

Designer Nation

A History of American Immigration Policy

REVIEWED BY F. ROGER DEVLIN

Aristide Zolberg is a Professor of Political Science at the New School for Social Research and a widely published author on African affairs and international migration. A few years ago, he co-edited a hand-wringing volume called *Shadows Over Europe*, warning of the “peril” from “radically xenophobic parties supporting ideologies that had been relegated to the lunatic fringe,” such as the Vlaams Belang and the Lega Nord. He may be safely described as a man of conventional views within the context of today’s academic establishment. *A Nation by Design*, many years in the making, is his history of American immigration

policy. Its 459 pages of narrative are supported by 159 pages of notes and 14 pages of graphs.

The author presents himself as something of a moderate:

[N]ativism can be thought of as representing the conservative position on an “identity” continuum, which allows for other positions ranging through the acceptance of shifting boundaries as a concomitant of historical change—where I would roughly place myself—all the way to the advocacy of radical transformation.

But a little later he provides some necessary

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context for understanding this stance: “the most striking fact about the contemporary immigration policies of capitalist democracies is that, on a hypothetical continuum ranging from ‘open’ to ‘closed’ borders, they are clustered very narrowly around the ‘closed’ pole.” Many of *Social Contract’s* readers will be stunned to learn that immigration to Western countries is at a very low level. One wonders how much greater the flow would have to get before Prof. Zolberg would consider it a “normal concomitant of historical change,” let alone “transformation.”

But it is the privilege of the conscientious historian to produce work of value to readers of all political persuasions. Particularly welcome is *A Nation by Design’s* treatment of immigration policy in the early years of the American republic,

which “challenges the widely held notion that until the late nineteenth century the United States maintained a laissez-faire stance in the sphere of immigration.” Indeed, disputes over immigration predated independence.

During the seventeenth century, net European immigration to the future United States totaled 155,000, yielding a total white population of about 223,000. During the first eight decades of the eighteenth century, further European immigration amounted to just 346,000 souls, but the white population exploded to 2,205,000 due to an astounding rate of natural increase. America was a good place to raise a family.

The migrants were drawn initially mostly from England, says Zolberg, but later on largely from the Celtic countries that were being amalgamated into the United Kingdom. There were also sizeable flows from the Continent, notably German speakers

A Nation by Design Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America

By Aristide R. Zolberg

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from the southwestern region of the Holy Roman Empire, as well as the Swiss cantons. A population of mostly Dutch origin was incorporated by way of conquest as well. Concurrently, from the mid-seventeenth century onward, some 400,000 slaves were imported into the area from Africa. The result was “a vastly broader diversity of racial, linguistic and religious groups than existed in any kingdom of Western Europe.”

In the early period of British settlement, land appeared inexhaustible and labor was scarce, so agreement prevailed on the desirability of further settlement. The colonial governments did their part by offering naturalization on easier terms than in Britain itself. On the other hand, the colonists were concerned to keep out criminals and paupers.

The British government had opposite purposes in both respects. In 1718, it formally legalized “transportation” to North America as a punishment for criminals. Ben Franklin was one of the many colonists who protested: “Thou art called our mother country; but what good mother ever sent thieves and villains to accompany her children; to corrupt some with their infectious vices and murder the rest?” But North America was too tempting a dumping ground, and felons continued to be shipped clandestinely even after independence. Only the 1788 establishment of the Botany Bay Penal Colony in Australia laid the issue to rest.

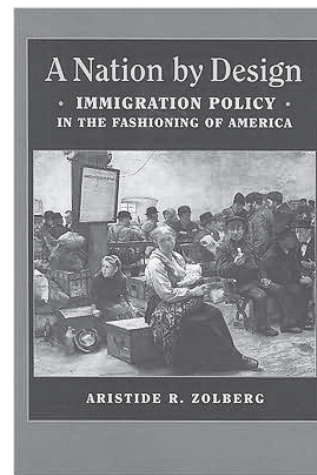
On the other hand, in the years just preceding independence, Britain sought to confirm her colonies in the condition of small settlements subservient to her own needs. In 1771, North Carolina was abruptly forbidden to offer a four-year tax exemption to new settlers. Two years later, governors in all colonies were prohibited from assenting to any new naturalization acts which originated locally. Britain even attempted to prevent white settlement west of the Appalachians. Jefferson listed these grievances in his original draft of the Declaration of Independence: “He [the King] 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.”

The European powers also took a dim view of American efforts to encourage settlement. The usual view at the time was that subjects were forever bound to their sovereign regardless of where they might travel: this was known as the “doctrine of perpetual allegiance.” The author goes so far as to call it “the foundation stone of the entire European state system.” In effect, Americans were asserting a “right to appropriate manpower, which constituted the most valuable asset of any sovereign,” and a “right to transform the subjects of European monarchs into republican citizens.”

In his very first message to Congress, George Washington stressed the importance of working out a uniform rule of policy toward immigrants. His central concern was landholding and officeholding rather than voting; before the War of 1812 many states actually permitted non-citizen voting. The law eventually enacted in 1790 provided that free white persons of satisfactory character would be eligible for naturalization after two years’ residence in the United States (later increased to five). This was more liberal than the policy of any European state at the time.

The requirement of whiteness “evoked no debate whatsoever.”

In the national elections of 1788, Pennsylvania’s German community, which had hitherto shied away from politics, demanded representation in proportion to its weight in the population, thereby prompting both Federalists and Anti-Federalists to nominate appropriate ethnic candidates. Voting as a bloc, the Germans sent three representatives to the new Congress, where they firmly supported the “liberal” side in the naturalization debate, thereby providing a precocious demonstration of the “feedback effect” of incorporation on immigration and naturalization policy.



The first national census of 1790 (which excluded Indians) counted 3.9 million persons in the United States, of whom 81 percent were white. Of the whites, 85.6 percent came from the British Isles: 59.7 percent from England, 16.3 percent from Ireland (mostly Ulster protestant “Scotch-Irish”), 5.3 percent from Scotland, and 4.3 percent from Wales. For the rest, white Americans were 8.9 percent German, 3.1 percent Dutch, 2.1 percent (mostly protestant) French, and 0.3 percent Swedish.

There was a brief outburst of anti-immigration sentiment in the late 1790s as a belated response to the threat from revolutionary France. This found expression in the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, which, among other things, extended the waiting period for naturalization to fourteen years. It was reduced again to five in 1802.

Immigration was slowing down in any case during the 1790s, and in the Napoleonic period became a mere trickle. It would remain low until 1832. Americans did not seem to be concerned by the drop-off, perhaps because their natural birthrate was so uncommonly high. Some of the founders may have been influenced by Montesquieu’s idea that republics require an especially high degree of social homogeneity. Jefferson, despite his earlier protestations to King George, became concerned that immigrants would “bring with them the principles of the [monarchical] governments they leave, imbibed in their early youth,” thus weakening the republican spirit.

Many were also reluctant to see the young republic riven by ethnic conflicts. Hezekiah Niles, Baltimore publisher of *Niles’ Weekly Register*, was generally a pro-immigration voice, but expressed the following reservation:

If a citizen of the United States, born in England, Ireland or Scotland, is a candidate for office, the custom too generally is for all his countrymen to support him, thereby maintaining an interest separated from that of the people at large: and in some of our public offices also, when the head of it happens to have had the place of his birth in a foreign country, we find that nearly all of his subor-

dinates are of his own class. This sort of clannish spirit begets one of opposition, lessens the public liberality, and militates against the public harmony.... Their conduct is highly indelicate, and a very improper return for the courtesy extended to them in permitting them to elect and be elected to office.

In 1819, Congress passed an act regulating passenger ships and vessels which “prohibited ships of any nationality entering an American port from carrying more than two persons for every five tons of registry and required them to deliver to the Dept. of State ‘a list or manifest of all the passengers taken on board,’ including each one’s name, occupation and place of origin.” The Passenger Act, designed to discourage lower class immigrants, stood as the sole federal enactment pertaining directly to European immigration until the late 1840s.

This paucity of federal regulation has been frequently misinterpreted, according to Prof. Zolberg, as signifying a national consensus on *laissez-faire*. In fact, it was an expression of antebellum respect for states’ rights. In *City of New York v. Miln* (1836), the Supreme Court declared: “so long as they were on ships, immigrants fell within the jurisdiction of the federal government, which legitimately controlled navigation; but once they landed, they ceased being passengers and became persons, hence falling under the jurisdiction of the states.”

The Census of 1830 counted 10.5 million white Americans; recorded immigration contributed a mere one-twentieth of population growth in these years.

But in the course of the 1832 sailing season, recorded arrivals surpassed 60,000, twice the previous maximum. And they continued to climb, passing 100,000 in 1842. There were more Irish and Germans than British, and most of the Irish were now Catholic. The contribution of immigration to white population growth grew to around one-sixth.

In 1847, Congress once again passed an act, ostensibly concerned with passenger safety and convenience, but really intended to lighten the flow of immigrants and discourage those likely to become public charges. This time, the aim was thwarted

by technological progress: for reasons unrelated to the new legislation, huge three-decker ships were soon being constructed for which the tighter regulations presented no problem, and fares actually decreased.

Immigration was now so prominent and worrisome a phenomenon that it prompted the introduction into the 1850 native-Census of an unprecedented distinction between native- and foreign-born. The count revealed that the proportion of foreign-born among the white population had reached 11.5 percent for the nation and 15.5 percent in the Northeast. By 1860, the proportions were 15 percent and 22 percent. More than half of New York City was foreign-born by 1855.

Irish and Germans continued to predominate, and “the Irish, in particular, came to be viewed as an alien race whose intrusion therefore raised an unprecedented problem of incorporation.” Herman Melville was a rare example of damn-the-consequences immigrationism in these years, writing “If [the immigrants] can get here, they have God’s right to come, though they bring all Ireland and her miseries with them.”

Lingering foreign loyalties continued to arouse suspicion. In 1856 the U.S. Government brought action against a dozen Irish-born naturalized Americans for membership in a secret society pledged “to uproot and overthrow English government in Ireland.” The men were said to have violated an 1818 law prohibiting the preparation of any military expedition or enterprise against a state with whom the United States are at peace. The presiding judge sternly warned the defendants “there can be no such thing as a divided national allegiance.”

The peak antebellum year for immigration was 1854, with 414,933 recorded arrivals. But by this time, a reaction was brewing.

The Order of the Star-Spangled Banner was a secret restrictionist society founded in New York in 1849. A number of similar groups merged with them in 1854, and in May they captured the mayoralty of Philadelphia. In the wake of this victory, delegates from thirteen states convened in New York to set up what they called the American Party. But journalist Horace Greeley gave them the name they would

forever be remembered by: the “Know-Nothings.” The nickname referred to their secretiveness rather than any alleged ignorance, but critics have played upon the double meaning ever since.

The main Know-Nothing policy objective was a twenty-one-year residence requirement for naturalization. The best they actually achieved was an 1855 Passenger Act somewhat more restrictive than that of 1847.

Know-Nothingism was one of those movements that suddenly snowballs out of seemingly nowhere, appears poised to carry all before it, and then disappears with the same mysterious rapidity as it began. At the height of the hysteria, twenty Germans were lynched in Louisville, Kentucky. But 1855 brought only 197,337 new arrivals: partly because word of the new mood in America quickly reached Europe, but partly just because of an economic downturn. The “American Party” fell apart and immigration remained relatively low until the Civil War.

The Know-Nothings have always represented a moral dilemma for liberal historians, for besides being “bad” restrictionists, they were nearly all “good” abolitionists. Isn’t the world complicated?

During these last years before the Civil War, a new immigration issue arose on the nation’s Pacific coast. A small flow of Chinese migrants to California — mostly single men — followed the discovery of gold in 1848. In 1852, miners tried but failed to prohibit the entry of Chinese into the state altogether. By 1860, the U.S. Census was reporting 35,000 Chinese in America, and local estimates ranged as high as 47,000. By the early 1870s, Chinese constituted 9 percent of California’s population and (being almost all adult males) up to 25 percent of her wage-earners.

When the Central Pacific Railroad was organized in 1861, management found the Chinese useful for breaking a strike, and kept them on afterward. Eventually more than 25,000 “coolies” were enlisted to complete work on the first transcontinental railroad.

The federal invasion of the South diverted a large amount of labor from Northern industry, as well as scaring off many Europeans who might oth-

erwise have immigrated to the American Northeast. But only on July 4, 1864, did Congress pass an Act to Encourage Immigration. American consular officials in Europe cooperated with the officially private American Emigration Company to extend loans for transportation of contract laborers to America, with repayment enforced in America by the courts.

The system was not a great success. Some charged that it amounted to bound labor of the sort being abolished amid so much bloodshed in the American South. Opposed by organized labor and rendered less urgent by demobilization and the postwar recession, the act was repealed in 1868.

The 1860s also saw the switchover from sail to steam, and the time required for the Atlantic passage fell from a month to twelve days. Moreover, the old sailing ships had averaged 247 passengers; by the 1880s, a single steamship could hold 1,500.

In 1870, Radical Republican Sen. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts became the first to propose a law excluding racial requirements for naturalization altogether; his proposal was soundly defeated.

Chinese immigration increased from 4,300 per year in the period 1861-1867 to over 20,000 per year in the 1870s. Opposition grew until, in 1882, Congress voted the Chinese Exclusion Act into law. The act suspended the importation of Chinese labor for a ten-year period (later extended) and also specified that no state should admit Chinese nationals to citizenship. The Chinese population would peak at 118,746 in 1900 and sank to a low of 85,202 in 1920 (stabilizing as the sex ratio evened out). In 1940, there were still fewer Chinese than at the beginning of the century.

Immigration broke new records in 1881 and 1882. There was a notable rise in north German and Scandinavian immigration, but this caused little concern: these two streams were “simply recombining in the United States the strains which had earlier blended in English blood.”

But a small influx of immigrants from southern (5 percent) and eastern (7 percent) Europe was also beginning. Much of this “new immigration” consisted of contract laborers brought in to break strikes or weaken native labor unions. Like the

Chinese coolies, they were often single men who intended to earn money and then return to their native land: sojourners rather than true immigrants. In response, and with union support, a bill “to prohibit the importation of foreigners under contract to perform labor in the United States” was signed into law in 1885.

In 1884, an Irish candidate was elected mayor of Boston: the Irish were getting to be considered “ordinary” Americans.

The late 1880s saw the beginning of the restrictionist movement that would bear fruit only after the First World War. In 1888 alone, Congress received fifty petitions to limit immigration. That same year, the American Economic Association sponsored an essay contest on “The Evil Effects of Unrestricted Immigration.” It was won by Edward Bemis, a professor at the new University of Chicago, who argued that imported labor “makes commodities cheaper, not by increased industry and ingenuity, but by reducing the civilization of the community.”

To those who, even then, alleged that Christian ethics demanded open borders, Bemis responded that the burden of civilizing too many immigrants would lower “our national life, and consequently our power as a civilizing agency in the world.” Bemis proposed a literacy test to eliminate the least desirable newcomers: it was estimated that the measure would exclude 75 percent of Poles, Italians, and Hungarians, but just 3 percent of Irish and even fewer English or Germans.

By 1890, one-third of America’s white population was foreign-born; in Tocqueville’s time it had been one-twentieth.

In 1891, a comprehensive law federalized immigration enforcement, creating a new superintendent of immigration within the Treasury Department. The act also provided for permanent inspection stations at both land and sea borders: Ellis Island opened for business within a year.

The Immigration Restriction League (IRL) was founded in 1895 by a group of Harvard graduates. The following year, a literacy test requirement made it through Congress but was vetoed by the outgoing President Cleveland in March 1897.

Jewish immigration reached unprecedented heights in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Jews were particularly prominent in the fight against restriction. Financier Oscar Straus founded the Immigration Protective League as a response to the IRL (1898). The organization proposed to diminish tensions by distributing new arrivals more evenly throughout the country. The Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society attempted to carry out this policy. The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, quickly turned much of its attention to the fight against restriction. Concurrently, the international *Alliance Israélite Universelle* launched a National Liberal Immigration League.



One restrictive measure that enjoyed more success than the literacy test was the head tax. A tax of 50 cents was introduced in 1882, doubled at an unspecified date, doubled again to \$2 in 1903, then to \$4 in 1907 and finally to \$8 in 1917. The taxes seem, however, to have had limited effect: 1882's record immigration of 788,992 was exceeded in 1903; the million mark was passed in 1905; and 1907 saw 1,285,349 arrivals—a figure unsurpassed until 1990.

The cause of restriction gained ground slowly. A 1903 act tightened regulations and mandated medical examinations of would-be immigrants before embarkation, and 1907 saw the establishment of an Immigration Commission and a federal Division of Naturalization. In 1913, passage of an Alien Land Law made it more difficult for newcomers to become landowners. Literacy test bills got

vetoed once by President Taft and twice by President Wilson, until, in 1917, Congress succeeded in overriding the veto. It had taken twenty-nine years from Bemis's first proposal.

By the end of the First World War, the mood of the country had shifted decidedly in favor of restriction. The complicated congressional battle is carefully recounted by Zolberg; we shall content ourselves with summarizing the result, known as the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924. Europe was subjected to a system of national quotas corresponding to the ethnic makeup of America as of 1890. This meant Northwest Europeans were heavily favored over Southern and Eastern Europeans. Western Hemisphere migration remained unsubject to quota, though separate measures were taken in 1929 to limit the influx from Mexico. Asians remained totally excluded. European colonies were nominally included under the European quotas, but in reality contributed virtually no immigrants.

One symptom of these changes: English-speakers, who had formed 8.8 percent of total immigration in 1914, rose to 28.3 percent by 1924. By 1931 total immigration had fallen below 100,000 for the first time since the Civil War; it would remain there through the end of World War II.

About 202,000 refugees, including 138,000 Jews, were admitted to the United States from Europe during the period 1933-1945. America took in more Jews than any other country, including Palestine, yet the legal quotas were not increased—and even went unfilled.

In June 1948, President Truman signed the Displaced Persons Act, leading to the resettlement of some 410,000 persons in the United States. But entry quotas were not raised: entry visas of displaced persons were “mortgaged” against future quotas from their country of origin. So many fled the Greek Civil War that the waiting period for “ordinary” visas there grew to two centuries!

Between 1920 and 1960 the population of the U.S. increased from 106.5 to 180.7 million, and the foreign-born share fell from 13.1 percent to around 5 percent. This period saw the gradual acceptance of Italian and east European-derived persons as “normal” Americans.

Half a million Puerto Ricans moved to the mainland cities of the Northeast between 1940 and 1960, but this was not officially counted as “immigration.”

The McCarran-Walter Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952, passed over President Truman’s veto, retained the national quota system but reserved the first 50 percent of entry visas for “immigrants with skills urgently needed by the United States.” Cold War considerations led to an unprecedented emphasis on national security in both naturalization and deportation procedures. Asian exclusion was formally abolished and every country on Earth allowed at least a token 100 visas. Again, the Western Hemisphere was regulated separately and not subject to quota. European colonies were also directly given 100 visas apiece, possibly to limit the number of blacks arriving from the West Indies.

Illegal migration from Mexico grew to the point where, in 1954, the governor of California protested to the White House. President Eisenhower responded by authorizing “Operation Wetback.” The INS claimed to have netted 1.3 million departures from this six-week operation, but the true number is inherently difficult to establish. One consequence was a rise in *legal* admissions from Mexico — which, as noted, were not subject to any quota. In 1956, legal Mexican arrivals passed 65,000, making the country America’s leading source of immigration for the first time in history.

Also in 1956, the United States admitted 36,500 Hungarian refugees fleeing the Soviet invasion of their country. The legal instrument for this was an obscure provision giving the Attorney General discretionary authority to “parole” aliens into the country for reasons of emergency or if “deemed

strictly in the public interest.”

The mood of the country was shifting perceptibly by the late 1950s, and Sen. John Kennedy’s aides identified immigration liberalization as a winning issue. In 1957, Kennedy successfully sponsored a bill to forgive “mortgaged” quotas and regularize the paroled Hungarians. The mortgage forgiveness provision released some 300,000 entries over the next several years.



of southern and eastern European ancestry is widely thought to have gained him the presidency in 1960.

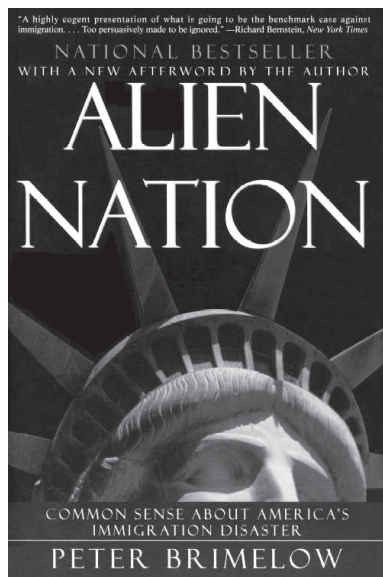
In his first year as President, Kennedy facilitated the settlement of 100,000 refugees from the Communist takeover in Cuba. And in June 1963, his administration unveiled a general proposal for overhauling the immigration system. Its centerpiece was the elimination of national origin quotas.

The bill remained trapped in congressional gridlock until after the President’s assassination. President Lyndon Johnson made the Civil Rights Act his legislative priority for 1964, so congressional hearings on immigration did not begin until February 1965. The 1964 congressional elections were favorable to the cause of reform, but there was still significant Southern opposition to black immigration and a widespread desire for caps on nations of the Western Hemisphere. Attorney General Nicolas Katzenbach blandly told senators that “the pressure of overpopulation that leads to immigration” is not

In 1958, Sen. Kennedy put his name to a book entitled *A Nation of Immigrants*, which had originated as a pamphlet commissioned by the Anti-Defamation League. The following year, Kennedy’s staff even devised a proposal to do away with the national origins system which, for the moment, got nowhere. Support from the “new immi-

found in “most of the countries of this hemisphere”; in reality, as Prof. Zolberg shows, Mexico’s population was growing at the astounding rate of 5 percent *per year*, and the rest of Latin America not much more slowly.

The Act passed in September, helped along by Sen. Edward Kennedy’s unctuous assurances that it wouldn’t really have much of an effect.



Besides abolishing “discrimination,” the measure reoriented preferences away from skills and toward family reunion. This included an unprecedented provision for admitting adult brothers and sisters as “family.” More than anything else, the “brothers and sisters” provision

was responsible for the geometrically expanding “chain migration” of later decades.

Prof. Zolberg does a good job of emphasizing the “strange bedfellows” phenomenon which recurs in the immigration debate at this and every historical epoch. It is caused, as he says, by “the perennial tension between the distinct imperatives of capitalism and identitarian nationalism.” Less happily, he is not a writer who shrinks from sharing his own preferences with readers. Indeed, he takes for granted that we share them. He confidently speaks of “our revulsion at Jefferson’s disparaging remarks about continentals,” e.g., which “cast a dark shadow over his republican celebration of openness.” (This refers to Jefferson’s misgivings that immigrants might bring monarchist notions with them to America.)

Such pronouncements multiply as the narrative passes the 1964 Act and approaches the battles of the present. Thus, politicians are now “opportunists” who “exploit” immigration if they call for restrictions, but not if they call for liberalization. Advocates of official English are “militants” but

not, apparently, the jovial bunch at MALDEF and La Raza. The amnesty of 3 million illegal immigrants in 1986 was an “achievement,” but not the closing of the gates after 1924. All negative generalizations about groups are “prejudices.” And so forth.

But Prof. Zolberg only really seems to lose control when he comes to Peter Brimelow’s *Alien Nation*: “scurrilous rhetoric,” “an overblown tirade,” “an explicitly white-supremacist position,” and further verbiage worthy of *Pandagon.net*. “The more interesting question,” he revealingly writes, “is not why Brimelow, but why the considerate treatment he received?” Prof. Zolberg is, you see, a great believer in “respectability”: no belief can be true if its expression would constitute a *faux pas* at a Manhattan cocktail party. It is therefore incumbent upon the respectable crowd to be rude to the likes of Mr. Brimelow.

The narrative continues through George W. Bush’s first term in office. We get detailed treatment of every inconclusive congressional negotiation, every judicial nullification of legislative acts and ballot measures, and every administrative failure to enforce such restrictive measures as did get through.

In 1990, Congress authorized a Commission on Immigration Reform, chaired by Barbara Jordan and commonly called the Jordan Commission, to analyze the effects of current immigration policy and make recommendations for reform. The commission would issue a series of reports between 1994 and 1997.

As the author sees it, the congressional show-down following the Jordan Commission’s report of spring 1995 marked a turning point. The commission took an openly restrictionist stance, recommending that automatic admission of brothers, sisters, and adult sons and daughters (both married and unmarried) on “family reunion” grounds be abolished. Bills were quickly put forward to this effect, as well as to do away with birthright citizenship and deny public education to the children of illegal entrants.

“In the spring of 1995 we didn’t think we could turn the restrictionist tide, couldn’t stop the reform

juggernaut,” said one liberal activist, “and it looked like something close to zero immigration was on the verge of being enacted.”

Eventually something called the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 got signed into law by President Clinton, but none of the tough proposals made it into the final draft. Both legal and illegal immigration remained high in the months and years that followed. The Welfare Reform Act of that same year did manage to deny welfare benefits to aliens, but this only resulted in a spurt of naturalization by the alien underclass.

In Prof. Zolberg’s view, the failure of the restrictionist cause at this juncture was as momentous in its way as the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924. The mountain had gone into labor and brought forth...nothing much. His explanation for why the gates were not shut is worded most delicately: “The

hostile national mood’s impact on policy was mediated by political institutions, which constituted an arena where the interplay of the two dimensions of concern and interest emphasized throughout this work generated heavily contingent outcomes.” Isn’t democracy grand?

The author points out that polls indicated a weakening of opposition to immigration in the late 1990s. He therefore takes the defeat of restriction in 1995-1996 as definitive and finds it a suitable way of rounding off his narrative. In my view, the “cooling off” of the immigration issue in the late 1990s had much to do with the false sense of prosperity in those last years of the stock market bubble. Restrictionists will not have such optimism to contend with again for many years to come. It is the prerogative of history, unlike the stories crafted by historians, always to remain open. ■

Immigrant Educator Defies the Educational Establishment

The Travels and Triumphs of a Naturalized Citizen Who Lived the American Dream



American Immigrant
My Life in Three Languages
Rosalie Pedalino Porter
Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2009
HB \$39.95, PB \$29.95, 488pp

"American Immigrant will delight those who know only the public Dr. Porter. This working class Italian immigrant deferred college to help support her family, ultimately earned a doctorate, and fought against a program hurting immigrant children. Rosalie's a 'Profile in Courage' and an amusing, insightful writer."

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