

Carlsbad 1819

Like another Chouannerie

Copperheads go where no #Liberalist dares tread

September 8, 2018 by Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

The Old Guard (1863-1867) was probably the most incendiary of the Copperhead journals. Staunchly anti-abolitionist, pro-states' rights, Jeffersonian in direction, and anti-Lincoln, its editor Charles Chauncey Burr was himself a former sympathizer of abolitionism and also an early publisher of Edgar Allan Poe's poetry. Devoted on its masthead to the principles of 1776 and 1787, it lionized the South often more vigorously than much of Dixie's own men.

An example of their brutal consistency is in an August or September 1863 issue where they pose the question "Shall the American Principle Fall?"

(<https://archive.org/stream/oldguardmonthlyjv1burr#page/232>). There are two pillars: consent of the governed, and free discussion:

The man who will not allow free discussion, is both a tyrant and a coward — more fit for a dungeon himself, than for a post of office among a free people. No! he aids rebellion who denies the right of free discussion; for he teaches the people to disregard the Constitution, and himself sets the example of rebelling against the very soul of its existence. If we cannot suppress rebellion without destroying liberty, and abolishing the constitutional form of our government, then rebellion has an indefeasible right to succeed. But, “have we not a right to preserve the Union?” Yes: that right is sacred — it is eternal — and no man, who loves his country, will count his own life too great a sacrifice for its salvation. If you are saving the Union — if you are preserving the glorious old Constitution which was the bond of our Union — then we shall stand by you in life or in death for the accomplishment of that great end. But, if you are trampling upon that Constitution — if you are making the salvation of the Union an impossible thing — if you prefer the enlargement of negroes to the reconstruction of the “Union as it was” — then we shall not go with you — no, not even though you fill this once free land as full of prisons as perdition is of fiends! Your tyranny we denounce, and your threats we despise. We hold you as traitors, more to be condemned than the abhorred rebellion of the South; because you aim, not like it, at the mere territorial integrity of the Union, but at its fundamental life — at the very soul of liberty and self-government. To “destroy” the South, is not to save the Union. To sweep over the territory of revolted States, with all the savagery of unrestrained vengeance is not to bring them back. To “exterminate” them, is not to enforce the laws, for there are no laws for the extermination of States. Let us understand this matter: once establish the right to destroy — to hold as colonies — and the government which was established by the great men of the Revolution, perishes forever. This is a thousand times worse than secession; for that makes no war upon either the spirit or form of the government. To secede from a government, is not to destroy it. **But this thing, that the abolitionists propose to do, sweeps down the whole temple of the Constitution and laws together, and leaves upon its ruins a gigantic despotism, which inaugurates its advent by threatening to cut the throats of all who do not adopt their degrading notions of negro equality with the white race. — Suppose these men should succeed in destroying slaveholders, how long may it be before they will begin to destroy some other portion of the people, who hold opinions different from their own? If we have not a right to differ with them on the subject of negroes, do we not lose the right to differ with them on any subject? If we allow them to strike down our liberty in this matter, where is our liberty in any thing else secure?**

To preserve this Union, then, the people have not only to overcome the crime and folly of secession, but they have also to strike down this bloody, liberty-destroying monster of Abolition. The crimes of the secessionists are territorial and external — those of the abolitionists are fundamental, striking at the heart of the Constitution, and sweeping away the whole edifice of popular self-government.

I sure would like to watch that debate on the Rubin Report.

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