

"while many people say they want peace, few know or want the things that make for peace. . . . When men rely on political privilege to acquire economic goods, they have already embraced the near end of a principle whose far end is war." □

Robert Higgs is Research Director for the Independent Institute.

Alien Nation

by Peter Brimelow

Random House • 1995 • 327 pages • \$24.00

Reviewed by Gregory P. Pavlik

Peter Brimelow, a journalist and senior editor at *Forbes* and *National Review*, has written a stimulating and illuminating discussion of the morass that passes for U.S. immigration policy. Brimelow argues, correctly, that current immigration regulations are part of a wider trend that seeks to change the face of America: that is, the official policy of the federal government is part and parcel of the domestic social engineering efforts that aim at a radical transformation of American society from its European mores, folkways, and culture. Hence, along with the elevation of Third World lifestyles under the leftist rubric of "multiculturalism," current supporters of U.S. immigration laws and so-called open borders, are buttressing anti-Western trends by importing masses of largely unassimilable minorities.

Contemporary libertarian critics of open borders contend that immigration serves to bolster the cost and size of the welfare state, a point that Mr. Brimelow demonstrates conclusively. It is also important to note that the current shape of immigration is politically determined: it actively limits the immigration of skilled Europeans who are more likely to assimilate—as well as add to the economy.

In his book, Mr. Brimelow addresses the economics of immigration directly. He shows that the economic benefits from recent immigration have been almost unnoticeable. In fact, there would have been virtually no loss of economic growth if the current massive immigration wave had never occurred. Brimelow also shows that the quality, in terms of economic potential, of current immigrants is much lower than that of the current American work force, the long-range effects of which have yet to be felt.

Mr. Brimelow also provides a provocative demonstration that free trade can replace immigration in public policy, allowing us to enjoy the benefits of the international division of labor without the social dislocations and destructiveness of mass immigration. As an example, "[t]he Japanese have factories in the Philippines rather than Filipinos in Japan." A similar situation existed in Victorian England. In Britain, the period of "splendid isolation" was characterized by almost unlimited free trade and virtually no immigration. In other words, the international division of labor and the mobility of capital tends to eliminate the need for large-scale immigration.

Alien Nation is a hard-hitting rebuttal of the positions embraced by advocates of open borders in other ways. Supporters of mass immigration obscure the dangers that continued immigration from the Third World presents to America's European civilization. The basis of this obfuscation rests in part on what has been called the Myth of Economic Man—the fallacious world view that boils all of human society and interaction down to economics and materialism. There are values, ways of life, and aspects of civilization that are extrinsic to economics, and motivations for human behavior that are determined by longstanding cultural practice—and even biological urges—that a purely economic worldview is unable to address, understand, or explain. It's worth noting that the Myth of Economic Man also underlies classical Marxism, whereas it is decidedly *not* a part of the free market view of the Austrian School which teaches that human actions are motivated by human values which may be entirely unrelated to material concerns.

Mr. Brimelow also makes an important corollary point: freedom and free markets do not—in fact, cannot—emerge from a vacuum. Freedom is a political category that emerges from a particular history that lends itself to a particular political disposition. If this were not the case, free political institutions would be the hallmark of world politics. Mr. Brimelow's contention is that the supporters of our current policy, and their apologists in the open borders corner, are in the process of overhauling the character of America. No honest person can believe that this will be without political ramifications. □

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The Case for Free Trade and Open Immigration

edited by Richard M. Ebeling and Jacob G. Hornberger

The Future of Freedom Foundation • 1995 • 143 pages • \$17.95 cloth; \$9.95 paperback

Reviewed by Robert Batemarco

Should a free country's freedom stop at its borders? Libertarians have long answered this question with a resounding "No!" Yet in recent years, some staunch friends of a free and open economy have come to see open borders as a threat to domestic freedom rather than a complement to it. Peter Brimelow, whose provocative *Alien Nation* is reviewed in this issue, is a case in point.

The contributors to *The Case for Free Trade and Open Immigration*, however, see freedom as indivisible. They are of one voice in blaming any adverse consequences of our most recent wave of immigration on our domestic welfare state. They view calls to restrict immigration as confirmation of Mises' claim that any hampering of the market economy creates problems which are used to "justify" further intervention. Co-editor Richard Ebeling blames, "licensing restrictions, . . . heavy tax burdens, . . . welfare programs, . . . government schools with their mandatory bilingual programs," as opposed to immigration *per se*, for any threat immigration poses to our economy and our culture.

Ultimately, their advocacy of free immigration rests on the sanctity of property rights. As Sheldon Richman points out in his piece, "There is nothing inherently coercive about a foreigner's move to the United States. He pays for transportation. He rents or buys living quarters. He works for a consenting employer or starts his own business." If he does not, he is an invader rather than an immigrant and should indeed be repelled. Those anti-immigrationists who, in the heat of argument, treat all immigrants as an invading army, however, seem to have lost sight of this distinction.

One important libertarian pro-immigration argument this book fails to include is the nature and magnitude of the new powers we must hand over to our government if we are really serious about sealing our borders. The power already granted to disrupt operations and levy fines on employers of illegal immigrants seems to have had minimal effect. Can seizing those

employers' assets or putting them in prison be far behind?

While the immigration issue is currently stirring up controversy among free-marketeers, it only constitutes half of this book. The rest deals with free trade, where among libertarians consensus still reigns. As in the chapters on immigration, the contributors exhibit a knack for getting down to first principles. James Bovard, for instance, succinctly captures the essence of what distinguishes fair trade from free trade by posing the query: "Is coercion ever fairer than voluntary agreement?" Discussions of managed trade, U.S. protectionist policies, and Friedrich List's role in promoting protectionism round out this section of the book.

The contributors to this volume should be quite familiar to readers of *The Freeman*, most having served as FEE staff members, lecturers, or writers for *The Freeman*. In addition to editors Hornberger and Ebeling, contributors include Leonard E. Read, Ludwig von Mises, Bettina Bien Greaves, W. M. Curtiss, Lawrence W. Reed, and Gregory F. Rehmkne. For those interested in understanding the classical liberal view that both people and goods should be permitted to cross borders freely, this book is an excellent place to start. □

In addition to editing the book review section of The Freeman, Dr. Batemarco is a marketing research manager in New York City and teaches economics at Marymount College in Tarrytown, New York.

Simple Rules for a Complex World

by Richard A. Epstein

Harvard University Press • 1995 • 375 pages • \$35.00

Reviewed by William H. Peterson

America broods over laws and lawyers, as witness:

Q. Why didn't the shark eat the lawyer?

A. Professional courtesy.

Q. What are 500 lawyers at the bottom of the ocean?

A. A good start.

Q. How can a single lawyer in town without enough to do succeed?

A. Get another lawyer to move into town, and both will thrive.

Witness more. In 1936, at the height of the New Deal, the *Federal Register* had 2,411 pages