

FREEDOM'S CHOIR

Social and Economic Conservatives Are Singing the Same Song

REPRESENTATIVE DICK ARMEY

An old ghost returned to haunt the Republican Party during the debate over the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). While the party's economic conservatives, true to the free trade orthodoxy of the Reagan era, immediately leapt to support the pact, the party's social conservatives were suspicious of it from the start. One pro-life leader captured the depths of the minischism when she remarked, "only the establishment's for NAFTA"—meaning "only" the economic conservatives with whom she had made common cause for 12 years.

Like the intraparty disputes over abortion, gay rights, taxing the rich, or a host of other issues, the NAFTA campaign has raised serious questions in some minds about the coherence of the Republican Party. On one side of the party, they see economic conservatives champion lower taxes, less regulation, and free trade. On the other, the cultural conservatives who, in their view, take decidedly unlibertarian positions on social issues and often seem lukewarm in their support for classical market economics. While the two groups may have been held together in the past by a shared anticommunism or their mutual enthusiasm for Ronald Reagan, the argument runs, on a number of issues the two camps are now divided.

FEARS OF FRATRICIDE

Even the conscience of conservative Barry Goldwater, who did as much as anyone to build the modern Republican Party, is troubled by a sense of inconsistency. Surveying the cultural conservatives' consternation over President Clinton's plan to put gays in the military, the former senator told a gay newspaper, "The Republican Party should stand for freedom and only for freedom ... freedom means doing what you damn well please. To see the party that fought communism and big government now fighting gays, well, that's just plain dumb."

Senator Goldwater alludes to the key question: Is there an inherent contradiction between the party's support for economic freedom and its social agenda?

If so, the GOP is divided against itself, and presents a potentially unstable coalition that could fly apart—particularly as we enter the new, post-Cold War world. Any armchair political scientist could easily imagine the party transforming itself into a "more consistent" William Weld

party with the goal of keeping the government off our backs and out of our bedrooms. Or it could become a party combining social conservatives and protectionist trade unionists—a Pat Buchanan party supporting traditional values and putting "America First."

More likely, the party could "go the way of the Whigs," destroying itself in fratricidal battles and leaving Ross Perot to occupy the ruins.

Before the professional doomsayers get carried away about the GOP's future, however, we should remember that the problem of internal division has visited the party many times since modern conservatism's inception. The tensions we see today pale in comparison to the dispute that raged in the 1950s between the followers of libertarian-leaning Friedrich von Hayek and the traditionalists led by Russell Kirk. That argument was resolved so completely by William F. Buckley Jr. and the intellectual battalions at *National Review* that generations of conservatives—myself included—have grown up feeling perfectly at home among the most ardent partisans of both camps.

There is, in fact, no inherent contradiction among the strains of conservatism. If we reconsider and resolve again this old argument between our party's economic and cultural conservatives, we will find that they both are firmly united behind a freedom agenda.

THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY

I happen to agree with Senator Goldwater that the best way to describe ourselves in the 1990s is as "the party of freedom." That phrase best captures our basic values as we confront the most statist administration in 30 years.

After a President flying the Republican banner—however weakly—was kicked out of the White House with 62 percent of the country voting against him, we urgently need a fresh way to explain ourselves to an understandably surly and skeptical electorate.

This does not mean recasting ourselves. Our situation today is very different from the profound spiritual crisis facing McGovernite-New Deal Democrats after a similar debacle in 1980. Their deepest beliefs and policies had been utterly repudiated by events—and they knew it. The

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New Jersey Newsphotos

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Democrats' failure to arrest inflation, or even comprehend its causes, proved that they did not have a clue about how to run the government in a modern, capitalist economy. They made an enormous effort to resolve an energy crisis which, we discovered a few Republican policies later, did not exist. The trillions of dollars they spent waging war on poverty netted them (and us) only an unprecedented crime wave and a brutal subculture in the inner cities. Their generous attempts to appease the Soviets produced genocide in Afghanistan and 300 new missiles aimed at Europe. In short, the Democrats' entire world view was shattered. Young, ambitious Democratic candidates had no choice but to call themselves "New Democrats," until one was convincing enough to ride a plurality into the White House—with a little help from Mr. Perot.

THE PARTY OF FREEDOM

In the Republican case, our world view has been completely vindicated by events since 1980. From the moment our tax cuts and deregulation began taking effect in 1982, our economy entered the longest peacetime expansion in history, growing by nearly a third, an achievement

equal to grafting the entire German economy onto ours. All income groups, contrary to the numbers cooked up by the Democrat-controlled Congressional Budget Committee, saw their incomes rise by at least 10 percent. This recovery of our economic strength, combined with Reagan-inspired self-confidence and a formidable arms build-up, relegated the Soviet Empire to the ash heap of history, and left us more secure from foreign aggression than at any time since 1918.

Now, as we enter the post-Cold War world, we are as ideologically vital as we ever were. One might have expected a certain exhaustion to set in as we searched for new policies for a new era. It hasn't happened. The only new ideas for addressing our schools and cities—from school choice to enterprise zones to urban homesteading—are Republican ideas. We own the crime issue, as the public supports us on the death penalty, more prisons, and more police. And there is no way to understand what has happened to the economy since President Reagan left office except as a consequence of the reversal of his policies, demanding their immediate reinstatement.

We don't need, then, a reworking of our platform—to give up ideas we believe in for ones we don't believe in,

as Margaret Thatcher once said of her opposition. But we do need a new way to explain ourselves to our own followers and to the general public. "The Party of Freedom," I believe, best captures the essence of what we are about and will effectively undermine both the elitism of Bill Clinton and the counterfeit populism of Ross Perot.

FREEDOM TO DO WHAT?

Freedom has actually been a controversial theme in conservative history. Back in the wilderness years of the late 1940s and early 1950s, the traditionalists, forerunners of today's cultural conservatives, were wary of Friedrich von Hayek and his followers, partly out of an aristocratic fear that the free market could erode time-tested traditions, but mainly because they smelled in their writings the smoke of an extreme libertarian ideology. As Russell Kirk put it in 1988, echoing his point of 30 years earlier:

The ruinous failing of ideologues who call themselves libertarians is their fanatic attachment to a simple and solitary principle—that is, the notion of freedom as the whole end of civil order, and indeed of human existence.

The emphasis on freedom, the traditionalists argued, implied that other values—or any values—were unimportant. Freedom is a mere process, desperately begging the question: "freedom to do what?" It was much better, in their opinion, for conservatives to rally around substantive values, like belief in God and a transcendent order in the universe. Without such grounding, celebrating freedom could easily collapse into a celebration of raw libertinism.

But being the party of freedom did not mean then, nor does it mean now, that we believe individuals should be freed from all social restraint. In contrast to our genuinely libertarian friends, we firmly believe that the influence of family, the weight of tradition, and above all religious conviction are essential for individuals to live virtuous lives, which we accept as the only proper end of human life. We simply make a crucial distinction between these forms of social control, which are not enforced by physical coercion, and the power of the central government, which most certainly is.

Nor does the party-of-freedom label mean that we necessarily oppose local and even state laws that regulate behavior. We are certainly skeptical of them, but they at least have the virtue of applying locally, where they are more likely to reflect the general wishes of the governed and are comparatively easy to repeal if they do not. They also leave individuals with the ability to vote with their feet and move to a less restrictive jurisdiction. When laws are formulated in Washington, D.C. and applied to the entire nation, there is no such escape. Anyone wishing to live near any major American city today, for example, cannot evade the crime spreading from inner cities laid waste by the Great Society.

True free-market conservatives have in fact long argued that personal virtue is essential for freedom to work. As Hayek himself wrote:

It is indeed a truth, which all the great apostles of

freedom outside the purely rationalistic school have never tired of emphasizing, that freedom has never worked without deeply ingrained moral beliefs and that coercion can be reduced to a minimum only where individuals can be expected as a rule to conform voluntarily to certain principles.

Freedom, to us, does not mean freedom to do whatever one wants; it means maximum freedom from government control, particularly central government control.

As for the argument that traditional values must suffer under the dynamism of a free-market economy, a number of writers in our own time, especially Michael Novak and George Gilder, have put that idea soundly to rest. As Mr. Gilder wrote in *Wealth and Poverty*:

Under capitalism, the ventures of reason are launched into a world ruled by morality and Providence. The gifts [produced by capitalists] will succeed only to the extent that they are altruistic and spring from an understanding of the needs of others. They depend on faith in an essentially fair and responsive humanity.

Or, as I would put it, the market punishes immorality. If one is indifferent to the needs of his fellow citizens in a capitalist economy, he will find himself in poverty, just as he will if he earns a reputation for dishonesty and fraud. As Walter Lippmann wrote, in the free market "the golden rule is economically sound." Today, as free market economics have proven spectacularly successful across the globe, the idea of freedom is far less controversial on the Right than the notion that the cultural conservative agenda is inconsistent with it. Among some economic conservatives, and especially among moderate Republi-

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cans and America's vast political middle, a perception has taken hold that the cultural conservatives are an illiberal force, intent on using the federal government to impose religious values on people who may not share them. The charge is plainly false and stems, I think, from a fundamental misunderstanding of what cultural conservatives are all about.

RISE OF RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVES

The first thing that needs to be understood about today's cultural conservatives, which I rather loosely identify with the religious right, is that they are entirely a defensive movement. It's not as if Pat Robertson and his compatriots were brainstorming one afternoon and suddenly hit upon the idea of infiltrating the government and using its power for their own ends.



Betmann Archive

There was never an attempt by cultural conservatives to to use federal power to encourage an “Ozzie and Harriet”-style family arrangement.

Rather, millions of evangelicals and orthodox Catholics in the 1970s felt their way of life to be under subtle but determined attack by federal policies. They organized politically, after decades of shunning politics, not to impose their beliefs on others, but because the federal government was imposing its values on them.

Specifically, many leading cultural conservatives point to the threat of government regulation of private schools as the catalyzing event. Paul Weyrich writes:

What caused the movement to surface was the federal government’s moves against Christian schools. This absolutely shattered the Christian community’s notion that Christians could isolate themselves inside their own institutions and teach what they pleased. The realization that they could not then linked them to the long-held conservative view that government is too powerful and intrusive, and this linkage is what made the evangelicals active.

Richard Viguerie, who observed the movement from its inception, points in particular to a proposed IRS ruling in 1978 that would have saddled all private schools with the burden of proving that they were not founded to evade antidiscrimination laws—a ruling that would have put federal authorities in the position of denying Christian schools their tax exempt status on dubious grounds. Ralph Reed Jr., the executive director of the Christian Coalition, agrees. “The spark that ignited the pro-family movement was the fear of increased government regulation of church schools.”

Other issues were crucial as well. Phyllis Schlafly was mainly occupied with national security issues until she was confronted with the proposed Equal Rights Amendment in 1972. Faced with the prospect that overreaching federal courts would use the loosely worded amendment to justify unprecedented intrusions into private affairs, possibly even moving against the Catholic Church for harboring an all-male clergy, she organized hundreds of thousands of new political activists.

And even the enemies of the cultural conservative movement recognize the crucial importance of the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* abortion decision. “*Roe* was a powerful stimulus to the right-to-life movement,” the editors of the *New Republic* wrote in 1989, “which in turn was a cornerstone of the New Right, which is still a powerful political force today.”

Nothing provoked more justified fear among devout believers than the sudden realization in the 1970s that an appointed, nine-member court could—with no accountability—impose its views on abortion, pornography, public prayer, education, and even sexuality on every community in the country.

Someone once quipped that “America is a country with a population as religious as India’s ruled by a political elite as secular as Sweden’s.” Devout believers in middle America have certainly long believed that to be true, and they warily tolerated it. But once it became clear that an arbitrary federal authority could strike down the considered laws of 50 state legislatures on a whim, extend its control to religious institutions, and use amendments to the Constitution to engineer social revolutions, very little seemed safe. The cultural conservatives’ “diabolical” agenda was, and is, simply to neutralize the government’s influence on disputed moral questions, and then to minimize the government’s power to ensure it would not threaten their way of life in the future.

DEFENDING FAMILY RIGHTS

To be sure, the ACLU and other groups delight in finding some religious right field organizer who takes a more expansive view of cultural conservative goals. Occasionally, some religious right leaders have made intemperate remarks. But we can best judge the intentions of the movement by the issues it has actually pursued in the national arena. Far from being the right-wing Savonarolas of ACLU executive director Ira Glasser’s imagination, their goals have been remarkably modest.

Take the debate over funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA,) an important issue because it served more than any other to feed the Left’s fantasies of martyrdom at the hands of cultural fanatics. The NEA, a government board which doles out \$170 million in arts funding, found itself in a maelstrom in 1989 when it chose to fund an absurd work of art by the artist Andres Serrano. Mr. Serrano used NEA money to take a crucifix, suspend it in a jar of human urine, and photograph it. Naturally, Christians and members of other faiths across the country were outraged—but at what? Not especially at Mr. Serrano, but at the federal government for using their money to subsidize him.

Although the Left cried censorship, I defy anyone to

find a moment in the debate when cultural conservatives questioned Mr. Serrano's right to produce his "art." They simply argued that the taxpayers should not finance it. It was as if the art community believed censorship was having someone try to deny an artist a federal check.

I argued that if we were really opposed to censorship, we ought to close down the NEA entirely and avoid having an unelected government board deciding what constitutes art and what does not—a position which earned me the praise of such religious right leaders as Mississippi's Reverend Donald Wildmon.

Notice that the religious right did not argue that the federal government should reverse itself and fund Christian art, only that it remain neutral, neither encouraging nor discouraging particular works. That didn't stop the avant garde left from calling religious conservatives "cultural ayatollahs."

On another telling issue, a couple of years earlier, Congress was debating a child care bill that had been drafted, more or less, by Marion Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund. The bill would have set up a new federal bureaucracy of Great Society proportions to funnel money to child-care centers—but only federally regulated child-care centers. That meant only large, secular child-care institutions. If a child-care center was in a church basement, it might still get money, but only after it put tarps over any crosses or other religious ornaments evident on the walls.

Conservatives, led by The Eagle Forum and Concerned Women for America, strenuously opposed the plan as "anti-family." It was not that they objected to people placing their children in daycare, something that was clearly a matter of individual choice. The problem was

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that the government would in effect be encouraging only one type of child-rearing arrangement—working parents who put their children in large child-care centers. At the same time, it would force all families, including so-called traditional families that made huge sacrifices to raise their children in their own homes, to foot the bill.

They proposed instead a neutral alternative. Rather than give the money to the child-care centers, why not give it directly to parents and allow them to spend it as they saw fit? That way, the parents could use the money to alleviate the costs of whatever child-rearing arrangements they chose—whether that was raising their children in the home with a stay-at-home parent, placing them in daycare, or placing their children in an informal

child-care setting, such as in the care of a relative or neighbor. There was never an attempt by the cultural conservatives to use federal power to encourage an "Ozzie and Harriet"-style family arrangement, as Representative Pat Schroeder derisively puts it. They simply asked that the government remain even-handed and allow free people to decide their family styles themselves, without the decision being unduly influenced by Washington.

What about all the school textbook cases, which earned the cultural conservatives the epithet of "book burners" by the civil libertarians? Every once in a while

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politically active Christians are charged with trying to have certain textbooks removed from school shelves, or have creationism taught alongside evolution, or insist that sex education be based on abstinence. Their opponents revel in these cases, since such issues allow them to portray cultural conservatives in the worst, most anti-intellectual, know-nothing light. But with rare, localized exceptions, the religious right in these cases was defending the communities' right of self-determination against encroachments from distant government authorities. In the old issue of prayer in the classroom, for example, individual communities chose to pray in public, as they had for as long as anyone could remember. Federal court orders said they could not.

In other misunderstood cases, the rights of parents themselves were threatened. For weeks this fall, in one example, voters in Northern Virginia were carpet-bombed with political ads charging that a Republican candidate wanted to have the *Wizard of Oz* taken out of a school curriculum. The charge was not true. In fact, the candidate had simply given legal advice to some parents who, for religious reasons, did not want their children reading books containing good witches. These parents didn't want the book taken off the shelves; they merely wanted school authorities to refrain from forcing their children to read it.

RESISTING THE GAY AGENDA

Finally, let's examine gays in the military, the issue that so exercised Senator Goldwater. While many military retirees opposed the policy on the grounds of military effectiveness—a position anyone interested in preserving freedom could endorse—the cultural conservatives were mainly concerned that the government would be casting an aura of legitimacy on the gay lifestyle, and thus take sides on an issue that was being hotly debated in the society at large.

As the cultural conservatives see it, society as a whole is still unsure of how we should respond as individuals to

our gay citizens. Certainly the public is becoming more tolerant of gays, but it is not clear where this will lead. Some believe that homosexuality is normal and healthy and should be treated as such. Others believe it is a moral abomination and should be discouraged. Still others, the majority in my opinion, decline to pass judgment on gays as individuals but shrink from endorsing their lifestyle. If the federal government were to abruptly change a long-standing tradition and allow gays in the armed forces, it would throw its enormous moral authority behind the first view, possibly preventing a different, more appropriate, social consensus from developing.

Indeed, the so-called “anti-gay” agenda of religious conservatives is geared toward nothing more than preserving people’s freedom to decide for themselves how to respond to gays. Colorado recently earned itself the enmity of half of Hollywood when it passed a proposition denying gays special privileges under law. In practice, the Colorado proposition means that if a person believes homosexuality is normal, he is free to act accordingly. But

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if he believes that it is immoral or unhealthy and doesn’t want his children exposed to it, he cannot be forced to rent his spare bedroom to a practicing homosexual couple. (Significantly, when a group tried to persuade Oregon voters to adopt a broader proposition, one which would actually declare in law that homosexuality was wrong, the voters rejected it, and the group has since rightly confined itself to working for “no special privileges.”)

We are still left to deal with the difficult issue of abortion, however. Many who have followed this reasoning so far will still consider abortion as Exhibit A in their contention that the cultural conservatives mean to interfere with individual freedom. But that depends on what one means by “individual.” If we accept the idea that the fetus is a human being, then the cultural conservatives’ campaign against abortion is actually waged in the defense of freedom—an individual’s freedom to live. Even

an extreme libertarian accepts an absolute obligation for the government to protect its people from unjust aggression by others. Assuming that an unborn child is in fact a person—as I firmly believe it is—there can be no problem, and certainly no philosophical inconsistency, in supporting the government’s duty to defend it.

William F. Buckley Jr., I thought, put the issue quite well. When one of this guests on “Firing Line” asked him how he could advocate “getting the government off our backs” at the same time he desired the government to “reach into our homes” and restrict abortion, he replied: “Why, for the same reason the government can ‘reach into my home’ and tell me I can’t have a slave in the closet.” In each case, it is merely defending a basic human right. Whatever differences individuals within the party have on abortion, they have nothing to do with different philosophies about the role of government and everything to do with different philosophies of humanity itself.

A CULTURAL FREE MARKET

It is certainly true that on the most prominent cultural issues—the values displayed in art, family arrangements, attitudes towards homosexuals—cultural conservatives have pronounced personal views. What is striking, however, is that they rarely look to the government, certainly not the federal government, to enforce their views, let alone to impose them on others. Their political program, properly understood, is nothing more than to neutralize the government’s influence on disputed value questions and minimize the government’s power in order to prevent it from attempting to exert any such influence in the future. They want the government to allow people to decide these issues by themselves.

Allow people to decide these issues by themselves. Here we can see the clear link between the cultural and economic conservatives. The economic conservatives are devoted to the idea of a self-regulating free market to achieve the best possible distribution of economic goods. The cultural conservatives—as judged by their actual political program—implicitly believe in a kind of cultural free market in which free people, regulated through largely noncoercive means, may arrive at the best possible solution to the social questions that currently divide us.

As they see it, if the federal government were not subsidizing bigoted anti-Christian art, that art would be rejected by the public and consigned to a limited counter-culture audience. Without federal subsidies of family disintegration—either in the form of welfare programs that have destroyed our inner cities and child-care programs geared solely to the institutionalization of children—the traditional family would flourish as it has in generations past. And without President Clinton using the enormous federal bureaucracy to express his personal view of homosexuality, a social consensus on the subject would naturally evolve—one that neither persecutes homosexuals nor accepts their lifestyle as normal, happy and healthy. Fervent proselytizers though they may be in their private life, the cultural conservatives’ political program is aimed solely at minimizing the government’s role in these issues.

Cultural conservatives fear the power of the modern



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Cultural conservatives fear the power of the modern state for precisely the reason that Hayek, the patron saint of modern market economics, outlined 50 years ago in *The Road to Serfdom*. They know that with its enormous control of economic resources—the power to tax, to fund programs, to regulate vast types of activities—the state can slowly but determinedly spread its control over their culture and erode their way of life.

LEADING VIRTUOUS LIVES

Anyone who has spent much time around flesh-and-blood cultural conservatives—say, your average Southern Baptist family in Texas, for example—knows that they have utmost confidence that, as long as the central government does not take sides on disputed value questions, people are most likely to live virtuous lives, as they understand them. If the only weapon being used in the so-called “culture war” is the entirely peaceful one of persuasion by words and deeds, they believe they will win it. Only when coercive power is employed by a distant, central authority will they lose. Their idea of the world is of a hard-working, God-fearing America that would be doing

just fine were it not for government policies that erode traditional values. I think this view is a fair description of our country's plight, but whatever the objective reality, it is clear that the cultural conservatives believe this is the case. They thus neither seek nor desire to capture the government themselves and use it to impose their views on others. They simply want it to get out of the way.

What we have here is an exact parallel among the cultural conservatives to what our economic conservatives are doing in the economic sphere. Just as the economic conservatives do not want the government telling us what type of HDTV we should develop, the cultural conservatives don't want it telling us what type of art we should buy. As the economic conservatives object to Hillary Clinton ushering us all into health alliances against our will, the cultural conservatives object to the government encouraging us to adopt Pat Schroeder's view of the ideal family arrangement. The economic conservatives don't want the government telling us to buy domestic goods when we believe a foreign product may be superior; the cultural conservatives don't want the government telling us to rent our extra room to homosexuals if we believe the gay lifestyle is unhealthy.

Both groups have an identical, surpassing interest in

more confidence in the collective wisdom of hundreds of millions of free men and women than in all the economic planners and social engineers in Washington, D.C.

LAST GASP OF STATISM


It is my firm belief that by understanding our party's seamless devotion to freedom we can best equip ourselves to face and defeat the last gasp of 20th century statism, otherwise known as the Clinton Administration. Interestingly, just as our party is a collection of people united in their commitment to limiting government, our Democratic opponents are a disparate lot brought together by nothing but their vested interest in expanding government. One would not ordinarily expect unionized workers, suburban feminists, civil rights activists and militant gays to enjoy one another's company. The reason they work together is that they all understand that government power is central to achieving their goals.

That makes Bill Clinton their ideal president. Although he had the political sense to veer rightward long enough to win a national election, the essence of his program in office has been to expand the government's power and reach. His tax plan, for all the deficit reduction salesmanship, is a plan to finance a 20-percent growth in

government by 1997. His much-touted spending cuts, particularly those in defense, serve only to free funds to feed his swelling domestic programs. And that is only a prelude to his prime objective, which is to use the false promise of health security to accomplish a government take-over of the entire health-care industry, totaling one-seventh of our economy.

As Hillary Clinton explained their motives last spring—in a speech the president endorsed—they intend to create a “new politics of meaning,” in which a Clinton-led federal government will somehow allow people to feel meaning in their supposedly meaningless lives as they watch the federal bureaucracy spend their money for them for its own ends.

As our cultural conservatives are wrongly maligned, even by some of their own conservative brethren, for supposedly trying to impose their beliefs on everyone else, the Clintons have explicitly stated their intention to use the power of the federal government to impose their values on us—a chilling thought.

By rallying in turn around a “new politics of freedom,” we will offer the American people a clear alternative to this grim elitism: A Republican vision celebrating the practical and moral virtues of a free people. 

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FROM PLURIBUS TO UNUM

Immigration and the Founding Fathers

MATTHEW SPALDING

Americans torn by conflicting impulses on the question of immigration may find it helpful to consult the thoughts of the Founding Fathers. The Founders were also torn. They favored open immigration, and yet they worried that the new republic would be endangered if large numbers of foreigners arrived without learning the English language and embracing America's cultural and political institutions. The Founders resolved the dilemma by insisting on the rapid assimilation of newcomers. Men and women would be free to come to America from every country in the world—but only if they became Americans.

From the beginning, Americans wanted to share the blessings of liberty they had secured for themselves with the rest of mankind. The Declaration of Independence cited, as one of its principal grievances against George III, that "He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose, obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, [and] refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither." The Constitution called upon Congress to establish a uniform naturalization law, and the young republic placed virtually no restrictions on immigration.

Even as they favored plentiful immigration, however, the Founders worried that foreign ideas and influences might undermine America's republican institutions. They feared that concentrations of foreign populations on American soil might exacerbate the risk of factional and sectional conflict. To minimize these dangers, the Founders thought carefully about allowing foreigners to become Americans. The challenge was to make a myriad of peoples into one nation. In this effort the Founders largely succeeded. The lesson for our times is that a free nation can sustain high levels of immigration if it labors carefully at the hard task of making citizens.

SECOND LAND OF PROMISE

The American Revolution, and its experiment in republican government, gave fresh meaning to the concept of the New World as an escape from the Old. Thomas Paine, himself a recent immigrant when he wrote *Common Sense* in 1776, called America "the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe." The thought of America as a political refuge was nothing new to the people of New England; their

Puritan ancestors had emigrated to escape religious persecution. Now, political asylum was part of the very idea of the nation. George Washington wrote in 1785, "let the poor, the needy and oppressed of the Earth, and those who want Land, resort to the fertile plains of our western country, the Second Land of Promise, and there dwell in peace, fulfilling the first and great commandment."

The Founders expected and welcomed a large influx of immigration. "Those who live under arbitrary power do nevertheless approve of Liberty, and wish for it," Benjamin Franklin wrote John Jay from Paris in 1777. "...[T]hey almost despair of recovering it in Europe; they read the translations of our separate colony constitutions with rapture; and there are such numbers everywhere, who talk of removing to America, with their families and fortunes, as soon as peace and our independence shall be established, that 'tis generally believed we shall have a prodigious addition of strength, wealth, and arts from the emigrations of Europe."

There was also an expectation that the best immigrants would add to the moral capital of the growing country, bringing with them the attributes necessary for the workings of free government. America promised advantages to those "who are determined to be sober, industrious and virtuous members of Society," Washington told a Dutch correspondent in 1788. "And it must not be concealed," he added, "that a knowledge that these are the general characteristics of your compatriots would be a principal reason to consider their advent as a valuable acquisition to our infant settlements."

Economic freedom and the prospect of prosperity would also be a great inducement, adding population and material wealth to the new nation. While many of those who initially immigrated were indentured servants or redemptioners, there were increasing numbers of skilled workers and artisans. Alexander Hamilton, in his 1791 *Report on Manufactures*, pointed out that businessmen are reluctant to move from one country to the next unless "by very apparent and proximate advantages." He believed that the new nation, because of better prices, cheaper

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