

following basic ideas:

- 1) Human beings are just one species among many species that are interdependently involved in biotic communities.
- 2) Human social life is shaped by intricate linkages of cause and effect (and feedback) in the web of nature, and because of these, purposive human actions have many unintended consequences.
- 3) The world we live in is finite, so there are potent physical and biological limits constraining economic growth, social progress, and other aspects of human living.
- 4) However much the inventiveness of *Homo sapiens* or the power of *Homo colossus* may seem for a while to transcend carrying capacity limits,

nature has the last word (p. 238).

Catton concludes that the human community is condemned to bet on an uncertain future. Misperception of the human situation will motivate efforts to pursue solutions which make matters worse. An ecological understanding of the human predicament will help avoid constructing "the road to hell paved with good intentions." We must act to ensure the inevitable crash minimizes die-off of the human species. Policies must be developed to diminish global dominance to avoid the fatal practice of stealing from posterity.

This book is a vital contribution to the field of Human Ecology and is a comprehensive reference containing the application of ecological principles to the human situation.

**TSC**

# Is Immigration Reform a Good Thing?

## Book Review by Scip Garling

In *Not Like Us*, University of Cincinnati history professor Roger Daniels examines the conditions in America for three groups (Blacks, Amerindians and immigrants) and the "reactionary forces" hostile to them, exploring the "paradox" that "a period of supposed progress was instead filled with conflict and xenophobia" [back cover]. Despite a strong anti-immigration reform tone Daniels' book contains a lot of historical information and context useful to modern reformers — including the story of the *original* moratorium bill and its whirlwind

passage in the House!

Much of the book is devoted to the plight of American Blacks and Amerindians. While this material is central to Daniels' analysis, it has little relevance to the interests of the average immigration reformer, and may be skimmed without much loss of context. In a small way, this is unfortunate, for it is the "Black" passages that contain the best of Daniels' prose, including his nearly cinematic descriptions of the race riots of the "Red Summer" of 1919 in Chicago and Tulsa.

In a great service to the reader Daniels places the Americanization movement in the larger context of the Progressive movement of which

it was an element. Elements that today seem politically disparate — education reform, election reform, immigration reform, Prohibition, women's

**Not Like Us:  
Immigrants  
and Minorities  
in America,  
1890-1924**

by Roger Daniels

Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishing  
192 pages, \$12.95



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rights — were, during the first quarter of the century, considered facets of a broad agenda of the Progressive movement. (The Progressive movement left a number of legacies, including the initiative/referendum process and the direct election of Senators, who had previously been selected by state legislatures.)

For example, because the Progressive agenda included women's suffrage, the 1924 Immigration Act was preceded by the Cable Act of 1922, which decoupled women's citizenship status from that of their husbands. Before 1922, native-born American women who would marry foreigners would actually lose their U.S. citizenship (p.137).

Being part of a larger agenda helped the cause of immigration reform in the 1920s; today a firm connection between it and other reform movements has yet to develop. Inklings in that direction, however, can be seen in the infant Reform party and in the writings of Michael Lind, who has recently suggested in *The New Republic* that immigration reform needs to be one of the central planks in a broader agenda for "neo-Progressives."

Arguably the most important item in *Not Like Us* is news of a legislative "ancestor" to the idea of an immigration moratorium. In December 1920, Representative Albert Johnson, the then-champion of immigration reform, sponsored a moratorium bill which was "introduced, debated, and passed, without any of the customary hearings, in one week" (p.120). By a vote of 296 to 42 (an absolute majority of both parties) the House voted to halt all immigration for one year. (Johnson's original bill was for a two-year halt, but it was modified by the House.) The Senate, however, shelved the bill and replaced it with a quota bill, which was pocket vetoed by Woodrow Wilson in his last week in office. But the Senate's desire to avoid the extremity of a moratorium pushed Congress to enact the quota law of 1921 — later made permanent by the 1924 Act — that kept immigration at a low level until 1965 (p.132).

Daniels' book includes other surprises. Restrictionists, it turns out, did intend to limit Western Hemisphere immigration in the 1924 Act but were blocked by Southwestern legislators "insisting that their regions needed Mexican agricultural labor" (p.136). Much of the reduction in immigration levels

in the 1920s and 1930s followed *not* from well-known legislative numerical restrictions, but from the consular service's heavy use of its new executive authority to deny visas to "LPCs" — those "likely to become a public charge" (p.141).

And who would guess the author of the following quote:

*Our industrial plant is built. ...Our last frontier has long since been reached. ...There is no safety valve in the form of a Western prairie. ...We are not able to invite the immigration (sic) from Europe to share our endless plenty* (p.149).

That was spoken by liberal Democratic presidential candidate Franklin Roosevelt in a 1932 address to the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco.

Unfortunately Daniels occasionally tosses off tantalizing assertions without giving any further evidence:

*Even the leaders of many of the longer-established immigrants groups supported the [1924 immigration reform] bill, as did many African-American leaders* (p.139).

Also, Daniels is no friend of immigration reform for today, which he sees only as a manifestation of wicked "nativism." Daniels' stance against immigration reform often shows strongly in his writing:

*Present-day nativists, such as members of FAIR (Federation for American Immigration Reform), who view the numbers of contemporary immigrants with alarm, fail to note that while the 8-million-plus immigrants of the first decade of this century came to a country of some 90 million persons, those in the 1990s come to one of more than 250 million* (p.159).

If the reader can overlook such flaws, the book is overall an interesting read with information and perspectives that help modern reformers both to understand the success of the earlier movement and to gather clues about repeating it today.

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# Environmental Stress and the Coming Anarchy

## Book Review by Ted Wheelwright

This book has an arresting title, and with it four chapter headings to match: (1) The Coming Anarchy: The Collapse of Civilization and the Coming of Hell on Earth, (2) The Ecology of Collapse: Technological and Ecological Mechanisms for the Destruction of Civilization, (3) The Remorseless Working of Things: Population Collides with Environment, (4) Global Meltdown: A Tapestry of Turmoil at the End of the Modern Age.

Although self-contained, the book develops the argument of the authors' previous book, *Healing a Wounded World* (1997) with the same publisher. This argued that human demands on the global ecosystem had already overshot its carrying capacity; consequently we live on ecological credit, stolen from future generations. Hence the phrase "future eating" — a term popularized by T. Flannery in his book *The Future Eaters: An Ecological History of the Australasian Islands and People* (Reed Books, Melbourne, 1994).

The authors had argued in their previous book that the types of changes required to avert ecological disaster are too difficult to implement within a few decades. Hence environmental disaster is inevitable, which threatens the human race. This new book continues the theme and focuses on the breakdown of civilization and the resulting loss of life.

The first chapter, "The Coming Anarchy," argues that the world faces chaos and political disintegration

over a long period of time. This process had already begun and is manifest in the acceleration of political disintegration leading to increasing crime, ethnic violence, and permanent refugees by the millions. This theme is taken from a book by L. Watson, appropriately titled *Dark Nature: A Natural History of Evil* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1995):

*Central governments have begun to wither, regional and tribal identities are being revived, and fundamentalism of every stripe is becoming ever more obvious and more strident. Under the*

*pressure of environmental and demographic stress, we are watching the old order crack or fragment into city states and ragged private armies (pp.250-1).*

The authors' thesis is that the modern world is like a nuclear reactor undergoing meltdown. The forces interacting include environmental destruction, economic rationalism, globalization, technology, immigration, multiculturalism, and racial and ethnic

conflict. It is argued that there can be no rebirth of an environmentally sensitive civilization, as the damage inflicted is already too great. Hence this is a "Doomsday Book" *par excellence*.

There is a formidable list of authors cited to corroborate the thesis that global change is out of control and a collapse of moral values has occurred, "with consumerism masquerading as a substitute."

America's shortcomings are outlined, from a greedy upper class, to widespread urban decay, a massive drug culture, and the propagation of moral corruption by the visual media. Its fate is said to reflect that of most nations. Environmental problems exacerbate the situation, and create additional sources of social conflict.

### Global Meltdown: Immigration, Multiculturalism, and National Breakdown in the New World Disorder

by Joseph Wayne Smith, Graham Lyons, and Evonne Moore  
Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers  
185 pages, \$59.95



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