlantic. In the next nine months, Tocqueville and his friend Gustave de Beaumont traveled the length and breadth of the eastern half of the continent—from Boston to Green Bay and from New Orleans to Quebec—in search of the essence of American life.

Tocqueville was fascinated by what he saw. He marveled at the energy of the people who were building the new nation. He admired many of the new political institutions and ideals. And he was impressed most of all by the spirit of equality that pervaded the life and customs of the people. Though he had reservations about some of the expressions of this spirit, he could discern its workings in every aspect of American society—in politics, business, personal relations, culture, thought. This commitment to equality was in striking contrast to the class-ridden society of Europe. Yet Tocqueville believed “the democratic revolution” to be irresistible.

“Balanced between the past and the future,” as he wrote of himself, “with no natural instinctive attraction toward either, I could without effort quietly contemplate each side of the question.” On his return to France, Tocqueville delivered his dispassionate and penetrating judgment of the American experiment in his great work *Democracy in America*. No one, before or since, has written about the United States

with such insight. And, in discussing the successive waves of immigration from England, France, Spain and other European countries, Tocqueville identified a central factor in the American democratic faith:

All these European colonies contained the elements, if not the development, of a complete democracy. Two causes led to this result. It may be said that on leaving the mother country the emigrants had, in general, no notion of superiority one over another. The happy and powerful do not go into exile, and there are no surer guarantees of equality among men than poverty and misfortune.

To show the power of the equalitarian spirit in America, Tocqueville added: “It happened, however, on several occasions, that persons of rank were driven to America by political and religious quarrels. Laws were made to establish a gradation of ranks; but it was soon found that the soil of America was opposed to a territorial aristocracy.”

What Alexis de Tocqueville saw in America was a society of immigrants, each of whom had begun life anew, on an equal footing. This was the secret of America: a nation of people with the fresh memory of old traditions who dared to explore new frontiers, people eager to build lives for themselves in a spacious society that did not restrict their freedom of choice and action.

Since 1607, when the first English settlers reached the New World, over 42 million people have migrated to the United States. This represents the largest migration of people in all recorded history. It is two and a half times the total number of people now living in Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont and Wyoming.

Another way of indicating the importance of immigration to America is to point out that every American who ever lived, with the exception of one group, was either an immigrant himself or a

descendant of immigrants.

The exception? Will Rogers, part Cherokee Indian, said that his ancestors were at the dock to meet the *Mayflower*. And some anthropologists believe that the Indians themselves were immigrants from another continent who displaced the original Americans—the aborigines.

In just over 350 years, a nation of nearly 200 million people has grown up, populated almost entirely by persons who either came from other lands or whose forefathers came from other lands. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt reminded a convention of the Daughters of the American Revolution, “Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists.”

Any great social movement leaves its mark, and the massive migration of peoples to the New World was no exception to this rule. The interaction of disparate cultures, the vehemence of the ideals that

America a flavor and a character that make it as unmistakable and as remarkable to people today as it was to Alexis de Tocqueville in the early part of the nineteenth century. The contribution of immigrants can be seen in every aspect of our national life. We see it in religion, in politics, in business, in the arts, in education, even in athletics and in entertainment. There is no part of our nation that has not been touched by our immigrant background. Everywhere immigrants have enriched and strengthened the fabric of American life. As Walt Whitman said,

*These States are the amplest poem,
Here is not merely a nation but
a teeming Nation of nations.*

To know America, then, it is necessary to understand this peculiarly American social revolution. It is necessary to know why over 42 million people gave up their settled lives to start anew in a strange land. We

must know how they met the new land and how it met them, and, most important, we must know what these things mean for our present and for our future.

Chapter 2

Why They Came

LITTLE IS MORE EXTRAORDINARY THAN THE DECISION to migrate, little more extraordinary than the accumulation of emotions and thoughts which finally leads a family to say farewell to a community where it has lived for centuries, to abandon old ties and familiar landmarks, and to sail across dark seas to a strange land. Today, when mass communications tell one part of the world all about another, it is relatively easy to understand how poverty or tyranny might compel people to exchange an old nation for a new one. But centuries ago migration was a leap into the unknown. It was an enormous intellectual and emotional commitment. The forces that moved our forebears to

their great decision—the decision to leave their homes and begin an adventure filled with incalculable uncertainty, risk and hardship—must have been of overpowering proportions.

Oscar Handlin, in his book *The Uprooted*, describes the experience of the immigrants:

The crossing immediately subjected the emigrant to a succession of shattering shocks and decisively conditioned the life of every man that survived it. This was the initial contact with life as it was to be. For many peasants it was the first time away from home, away from the safety of the circumscribed little villages in which they had passed all their years. Now they would learn to have dealings with people essentially different from themselves. Now they would collide with unaccustomed problems, learn to understand alien ways and alien languages, manage to survive in a grossly foreign environment.

Initially, they had to save up money for passage. Then they had to say good-bye to cherished relatives and friends, whom they could expect never to see again. They started their journey by traveling from their villages to the ports of embarkation. Some walked; the luckier trundled their few possessions into carts which they sold before boarding ship. Some paused along the road to work in the fields in order to eat. Before they even reached the ports of embarkation, they were subject to illness, accidents, storm and snow, even to attacks by outlaws.

After arriving at the ports, they often had to wait days, weeks, sometimes months, while they bargained with captains or agents for passage. Meanwhile, they crowded into cheap lodging houses near the quays, sleeping on straw in small, dark rooms, sometimes as many as forty in a room twelve by fifteen feet.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century the immigrants traveled in sailing vessels. The average trip from Liverpool to New York took forty days; but any estimate of time was hazardous, for the ship was

subject to winds, tides, primitive navigation, unskilled seamanship and the whim of the captain. A good size for the tiny craft of those days was three hundred tons, and each one was crowded with anywhere from four hundred to a thousand passengers.

For the immigrants, their shipboard world was the steerage, that confined space below deck, usually about seventy-five feet long and twenty-five feet wide. In many vessels no one over five and a half feet tall could stand upright. Here they lived their days and nights, receiving their daily ration of vinegar-flavored water and trying to eke out sustenance from whatever provisions they had brought along. When their food ran out, they were often at the mercy of extortionate captains.

They huddled in their hard, cramped bunks, freezing when the hatches were open, stifling when they were closed. The only light came from a dim, swaying lantern. Night and day were indistinguishable. But they were ever aware of the treacherous winds and waves, the scampering of rats and the splash of burials. Diseases—cholera, yellow

fever, smallpox and dysentery—took their toll. One in ten failed to survive the crossing.

Eventually the journey came to an end. The travelers saw the coast of America with mixed feelings of relief, excitement, trepidation and anxiety. For now, uprooted from old patterns of life, they found themselves, in Handlin's phrase, "in a prolonged state of crisis—crisis in the sense that they were, and remained, unsettled." They reached the new land exhausted by lack of rest, bad food, confinement and the strain of adjustment to new conditions. But they could not pause to recover their strength. They had no reserves of food or money; they had to keep moving until they found work. This meant new strains at a time when their capacity to cope with new problems had already been overburdened.

There were probably as many reasons for coming to America as there were people who came. It was a highly individual decision. Yet it can be said that three large forces—religious persecution, political

oppression and economic hardship—provided the chief motives for the mass migrations to our shores. They were responding, in their own way, to the pledge of the Declaration of Independence: the promise of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

The search for freedom of worship has brought people to America from the days of the Pilgrims to modern times. In our own day, for example, anti-Semitic and anti-Christian persecution in Hitler’s Germany and the Communist empire have driven people from their homes to seek refuge in America. Not all found what they sought immediately. The Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, who drove Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson into the wilderness, showed as little tolerance for dissenting beliefs as the Anglicans of England had shown to them. Minority religious sects, from the Quakers and Shakers through the Catholics and Jews to the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses, have at various times suffered both discrimination and hostility in the United States.

But the very diversity of religious belief has made for religious toleration. In demanding freedom for itself, each sect had increasingly to permit freedom for others. The insistence of each successive wave of immigrants upon its right to practice its religion helped make freedom of worship a central part of the American creed. People who gambled their lives on the right to believe in their own God would not lightly surrender that right in a new society.

The second great force behind immigration has been political oppression. America has always been a refuge from tyranny. As a nation conceived in liberty, it has held out to the world the promise of respect for the rights of man. Every time a revolution has failed in Europe, every time a nation has succumbed to tyranny, men and women who love freedom have assembled their families and their belongings and set sail across the seas. Nor has this process come to an end in our own day. The Russian Revolution, the terrors of Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy, the Communist suppression of the Hungarian

Revolution of 1956, and the cruel measures of the Castro regime in Cuba—all have brought new thousands seeking sanctuary in the United States.

The economic factor has been more complex than the religious and political factors. From the very beginning, some have come to America in search of riches, some in flight from poverty and some because they were bought and sold and had no choice.

And the various reasons have intertwined. Thus some early arrivals were lured to these shores by dreams of amassing great wealth, like the Spanish conquistadors in Mexico and Peru. These adventurers, expecting quick profits in gold, soon found that real wealth lay in such crops as tobacco and cotton. As they built up the plantation economy in states like Virginia and the Carolinas, they needed cheap labor. So they began to import indentured servants from England, men and women who agreed to labor a term of years in exchange for eventual freedom, and slaves from Africa.

The process of industrialization in America increased the demand for cheap labor, and chaotic economic conditions in Europe increased the supply. If some immigrants continued to believe that the streets of New York were paved with gold, more were driven by the hunger and hardship of their native lands. The Irish Potato Famine of 1845 brought almost a million people to America in five years. American manufacturers advertised in European newspapers, offering to pay the passage of any man willing to come to America to work for them.

The immigrants who came for economic reasons contributed to the strength of the new society in several ways. Those who came from countries with advanced political and economic institutions brought with them faith in those institutions and experience in making them work. They also brought technical and managerial skills which contributed greatly to economic growth in the new land. Above all, they helped give America the extraordinary social mobility which is the essence of an open society.

In the community he had left, the immigrant usually had a fixed place. He would carry on his father's craft or trade; he would farm his father's land, or that small portion of it that was left to him after it was divided with his brothers. Only with the most exceptional talent and enterprise could he break out of the mold in which life had cast him. There was no such mold for him in the New World. Once having broken with the past, except for sentimental ties and cultural inheritance, he had to rely on his own abilities. It was the future and not the past to which he was compelled to address himself. Except for the Negro slave, he could go anywhere and do anything his talents permitted. A sprawling continent lay before him, and he had only to weld it together by canals, by railroads and by roads. If he failed to achieve the dream for himself, he could still retain it for his children.

This has been the foundation of American inventiveness and ingenuity, of the multiplicity of new enterprises, and of the success in achieving the highest standard of living anywhere in the world.

These were the major forces that triggered this massive migration. Every immigrant served to reinforce and strengthen those elements in American society that had attracted him in the first place. The motives of some were commonplace. The motives of others were noble. Taken together they add up to the strengths and weaknesses of America.

The wisest Americans have always understood the significance of the immigrant. Among the “long train of abuses and usurpations” that impelled the framers of the Declaration of Independence to the fateful step of separation was the charge that the British monarch had restricted immigration: “He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that reason obstructing the Laws for the Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.”

Chapter 2 Why They Came

Other Immigrant Groups

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, emigration to America underwent a significant change. Large numbers of Italians, Russians, Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Austrians and Greeks began to arrive. Their coming created new problems and gave rise to new tensions.

For these people the language barrier was even greater than it had been for earlier groups, and the gap between the world they had left behind and the one to which they came was wider. For the most part, these were people of the land and, for the most part, too, they were forced to settle in the cities when they reached America. Most large cities had well-defined “Little Italys” or “Little Polands” by 1910. In the 1960 census, New York City had more people of Italian birth or parentage than did Rome.

The history of cities shows that when conditions become overcrowded, when people are poor and when living conditions are bad, tensions run high. This is a situation that feeds on itself; poverty and crime in one group breed fear and hostility in others. This, in turn, impedes the acceptance and progress of the first group, thus prolonging its depressed condition. This was the dismal situation that faced many of the Southern and Eastern European immigrants just as it had faced some of the earlier waves of immigrants. One New York newspaper had these intemperate words for the newly arrived Italians; “The flood gates are open. The bars are down. The sally-ports are unguarded. The dam is washed away. The sewer is choked . . . the scum of immigration is viscerating upon our shores. The horde of \$9.60 steerage slime is being siphoned upon us from Continental mud tanks.”

Italy has contributed more immigrants to the United States than any country except Germany. Over five million Italians came to this country between 1820 and 1963. Large-scale immigration began in 1880, and almost four million Italian immigrants arrived in the present century.

The first Italians were farmers and artisans from northern Italy. Some planted vineyards in Vineland, New Jersey, in the Finger Lakes region of New York State and in California, where they inaugurated our domestic wine industry. Others settled on the periphery of cities, where they started truck gardens.

But most Italians were peasants from the south. They came because of neither religious persecution nor political repression, but simply in search of a brighter future. Population in Italy was straining the limits of the country's resources and more and more people had to eke out a living from small plots of land, held in many instances by oppressive landlords.

In many ways the experience of the later Italian immigrants parallels the story of the Irish. Mostly farmers, their lack of financial resources kept them from reaching the rural areas of the United States. Instead, they crowded into cities along the Eastern seaboard, often segregating themselves by province, even by village, in a density as high as four thousand to the city block.

Untrained in special skills and unfamiliar with the language, they had to rely on unskilled labor jobs to earn a living. Italians thus filled the gap left by earlier immigrant groups who had now moved up the economic ladder. As bricklayers, masons, stonecutters, ditchdiggers and hod carriers, they helped build our cities, subways and skyscrapers. They worked on the railroads and the dams, went into the coal mines, iron mines and factories. Some found a place in urban life as small storekeepers, peddlers, shoemakers, barbers and tailors. Wages were small and families were large. In the old country everyone worked. Here everyone worked too. Wives went into the needle trades. Boys picked up

what pennies they could as news vendors, bootblacks and errand-runners. Through these difficult years of poverty, toil and bewilderment, the Italians were bolstered by their adherence to the church, the strength of their family ties, Italian-language newspapers and their fraternal orders. But they overcame obstacles of prejudice and misunderstanding quickly, and they have found places of importance in almost every phase of American life. Citizens of Italian descent are among our leading bankers, contractors, food importers, educators, labor leaders and government officials. Italians have made special contributions to the emergence of American culture, enriching our music, art and architecture.

An Italian, Filippo Traetta (Philip Trajetta), founded the American Conservatory in Boston in 1800, and another in Philadelphia shortly thereafter. Another Italian, Lorenzo da Ponte, brought the first Italian opera troupe to New York in 1832, where it developed into a permanent institution. Italians have founded and supported the opera as an

institution in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and other large cities, providing from their ranks many impresarios and singers. Italian-born music teachers and bandmasters are numerous. Arturo Toscanini, for many years leader of the New York Philharmonic, and our most distinguished conductor of recent years, was Italian-born.

Italians have also been among our most prominent sculptors, architects and artists. A West Indian and a Frenchman designed our nation's Capitol. An Italian beautified it. Constantino Brumidi painted the historical frieze in the rotunda of the Capitol building. Other Italian painters and sculptors depicted our history in paintings, murals, friezes and statues. Historical monuments and statues up and down the country have been wrought by Italian-American sculptors. On a humbler scale, the taste and skill of Italian-American landscape gardeners and architects have placed our homes and communities in beautiful settings.

About the time the Italians began coming, other great tides of immigration from the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe also began arriving in the United States. In the years between 1820 and 1963 these areas, Italy included, sent over fifteen million immigrants to our shores.

They came for all manner of reasons: political upheavals, religious persecution, hopes for economic betterment. They comprised a wide ethnic variety, from Lithuanians and Latvians on the Baltic to Greeks, Turks and Armenians on the eastern Mediterranean. They brought with them a bewildering variety of language, dress, custom, ideology and religious belief. To many Americans already here who had grown accustomed to a common way of life, they presented a dismaying bedlam, difficult to understand and more difficult to respond to. Indeed, because of the many changes in national boundaries and prior migrations of races within that area of Europe, there is no way of accurately reporting on them statistically.

The largest number from any of these countries of Eastern Europe were Poles, who for 125 years had been under the domination of Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary. Some followed the pattern of the Germans and Scandinavians, settling on individual farms or forming small rural communities which still bear Polish place names. But most gravitated to the cities. Four-fifths were Roman Catholic. Longer than most immigrant groups they kept their language, their customs and their dances. At first, like other immigrants, they lived under substandard conditions. Gradually they, too, improved their status. They aspired to own their own homes and their own plots of land. In Hamtramck, Michigan, an almost wholly Polish community, three-quarters of the residents own their own homes.

By 1963, almost 130,000 Czechs had migrated to this country. They tended to gravitate to the farming communities. It is one of these homesteads that is portrayed by novelist Willa Cather in *My Antonia*. They also formed enclaves in cities, principally in Chicago, Cleveland

and New York.

A potent force in the development of Czech life in this country has been the *Sokol*, a traditional cultural, social and gymnastic society. These societies stressed high standards of physical fitness and an interest in singing, music and literature.

The immigrants from Old Russia are estimated at almost three and a half million. Most of this wave of immigration went into the mines and factories. However, there were also many Russian intellectuals, scientists, scholars, musicians, writers and artists, who came here usually during periods of political oppression.

Most students of the history of immigration to America make special mention of the Jews. Although they appeared as part of several of the waves of immigration, they warrant separate discussion because of their religion, culture and historical background.

In colonial times most Jews in America were of Spanish-Portuguese origin. Throughout the nineteenth century most came from Germany.

Beginning at the end of the nineteenth century they began to come in large numbers from Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary, Rumania and, in smaller numbers, from almost every European nation. The American Jewish population today numbers approximately six million.

The Jews who came during the early nineteenth century were often peddlers, wandering throughout the land with their packs and their carts or settling down to open small stores. They prospered in this era of opportunity and expansion, for from these humble beginnings have grown many of our large department stores and mercantile establishments.

The exodus from Germany after 1848 brought Jewish intellectuals, philosophers, educators, political leaders and social reformers. These shared much the same experiences as the other immigrants. "Like the Scandinavian Lutherans and the Irish Catholics," says Oscar Handlin, "they appeared merely to maintain their distinctive heritage while sharing the rights and obligations of other Americans within a free

society.”

At the turn of the century the Jews fleeing persecution in Russia came in such numbers that they could not be so readily absorbed into the mainstream of life as the earlier comers. They clustered in Jewish communities within the large cities, like New York.

Like the Irish and the Italians before them, they had to work at whatever they could find. Most found an outlet for their skills in the needle trades, as garment workers, hatmakers and furriers. Often they worked in sweatshops. In an effort to improve working conditions (which involved child labor and other forms of exploitation), they joined with other immigrant workers to form, in 1900, the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. In time, they developed the clothing industry as we know it today, centered in New York but reaching into every small town and rural area. The experience and tradition of these pioneers produced many effective leaders in the labor movement, such as Morris Hillquit, Sidney Hillman, Jacob Potofsky and David

Dubinsky.

Jewish immigrants have also made immense contributions to thought: as scholars, as educators, as scientists, as judges and lawyers, as journalists, as literary figures. Refugee scientists such as Albert Einstein and Edward Teller brought great scientific knowledge to this country.

Immigration from the Orient in the latter part of the nineteenth century was confined chiefly to California and the West Coast. Our behavior toward these groups of newcomers represented a shameful episode in our relationships to those seeking the hospitality of our shores. They were often mobbed and stoned by native Americans. The Chinese suffered and were barred from our shores as far back as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor many Japanese-Americans were victimized by prejudice and unreasoning discrimination. They were arbitrarily shipped to relocation camps. It took the extraordinary battlefield accomplishments of the

nisei, Americans of Japanese descent, fighting in the U.S. Army in Europe, to help restore our perspective. While our attitude toward these citizens has been greatly improved over the years, many inequities in the law regarding Oriental immigration must still be redressed.

Today many of our newcomers are from Mexico and Puerto Rico. We sometimes forget that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth and therefore cannot be considered immigrants. Nonetheless, they often receive the same discriminatory treatment and opprobrium that were faced by other waves of newcomers. The same things are said today of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans that were once said of Irish, Italians, Germans and Jews: “They’ll never adjust; they can’t learn the language; they won’t be absorbed.”

Perhaps our brightest hope for the future lies in the lessons of the past. The people who have come to this country have made America, in the words of one perceptive writer, “a heterogeneous race but a homogeneous nation.”

In sum, then, we can see that as each new wave of immigration has reached America it has been faced with problems, not only the problems that come with making new homes and learning new jobs, but, more important, the problems of getting along with people of different backgrounds and habits.

Each new group was met by the groups already in America, and adjustment was often difficult and painful. The early English settlers had to find ways to get along with the Indians; the Irish who followed were met by these “Yankees”; German immigrants faced both Yankee and Irish; and so it has gone down to the latest group of Hungarian refugees. Somehow, the difficult adjustments are made and people get down to the tasks of earning a living, raising a family, living with their new neighbors and, in the process, building a nation.

Chapter 7

Where We Stand

THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT OF 1952 undertook to codify all our national laws on immigration. This was a proper and long overdue task. But it was not just a housekeeping chore. In the course of the deliberation over the Act, many basic decisions about our immigration policy were made. The total racial bar against the naturalization of Japanese, Koreans and other East Asians was removed, and a minimum annual quota of one hundred was provided for each of these countries. Provision was also made to make it easier to reunite husbands and wives. Most important of all was the decision to do nothing about the national origins system.

The famous words of Emma Lazarus on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty read: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” Until 1921 this was an accurate picture of our society. Under present law it would be appropriate to add: “as long as they come from Northern Europe, are not too tired or too poor or slightly ill, never stole a loaf of bread, never joined any questionable organization, and can document their activities for the past two years.”

Furthermore, the national origins quota system has strong overtones of an indefensible racial preference. It is strongly weighted toward so-called Anglo-Saxons, a phrase which one writer calls “a term of art” encompassing almost anyone from Northern and Western Europe. Sinclair Lewis described his hero, Martin Arrowsmith, this way: “a typical pure-bred-Anglo-Saxon American—which means that he was a union of German, French, Scotch-Irish, perhaps a little Spanish, conceivably of the strains lumped together as ‘Jewish,’ and a great deal of English, which is itself a combination of primitive Britain, Celt,

Phoenician, Roman, German, Dane and Swede.”

Yet, however much our present policy may be deplored, it still remains our national policy. As President Truman said when he vetoed the Immigration and Nationality Act (only to have that veto overridden): “The idea behind this discriminatory policy was, to put it baldly, that Americans with English or Irish names were better people and better citizens than Americans with Italian or Greek or Polish names. . . . Such a concept is utterly unworthy of our traditions and our ideals.”

Partly as a result of the inflexibility of the national origins quota system, the government has had to resort to temporary expedients to meet emergency situations. The 1957 Kennedy amendment, which permitted alien spouses, parents and children with inconsequential disqualifications to enter the United States, was responsive to this need. In 1948 Congress passed the Displaced Persons Act allowing more than 400,000 people made homeless by the war to come to this country. In

1953 Congress passed the Refugee Relief Act to admit about 200,000 people, most of whom had fled from behind the Iron Curtain. Under this Act and under a clause of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, not originally intended for use in such situations, some thirty thousand Chapter 7 Where We Stand refugees from Hungary were admitted in 1957. As a result it became necessary to pass a special law in 1958 to regularize the status of many of these immigrants.

Following the 1958 earthquakes in the Azores which left so many Portuguese homeless, none of these people could enter the United States as quota immigrants. Persons of Dutch origin in the Netherlands who were displaced from Indonesia were also ineligible to enter the United States as quota immigrants. Both needs were met by the Pastore-Kennedy-Walter Act of 1958 admitting a number of them on a nonquota basis into the United States. In 1962 a special law had to be passed to permit the immigration of several thousand Chinese refugees who had escaped from Communist China to Hong Kong. The same

legislative procedure was used as in the 1957 Hungarian program. Each world crisis is met by a new exception to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. Each exception reflects the natural humanitarian impulses of the American people, which is in keeping with our traditions of shelter to the homeless and refuge for the oppressed.

While none of these measures are, of themselves, especially generous responses to the tremendous problems to which they are addressed, they all have a great impact on our foreign policy. They demonstrate that there is still a place in America for people fleeing from tyranny or natural calamity. Nevertheless, the effect of these actions is diluted by the very fact that they are viewed as exceptions to our national policy rather than as a part of that policy.

Another measure of the inadequacy of the Immigration and Nationality Act has been the huge volume of private immigration bills introduced in Congress. These are bills to deal with individual hardship

cases for which the general law fails to provide. In the Eighty-seventh Congress over 3,500 such bills were introduced. Private immigration bills make up about half of our legislation today.

It is not hard to see why. A poor European college girl was convicted three times for putting slugs in a pay telephone, and fifteen years later, married to an American teacher abroad, she was denied entrance to our country because of three separate convictions for a crime involving moral turpitude. Or another case: An Italian immigrant living in Massachusetts with his small children could not bring his wife to the United States because she had been convicted on two counts involving moral turpitude. Her crimes? In 1913 and 1939 she had stolen bundles of sticks to build a fire. It took acts of Congress to reunite both these families.

These are examples of the inadequacies of the present law. They are important of themselves because people's lives are affected by them. But they are more important for what they represent of the way

America looks at the world and the way America looks at itself.

There is, of course, a legitimate argument for some limitation upon immigration. We no longer need settlers for virgin lands, and our economy is expanding more slowly than in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A superficial analysis of the heated arguments over immigration policy which have taken place since 1952 might give the impression that there was an irreconcilable conflict, as if one side wanted to go back to the policy of our founding fathers, of unrestricted immigration, and the other side wanted to stop all further immigration. In fact, there are only a few basic differences between the most liberal bill offered in recent years, sponsored by former Senator Herbert H. Lehman, and the supporters of the status quo. The present law admits 156,700 quota immigrants annually. The Lehman bill (like a bill introduced by Senator Philip A. Hart and cosponsored by over one-third of the members of the Senate) would admit 250,000.

The clash of opinion arises not over the number of immigrants to be admitted, but over the test for admission—the national origins quota system. Instead of using the discriminatory test of where the immigrant was born, the reform proposals would base admission on the immigrant's possession of skills our country needs and on the humanitarian ground of reuniting families. Such legislation does not seek to make over the face of America. Immigrants would still be given tests for health, intelligence, morality and security.

The force of this argument is recognized by the special measures enacted since 1952 which have ignored the established pattern of favoring Northern and Western Europe immigration over Southern and Eastern European countries. These statutes have resulted in the admission of a great many more persons from Southern European countries than would have been possible under the McCarran-Walter Act.

But more than a decade has elapsed since the last substantial amendment to these laws. There is a compelling need for Congress to re-examine and make changes in them.

Religious and civic organizations, ethnic associations and newspaper editorials, citizens from every walk of life and groups of every description have expressed their support for a more rational and less prejudiced immigration law. Congressional leaders of both parties have urged the adoption of new legislation that would eliminate the most objectionable features of the McCarran-Walter Act and the nationalities quota system.

It is not only the initial assignment of quota numbers which is arbitrary and unjust; additional inequity results from the failure of the law to permit full utilization of the authorized quota numbers. The tiny principality of Andorra in the Pyrenees Mountains, with 6,500 Spanish-speaking inhabitants, has an American immigration quota of 100, while Spain, with 28 million people, has a quota of only 250. While American

citizens wait for years for their relatives to receive a quota, approximately sixty thousand numbers are wasted each year because the countries to which they are assigned have far more numbers allocated to them than they have emigrants seeking to move to the United States. There is no way at present in which these numbers can be reassigned to nations where immense backlogs of applicants for admission to the United States have accumulated. This deficiency in the law should be corrected.

A special discriminatory formula is now applied to the immigration of persons who are attributable by their ancestry to an area called the Asia-Pacific triangle. This area embraces all countries from Pakistan to Japan and the Pacific islands north of Australia and New Zealand. Usually, the quota under which a prospective immigrant must enter is determined by his place of birth. However, if as much as one-half of an immigrant's ancestors came from nations in the Asia-Pacific triangle, he must rely upon the small quota assigned to the country of his ancestry,

regardless of where he was born. This provision of the law should be repealed.

The Presidential message to Congress of July 23, 1963, recommended that the national origins system be replaced by a formula governing immigration to the United States which takes into account: (1) the skills of the immigrant and their relationship to our needs; (2) the family relationship between immigrants and persons already here, so that the reuniting of families is encouraged; and (3) the priority of registration. Present law grants a preference to immigrants with special skills, education or training. It also grants a preference to various relatives of the United States citizens and lawfully resident aliens. But it does so only within a national origins quota. It should be modified so that those with the greatest ability to add to the national welfare, no matter where they are born, are granted the highest priority. The next priority should go to those who seek to be reunited with their relatives. For applicants with equal claims, the earliest registrant should be the

first admitted.

In order to remove other existing barriers to the reuniting of families, two additional improvements in the law are needed.

First, parents of American citizens, who now have a preferred quota status, should be accorded nonquota status.

Second, parents of aliens resident in the United States, who now have no preference, should be accorded a preference, after skilled specialists and other relatives of citizens and alien residents.

These changes will have little effect on the number of immigrants admitted. They will have a major effect insofar as they relieve the hardship many of our citizens and residents now face in being separated from their parents.

These changes will not solve all the problems of immigration. But they will insure that progress will continue to be made toward our ideals and toward the realization of humanitarian objectives.

We must avoid what the Irish poet John Boyle O'Reilly once called

*Organized charity, scrimped and iced,
In the name of a cautious, statistical Christ.*

Immigration policy should be generous; it should be fair; it should be flexible. With such a policy we can turn to the world, and to our own past, with clean hands and a clear conscience. Such a policy would be but a reaffirmation of old principles. It would be an expression of our agreement with George Washington that "The bosom of America is open to receive not only the opulent and respectable stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all nations and religions; whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges, if by decency and propriety of conduct they appear to merit the enjoyment."

