

and be able to use tend to get out as soon as possible. Those who remain probably aren't of much use for anything. Now, if the migrants who never come back stop sending money back as well, the result could be further economic collapse in their home areas, prompting still more immigration in the future.

Meanwhile, while California's Gov. Gray Davis and President Bush bicker at each other over energy policy, the truth is that there would be no energy crisis in California at all if it were not for

the massive number of immigrants who have swelled the state's population over the last thirty years. As demographer Virginia Abernethy points out in a recent column, California energy consumption declined per capita over the last twenty years, but the state's population grew by forty-three percent in the same period. The reason for ninety-five percent of the population increase in the last decade has been immigration. Had those new heads not arrived to consume more energy, there would be no

energy crisis in California — and no looming crisis for the nation.

While Americans have subsidized Mexican development, Mexicans and other immigrants have helped cause our energy crisis — as well as burdens on other resources and infrastructures. So we don't really need to hear more lectures about how Mexican depopulation is all our fault. If no more of them came and if the whole mass of them went home and stayed there, both countries would be better off. ■

George W. Bush Proposes an Amnesty

'Looking for love in all the wrong places'

by Diana Hull

The "steam" behind the new immigrant amnesty started building early last year. Illinois Congressman Luis Gutierrez proposed it in the form of a bill that delivered on President Clinton's promises to LULAC and MALDEF and the hundreds of groups that comprise the immigrant lobby.

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"Illegal" is a pejorative word, so opposing illegal immigration is an easy position for elected officials to take. The hope is that by removing the onus of illegality by awarding an amnesty, the problem will go away, whereas actually doing something to stop the breaching of the U.S. border, is another matter entirely.

Because elected officials failed to act decisively, amnesty for illegal immigrants was first sold to the public in 1986 as a way of solving this difficult problem once and for all.

That was the supposed motive fifteen years ago when there were five million illegal immigrants in the United States, and that is claimed to be the motive today when there are eleven million illegal immigrants living among us.

But amnesties do not solve and only exacerbate the problem of illegal entry and increase rather than deter illegal immigration. That was the conclusion reached in an INS report of 12 October 2000 and

subsequently ignored — an analysis released almost immediately after former INS Commissioner Doris Meissner resigned.

But despite this acknowledged policy failure that has changed California and the rest of the United States forever, our new President and his advisors are pushing for more of the same.

The only difference between the political parties on this issue is that Bill Clinton was sneaky in the way that he pursued it and tried to tack amnesty provisions onto unrelated congressional bills. For President Clinton amnesty was a promised payback to Hispanic supporters, but for George Bush, amnesty is fueled by a fantasy that he can seduce the Latino electorate.

In the case of both men, the wishes of the American people on this issue are as nothing to either of them, and they care not a whit about the “too many people” problem.

But what, if any, crisis will yet another amnesty resolve, and what new turmoil will be created by national leaders still looking for love in all the wrong places?

In addition to the fact that most Americans oppose it, there are other reasons to question the legitimacy of amnesty as a tool of immigration policy. The record is completely absent any history of rewards being used effectively in place of deterrence. Are immigration violations a special case where reverse motivation applies?

Before 1986, there were only three prior amnesties in all of US history. In 1865 and again in 1868, President Andrew Johnson granted amnesty to the supporters of the Confederacy. Then, almost a hundred years later, in 1977, President Carter forgave the draft resisters who had gone to live abroad during the Viet Nam war.

The purpose of these earlier amnesties was to heal internal rifts between the government and its own citizens — an attempt to bring together Americans torn apart by deeply held political differences. In those instances amnesties were successful in closing the book on specific internal wars and rebellions.

All three of these earlier amnesties were a one time forgiving, and hopefully forgetting, whereas recent amnesties have brought no reconciliation, only demands for more amnesties while inviting more of

the behavior that prompted the forgiving in the first place.

The 1986 IRCA Amnesty was, in more ways than one, the “mother” of the amnesty now being considered by the Bush administration. It was a program that fostered dishonesty in the recipients. It was originally intended for farm workers — a program that wildly underestimated the number of applicants who would apply for legalization, was the impetus for the ubiquitous counterfeit documents in circulation today, and failed totally to remove the magnet of jobs as promised. *New York Times* writer Robert Suro called the 1986 amnesty the most massive case of immigration fraud ever perpetrated on the American people.

So, do we really need to repeat this experience again? And how did *failure* like this create a precedent for what has become a continuing series of similar legislation?

The lesson is that forgiving and forgetting can only be successful when the parties involved have significant ties to each other — ties more important than the struggle that separates them.

Considering that amnesty is not an appropriate strategy for solving illegal entry, solutions lie rather in insisting our borders and laws are respected. We need to rein in our super-indulgent society that tolerates cheating and where continuing amnesties have simply become the ultimate immigrant entitlement program. We shouldn't have to be opposing one amnesty after another. How about stopping the misapplication of the amnesty concept, which should never have been applied to illegal aliens in the first place? And let's remove that warm cuddling wrap that surrounds the word “amnesty” — wrong for a policy associated with so much treachery and so many abuses.

If the continuing demand for agricultural workers remains an issue, it would be a bargain in the end for government to make a major investment in advanced robotics technology for farmers.

We don't pick cotton by hand anymore, and instead of amnesties, we could modernize the way we get fruit off a tree and produce out of the ground. But we'll never invent advanced machinery so long as people are cheaper than technology, another reason to label amnesty such a regressive social policy. ■

Flirting with Cataclysm, Disease, and Famine

The potent three antidotes for excess fecundity

Book Review by Craig A. Straub

Lindsey Grant's *Too Many People* is a handbook that provides an introductory synopsis of population growth issues to the undergraduate audience and supports the critical thinker in awakening those numb to the impacts of population growth on the planet. Grant makes a strong case for saving the future by entering into a sustainable relationship with nature, preceded by ending growth and embracing a smaller population.

Evidence for curbing growth is explored in the areas of natural resources, socioeconomics, and energy:

Humans and the Neolithic age have been proficient at disturbing and displacing natural systems, notably through forest destruction, land erosion and species extinction. With the advent of the industrial revolution, we have multiplied our disturbance as we extract minerals from the air and the Earth's crust, invent new chemicals and dump them heedlessly into the biosphere. Now we are on the threshold of adding genetic manipulation – deliberately redesigning animals and plants – that may be as destabilizing as the earlier two revolutions. We are changing the Earth without having demonstrated that we know how to manage it. (p. 2)

Grant inadvertently skims the edges of plant warfare, the combat of non-native plant species. Native plants contribute to the health of an ecosystem and provide natural sources of food and fiber. The use of

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herbicides are linked to population growth, neurological deterioration, skin problems, reproductive disorders, and cancer. To support maximum crop yields in an effort to feed a growing world, herbicides are applied to eliminate weedy competition. Herbicides are also applied to eradicate aggressive plant species in an effort to support healthy ecosystems. Introduction of non-native plants into the U.S. is due to an exploding population, increased international travel, and expanded international trade.

Some non-native plant species become aggressive and displace native plants in woodlands, wetlands, prairies, and other natural areas. Non-native plant species reduce local native plant communities, disrupt insect-plant associations for native seed dispersal, and serve as host reservoirs for plant pathogens.

Approximately two hundred native plant species have become extinct since the 1800s and five thousand species in North America are threatened with extinction. About two billion dollars are spent each year to combat non-native aggressive plant species in the U.S.

Synergisms are provided to illustrate the importance of the natural resource base and the implications of human habits:

The loss of forests changes the water cycle. No longer held back by the trees, stream flows become abrupt and erratic. Streams become arroyos, alternating between dry beds and destructive floods. Neither is used for agriculture, and the floods wash out cropland. Production suffers, intensifying the need to carve more land out of the forests, and the loss of trees contributes to global warming, which in turn contributes to intensified storms and droughts and crop losses – and the need for still more arable land. (p. 18)

**Too Many People:
The Case for
Reversing Growth**
by Lindsey Grant
Santa Ana, CA: Seven Locks Press
94 pages, \$7.95 softcover

