

# Ducking the Issue

## *Candidates fail to talk about immigration*

by Charley Reese

**D**en Xiaoping was discussing trade matters with President Jimmy Carter. Carter said he was sorry but that U.S. law prevented the granting of most-favored-nation status to any country that did not allow free emigration.

“Why, that’s no problem at all,” the Chinese leader replied. “How many Chinese would you like, Mr. President? Ten million? Twenty million? Thirty million?”

Whether this is a true story, I don’t know, but it certainly illustrates the problem industrialized countries have in regard to population growth. The population expansion is, perfectly in keeping with nature’s method, far from uniform.

Consequently many countries such as China and India have millions of people to spare, and the industrialized countries, where population is stable or dropping, can expect waves of immigrants legal or otherwise.

The United States at present admits about 1 million legal immigrants and probably a quarter of a million illegals every year. If this rate keeps up, U.S. population will be about 400 million within 50 years. With that many folks, you can forget about environmental concerns, curing traffic jams or stopping urban sprawl. It will be a country not recognizable by people living today.

Congress, of course, ought to pass the Mass Immigration Reduction Act. The current legal levels of immigration are about three times higher than our historical level. This bill would reduce the current level from 1 million to about 270,000 per year. It is a quite sensible bill, but it will face massive opposition.

Congress, of course, ought to defeat any bills to grant amnesty to illegal aliens already here. The problem is that once they are given legal status, then they jump to

the head of the line and are eligible to bring their families in.

Personally, I like most immigrants better than a lot of native-borns I could mention. Immigrants at least still appreciate the American experience. They are much more interesting to talk to than people who are fascinated by television quiz shows or who fathered the latest illegitimate child of some entertainer.

My objection to the current high level of immigration is strictly based on numbers, not on the people. Nevertheless, one should not forget that what makes a country is the people who live there, not its history or its geography. With continued mass immigration, it is unlikely America can retain its unique identity, which, whether people like it or not, is firmly grounded in the Anglo-Saxon history and European culture.

There are some basics in human experience, and one is that a nation must control its borders; otherwise it will not survive. We are a nation today because the people already living in North America could not control their borders. Our ancestors simply muscled the Native Americans out of the way.

Well, there are plenty of people alive today who are perfectly willing to muscle us out of the way. They are no different from our own ancestors. They are looking for a better life, for places where they can make their dreams come true. And, like our ancestors, they’re a pretty tough bunch, willing to do the 12-hour day and the seven-day week if that’s what it takes.

There is plenty of room for disagreement on immigration, but what Americans ought not to tolerate is avoiding the issue, which is what both major political parties are attempting to do.

Nor should Americans pay any attention to big business on this issue. It wants cheap labor, and it doesn’t care about the social costs. The working men and women with their taxes will have to pay those.

We don’t need poor immigrants to drive down service-job wages. €

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*Charley Reese is a syndicated columnist. © 2000, this article is reprinted with permission from King Features Syndicate.*