OPINION

Page 9 • Tuesday, April 20, 1999

Give me your tired, your poor ...' Jnited States should reopen borders to all mmigrants, allow economic opportunity

he United States is a nation of immigrants. This has always been one of ica's main strengths, as it nabled us to take the best rightest of other nations llow them to use their vity to enrich the United

e Battalion



ere is even a certain stat-New York City dedicated

principle that the United States will welcome from all over the world to its shores. Unforely, the generous American spirit of welcommmigrants has been fading throughout much 20th century. Instead, Americans now call or tight restrictions on immigration. This move from open immigration has been a tragic to the United States both economically and rally

here is absolutely no reason to fear immigra-Immigrants have always been a resource to rica in the past, giving us the needed human al resources to fully develop this country. Why ld they not continue to be of value to America e future?

he claim that immigrants just want to come to United States to take advantage of welfare and government services is absurd. The Bureau of r Statistics reveals that only 12.8 percent of igrants use some type of government welfare, ompared to 13.9 percent of the native popula-This suggests that not only will most immits stay off welfare, but they are actually likely more productive than the native-born popula-By their nature, most immigrants are ambi-, energetic people who want to build better for themselves and their children.

nese are the kind of people we need in Ameripeople with drive and ambition, people who not afraid to take risks. Despite certain loathe steps towards the left, the United States is the land of opportunity, not the land of welfare douts. Immigrants to this country understand and come to America with the intention of king to improve themselves, to seize control of own destinies

all they wanted was to have a paternalistic ernment take care of them, they would not be ing to America, they would be going to a welstate like Canada or Sweden.

f course, it is frequently this daring spirit which

causes people to fear immigrants. Another common argument against immigration is that immigrants will take jobs away from Americans, an argument that is just as invalid as the welfare argument. Immigrants are frequently poorly educated, unskilled labor. They are at a severe competitive disadvantage with native workers. This usually leads to immigrants being forced into the most menial, miserable work available (work most American workers would not want to do in the first place). But by doing this work (and especially by doing it at low wages), immigrants end up helping the economy. They pump more money into the economy through their own spending and help American companies stay competitive against foreign competition by providing a cheap source of labor.

Also the same daring spirit that brings immi-grants to the United States in the first place can also help to produce entrepreneurs, which means immigrants or at least their children frequently end up founding businesses of their own. The proof for all of this can be seen by a Cato Institute report, which studied immigration during the 1980s and concluded that the states with the highest rates of immigration also had the highest rates of economic growth and the lowest rates of unemployment.

This seems to prove that immigrants will not take away jobs from native Americans, and instead will actually help make more jobs available.

But despite the obvious economic advantages of open immigration, some still fear the cultural impact. It is a common misconception that immigrants will come here with their own languages, customs and religions, resist all attempts at assimilation and end up being a source of conflict and strife

Benjamin Franklin voiced these very concerns about German immigration during the early national period. Yet today, German-Americans are the largest single nationality in this country and have assimilated beautifully. This charge has also been raised against every subsequent wave of immigrants including the Irish, Italians, Jews, Asians or Hispanics, and it has never been shown to have any validity

Of course immigrants are going to want to follow their native customs as closely as possible, but they have never shown any general refusal to obey the laws and dominant cultural beliefs of the United States

Most immigrants understand that at least some

own culture Strength comes from diversity, that is a basic principle of evolution that can also be applied to

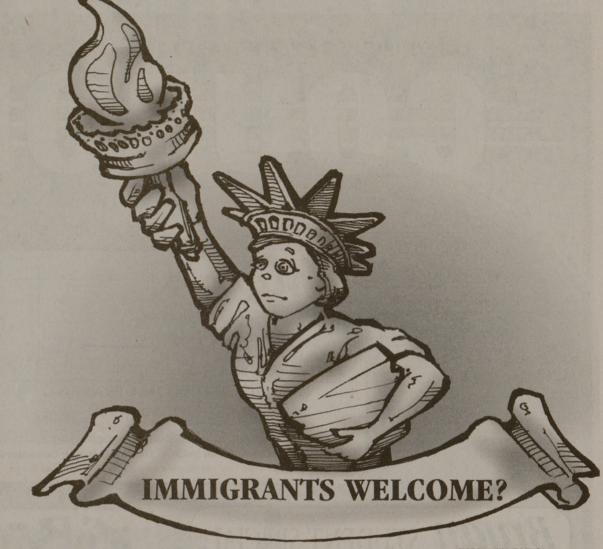
the affairs of nations. Immigrants provide that diversity to American society, they help to bring new

the United States and work to fit into American so-

ciety while still keeping what is best from their

valuable and usually thankless labor that helps make the entire country more prosperous. Open immigration helped make the United States great in the 19th century, we should return to it if we want to continue to be great in the 21st century.

> Brendan Guy is a senior political science and history major.



ROBERT HYNECEK/THE BATTALION

assimilation is necessary if they want to survive in ideas and approaches to America, and they provide

First Amendment free speech should not be absolute, unlimited

ongress shall make no law idging the freedom speech, or of the

Sound familiar?

nals of American history is to scream "fire" in a crowded theater. The clause exists because people may be killed in the mad stampede to escape the burning (well — not really burning) building. This clause in the free speech campaign is to protect the people

Hardly.

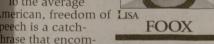
But there are people who believe what he claims, and some of these people choose to take the law into their own hands and "take care of the problem." People have died as a result of David Duke's preaching as surely as if they

jobs are available.

So, if someone is so upset with America they need to burn the flag for which soldiers have died (in the name of freedom, no less), these people should make their voices heard by leaving America. Legalizing flag burning was a

"marketplace of ideas" theory, where every addition to discourse adds some new perspective and some new insights and therefore, all are worthy of being heard

But when voices that promote hatred and ignorance, and nothing else, are



ses a variety of ideas. In fact, in a se, freedom of speech could allow ain Americans the right to insult, dee, and humiliate the minority. reedom of speech should not necesilv be so all-encompassing. The First Amendment is indeed alat absolute at this point in time. Not long ago, the Supreme Court granted interamericans the right to burn the Ameri-I flag as of expressing their opinion of he U.S. government.

One of the only big no-no's in the an-

Well, using that logic, it appears that freedom of speech should be curtailed a little more than it is right now.

When people preach hatred and bigotry, racism and absolutism, people can get hurt, maimed or killed. How so?

Take for example David Duke, a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. He continuously spouts hatred of the minorities that live in America. It appears that he truly believes he has the answer to solving the country's problems.

He thinks that if society could just get rid of the blacks, Jews, Mexicans, Asians, and homosexuals, all the economic and social evils would disappear.

were trampled in a crowded theater There should be a fine or a punish-

ment for David Duke. Another example: Joseph McCarthy. The words he chose to say caused a great deal of harm to many innocent American citizens and his legacy is a blot upon the conscience of the American government. His moment in the spotlight did not improve society.

Flag burning, on the other hand, it something it is necessary to talk about. There are thousands of people every year who want to enter this country. They are desperate to come here and many have waited years to have the chance to live in America, where food, clothing and

mistake on the part of the Supreme Court.

How does all of this relate to Texas A&M University? Well, somewhere in the darkened halls of Sterling C. Evans Library there is a collection of Holocaust literature. Among the books are a few that claim the Holocaust never happened. It's called "negationism" and it is false. So why are those books in Evans? Because of the freedom of speech

In this case, freedom of speech is harmful. It allows a generation already unfamiliar with the horror to doubt the reality of the murder of millions.

Most people who claim that free speech should be absolute are using a

heard, they drown out the message of the few pure and more enlightened voic-

Mahatma Gandhi would have been condemned, if not killed, by the Ku Klux Klan

There is never a reason to allow the minority to not to be heard - e when the minority is so strident, so hateful, that people can get hurt. There should be punishments for those who infringe on other people's right to exist peaceably. Even if that means an abridgment of the First Amendment.

> Lisa Foox is a senior journalism major.

Malcolm X, writer appear uninformed

response to Christian Robbins' pr. 16 opinion column.

ESK

Robbins' comments concerning lalcolm X in general, and white erception of blacks and Malcolm X particular, are hyperbolic and eedlessly incendiary. Malcolm X is idely and soundly criticized, in , because of his separatist po-

nstead of a personified melting ot as our forefathers, both black nd white envisioned. X would have d us live in the same country, yet nteract only with each other if abolutely necessary.

From her precariously estabhed pulpit, Robbins segues into er own disenchanted viewpoints. bbins would have us believe that even today African-Americans do t have the human rights guaraneed them under the law

t must strike Robbins as amazthat the only human rights violans reported in today's newspaper e those occurring in Kosovo. Apently there is substance to the

"shadow government" conspiracy theory. It would also be enlightening to discover which school it was that turned down any student with a 4.0 GPA and a 1600 SAT score. To insinuate that "the success of the African-American community in such a short time collectively scares caucasian America" is stereotypical and highly insulting This professes the same ignorance as would a white person who believes that all blacks are thieving gang members. The search on this campus for this mysterious "someone" who thinks that Rodney King

was not the recipient of excessive force would also be a revelation. Please try to keep the ambiguity and ignorance out of your forthcoming articles.

> Bart Fehr Class of '00

Mail Call proves hostility on campus

In response to Ronnie Kirschner's April 19 mail call.

Ronnie Kirschner's ranting and

MAIL CALL raving about Ricky Wood's election as yell leader is a prime example of the hostility that does in fact between some members of the Corps of Cadets and the non-reg student body here at A&M.

Kirschner claims he has many friends who are not in the Corps of Cadets. My first question is, would you be as upset if one of those friends ran for yell leader and made it?

Yes, the position of yell leader was started by the Corps, however, so were every one of the traditions we hold sacred here at A&M.

And, like the position of yell leader, those traditions have gradually become a part of every student's life here at this school.

My second question is do you get this riled up when a student who is not in the Corps wildcats or stands up to sing the Fight Song? I would hope not

The non-reg population of students now makes up the majority of people on this campus today, without that population the University would still be an all-male military training program, not the world-class University that it is.

My last question is that if you feel the position of vell leader should be reserved for the Corps. why don't you spend all of your hostile energy on trying to remove it from the student body elections ballot and have only the Corps

Albert Atkins

Most Christians not offensive, pushy

In response to David Lee's Apr. 19 opinion column.

In your article, you state that students of this university shouldn't "push their beliefs onto others," however, you seem to single out Christians as the biggest offenders.

True, Christ instructs Christians to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20).

However, you must realize that every time that anyone declares

their opinion, they are expecting people to listen and somehow change their way of life from what they hear. The only difference between what you have said and the truth is that the recipient of the message is always given the option to not listen or change.

I have been a Christian all of my life, and yet I have never attempted to pester another person into believing what I do, and I have never witnessed any other Christian do so.

I have handed out tracts, written pro-Christian articles, and participated in Christian events. However, this is no more "forcing" my opinions on them as the student government candidates who gave out fliers, set up Web pages and held rallies did.

Even if we did aggressively try to force "our slant of Christianity' down someone's throat, it would be worthless. People are rarely converted from one religion to another by simply hearing about it.

However, if we can demonstrate to others, by our attitudes and actions, that our religion gives us something unique, perhaps they

would consider becoming a Christian.

Rather than attack and incense the entirety of the Christian community, why not discuss your feelings with that minority of Christians who have aggressively tried to force their beliefs on you? Instead of turning around and forcing your opinion down their throat. just say you aren't interested.

No one can stop you from not hearing.

> Jonathan L. Deonarine, Class of '02

The Battalion encourages letters to the ed-itor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed Mo-Donald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to

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Class of '01

make those decisions?