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Like another Chouannerie

We are a nation of immigrants (1856)

March 11, 2018 by Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

The great paradox of American history is that it has been hardly possible to forge a stable, lasting coalition that is anti-immigrant/protectionist *and* socially conservative. On everything besides immigration, the Know Nothings were insanely liberal.

(<https://carlsbad1819.wordpress.com/2018/01/16/nativism-and-radical-republicanism-a-curious-relationship/>). The other great success of nativism was during the major upheaval of social workers, journalists and philosophes known as the Progressive Era, the legacy of which left nothing to the eugenic part of it and everything to turning America into a unitary Jacobin state. The “alt-right consensus” view of history now gaining traction that America was basically a nation of homogeneous and culturally counterrevolutionary Englishmen until the Jews botched it, is quite off.

Rather than say so bluntly that America is a “nation of immigrants” (<https://nithgrim.wordpress.com/2016/06/13/the-american-experiment/>),” an older pro-immigrant writer might have said that America is a nation whose principles are defined by, among other things, “liberal naturalization laws.” As did Louis F. Schade (1829-1903), Forty-Eighter emigrant to America fleeing the death sentence for revolutionary activity, Democratic Party activist, and later legal counsel to Confederate Major Henry Wirz.

Schade’s 1856 monograph *The Immigration Into the United States of America, From a Statistical and National-Economical Point of View* was republished in the Democratic National Committee’s campaign manual (<https://books.google.com/books?id=yHA0AQAAAMAJ>), for the same year, so this wasn’t some nut’s fringe opinion. It was influential to people with “clout.”

Schade (and the DNC by approving it) flat out declares that “the founders of our republic, therefore, favored immigration, and to that end denounced the obstruction to naturalization, and the refusal to “encourage migration hither” — in quite open contradistinction to any cries of “But what about the Naturalization Act of 1790?!”

Besides the economic argument, with Schade saying that America was indebted to immigrants for “the reduction of the vast wilderness of the west and northwest to the dominion of civilization and industry, swelling the amount of our annual revenues, increasing to an almost limitless extent our commercial wealth, and placing us in the front rank of nations as an agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial people,” the benefit of population growth, etc. Schade skewers the Know Nothings for their hypocrisy in

promoting abolitionism and seeking to elevate negroes to equal rights with whites. This was true, and the sectional divisions b/w North and South were what fractured the American Party and ruined it as a national force.

As follows:

Emigration is as old as mankind. The first history of man is nothing but a narration of events which befell individuals or whole nations whilst migrating from one country to another, pictured by single deeds of gallantry or depravity of prominent men. In general, emigration has always flowed from east to west. . . . But emigration in the American sense was unknown to the ancient and middle ages. The emigrants to this country came not as conquerors fighting for their native sovereign, or to increase, by their labor, his finances and revenues, but for the purpose of founding a new home, a new fatherland. They came to the land of their choice as freemen, with the expectation to die also as such.

In the catalogue of “injuries and usurpations” on which the immortal signers of the Declaration of Independence based their resolution to defy the power of the king of Great Britain, the following stands conspicuous:

“He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.”

These, amongst others, were enumerated as evidence of a direct object on the part of the British king to establish “an absolute tyranny over the States.” The founders of our republic, therefore, favored immigration, and to that end denounced the obstruction to naturalization, and the refusal to “encourage migration hither” by George the Third, as acts of tyranny. The illustrious patriots who framed the constitution introduced into it a clause empowering Congress to adopt a “uniform rule of naturalization.” The first Congress which assembled under the constitution, composed to a great degree of the same sages and statesmen who had signed the Declaration of Independence and framed the constitution, enacted a law by which any free white alien, who had resided two years within the United States, might become a citizen. . . .

It is now proposed by the modern order of patriots, who delight in the name of know-nothings, to prevent the further immigration of foreigners by repealing the naturalization laws entirely, if that is found practicable, and, if not, to obstruct it as much as possible by extending the term of residence to twenty-one years. Their first proposition is substantially the policy of the king of Great Britain, which the signers of the Declaration denounced to the world as tyrannical. . . . The democrats stand upon the platform first erected under Washington, and reestablished under Jefferson, for carrying into practical effect the policy proclaimed by the signers of the Declaration of Independence. . . .

If immigration is wrong now, it was wrong then; if obstructions to naturalization are right now, they were right then.

We are not without reliable data on which to determine whether know-nothings are wiser and more patriotic than Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and the host of sages and statesmen who have concurred with them in encouraging immigration and facilitating naturalization. We have the fruits of their policy, and by that standard we will judge of its wisdom. . . . We have now thirty-one States, with a free population of more than twenty millions. Population and territory are prominent elements in natural strength, prosperity, and greatness. Our revenues have increased from a few millions to more than fifty annually. Immense new empires of new territory have been acquired and paid for, and now furnish homes and happiness to millions of enterprising and productive citizens. Our progress, in all that gives power and greatness to a nation, has filled the world with wonder and admiration, whilst it has filled our own people with a spirit of national pride which they have abundant cause to indulge. All this, and manifold more, will be readily conceded even by our know-

nothing patriots: but, in their simplicity, they will ask, what has our amazing progress, in all the elements of national prosperity and grandeur, to do with the policy of immigration and naturalization? We will endeavor to enlighten them by the irresistible logic of facts and figures.

If the know-nothings had controlled the government in 1789, when the constitution went into operation, instead of encouraging immigration and enacting liberal naturalization laws, their policy would have been in total exclusion of all foreigners. They would have acted upon the doctrine which they now advocate, "Americans must rule America;" and to that end no foreigner would have been allowed a resting place within the limits of the Old Thirteen. Let us now see how that policy would have worked.

In 1790 the population of the United States, including whites and free colored persons, was 3,231,930. If all increase from immigration had been cut off, in pursuance of the know-nothing doctrine, the surplus of births over deaths would have constituted the only growth in our population. A very interesting problem then presents itself. Upon the know-nothing policy, if adopted in 1790, what would be the present population of the United States? Fortunately, the census table furnishes us with the data for solving this proposition, and of illustrating the wonderful wisdom of the know-nothing policy.

The calculation is a long and tedious one, but the result is mathematically certain. It is this: The population in 1790 being 3,231,930, and being increased alone by the surplus of births over deaths, would in 1850 amount to 7,555,423 whites and free colored persons, including 200,000 for Louisiana, Florida, California, and those territories which were acquired since 1790. But upon turning to the actual returns of the census of 1850, we find the number of whites and free colored persons to be 19,987,573. It appears, then, that if the know-nothing policy had been adopted in 1790, our present population would be 7,555,423, instead of its actual number of 19,987,573 — a difference in population between the know-nothing and the democratic policy of 12,432,150.

None can fail to see in these figures the great benefit this country has derived from the increased immigration. . . . But for the influence of immigration, the wonderful works of improvement, which have added so much to our national wealth and prosperity, could not have been accomplished. To this we are indebted, in an eminent degree, for the thousands of miles of railroad and canal communication which now cover our vast domain like a network, and furnish ready and profitable facilities for realizing the benefits of the productive energies and enterprise of every industrial pursuit. To this we are indebted for the reduction of the vast wilderness of the west and northwest to the dominion of civilization and industry, swelling the amount of our annual revenues, increasing to an almost limitless extent our commercial wealth, and placing us in the front rank of nations as an agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial people. To immigration we are indebted in no small degree for the rapid addition of State after State to the confederacy, until we have spanned the continent with more than double our original number. But it cannot be necessary to dwell upon results so astounding to foreign nations, and so flattering to our national pride. To appreciate them, we have but to imagine twelve millions of our population withdrawn, and reflect upon the amazing contrast that would now be presented with a population little more than one-third of its present number!

It is true, the people of the United States, as a power, can use means to prevent immigration, and prohibit it if they will. But, in doing so, an original and distinguished principle of the government must be abrogated; and, having done this, we descend to a level with the arbitrary and proscriptive thrones of Europe. But the loss of the laborious immigrant will soon be felt. . . . Men of genius, artists, scholars, came with this tide of immigration; and, while they have been able to find

employment for themselves, they have also vastly contributed to the intellectual stores of this country. A remarkable instance of the public spirit and generosity of foreign-born citizens may be seen in the fact that the three leading scientific or educational institutions in the United States were founded by men born in other lands. I allude to the great Astor Library, of New York, endowed by the German John Jacob Astor; the Girard College, in Philadelphia, endowed by the Frenchman, Stephen Girard; and the Smithsonian Institution, at Washington, endowed by the Englishman, John Smithson. . . .

The principles of the know-nothings carried out would degrade the emigrant to the low position of an East Indian pariah, or a Russian serf, excepting only that they could not be sold. They would doom in to a fate far worse than the hardest despotism of the Old World. There, at least, he would have the consciousness of not suffering alone, as the whole population, and not a part of it, would have no more rights than himself. Here he would be marked out as an inferior, useful only to dig canals and build railroads, to fight like the Helots of old, to act as hewer of wood and drawer of water to those who falsely call themselves superior beings. And not this only. While this is sought to be made the lot of the white adopted citizens — while the laboring classes are appealed to deny equal privileges to the foreign-born fellow-being of their own race — behold their efforts making in the free States to elevate the negro to the political rights and privileges of the whites!

“Americans must rule America!” —that is the constant war-cry of the know-nothings. There are at present in the United States twenty-seven millions of inhabitants, of which five millions are foreigners. . . . But there is not a single foreign-born member of Congress. Are the democratic members for whom foreign-born citizens have cast their vote, not as good, intelligent, and wise as those who have been elected by a mere native vote? The know-nothings speak constantly of their revolutionary inheritance, their “glorious sires of ’76.” Will they inform me how many of them can trace back their lineage to the time of the Revolution? Are not at least two-thirds of their number descendants of those who arrived in the country since 1790? Was not, in New York, even their candidate for governor the son of a foreigner? Are not, with only the exception of two, all the 148 or 149 know-nothings of the New York State legislature sons of foreign parents? The answer to these questions will put to shame the warfare which the know-nothingism is waging upon the policy of the founders of this republic. It is not simply a warfare upon the foreign-born citizens diffused throughout the Union, identified in interest with our institutions; connected by the closest ties with native-born citizens; engaged in industrial pursuits which add to the national wealth and prosperity; levelling mountains and filling up valleys for our great internal improvements; felling the forests, and spreading the area of productive agriculture in the Far West; shouldering their muskets when the tocsin of war sounds; and fighting and dying bravely on the battle field by the side of native Americans. A warfare upon such a body of men is bad enough in all conscience; but the warfare of know-nothingism is against the principles on which our Revolution was started and consummated —against the policy engrafted upon our constitution, and carried out by liberal naturalization laws in Congress; and against the prosperity of the nation, which has received one of its chief impulses from this policy.

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