

On Multi-Cultural Education

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Body

The positive spin of your Feb. 11 article, "Multi-Cultural Education: Immersion Lesson for Students," disguises some very troubling aspects of this movement. For starters, solicitude for immigrant or minority students is nowhere near as new as the article implies. It was present during the last major wave of massive immigration in the early 20th century, while teaching various perspectives has a long tradition in American education.

The multi-culturalist proponents tout the importance of learning of differing points of view. No problem there. The danger lies in pretending that all points of view are of equal significance or validity. In particular, the multi-culturalists suppress or deny the reality of an American point of view. Their programs presume only a variety of perspectives determined by group identity. Consequently, the reality of the American experience, which heretofore has assimilated immigrant populations and Americanized them -- with recognition for variation in degree -- is rejected. It is precisely this type of "group-think" which has led to the implementation of the ethno-racial quota system so despised by the majority of Americans.

Most strikingly, none of the various educational and multi-culturalist "experts" cited in the article demonstrates any concern to inculcate American history and heritage in immigrant children in order to aid in their assimilation of American culture. On the contrary, the multi-culturalist approach encourages immigrants to maintain their foreign traditions rather than adopting to American norms. The local multi-culturalists, and their many allies nationwide, have flipped the traditional assumption that immigrants should adjust to the American condition. In its place they propose, implicitly or explicitly, that Americans adjust to them -- a prescription for national suicide unique in world history.

Totally missing from the quoted statements of Long Island's multi-culturalist advocates, and this seems standard with such people, is any comprehension that such a thing as American culture, or nationhood, exists. The so-called "celebration of diversity" typically results in a stifling or diminution of the American heritage. The different programs, increasingly mandated, which emphasize multi-cultural/minority interests, reduce or exclude the historical/cultural heritage of the majority of American citizens and their children. This is the surest way to generate the resentments which the multi-culturalist programs purportedly diminish.

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