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From Kharkov to Crozet

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George's wife, Rosemary, is a former schoolteacher. They have one son, Nick.

"From Kharkov to Crozet"

Introduction

As a nation, we have always been ambivalent about immigration issues. It has been "give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" (the inscription on the Statue of Liberty, erected in 1886). Or the sentiment expressed four years before the Statue of Liberty was erected, when Congress enacted the first immigration restrictions, specifically excluding "paupers, ex-convicts, mental defectives and Chinese" (The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882). That immigration legislation came at the beginning of the greatest wave of immigration in American history, which brought in 18 million new citizens, diversified U.S. society, and gave us the enduring analogy of the "melting pot."

Today we are experiencing another wave of immigration. Some 1 million immigrants a year enter the United States legally. By most estimates, another 300,000 enter our country illegally. Most sources estimate more than one in 10 U.S. residents are immigrants, and while that's the highest share of the overall American population since the 1930s, it's still below the high of 15 percent recorded in 1890 and 1910, according to a recent Census Bureau report. Immigration patterns have shifted. Rather than Europe as the primary source of immigration, the Latin America and the Caribbean are the primary source of US immigrants with Mexico as the single greatest country of origin of US immigrants. India and Asian countries play a major role as well. Like the earlier wave, the influx is likely to fundamentally change America, but Americans have yet to work through how they feel about it.

Immigration policy is about deciding what kind of country the United States is going to be. Today we are also an ambivalent nation on that question.

This conflict of perspectives is not new. It is tempting to think of ourselves in a unique situation as we sit here in the wake of September 11, with the heightened concerns about illegal immigration, and with the threat of Islamic terrorism. I would submit that this is not the case. There have been other periods in our country's history during which immigration was a hot button on which the national perspective was equally divided and ambivalent.

The history of my family is intertwined with some of this hot button and with immigration and refugee issues in the United States. In relating some of that history from my presentation, I hope to raise our collective awareness about the subject. By providing a personal context, I hope to illustrate the human context that is part and parcel of our immigration policy.

This has been an interesting research project for me. Like some of those in the room, I do not have first hand experience about the period leading up to World War II or about the war itself. In fact, my earliest childhood memories are rooted firmly in the cold war. Many others in our audience have vivid recollections of the events of 1930's, World War II and the post-war period. For them, my comments are sure to raise clear memories and strong opinions. That is as it should be in our SPHEX Club and in our nation.

Zhanna and Frina Arshanskaya

Zhanna Arshanskaya was born in Berdyansk, a picturesque seaside town in the southern Ukraine on the Sea of Azov (a tributary of the Black Sea) on April 1, 1927. Her sister, Frina, was born two years later. Their parents were Dimitri Illyich Arshanskay and Sara Konstantinova Arshanskaya, were Jewish by culture, heritage and birth - but like many of the Berdyansk Jewish community, they did not practice or worship their religion. By profession Dimitri was a candy maker, but his religion was music -- especially his violin and piano. His god was Paganini, the Italian violinist and composer.

In December of 1941, Dimitri and Sara lIllyich, and Dimitri's parents (along with 16,000 other residents of Kharkov and the surrounding countryside) were marched to a place called Drobitsky Yar, shot in the back, and buried in a mass grave. How two young girls used their wit, will, and musical ability to survive the holocaust, the war, and the aftermath is a unique story -- as are the thousands of stories of other holocaust survivors. How the United States reacted to them as refugees, and how the millions of refugees from World War II fared, is instructive to us as we consider our national ambivalence to immigration and naturalization issues today.

Before the War

The late 1920's in Berdyansk were the best of times for small proprietors like Dimitri Illyich. Lenin's New Economic Policy was instituted in 1921 to jump start the Soviet economy devastated by the economic dictates during

the revolution and then by World War I. By the late 1920's, the NEP was producing economic prosperity for the Ukraine. The NEP allowed a limited amount of capitalism and created a capital market built on the foundation of the sale of excess agricultural production by farmers. By 1928 this market produced a relative level of prosperity for a candy maker like Dimitri Illyich. It was short-lived.

After consolidation of his power base following Lenin's death in 1924, in 1929 Stalin began an aggressive five year plan to eliminate the budding capitalism that had begun under the NEP. His intention was to impose a strict socialistic system on the Soviet Union through a collective agricultural system and rapid development of state-owned industry. The Ukraine, the "bread basket" of Europe, was dealt with severely. Five thousand scholars, scientists, and leaders were arrested and shot or deported to Siberia. All farms were seized and converted to collectives. The wealthiest of farmers were also deported to Siberia work camps. In the face of the continued defiance of the Ukrainian people, Stalin deliberately deported nearly all grain and other crops during 1932 and 1933, sending it to Russia and to international markets. Borders were sealed and starvation imposed in the country. An estimated seven million people (25% of the population) had died by the end of 1933.

A candy maker whose income depended on the purchase of a luxury item did not fare well in this economic climate. Neither did Berdyansk, which soon became overrun by homeless peasants from the countryside who were dying of starvation.

Nevertheless, the newly discovered musical talent of the two young prodigies was not to be denied or suppressed. There was no money music lessons for the two daughters who started their musical instruction at ages four and five, but they were accepted for instruction pro bona based on their potential. At age six, Zhanna gave her first public concert (Bach's *Invention* was her selection) by radio from the local Berdyansk studio. Zhanna and Frina's fame spread throughout the region as they gave concerts and school performances.

By 1934 the Arshanskay family was flat broke. Most of their possessions had been sold for food. Government tax levies kept increasing and nobody was buying candy.

In a desperate move to save the family, a move to Kharkov was proposed. The city of 1 million, including Sara Konstantinova's relatives, was 350 miles to the North. More importantly, it was the cultural center of the Ukraine and Zhanna and Frina had been offered scholarships to the conservatory -- scholarships which actually included a stipend that was much needed income for the family. With little left but the piano and the violin, the family moved north to Kharkov.

Kharkov

While the family suffered in poor living conditions and with manual labor positions for Dimitri Illyich, the girls' musical careers flourished. The Soviet system of state-sponsored conservatories for the very talented was a blessing and accelerator to their careers, as was the fact that the crème de la

crème of Russian and European classical musicians performed in Kharkov. They received the best instruction and after winning a competition, were invited to Moscow to audition for admittance to the Moscow State Conservatory -– also known as the Tchaikovsky Conservatory -- whose professors and graduates formed the elite of 20th Century Russian classical music. Rachmaninoff, Richter, Oistrakh and many more were on the distinguished list. Their acceptance at ages 10 and 12 was the highest compliment that could be paid to a child musician of their place and time – a great compliment, but also a great irony for their parents had no option but to decline the invitation. There was no money to live in the expensive city of Moscow and the small stipend offered was not sufficient to cover the costs. That decision proved to be fatalistic for the entire family.

The War

On September 1, 1939, days after signing the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact with Stalin, Hitler launched his blitzkrieg into Poland. By May 1940, the Nazis had invaded and occupied Holland, Belgium, Denmark and Norway. France fell in June, and the Luftwaffe started the London blitz. Stalin held onto the hope and illusion that the Pact which had included a mutual non-aggression pact would protect the Soviet Union from invasion. Over the objections of his generals, Stalin was slow to begin preparations for the invasion that came on June 22, 1941. On that day, three million German troops and some 3,300 tanks crossed into Soviet territory in "operation Barbarossa." The objectives of the operation were two: to gain living space or "Lebensraum" for German people, and to cleanse the operation of Slavs, Jews, Bolsheviks, and others that Hitler considered less than human.

To achieve the second of these objectives he dispatched the Einsatzgruppen, killing squads organized by Himmler, to implement the final solution. These squads targeted the populations in question throughout Eastern Europe including Ukrainia. Various sources credit the Nazis with executing 1.3 million Russian Jews during their occupation from 1941 until 1943.

The Ukraine was also devastated by the policies of Stalin during and immediately after the war. As the Germans advanced, he directed the mass evacuation of Ukrainia. Those that did not flee before the advancing Germans were suspect as sympathizers. In addition, he implemented a "scorched earth" policy directing that all deserted supplies, buildings, and other useful material be burned so as not to aid the Germans.

Dimitri Illyich was apparently oblivious to the threats facing him and his family from the advancing German forces. Perhaps it was the illness of his wife and his concern about her ability to travel, or his belief that the German regime could not be worse than Stalin's, or his positive memory of interaction with Germans during World War I, or romantic notions about the nation of origin of his musical gods. For whatever reason, he made the same choice as many others and remained in Kharkov as it was occupied by the German army.

In December of 1941, the German command distributed leaflets ordering all Kharkov Jews to prepare for immediate evacuation to a factory district on the outskirts of the city. The assumption of most was that they were to be forced into a labor camp. Perhaps others had heard rumors of the holocaust

at Babi Yar near Kiev where 33,700 Jews were massacred on September 29 and 30, 1941. Along with 16,000 others, the Arshanskays were in a forced two-day march to a deserted factory 12 miles out of town. After several weeks of confinement, those that had not died of starvation or exposure were placed in rows of six across and marched the few remaining miles to Drobitsky Yar where they were executed and buried in mass graves in the open ravine or "yar."

The two young Arshanskaya girls were two of the few to escape from this death march. A bribe to a guard and a quick side step next to some non-Jewish Russian women, who were standing beside the row watching the death column pass, was the escape route for Zhanna.

So began the ordeal that was to become the life for the two girls. In the interest of time, I will abbreviate the story of how they made their way separately across 20 plus miles to Kharkov where they were turned away by many family friends and finally befriended by a family who helped them establish a cover story. Their survival depended on concealing their Jewish heritage which was no small task given their regional musical fame. Their plan was to use a cover story and flee to an orphanage in a distant city where they might obtain new identity papers. After being smuggled out of town in a cart filled with straw, they then traveled across the Ukrainian winter landscape on freight trains finally coming to rest in Kremenchuk where they were successful in obtaining new documents and were also impressed into a troop of Russians who were entertaining German troops, literally hiding in the spotlight as they became the mainline act and gained significant notoriety among the Germans while maintaining their false identities.

After more than a year and a half, they and the rest of the entertainment troop was transported under guard to Berlin as the Germans were forced out of Russia by the Soviet counter-attack. They arrived in Berlin in November of 1943, shortly before the Allied bombing of Berlin began. In Berlin the troop was placed "on tour" traveling by train to "ost" labor camps throughout Germany and Czechoslovakia – camps of impressed laborers from occupied countries.

As Berlin fell in spring of 1945, the girls were smart enough to flee south toward the American Zone in Bavaria. On VE Day, Zhanna and Frina were among an estimated 20 million foreigners – refugees, slave laborers, POW's, and death camp inmates who were stranded in Germany and Austria. Their official designation was "displaced persons." The Allied forces had chartered the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (or UNRRA) to run hundreds of camps where displaced persons could live while awaiting repatriation to their homeland or emigration to a new country. They ended up near Munich in a DP camp named Funk Kaserne located in an abandoned military base. This camp was run by an American Army officer on assignment to UNNRA.

Soon they were again "discovered" for their musical ability -- this time by the officer serving as camp director who had happened to hear them performing an impromptu show for some of the 5,000 displaced persons residing at Funk Kaserne. As it so happened, he was a devotee of classical music who quickly suspected that among his charges were two young girls of remarkable talent. He quickly moved to arrange for practice facilities

and music for them and in a particularly poignant moment in history, arranged for their first public performance since liberation at Landsberg Yiddish Center for an audience of 3,000 Jewish Polish holocaust survivors.

Despite their survival of the War, they were not out of danger. Zhanna and Frina were under pressure to return to Russia. They were conflicted on this point -- Zhanna in favor of returning to their homeland and Frina dead set against it. Like many other Russians, they were subject to forcible return to the Soviet Union under the terms of the Yalta Treaty (February, 1945) and related treaties. (It would be some time before Eisenhower issued orders to stop the forcible repatriations.) Stalin dealt severely with those that he felt were aiding the Germans – especially in the Ukraine.

Into this indecision stepped the Army officer/Director of Funk Kaserne, and his life-long appreciation of classical music, his vision of what these young girls might contribute to society, and frankly his overtly idealistic nature and lack of appreciation for what was not possible.

A Brief Recap of U.S. Immigration Policy

We break from our story to briefly recap the history of immigration in the United States. That history has vacillated between one of remarkable openness punctuated by periods of overly tight restrictions. A review of the history of these restrictions makes it clear that economic considerations, public opinion (and xenophobia), and resulting political consideration have been key determining factors in shaping immigration policy and practice.

Key milestones or reference points include the following :

- During the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries, immigration policy was essentially open borders, and, at times, immigrants were even recruited to come to America. Between 1783 and 1820, approximately 250,000 immigrants arrived at our shores. Immigration increased from 8,385 in 1820 to 84,066 in 1840, with approximately 70% from England, Ireland and Germany. (Source: "A History of U.S. Immigration Policy. The Immigration and Nationality Act, House Judiciary Committee, 1995.)

- The next 20 years saw increasing immigration prompted by settlement and development issues in the US and famine abroad. For instance, in the 1840s, the potato famine in Ireland, the gold rush in California, the construction of railroads featuring Chinese and others, the Resolution of the Mexican War which extended citizenship to 80,000 Mexicans, and the industrialization of America coupled with political unrest in Europe were all major factors. Immigration totaled 4.3 million between 1841 and 1860 and reached a single year high of 428,000 in 1854. (Source, Ibid.)

- By the mid to late 19th Century, there was public sentiment and significant legislation aimed at controlling immigration. Consider the following abstract from Digital History (available on line at www.digital.history.uh.edu):

- 1870-Naturalization Act limits American citizenship to "white persons and persons of African descent," barring Asians from U.S. citizenship. This is an interesting twist for a law whose original version was intended to merely guarantee citizenship for slaves and their descendents.
- 1882 - Chinese Exclusion Act restricts Chinese immigration.
- 1885 - Alien Contract Labor Law prohibited any company or individual from bringing foreigners into the United States under contract to perform labor here. The only exceptions are those who were brought to do domestic service and skilled workmen who should be needed here to help establish some new trade or industry.
- 1891 - Congress establishes the Bureau of Immigration within the Treasury Department.
- 1892 - Ellis Island opens -- serves as processing center for 12 million immigrants over the next 30 years.
- 1901 - After President William McKinley is assassinated by a Polish anarchist, Congress enacts the Anarchist Exclusion Act, which allows immigrants to be excluded on the basis of their political opinions.
- 1907 - Expatriation Act declares that an American woman who marries a foreign national loses her citizenship.
- Under the Gentleman's Agreement with Japan, the United States agrees not to restrict Japanese immigration in exchange for Japan's promise not to issue passports to Japanese laborers for travel to the continental United States.

Japanese laborer are permitted to go to Hawaii, but are barred by executive order from migrating from Hawaii to the mainland.

- Despite these controls, by 1915 immigrants comprised approximately 15% of the 100 million people residing in the United States. This, interestingly, was the high water mark for immigrants as a percentage of the United States total population. From 1920 to 1934 there were a number of laws enacted aimed at further controlling immigration and setting quotas for the various ethnic groups (Source, Digital History):

    - 1921 Quota Act limits annual European immigration to three percent of the number of a nationality group in the United States in 1910.
    - 1922 Cable Act partially repeals the Expatriation Act, but declares that an American woman who marries an Asian still loses her citizenship.
    - 1923 In the landmark case of United States v. Bhaghat Singh Thind, the Supreme Court rules that Indians from the Asian subcontinent could not become naturalized U.S. citizens.
    - 1924 The Johnson-Reed Act limits annual European immigration to two percent of the number of nationality group residents in the United States in 1890.

- Oriental Exclusion Act prohibits most immigration from Asia, including foreign-born wives and children of U.S. citizens of Chinese ancestry.
- 1934 The Tydings-McDuffie Act, which provided for independence for the Philippines on July 4, 1946, strips Filipinos of their status as U.S. nationals and severely restricted Filipino immigration by establishing an annual immigration quota of 50.

- In summary, by 1930 we were a country with a population that included some 14 million foreign-born citizens and approximately 118 million U.S. born natives. Immigration for the next several decades would be severely reduced by a combination of factors (including the above-cited legislation, instructions from the Hoover administration to tightly interpret and enforce restrictions, and by the lagging U.S. economy). Our composition as a nation had already been established based on significant in migration from: Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Britain, Italy, Poland, Russia, Norway and Sweden, Canada, and Mexico. Among these immigrants were various religious groups including an estimated two million Jews fleeing progroms in Russia and Eastern Europe, Polish Catholics, French Huegonauts, and Mormons.

During the period leading up to World War II, the administration of FDR struggled to deal with the restrictive attitude held by most Americans and the realities of oppression of Jews in Germany and occupied territories. The quotas in place in 1939 limited Germany to approximately 28,000 approved

visas as compared to 300,000 applicants – mostly from Jewish refugees who were by this time under severe persecution by the Nazi regime. A little over 20,000 were approved.

There was open conflict on the issue within FDR's cabinet – with the State Department taking the most restrictive position. Despite wide-spread knowledge of persecution – for instance the "Night of Broken Glass" that occurred in Germany on November 9, 1938, public opinion was against the admittance of large numbers of Jews who were fleeing. The State Department held tight and in May of 1939, the infamous voyage of the *St. Louis* occurred in which nearly a thousand refugees fleeing Nazi persecution were denied admission to the United States even though many of those on board were reportedly qualified for visas which had not yet been issued. After the passengers were refused admission to the U.S. and to several other countries they were eventually returned to Germany. It is believed that many were ultimately holocaust victims.

The failure to act decisively to protect German and European Jews during the period before and during the war has been widely noted. Public opinion was with the restrictive policies for a variety of reasons including bigotry, isolationism, a fear of spies and insurgents being admitted if immigration quotas were relaxed and disbelief or disinterest in the plight of the Jews. Faced with pressure from within his own cabinet, in 1944 FDR finally issued an order creating the War Refugee Board "to take all measures within its policy to rescue victims of enemy oppression in imminent danger of death." This Board finally began aggressive actions including joint efforts with Sweden to protect European Jews in jeopardy.

"The **Displaced Persons (DP) Act of 1948** finally gave formal legislative authority that allowed displaced persons of World War II to start immigrating. Some 200,000 Europeans and 17,000 orphans displaced by World War II were initially allowed to immigrate to the United States outside of immigration quotas. Truman signed the first DP act on June 25, 1948, allowing entry by 200,000 DPs; and then followed by the more accommodating second DP act on 16 June, 1950, allowing entry for another 200,000. This quota, included acceptance of 55,000 Volksdeutschen, required sponsorship of all immigrants. The American program was the most notoriously bureaucratic of all the DP programs and much of the humanitarian effort was undertaken by charitable organizations, such as the Lutheran World Federation and other ethnic groups. Along with an additional quota of 200,000 granted in 1953 and more in succeeding years, a total of nearly 600,000 refugees were allowed into the country outside the quota system, second only to Israel's 650,000."
(Source: Wikipedia, Immigration in the United States.)

These Acts codified executive actions that Truman had taken first in December of 1945 when he issued a directive ordering special measures to facilitate some of the displaced persons entrance into the United States with preference given to orphaned children and adults with relatives in the U.S. The order explicitly stated that immigrants would be responsible for visa fees and travel costs, and provisions of the immigration laws prohibited those that would likely become public charges.

On May 20, 1946, the S.S. Marine Flasher docked at Pier 64 in Manhattan. Its arrival was documented in the New York Times under the headline "795 Immigrants Reach U.S. Haven, First Under Truman's Alien Order." The Marine Flasher was the first refugee ship out of Germany and most of its passengers were Polish Jews who had survived the War.

Also on board were two Ukrainian survivors, Zhanna and Frina Arshanskaya. They were 18 and 16 years old and were coming to the United States under visas obtained by the military officer who served as the Director of Funk Kaserne. He and his wife had initiated adoption proceedings in order to qualify the two girls for visas and had probably pulled some additional strings to obtain passage. They also had raised the funds for their passage from their own limited finances and from friends.

In New York the two girls were met by a family friend who escorted them to Grand Central Station where they boarded a train for Charlottesville, Virginia. Speaking no appreciable English, armed with a note and a few dollars, they were able to find their way by taxi to a small farm near Crozet, Virginia, arriving in the middle of the night on May 22. Their late night arrival was unexpected because of the delayed mail delivery post-war -- they had arrived before the letter detailing the final plan. Travel weary, they were tucked into a large feather bed, to sleep with the wife of the Director and her infant son.

The Director of Funk Kaserne was my father, Laurence Dawson, and the woman greeting Zhanna and Frina that night was my mother. I was that infant son. By the grace of God and their determination, the two girls had

survived the war. By the idealism and vision of my father, and the hospitality and warmth of my mother, they had come to this country. In this they were lucky enough to slip through a crack in the door of immigration policy that was opened as the war ended and public opinion began to shift in favor of limited opening of refugee quotas.

The Post War Period

There have been significant shifts in immigration policy during the post-war period. The 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act is known for its restrictions on subversive or potentially subversive ideologies. More pertinent to our discussion, it introduced alternatives to national quotas as the basis for immigration policy. It maintained quota for the Eastern Hemisphere, but the Western Hemisphere continued to operate without a quota and relied on other qualitative factors to limit immigration. Moreover, the Mexican bracero program from 1942 to 1964, allowed millions of Mexican agricultural workers to work temporarily in the U.S. **I thought you might find this a novel idea.**

The **1965 Act** sought to correct the racially-based immigration system established in the 1920s:

- The act set a 20,000 per country limit and a yearly ceiling of 170,000 for admissions for the Eastern Hemisphere.
- It placed a high priority on family reunification and established a seven-category preference system for family members, skills-based individuals, and refugees. **In doing so, it replaced the previous nationality-based quota system with a family-based quota that**

was essentially a "chain immigration" system as increasing numbers of residents sponsored ever increasing numbers of their relatives.

- It removed the barriers to Asian immigration, which eventually resulted in a greater proportion of immigrants arriving from Asia than from Europe.
- The Western Hemisphere was designated a ceiling of 120,000 immigrants but without a preference system or per country limits.
- Modifications made in 1978 ultimately combined the Western and Eastern Hemispheres into one preference system and one ceiling of 290,000.

Three significant pieces of legislation since 1980 have shaped our current immigration system. First, the **Refugee Act of 1980** established a new refugee policy and removed refugees from a world limit of 270,000 annually. Second, the **1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)** introduced the concept of employer sanctions against companies that "knowingly" hired illegal aliens. It also provided amnesty for many undocumented immigrants. The legacy of this amnesty is still felt today, as many of the recipients are becoming citizens and sponsoring their spouses and minor children for immigration. The amnesty created an artificial "bulge" in immigration numbers from 1988 into the early 1990s. It was artificial since these amnesty recipients were already in the U.S.
Third, the **1990 Act**, which started out as a restrictive piece of legislation, actually increased legal immigration by 40%. In particular, the Act increased the number of employment-based immigrants significantly, up to 140,000, while also boosting family immigration. (Source: The American

Immigration Law Foundation: A Short History of U.S. Immigration Policy.)

The Immigration Debate of Today

So what are the immigration issues of today? The quick response is to point to illegal immigrant issues prompting discussion of fencing our border with Mexico and a guest worker program, or to debate the questions of national security that are before us.

More persuasive is the need to have a thoughtful national immigration policy that is based on a balance between the need to strengthen the competitive position of our nation in an increasingly global economy and the need for the United States to take a leadership position in addressing global refugee issues.

Instead, we are still feeling the unintended effect of the changes to immigration policy that occurred in the last 50 years. In his article, *"The Right Immigration Policy"*, Steven Malanga argues that the effect of the 1965 Act and other subsequent legislation has been to dramatically increase the number of immigrants - especially those that are uneducated and poor. From the 1950s to the 1970s, immigration from Asia soared tenfold, and from Africa fivefold, while newcomers from Central and South America doubled.

Today the United States has one of the least restrictive immigration policies of any nation. Each year we admit some one million legal foreign-born

immigrants and 300,000 or more illegals. Yet of this total, we limit the number of highly skilled immigrants to approximately 77,000. This quota is quickly filled by companies seeking to obtain visas for highly educated engineers and doctors. On the other hand, we have significant needs for many additional occupational tradesmen and other occupational groups. At the same time, our chain reaction of relations accounts for some 660,000 immigrants a year and a backlog of some four million applications. Increasingly we seem to be attracting the poor, the uneducated and the disadvantaged. Certainly we do have a social responsibility in the world. How this is to be balanced with our national interests and identity is a compelling question. Is it in our interest to create pockets of immigrants who do not assimilate into our national culture because of educational or economic issues?

For years we have been the destination of choice for the more educated of immigrants. According to David Bartlett of the Immigration Policy Center, in 2000 the U.S. was home to approximately one half of the world's immigrants with more than a high school education. However, in recent years we have been losing ground to other nations with a more purposeful immigration policy. Countries with such policies include Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and Canada. These countries are gaining, but our future chief competitors for talent are predicted to be India and China. Both of these countries are experiencing rapid technological progress, economic development, and booming domestic job opportunities for college-trained individuals. Both have also been key sources of highly skilled professionals with India alone accounting for one third of all H-1B visas granted by the U.S. in 2003, according to Bartlett.

Bartlett, Malanga, and others have suggested an aggressive shift in policy:

- A skill-based point system to guide immigration focusing on the highly educated but also skilled technical workers in key job classifications.
- Limiting family-based immigration to spouses and minor children.
- Getting tough on businesses who hire illegals - and development of a national registry to facilitate verification.
- Deport more illegals. Canada has followed this policy, beefing up its Border Services Agency and increasing deportations, estimated to rise to about 10,000 a year in an illegal population of about 200,000. By comparison, the U.S. deports some 50,000 annually out of its 11 million-strong illegal population.
- Eliminate the magnetic attraction of the U.S. welfare state. Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman has said: "It's just obvious that you can't have free immigration and a welfare state." Our history is as a land of opportunity, not a land of guarantees.

While these recommendations may seem overly tough, in significant ways they track those of a 1990 bi-partisan Congressional committee. This commission considered recommendations from leading economists, including Friedman. It recommended restricting quotas for unskilled immigrants, reducing total immigration by one third, and recommended against guest worker programs for industries like agriculture because they created pockets of rural poverty. The Clinton administration, as well as the

republican Congress, initially approved of the recommendations before backing down in the face of political pressure.

And so I close this paper with the statement that I opened with. As a nation we are still ambivalent on this subject. Public polls, by a two to one majority, favor tighter controls. Other countries have and are adopting purposeful immigration policies. Here in America we are basing the future demographics of our nation on 50 year-old laws and a fractured national policy. We should expect more.

Postscript

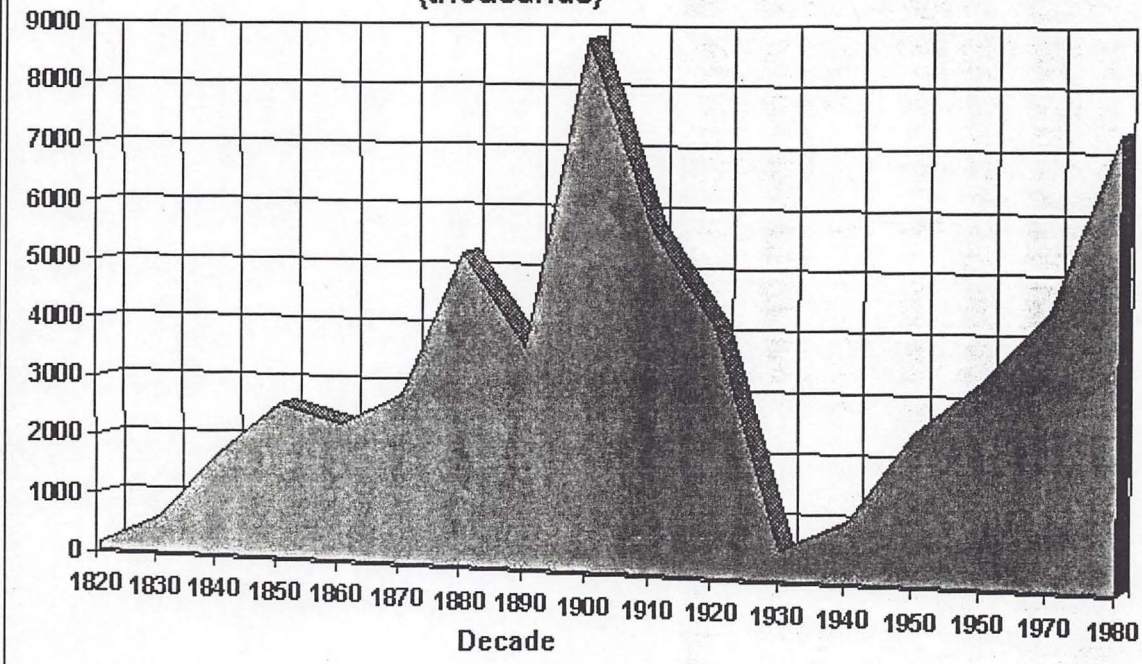
Zhanna and Frina Arshankaya lived with Grace Dawson and her two children on their farm near Crozet for 12 months before her husband Laurence Dawson returned from Germany and his UNRRA assignment. Shortly after his return he arranged auditions and the two young musicians were accepted on full scholarship at the Julliard School of Music in New York City where they studied with renowned pianist Muriel Kerr. After completing their studies both went onto careers as performers and teachers. Frina married Kenwyn Boldt, also a pianist, and the two spent the most of their careers on the faculty of the State University of New York at Buffalo where she was Chair of the Piano Department for many years until retirement. Zhanna married my father's brother, David Dawson, in 1948. They spent the majority of their careers on the faculty of the Indiana University where she taught and David, a concert violist, was a member of the famed Berkshire Quartet. He died in 1987.

Laurence Dawson, my father, joined the United States Department of State shortly after returning from Germany thus saving him from sure ruin as a farmer. He spent his professional life engaged in refugee affairs retiring as the Deputy Director of Refugee Affairs. After his retirement, he was awarded the prestigious Nansen Ring to recognize his lifelong contributions to international refugee issues.

Submitted to the SPHEX Club on January 18, 2007, by George W. Dawson

Return to Sociology Timeline

A Historical Look at U.S. Immigration Policy



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993.