

Immigration and the Building of a New Majority

By F. ROGER DEVLIN

This past 20th June, Pat and Bay Buchanan revived their American Cause organization with a conference in Tysons Corner, Virginia. The conference theme was “Building the New Majority.”

The old majority was the block of Southern and Mountain States upon which Nixon and Reagan based their successful electoral strategies. Today, as Pat Buchanan noted, this has been replaced by the Blue Wall: a group of eighteen states plus the District of Columbia which has voted Democratic in the last five presidential elections. These States control 248 of the 270 votes necessary to elect a president.

The most unimaginative strategy for regaining a majority has always been to split the dime’s worth of difference with the opposition in order to appeal to the center. This can allegedly be done by abandoning the “social issues” which the other side finds most galling: it is essentially what David Frum recommends and John McCain attempted.

A better strategy, as Peter Brimelow explained to the conference attendees, is to find an issue which shakes up and rearranges the existing political spectrum. For example: in the mid-Nineteenth Century, the British Conservative Party was widely viewed as an aristocratic and feudal party which time was passing by. Benjamin D’Israeli, however, saw that it was possible to revitalize conservatism by appealing to the patriotism of the working class. As one historian put it, D’Israeli saw the conservative working man as a sculptor perceives the angel imprisoned in the block of marble. Political leader-

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ship consists, to a great extent, in perceiving new issues around which new coalitions can be built temperamentally.

“We know what these issues are,” explained Brimelow, “because they walked up to the door of the stupid California Republican Party and banged on it—three of them:”



Peter Brimelow at the podium during the summer 2009 American Cause conference.

- 1) opposition to illegal immigration (prop. 187, 1994)
- 2) opposition to affirmative action (prop. 209, 1996); and
- 3) opposition to bilingual education (prop. 227, 1998).

All three ballot initiatives carried heavily despite Californians' support for Democratic presidential candidates and despite the overwhelming weight of establishment opinion. "The response of the California Republican Party was to dive under the bed and hide," declared Brimelow, "but the issues are still there and they can be developed."

Affirmative Action is a second winning issue; yet it has been so little exploited that Obama was actually able to win the under-thirty White vote, the demographic group with the most to lose in the zero-sum game that is Affirmative Action. The issue also has an immigration component, since immigrants are immediately eligible for preferences.



Pat Buchanan, Peter Brimelow and Lou Barletta discuss immigration and national politics during a panel discussion at the summer 2009 American Cause conference.

Concerning immigration specifically, Brimelow pointed to the case of *Social Contract* Publisher John Tanton.

Now, Tanton is not a conservative; he's sort of a Northern Progressive. He's an environmentalist. The reason he got interested in immigration reform is that he really likes trees. And his view is: the more people you have, the fewer trees. So you want to see immigration brought to a halt because that is what is driving American population growth. Nevertheless, John Tanton and his wife voted for Pat in the '92 primaries because of the immigration issue. That was more important to them than anything else. That's how a strong issue can jump over the conventional assessment of what motivates people to vote one way or the other.

The language issue polls even better, from our point of view, than either immigration or Affirmative Action: over eighty percent of Americans say they are in favor of official English. Yet Obama intends to require people in key positions to speak Spanish. In Canada, Brimelow pointed out, bilingualism has effectively displaced English-speaking Canadians from the Civil Service. The permanent government of the country is thus largely in the hands of the Quebecers. Our own Civil Service may one day be in the hands of Hispanics with carefully nourished grievances against the American majority.

One politician who has gained national attention by standing up to illegal immigration was at the American Cause conference to share his story: Lou Barletta, the mayor of Hazleton, Pennsylvania. The son of the Democratic Party Chairman in his hometown, Barletta ran a successful business for many years, and entered politics in the belief that "government needed to run like a business." Running as

a Republican in a city that was 2-1 Democratic, he was elected mayor by a 2-1 margin; by his third term, he was receiving over 90 percent of the vote.

Immigration was not initially his main concern, but as he began his first term as mayor he “started noticing more blight, more absentee landlords, more violent crimes.” He had occasion to visit one city apartment where he found nine mattresses on the floor and cockroaches in the refrigerator. The nine men living there all turned out to be illegal aliens: “I couldn’t understand why this would be happening in Hazleton, a small town in Northeastern Pennsylvania.” Shortly thereafter, an illegal taking part in a drug deal shot two persons about a hundred feet from where local high school students were having a pizza after a football game.

In December, 2005, Mayor Barletta visited Washington. He talked with Homeland Security and the Dept. of Justice about the gangs and the illegal aliens, stressing that his city did not have the wherewithal to fight the problem. He was listened to politely and left with a coffee mug, a lapel pin and a pat on the back.

On 10 May 2006, a fourteen year old illegal alien was arrested in Hazleton for shooting a gun into a crowded playground. That same night, a twenty-nine year old Hazleton resident was shot between the eyes by an illegal who had already been arrested eight times before coming to Hazleton. Gang graffiti began appearing in Hazleton, including threats to the lives of police officers.

So far, so normal. But at this point Mayor Barletta did something unprecedented in contemporary America: abandoning hope of help from Washington, he took action to protect the citizens of his town. He and his advisors devised the Illegal Immigration Relief Act to punish businesses which knowingly hired illegal aliens and landlords who knowingly renting to them.

We were immediately sued by the ACLU and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund. Thirty-six lawyers lined up against our little city. They told me not only that they would get me at election time, but that they would bankrupt our city, thinking we would back down. But unfortunately

they picked the wrong city in America for this fight. [*applause*]

I started a legal defense fund and began receiving money from people all over the United States. I have boxes and boxes of letters from people I’ll never even meet. I remember one day getting an envelope with seven dollars in it; it was from a retired veteran: he said “Mayor, this is all I have in my wallet; keep fighting.” I remember getting a letter from a gentleman in his eighties in a senior living home. He told his granddaughter that he had been saving quarters his whole life and he told her where they were hidden and said: “send them to Lou Barletta in Hazleton, he needs the help.”

Many of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit against the city were themselves illegal aliens. Accordingly, they asked the judge if their identities could be protected from the media and the public, which he allowed; they asked if their identities could be protected from the City of Hazleton, which he allowed; they asked if they could be excused from appearing in court, which he also allowed. Mayor Barletta has no way of being sure that his accusers even exist. The City of Hazleton eventually lost the suit, and the case is now before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

During these months, the national and international news media descended upon Hazleton. There were death threats against the mayor, and for a long time he stood alone in his fight. But today over a hundred cities across America have adopted or are considering similar ordinances.

During the six weeks running up to the 2008 Pennsylvania primary, all three candidates painstakingly crisscrossed Pennsylvania, appearing just about everywhere except Hazleton. Mayor Barletta eventually realized *why* they were avoiding Hazleton. So he sent them invitations to come and see ground zero of the illegal immigration controversy and tell the nation how they feel about it. Not one showed up. The Mayor asked rhetorically how the candidates were going to deal

with Iran and Venezuela if they were afraid of Lou Barletta in Hazleton, Pennsylvania.



Tom Tancredo focused his remarks on the challenge mass immigration presents to America's fragile sense of national unity. Today's immigrants, in stark contrast to most in the past, do not wish to become Americans. At the same time, many of our own people have fallen prey to the cult of

belonging, there must be something which holds us together as a nation. For a long time we could at least rely upon the English language. Earlier generations of immigrants, including Tancredo's Italian grandparents, wanted to learn English because they wanted to become Americans. By contrast, a Cuban professor at Florida State University told *Time* magazine a few years ago: "we like Miami because there is absolutely no pressure to become an American."



Former U.S. Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO) gets a laugh from American Cause panelists Bay Buchanan and Terry Jeffrey.

multiculturalism, or what Tancredo likes to call the "Perversity of Diversity." This ideological cult demands precisely that immigrants *not* assimilate, that they retain their native cultures while living in this country. At the same time, Americans are encouraged to shed their own culture and "enrich" themselves with anything so long as it is foreign.

Tancredo cited Sun Tzu's first rules of warfare: 1) you must know who your enemy is; and 2) you must know who you are. The "War on Terror," in which American soldiers in Afghanistan read Taliban fighters their Miranda rights, is good evidence that we do not really know who our enemies are; and multiculturalism and immigration have now combined to insured that we no longer know who we ourselves are. America has become a place where people reside rather than a nation to which citizens belong and bear loyalty.

If we are to restore a sense of identity and

On a visit to Florida Tancredo told a radio interviewer that "Miami is essentially a third world country." The next day this remark is a national news story and Tancredo gets a letter from Jeb Bush: "How dare you say this! We celebrate diversity down here! etc., etc." Not long afterwards he reads that a City Council in Florida has had to pass an ordinance requiring their employees to wear underwear and use deodorant.

Tancredo quoted the late Samuel Huntington as saying that throughout American history, people who were not White Anglo-Saxon Protestants have become American by adopting White Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture and political values, with the rule of law being among the most important. Huntington's argument, the Congressman emphasized, is for the importance of Anglo-Saxon culture, not necessarily Anglo-Saxon people.

An audience member asked what could be done to

reach young people. Tancredo responded:

Here's the way I get the attention of young people on college campuses: I go try and speak there and a riot breaks out. People start throwing bricks through windows; cops come in. At Chapel Hill a few months ago, as I was leaving, the kids who invited me—Youth for Western Civilization—were saying: "Oh Congressmen we are so sorry, so embarrassed, etc."

I said: Are you kidding me? You're going to be on every talk show and every cable news network in America tomorrow. And they were—we all were. It was wonderful. Very stupid of the other side. If I had to, I would go to Rent-a-Rioter and bring them in.

Other speakers addressed foreign policy, cap and trade, Obamacare, deficit spending and abortion. The legendary Phyllis Schlafly, now eighty-four and recovering from hip surgery, gave a rousing keynote address highlighting the importance of grass roots work. The enemy understands this point well: Obama learned "community organizing" from Saul Alinsky and successfully transferred the same methods to the internet during his presidential campaign. Today,

Obama's staff is transforming the YouTube, Facebook, texting, Twittering grass roots organization that put Obama in the Whitehouse into an instrument of government. Obama created a political group in the offices of the Democratic National Committee called Organizing for America. Three days after he was sworn in, an announcement video was sent to thirteen million email addresses telling them that their mission was to redirect the campaign strategy to get Congress to pass all the spread-the-wealth bills Obama wants. They envision an army of supporters talking, sending email messages and texting to friends and neighbors as they try to mold public opinion.

Obama called on his supporters to attend or to host "economic recovery house meetings" on the weekend of 6th February. Those who attended these meetings watched a four minute Youtube clip in which Obama urged his supporters "to come together, organize, and stay involved in the task of remaking this nation." They then watched a ten minute sales talk promoting the stimulus package, and downloaded talking points from the internet. Discussions were guided by a list of questions printed off the internet. And at the end of the meeting the host instructed [everyone] that "it's now our mission to get the word out by talking to our friends and neighbors."

The Obama people boasted that they had 3587 of these house meetings in all fifty States and in every Congressional district.

Could the right make effective use of such a strategy? Those old enough to remember, Schlafly told the audience, know that it has actually been done. Conservatives once organized home "study groups" to educate voters about Communism: this work contributed to the conservative takeover of the Republican Party and the nomination of Barry Goldwater. In the years from 1976 to 1980, Ronald Reagan spent his time traveling the country speaking to similar small groups and refining his conservative ideology.

But today, our base is no longer mobilized in this way. Liberals dominated conservatives by more than ten to one on the internet during the 2008 presidential campaign. When McCain got to Iowa last year, he marveled: "I didn't know immigration was such a big issue!" No one had told him.

We can't wait until the next presidential primaries to tell our leaders our concerns. If you are interested in doing some Alinskyite community organizing of your own, Phyllis Schlafly has materials available. Learn how to organize a home meeting on immigration at: www.eagleforum.org/groups/immigration. ■