

The Delray Democrat

Closing the Door and Ending America's Greatness¹

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"If we ever closed the door to new Americans, our leadership in the world soon be lost."

The author of the above-quoted sentence surprised me and may surprise you. Read to the end to see what "woke" American delivered these prophetic words.

It is axiomatic that America's greatness rests in large part on the fact that we are a nation of immigrants. Donald Trump is not Making America Great Again. He is destroying our greatness.

Immigrants have contributed as much if not more to this country than they have received in return, but their welcome has always fallen far short of the ideal expressed in Emma Lazarus's iconic verse: "Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

During the century after America's founding, most immigrants were Northern and Western European Protestants. In short, they were "people like us" to the original colonists.

Immigrants who failed to check all these boxes [faced a hostile welcome](#): "Irish and German Americans, especially Catholics, were not considered to be fully American in terms of culture or status by old stock Americans . . . Catholic churches and convents were destroyed and priests were attacked by Protestant mobs."

The vitriol and nativism intensified with the arrival of immigrants with different skin colors and countries of origin as well as religions: "old stock Americans sought to preserve the traditional image of the country as primarily composed of descendants from Northwest Europe, especially of English Protestant stock."

In the late Nineteenth Century, a series of "Chinese Exclusion" laws limited and then barred immigration from China. The Immigration Act of 1917 [established quotas](#), differentiating between "desirable" and "undesirable" immigrants based on nationality, race, and religion. Northern European Protestants were desirable, Southern and Eastern European Catholics and Jews were non-desirable, and non-Europeans were "highly undesirable."

The latter were the "shithole countries" of that era, to employ the degraded imagery of a president who would be king. Yet those immigrants persevered and became assimilated, for there is no such thing as "shithole" countries. There is no shortage of shithole people, however, many of whom are descendants of earlier waves of immigrations, people who forget where they came from, people who pull up the ladder after themselves, like Donald Trump and Stephen Miller and their minions and enablers.

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), May 2025, page 1.

Southern and Eastern European immigrants were demonized in cartoons like this one from the May 16, 1923, edition of the Klan newspaper, *Fiery Cross*.



Normalizing Racism and Xenophobia

A closer look at The Twenties reveals that the Ku Klux Klan accomplished then what Donald Trump has accomplished today. They normalized racism.

The March 14, 1924, issue of the Klan newspaper *Fiery Cross* exhorted: “It is God’s purpose that the white man should preserve purity of blood and white supremacy in this country.”

We know that Adolf Hitler studied and learned from the history of that era—in *Mein Kampf*, he praised the fact that American law “simply excludes the immigration of certain races.” Ironically, while Trump was probably parroting Adolph Hitler when he referred to immigrants “poisoning our blood,” that vile concept was, a century ago, as American as apple pie.

The Way Forward: Demolishing the Lies About Immigrants

Americans rejected the naked racism of the 1920s as they saw the contributions made by these immigrants. We can do so again by demolishing the lies:

- Immigrants do not pose a danger. According to a [study](#) by one of America’s most prestigious scientific societies, they commit far fewer crimes than native-born Americans.
- Immigrants “act more as ‘job creators’ than ‘job takers,’” according to a recent [study](#) published in the National Bureau of Economic Research. And many of the jobs they take are jobs that Americans do not want. Just remember that two of Donald Trump’s three wives were immigrants.
- Immigrants are not a drain on resources. Undocumented immigrants are ineligible to receive most federal benefits and immigrants who are eligible pay far more in taxes than they receive in benefits.

Ronald Reagan on Immigration

No less than Ronald Reagan understood the importance of immigrants and celebrated their contributions. The epigraph atop this piece comes from the last [speech](#) he made as president. Here's a more complete extract:

Now, tomorrow is a special day for me. I'm going to receive my gold watch. And since this is the last speech that I will give as President, I think it's fitting to leave one final thought, an observation about a country which I love. It was stated best in a letter I received not long ago. A man wrote me and said: "You can go to live in France, but you cannot become a Frenchman. You can go to live in Germany or Turkey or Japan, but you cannot become a German, a Turk, or a Japanese. But anyone, from any corner of the Earth, can come to live in America and become an American."

Yes, the torch of Lady Liberty symbolizes our freedom and represents our heritage, the compact with our parents, our grandparents, and our ancestors. It is that lady who gives us our great and special place in the world. For it's the great life force of each generation of new Americans that guarantees that America's triumph shall continue unsurpassed into the next century and beyond. Other countries may seek to compete with us; but in one vital area, as a beacon of freedom and opportunity that draws the people of the world, no country on Earth comes close.

This, I believe, is one of the most important sources of America's greatness. We lead the world because, unique among nations, we draw our people -- our strength -- from every country and every corner of the world. And by doing so we continuously renew and enrich our nation. While other countries cling to the stale past, here in America we breathe life into dreams. We create the future, and the world follows us into tomorrow. Thanks to each wave of new arrivals to this land of opportunity, we're a nation forever young, forever bursting with energy and new ideas, and always on the cutting edge, always leading the world to the next frontier. This quality is vital to our future as a nation. If we ever closed the door to new Americans, our leadership in the world would soon be lost.