

## READING A

## Multiculturalism – Melting Pot or Salad Bowl?

Read the following text with special attention to the words in bold.

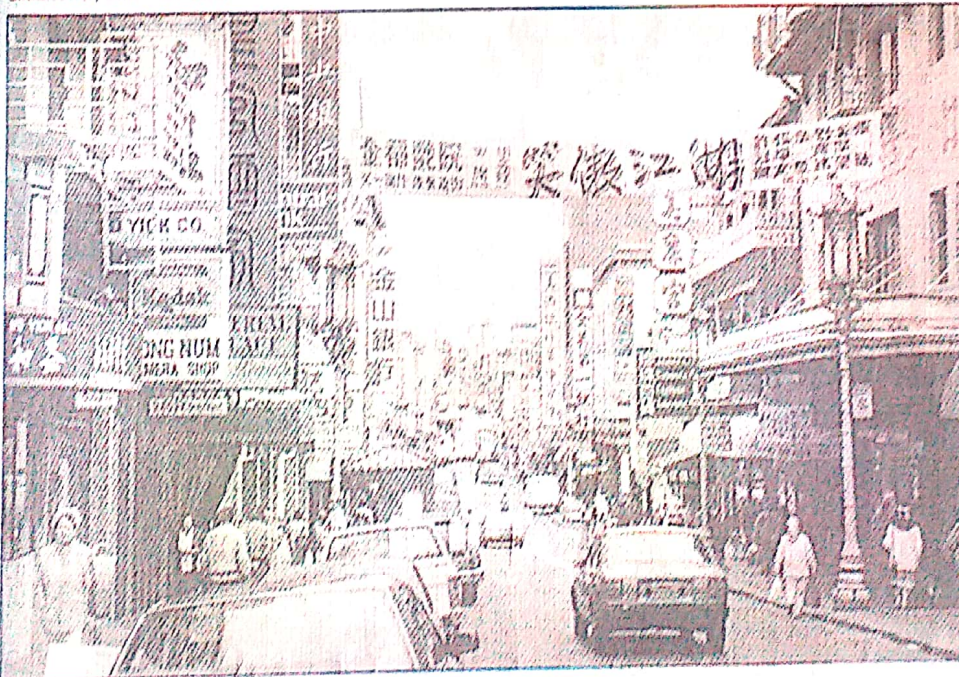
The United States is a society of immigrants. The promise of **wealth, land,** and **freedom** has attracted more than 50 million newcomers since the nation's beginnings. Over the years, the US has admitted more immigrants than any other country in history. This trend has continued up till the present day: 700,000 legal immigrants enter the US yearly.

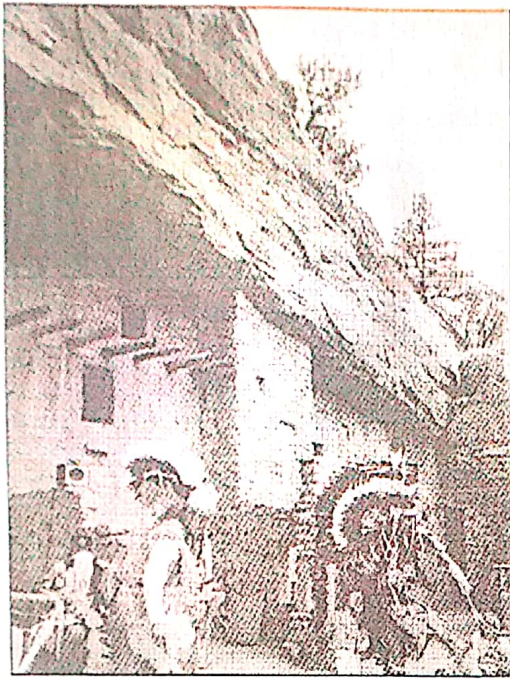
Among the first settlers the English were the most numerous, and thus their **language** and **culture** had the overriding influence. American society was from the beginning predominantly English, shaped by **white Anglo-Saxon Protestants** (WASPs). Early immigrants of other nations included Germans, who settled in Pennsylvania, and Dutch, who founded

the city of New York (originally called New Amsterdam). Africans provided slave labor in the southern colonies.

Although immigration to the US has been continuous, two great waves can be distinguished. The so-called "Old Immigration" in the first half of the 19th century brought predominantly Irish, Scandinavian, and German immigrants in vast numbers. The potato famine in Ireland drove one-fifth of the country's population (about 1.5 million people) to the US between 1840 and 1855. Around the turn of the century the "New Immigration" began: between 1880 and 1910 most of the people came from Southern and Eastern Europe, including 2.2 million from the Austro-Hungarian

Chinatown, San Francisco





Native Americans

Monarchy. During this period the US also received 3 million Italians, 2 million Russians, and 1.5 million Jews, the majority of whom came from the Russian Empire. Besides immigrants coming from Europe, Asian immigration began in the second half of the 19th century, when Chinese and Japanese started coming in ever increasing numbers.

Recent statistics indicate that currently the largest group of immigrants come from Mexico, the Philippines, and the West Indies. Due to their large numbers and high birth rates, they are expected to overtake the blacks to become the second largest racial group in the US within a few years. The long-term forecasts are even more astonishing: it is estimated that non-

white ethnic groups (mainly Hispanics, blacks, and Asians) together will constitute the majority of the American population and non-Hispanic whites will become a 45% minority by about 2050. Besides the legal newcomers, about 275,000 illegal immigrants cross the border of the country, and there are about 100,000 refugees seeking asylum in the US every year.

As a result of this influx of immigrants, an astonishing variety of different cultures coexist in America. San Francisco has its famous Chinatown, Chicago includes huge Polish and Italian sections, Los Angeles is a major city of Mexicans today, and New York has a larger Jewish population than any other city in the world. Newspapers in New York are published in two hundred languages besides English. Immigrants are no longer expected to assimilate to a mainstream American identity; instead, they can become African/Hispanic/Asian-Americans, and can follow the traditions of their own cultures. This is a new trend in American cultural life. Formerly, America was marked by the popular image of the melting pot, which is by now a term belonging to the past. It was a symbol of the idea of integration through assimilation. The new trend, multiculturalism, explicitly opposes the idea of the "melting pot," and it emphasizes the racial and ethnic diversity of American citizens. The promoters of this movement compare America to a "salad bowl," where the different ingredients are mixed but they still possess their own unique flavors.

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