

# Preface

**T**HIS is a beginning book. It is an effort to trace the role of ethnicity in the tumultuous, varied, endlessly complex life of New York City. It is time, we believe, that such an effort be made, albeit doomed inevitably to approximation and to inaccuracy, and although it cannot but on occasion give offense to those very persons for whom we have the strongest feeling of fellowship and common purpose. The notion that the intense and unprecedented mixture of ethnic and religious groups in American life was soon to blend into a homogeneous end product has outlived its usefulness, and also its credibility. In the meanwhile the persisting facts of ethnicity demand attention, understanding, and accommodation.

The point about the melting pot, as we say later, is that it did not happen. At least not in New York and, *mutatis mutandis*, in those parts of America which resemble New York.

This is nothing remarkable. On the contrary, the American ethos is nowhere better perceived than in the disinclination of the third and fourth generation of newcomers to blend into a standard, uniform national type. From the beginning, our society and our politics have been at least as much concerned with values as with interests. The principal ethnic groups of New York City will be seen

## PREFACE

maintaining a distinct identity, albeit a changing one, from one generation to the next. One group is not as another and, notably where religious and cultural values are involved, these differences are matters of choice as well as of heritage; of new creation in a new country, as well as of the maintenance of old values and forms. Our discussion of these differences necessarily touches, even dwells, on the consequent, widely varying patterns of achievement in areas such as education, business, and politics. Understandably enough, the unevenness of achievement in such matters is the source of resentment and even bitterness by many individual members of the different groups. It may be that our discussion will also be resented by such persons, for much the same reason. We would therefore, in advance, ask a measure of forgiveness for taking up a subject which needs to be discussed, but which cannot be aired without giving pain to some.

The Joint Center for Urban Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University sponsored this study, and its indefatigable director Martin Meyerson sustained it in adversity. A grant from the New York Post Foundation made possible much of the research and writing. We are singularly indebted to a great many scholars and fellow New Yorkers who have given us information, ideas, and encouragement. We would like particularly to acknowledge the counsel of Daniel Bell, Leonard Covello, Father Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, S.J., Herbert J. Gans, Frederick L. Holborn, Will Maslow, Michael Parenti, and Lloyd Rodwin. Nancy Edelman and Victor Gioscia helped with research on the Puerto Rican and Italian sections. Professor James S. Coleman generously provided an analysis of the results of the 1962 New York gubernatorial election.

This work was conceived and organized by Nathan Glazer. He wrote "the Negroes," "the Puerto Ricans," "the Jews," "the Italians," and most of the "Introduction." Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote "the Irish" and most of the last chapter, "Beyond the Melting Pot." We have discussed and criticized each other's writing, and worked together to formulate the thesis that the book presents.

*Washington*  
*April, 1963*

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xcviii

# Introduction

**I**<sub>N</sub> 1660 William Kieft, the Dutch governor of New Netherland, remarked to the French Jesuit Isaac Jogues that there were eighteen languages spoken at or near Fort Amsterdam at the tip of Manhattan Island. There still are: not necessarily the same languages, but at least as many; nor has the number ever declined in the intervening three centuries. This is an essential fact of New York: a merchant metropolis with an extraordinarily heterogeneous population. The first shipload of settlers sent out by the Dutch was made up largely of French-speaking Protestants. British, Germans, Finns, Jews, Swedes, Africans, Italians, Irish followed, beginning a stream that has never yet stopped.

The consequences of this confusion, soon to be compounded by the enormous size of the city itself, have been many. Not least has been the virtual impossibility ever of describing New York City or even the state in simple