

Hence, these anti-immigrant forces locked into the Democratic Party will push pro-immigrant Democrats (such as the “Asians,” Hispanics, and Jews) into the arms of the pro-immigrant (if Unz has his way) Republican Party. And this isn’t all. This fabulous racial Gotterdammerung in America will also “spark a massive rollback of the welfare state.”

Contrary to this racial Valhalla, November 8, 1994, revealed the opposite dynamic. A much larger number of Californian voters opted for restrictions on immigration than for Pete Wilson. That is to say, Proposition 187, despite its clumsiness and legal difficulties, gained more support than the top candidates of either party.

The third theme advanced by Republicans who favor “open borders” (or—like Unz—favor large flows of immigration) is an insouciant confidence that the United States would not become balkanized. This was unwarranted optimism even before the battle about California’s Proposition 187 had played itself out. As John O’Sullivan wrote in the *National Review*, “the arrival of more and more people speaking a language other than English” promotes “cultural ghettos” that, instead of being absorbed, continue to survive and expand.

The California scene before and following the November election woke us up to the fact that for America’s balkanization, it is later than we thought. Even though the voters decided, by a factor of two to one, that the 187 measure, with all its defects, was better than nothing, the opposition skillfully mobilized forces that promote these new ghettos. There were not only Mexican flags carried in several demonstrations, but also less visible portents, such as financial support for the organization that opposed 187 from a Spanish language television network and from the California Teachers Association (which is hostile to welfare reform and wants to maintain bilingualism). Moreover, official and unofficial voices from Mexico claimed, in effect, an international entitlement to send illegal immigrants into the United States. Worst of all, the big-government establishments in Sacramento and Washington have since been stoking the fires of balkanization by exhorting everyone to break the law, if necessary, in order to keep illegal immigration flowing. The larger this illegal flow, the easier it will be for the “balkanizers” to suborn the new immigrants into a ghetto culture.

— Fred C. Ikle  
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**R**on Unz concludes that immigration is being blamed for America’s social and economic problems. Not true. There is legitimate concern regarding *illegal* immigration and a renewed determination to take action to combat illegal immigration, already against U.S. laws. There also is the need for honest debate about proper levels of legal immigration. But Unz is wrong if he believes such public interest and concern amounts to blaming immigrants for the fundamental societal problems.

Immigrants, *if legal*, are a “blessing” as Unz asserts. Illegal aliens are not a “blessing”—they undercut our laws, our heritage of legal immigration and represent a drain on our economy and social network. Unz wants to return to “the Ellis Island tradition,” which he notes was “harsh

but fair” and which excluded those “with illnesses of who were otherwise likely to become a burden on society”. This is an argument for *legal* immigration, which I accept.

Unz then proceeds, however, to give examples of legal and illegal aliens needed to do “unpleasant jobs” and cites an example of a successful Silicon Valley entrepreneur who was illegal. This justification of illegal immigration is inconsistent with Unz’s push for a return to the Ellis Island tradition. Unz’s broad assertion that immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits does not stand review. First, you must separate legal from illegal immigrants. Second, at least half the illegal aliens do not pay taxes! They are paid in cash, there is no withholding, and no tax returns are filed. However, even if there is alleged economic benefit received from illegals, you cannot justify illegal activity on such grounds. If you do, you have restated the argument for slavery.

Unz states that “there exists an obvious incompatibility between immigration and an extensive social welfare state.” He further states that “...extending America’s generous welfare benefits to all Third World inhabitants who cross our borders would quickly bankrupt any economy and cause the collapse of the modern welfare state.” These statements are accurate. Moreover, they certainly show a significant relationship between immigration and the social welfare system.

Unz advocates that the Republican Party support reasonable levels of legal immigration and pursue efforts to deter illegal immigration. The Republican Party position pursued under Ronald Reagan was exactly that. Certainly a strong party position against illegal immigration is both good domestic and foreign policy as well as good politics.

Unfortunately, Unz, in positions stated in his article and in appearances in California, opposes every known approach to stopping illegal immigration. He agrees with more border enforcement but notes that half of the illegal entrants are visa overstays. He is against employer sanctions, which are the main deterrent to illegal aliens obtaining jobs. He opposed California Proposition 187, which will enhance existing laws to prevent illegal aliens from obtaining benefits. He blurs the distinctions between legal and illegal immigration and appears to accept illegal entrants if they work hard.

From my experience as U.S. Immigration Commissioner, to stop illegal immigration we must pursue a combination of efforts to stop the magnets of jobs and benefits, strengthen border enforcement, and improve the public resolve not to tolerate illegal immigration.

The concluding statement by Unz is that “our goal must be to return our entire society to the values of individual liberty, community spirit and personal self-reliance...drawing from the traditions of the Western frontier and Ellis Island.” A good place to start is to take definitive steps to stop illegal immigration which undercuts all such values.

— Alan C. Nelson

Commissioner, Immigration and  
Naturalization Service, 1982 to 1989  
Co-Author, Proposition 187  
President, Americans Against Illegal Immigration  
Newport Beach, CA

**R**on Unz's diatribe against those arguing for less immigration ("Immigration or the Welfare State," Fall 1994), contains the same faulty reasoning that has characterized Jack Kemp's view on this subject. It goes:

1) Immigrants are not a problem, rather it's welfare and other disincentives to work. Without welfare, immigration "is a blessing." The more immigration, the bigger the blessing. The solution is to cut welfare and forget immigration policy.

2) If we cut welfare, we get the support of conservative ethnic groups who are naturally disinclined to support welfare.

3) If the Republican Party gets into a discussion of immigration policy, the difficulties of the issue will ensnare the party in divisive issues that will prevent outreach to "people of color."

If immigration were not moving swiftly up the issue curve, such a "behind the curve" strategy might make sense. But immigration will soon be one of the top five issues in America. For those conservatives who see immigration as only a tool to attack the welfare state, they are fixating on too narrow a part of the picture. A huge issue will be left unattended by an important wing of America's intellectual field.

Immigration issues are dramatically affecting all phases of American society, driving a deep self-analysis of who and what we are—and want to be. The rapidly-growing pressure on America's borders has created an altered sense of our vulnerability to outside forces in controlling our destiny, and in passing on to future generations a nation with the same qualities as those we inherited from our ancestors.

Rather than rely on outmoded myths of the past, or create new ones out of the future, conservatives like Unz should engage the issue directly on its own merits: Why do we need immigration? If we do, how do current policies reflect the need? If we don't need immigration, why have it? This is the real debate on immigration. Let it begin.

— Daniel A. Stein

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## **T Ron K. Unz Responds:**

The basic thesis of my *Policy Review* article was a simple one: that immigration has generally been a good thing for America over the years, but that the recent leftist policies of multiculturalism, bilingualism, affirmative action, and welfare dependency are severe threats to our society, with or without immigration. My position probably represented the widely accepted mainstream of conservative thought just four or five years ago, and few facts have changed since then. I suggest that the enormous hostility this position provoked demonstrates the near-hysteria gripping all too many anti-immigration intellectuals. I will do my best to respond with as much common sense as possible.

Although Lawrence Auster is free to indulge his hyperbolic rhetoric—exemplified by the title of his 1990 book

on immigration, *The Path to National Suicide*—he should be more careful of his facts. That a few political activists in San Jose (peacefully) protested an allegedly "insensitive" public statue in 1990 (not 1992) is hardly a sign of significant ethnic conflict, and it was actually the Anglo multiculturalist liberals controlling the city council who chose to waste \$500,000 on a statue of an Aztec pagan god. This latter statue has actually aroused much criticism among San Jose's large Hispanic immigrant community, who are overwhelmingly pious Catholics or Evangelical Protestants; they are as eager to worship Quetzalcoatl as an American of Auster's (likely) German heritage worships Thor or Odin. These immigrants might have preferred, say, a Catholic Saint such as Our Lady of Guadalupe as the subject, but while the (Anglo) ACLU

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### **"I STAND BY MY VIEW THAT OUR WELFARE SYSTEM IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF OUR SOCIAL ILLS." — RON K. UNZ**

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has no problems with spending public money on statues of pagan gods, it would obviously never permit religious images in the town square. I belabor the point because the story of the Quetzalcoatl statue has received much national attention, and local nuances are often lost across 3,000 miles.

Similarly, the display of Mexican flags by the anti-187 marchers was a political blunder, but not all that different from the display of Irish flags during St. Patrick's Day marches, or various other forms of traditional ethnic American pride. More than a few of the protesters were proud Mexican-American veterans who attended the rally with their U.S. Army medals, decrying what they (rightly) perceived as the anti-Mexican rhetoric of many pro-187 activists. In fact, Los Angeles's Mexican-American community has among the nation's highest rates of military service, and is enormously patriotic on national defense issues.

Prof. Briggs's criticisms are far more tempered, but I believe that they are mistaken all the same. The decline of European immigration dating from 1914 was obviously caused largely by the outbreak of war and its disruptive aftermath, which were soon followed by the harsh Immigration Restriction Act of 1924. The Great Depression which began a few years later hardly proves that restrictionist policies guarantee jobs and prosperity. Furthermore, the enormous human capital of the German and Eastern European Jews, who would have fled to America in the 1930s, was certainly lost to our nation, with the notable immigrant exceptions of Albert Einstein and most of the other fathers of our A-Bomb program.

Turning to post-1965 immigration, a very substantial fraction of these immigrants demonstrate exactly those high cognitive abilities which Prof. Briggs argues are so important to our economy. The great prevalence of these immigrants and their children as winners of academic and science competitions, as students and faculty members at our finest universities, and as leading employees