

The Social Contract

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The Social Contract

is published quarterly

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A Note from the Editor

No Safe Places

Crime and Immigration

Criminal activities committed by foreign nationals have escalated. Aliens are crowding local, state, and federal jails across the country. Since the early 1990s, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons reports that more than 25 percent of federal inmates are non-U.S. citizens. These aliens are not in prison for simply being illegally in the United States — unless they are arrested for reentering illegally after being deported. The vast majority have been convicted of a felony while in this country. And a large percentage have committed multiple crimes.

“If we think the [number of imprisoned illegal aliens] is high, what is worse is that seven out of eight [criminal] aliens are either released or given probation and never serve time in prison,” Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas), Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, points out. These statistics do not imply that all or most immigrants are law-breakers. But under current immigration laws and procedures, large numbers of newcomers see crime as their avenue to the American dream.

The illegal alien population poses special problems. They enter illegally or under false pretenses. Unlike legal applicants, they undergo no form of screening. Many are engaged in serious criminal activity at the time of their illegal entry, e.g., alien and/or drug smuggling. Other illegals pay their smugglers by committing additional criminal acts, such as drug dealing or prostitution.

The Obama Administration’s Department of Homeland Security claimed in 2010 that they had secured “operational control” of most our southern border with Mexico. These assertions are not supported by facts. As Larry Dever, Sheriff of Cochise County, Arizona, wrote in the *New York Times* of May 12, 2011, “violent crime rooted in unchecked illegal immigration continues to spread here in southern Arizona.” As a consequence of the failure of federal officials to secure our borders, a number of state legislatures, notably those of Arizona, Alabama, and Georgia, have taken action.

In this issue of *The Social Contract*, our contributors confront the reality of crime and immigration. In addition to identifying the associated problems, they offer realistic policy proposals. In the area of law enforcement, we should do everything practicable to keep criminal aliens out of the U.S. and not fail to deport them once they are caught. ■

Wayne Lutton, Ph.D.