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**Ethnic Politicians in Congress:
German-American Congressmen
between Ethnic Group
and National Government circa 1880**



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I. American Civic Culture and German-born Congressmen

Of the members of the United States House of Representatives serving before 1945, forty-three happened to have been born in Germany.¹ For some, the German part of their background still meant something; it was a live element in their daily existence, some were "ethnic" politicians in the post-1960 sense of the word: they spoke for and appealed to voters with whom they shared certain elements of their German past and German-American presence. Their political behavior allows us to examine the role the American political system played for the integration of German-speaking immigrants. In Lawrence Fuchs' sweeping survey of *Race, Ethnicity, and the Civic Culture*, Germans are a prime exhibit: many of them took advantage of the opportunities offered by American electoral politics without giving up cultural preferences and the pursuit of various ethnic group interests. Fuchs observed how the inclusive character of American electoral politics made

¹ W. P. Adams, *Ethnic Leadership and the German-born Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1862-1945: A Report on Research in Progress* (Berlin: John F. Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien, Working Paper 88/1996).

possible at least the peaceful coexistence and at best the constructive cooperation of a good number of ethno-culturally diverse groups within one polity.²

There is, of course, no denying the obvious differences in quality and degree between the coercion and displacement of the aboriginal population, the subjugation of Africans into forced labor, the repression and exploitation of various other racially distinct non-European migrants, and the comparatively smooth absorption of many of the Christian European migrants into an ever changing European-American mainstream. On the whole, however, after two centuries of massive immigration and after thirteen decades of gradual emancipation of African-Americans, we find in the United States - compared to other regions of the world with ethno-culturally diverse populations - more cooperation, peaceful competition, "affirmative action" and convergence than open conflict and territorial separation between ethnically, culturally and economically defined minority groups and "mainstream" middle-class society. Compared to the phantasies of racial purity that were acted out with unprecedented cruelty in central Europe from 1933 to 1945, and compared to the childish invention of national pasts with tight communities of descent neatly located in space and time, we find in the American record of practically open borders for 50 million Europeans until 1921 an astonishing degree of national cohesion and a relatively tolerant cultural pluralism.

² Lawrence H. Fuchs, *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity, and the Civic Culture* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1990); on the Germans esp. pp. 27-30. For a comparative examination of the complex process of "acculturation" focussing on the German and Irish experiences see Reinhard R. Doerries, *Iren und Deutsche in der Neuen Welt: Akkulturationsprozesse in der amerikanischen Gesellschaft im späten 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1986); in his section "Partizipation und politische Akkulturation," pp. 51-65, Doerries stresses the diversity of political opinion and party preferences among German immigrants. Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee 1836-1860: Accomodation and Community in a Frontier City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 192, finds for pre-1860 Milwaukee: "It was in their political accomodation to urban American life that Milwaukee's Germans developed and maintained a public image of common action."

Since 1865, no separatist threat of the kind Quebec poses to the Canadian nation today, developed anywhere in the United States. The occasional outbursts of black "nationalism" only demonstrate their function as gestures of radical protest, not as a realistic goal. The divisive "multiculturalist" politics of group "identity" of the 1980s seems to have spent its momentum in favor of a more tolerant agenda that aims at a *Post-Ethnic America* in which the transethnic common good of the whole nation is not lost sight of.³

The civic culture credited by Fuchs with the "ethnic Americanization" (not: "Anglo-Americanization") of most of at least the European immigrants, was defined in 1963 by political scientists Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba as the "substantial consensus on the legitimacy of political institutions and the direction and content of public policy" that makes possible democratic government. In the post-1865 American case, this consensus includes "a widespread tolerance of a plurality of interests and belief in their reconcilability, and a widely distributed sense of political competence and mutual trust in the citizenry."⁴

Few citizens could have been more active participants in maintaining and adapting this civic culture than immigrants who became congressmen. In their hometowns, their state capitals, and in Washington, their role, ideally, would have been to mediate between the special interests of their constituency (ethnic or/and

³ David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); John Higham, *Multiculturalism in Disarray* (Berlin: John F. Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien, Working Paper: 55/1992).

⁴ Quoted in Fuchs, *Kaleidoscope*, 5. Fuchs specified: "The civic culture was based essentially ... on three ideas widely held by the founders of the republic, the ideas that constituted the basis of what they called republicanism: first, that ordinary men and women can be trusted to govern themselves through their elected representatives, who are accountable to the people; second that all who live in the political community (essentially, adult white males at the time) are eligible to participate in public life as equals; and third, that individuals who comport themselves as good citizens of the civic culture are free to differ from each other in religion and in other aspects of their private lives." p. 5.

otherwise) and legislation on the national level that had to reconcile a wide variety of regional, economic, cultural and other interests. The key question to be pursued here is, how closely real life approximated the ideal. Two cases have been selected for closer examination: Lorenz Brentano, Republican of Chicago, who stayed in Washington from 1877 to 1879 and Peter Victor Deuster, Democrat of Milwaukee, who served the three terms from 1879 to 1885.⁵ Both men were well-known editors of German-language newspapers when they were elected; both were publicly perceived, in Chicago, Milwaukee and Washington, as ethnically defined politicians with a special relationship to Germany and German immigrants in the United States. But, as we will see, further characteristics and political preferences differed. The best known German-American politician of this period, Carl Schurz, who represented Missouri in the Senate from 1869 to 1875, will make only a brief appearance here for the sake of contrast: he acted out an acrimonious exchange on the Senate floor in 1874 because he felt insulted by an alleged reference to his being a "foreigner". The fact that this kind of public encounter in Congress was rare, perhaps even singular, is an essential part of the findings of this paper. Since each word counts, this exceptional exchange is documented verbatim.

II. Lorenz Brentano, Republican of Chicago, 1877-1879

Lorenz(o) Brentano would have been the first republican prime minister of Baden, had the Prussian army not put down the popular uprising in 1848/49.⁶ Instead,

⁵ Additional case studies can be found in W. P. Adams, "Ethnic Politicians and American Nationalism during the First World War: Four German-born Members of the U.S. House of Representatives," *American Studies International*, vol. 29 (April 1991), 20-34.

⁶ "Lorenzo" is accepted as his first name in the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1949* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950), 886. Brentano's radical republican politics during the revolution in Baden in 1848/49 is mentioned repeatedly in Paul Nolte, *Gemeindebürgertum und Liberalismus in Baden 1800-1850* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994). His election to mayor of Karlsruhe in January 1849, and again in April 1849 was simply disallowed by the

sentenced to imprisonment for life and loss of his property, he fled to Switzerland. From now on, writing and publishing replaced organizing and governing, until Brentano became an ethnic politician, American citizen, and legislator.

In 1850, at age 37, he crossed the Atlantic together with his wife Caroline Leutz. After failed experiments as journalist in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, and farmer in Kalamazoo, Michigan, the Brentanos went to Chicago in 1859. He retrained in the law and was admitted to the Illinois bar. Before long, Brentano edited the Midwest's most influential German-language newspaper, the pro-Republican daily *Illinois Staatszeitung*. After he had become its principal proprietor, he sold his part of the newspaper in 1867 for close to \$100,000 and invested in real estate. As an independently wealthy man, he could afford to spend over three years (1868-72) as *rentier* in Zurich.⁷

Brentano's active role in the Republican party began in 1854, shortly after the call for the first Republican convention in Jackson, Michigan. An article of his explaining the new party's agenda and encouraging German-Americans to support it, received nationwide attention and was later said to have played an important role in winning over a substantial segment of the German-American electorate.⁸

reigning Großherzog von Baden and his Staatsministerium. The lawyer Brentano was no pitchfork-waving rioter. After the Grand Duke's surprising (temporary) flight, Brentano headed an opposition government in May 1849 and set up office in the Karlsruhe city hall as "Präsident" of the "provisorische Regierung". But Prussia's troops were stronger. On July 1, 1849, Brentano was in exile in Switzerland, justifying his failed brief government in an appeal "An das badische Volk." The *Basler Zeitung* published the essay on July 5 (p. 408).

⁷ Max Heinrici, ed., *Das Buch der Deutschen in Amerika* (Philadelphia: Walther's Buchdruckerei, 1909), 498; obituary in *Der Deutsche Correspondent* [Baltimore] Sept. 19, 1891; obituary in *Illinois Staatszeitung*, Sept. 18, 1891; see also Albert Faust, "Brentano, Lorenz", *Dictionary of American Biography*, 2 (1929), 19.

⁸ The article supposedly appeared in the Kalamazoo *Telegraph* in April or May 1854; *The Western Rural*, May 20, 1876, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

When Southern states began leaving the Union, Brentano immediately took a public stand. Together with ten other German-Americans and others, he signed the bipartisan manifesto of January 5, 1861.⁹ In 1862, hardly three years in Chicago, Brentano was elected as one of the seven representatives of Chicago in the Illinois House of Representatives. From 1863 to 1868, he was elected to Chicago's Board of Education, during the last year he served as its president. He succeeded in getting the board to approve the teaching of German language and literature; by 1872, thirteen of Chicago's public schools were teaching German.¹⁰ Brentano was an Illinois delegate to the Republican national convention in Baltimore in 1864, and to the end of his life he boasted of the fact that he served as secretary of the convention that nominated Lincoln in 1864 to run for his second term. In 1868, Brentano was one of the electors for the Grant ticket.

During his stay from 1869 to 1872 in Zurich, Brentano earned the gratitude of the Grant administration when he followed the suggestion of the American ministers in Paris and Switzerland and wrote several widely regarded legal articles in the *Wiener Freie Presse*, *Frankfurter Journal*, and *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* in support of the American claims before an international arbitration commission in Geneva to damages from Britain for allowing the *Alabama* and other English-built Confederate vessels to raid Northern merchant vessels on the open Atlantic.¹¹

Less well known to the American public became Brentano's emotional reaction to the German-French war of 1870. In a letter to an old friend in Karlsruhe shortly after the beginning of the war, Brentano gave a classic description of the remnants

⁹ A.T. Andreas, *History of Chicago, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Chicago: A.T. Andreas Company, 1885), vol.2, p.159.

¹⁰ Hermann Felsenthal, letter to the editor, *Illinois Staatszeitung* Oct. 23, 1876, and article in *Illinois Staatszeitung* Sept. 23, 1891, clippings, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

¹¹ Obituary in *National-Zeitung*, Sept. 18, 1891, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

of loyalty a number of emigrants feel for their home country's victories and defeats in conflicts with other nations - perhaps as part of the ethnicization that often occurred after emigration:

Although I was deprived of my rights as a German citizen, the inborn love of one's homeland lives on as strongly as ever. I share all your suffering and sorrows in this great and holy struggle, and I equally share your rejoicing over the splendid welfare and victories of the German armies, just as I still were one of you.

He enclosed 500 Swiss francs "for the wounded and the sick of your brave army."¹²

The dream of many an emigrant came true in Brentano's case, when in 1872 President Grant sent him as American consul to Dresden, the capital of the kingdom of Saxony. He owed the lucrative appointment, according to the sympathetic *Baltimore Correspondent*, not to frantic office-seeking on his part but to the services which the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* had rendered to Grant's election campaign.¹³

After three successful years as the official representative of American political and especially commercial interests in Dresden, Brentano decided to return to Chicago in time to take an active part in the 1876 election campaign. When it became known that Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, who had opposed Brentano's appointment from the beginning, had forced him to resign several months earlier than he had intended to, German-American newspapers attacked Fish's principle of not sending naturalized citizens as officials back to their country of origin. It was detrimental to American interests, they argued, and made fun of

¹² Lorenz Brentano to Malsch, Zurich, August 22, 1870, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society; my translation.

¹³ *Tägliche Chicagoer Union*, Sept. 19, 1872, article taken from *Baltimore Correspondent*, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society. The Brentano file in the Letters of Application and Recommendation collection of the National Archives, Diplomatic Branch, contain no information on the appointment

Brentano's successor for not being able to communicate with the Saxons in their language.¹⁴

The ethnic dimension of Brentano's 1876 election campaign was openly discussed, locally as well as nationally. After praising Brentano's qualifications, the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* referred to the fact that "besides Schleicher, a Democrat from Texas, no German-born citizen has yet been named for the next Congress. Brentano would certainly be a very strong candidate in his district, which is so largely populated by German-Americans."¹⁵ The population of the Third District - the city's North side and parts of suburban Cook and Lake County - was almost half German-American. An English-language newspaper claimed that "certainly one half of the Republican voters there are of German parentage."¹⁶ But only against strong Irish competition did Brentano secure the nomination on the sixth ballot of the district convention.¹⁷ When all nominations for the November election were known, the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* reported that in addition to Brentano five German-born candidates were running for the House of Representatives: Salomon Spitzer, Nikolaus Müller and Anton Eickhoff in New York City, Stiastrny in New Jersey, and Gustav Schleicher in Texas.¹⁸ The campaign was an unusually bitter one, and the ethnic antagonism was exploited to the full, especially by the Democratic *Chicago Times*. In its columns the Republican candidate's name was "Herr

¹⁴ Lorenz Brentano, Letter to the Editor of *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, April 22, 1876, and adjoining clippings, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

¹⁵ Translation in an unidentified English-language newspaper, possibly the *Chicago Courier*, of September 15, 1876, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

¹⁶ Newspaper not identified, Sept. 29, 1876, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

¹⁷ Letter to the Editor by "German-American," *The Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 19, 1876; report on convention in *The Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 29, 1876.

¹⁸ *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, Oct. 30, 1876

Brentano," his understanding of American affairs and especially of Chicago's interests was doubted, as was his very loyalty and his ability to speak "the language of the Congress." Substantive issues, such as Brentano's call for civil service reform, were ignored.¹⁹ Brentano received 11,843 votes, his Democratic opponent, Pennsylvania-born John LeMoyné, 11,435, which was considered a "substantial majority" by Chicago standards.²⁰

In his one term in the House of Representatives, Brentano, in addition to pushing some local issues, spoke up when German-American relations were dealt with, especially problems naturalized American citizens had when they returned to Germany.²¹ When dissatisfaction with the lack of compliance by German authorities with the Bancroft treaty of 1868 between the United States and the North German Confederation led to calls for its repeal, Brentano defended the usefulness of the basic recognition of the American citizenship of emigrated Germans by that treaty and warned against its repeal without a better substitute in sight. He was quite capable of patriotic American rhetoric:

The naturalization treaty concluded on the birthday of George Washington, February 22, 1868, with the North German Confederation, and afterward followed by similar treaties with Bavaria, Württemberg, Hesse Darmstadt, and Baden, was a great triumph of American diplomacy, and will for all time to come shed luster on the name of the great and celebrated statesman and scholar, George Bancroft, who induced the German governments to renounce the principle of indissoluble allegiance and to recognize the principle of the right of voluntary expatriation so repugnant to despotic governments, whose very foundation is their military power.

¹⁹ *Chicago Times* undated clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

²⁰ Unidentified and undated English-language newspaper, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

²¹ Brentano's resolution concerning the Julius Bäumer case received unanimous approval in the House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, 45th Congress, 3d Session, p. 22.

Brentano explicitly assumed the role of spokesman for German-Americans when he said: "I may be permitted to state here from the feeling which I know exists among the German-American portion of the people of the United States, that they would be the last to claim protection for such persons whom they consider citizens of two worlds but true to none."²²

Brentano's German background was acknowledged in a special way, when the House, sent him as one of their representatives to Gustav Schleicher's funeral in San Antonio.²³

At least parts of Chicago's English-language press considered Brentano to be "an accurate exponent of the true sentiments upon political issues of the German-Americans in his district" and presented speeches of his as "an index of the sentiments of our German fellow citizens."²⁴ The role of congressman clearly enhanced and reinforced his role as spokesman of his ethnic group. As an elected representative he had to heed constituent opinion, but as a member of Congress he was also in a favorable position to shape constituent opinion and to influence public opinion far beyond his district.

Although Brentano was willing to run for re-election in 1878, his district nominated the New York-born and Wisconsin-raised lawyer Hiram Barber; he was elected. After Brentano broke with the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* in 1879, his former

²² Speech on February 24, 1879, *Congressional Record*, 45th Congress, 3d Session, Appendix, pp. 161-162.

²³ In his memorial address before a special session of the House of Representatives on Feb. 17, 1879, Brentano claimed Schleicher, because of his love of liberty, would have become a revolutionary Forty-Eighter like himself, had he not emigrated shortly before the outbreak of the revolution. *Congressional Record*, 45th Congress, 3d Session, p. 1501.

²⁴ *The Chicago Post*, May 31, 1877, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

friends reminded him of the power of the press: "You would never have been elected, if the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* had opposed your candidacy."²⁵

Brentano was 65 years old when he returned to Chicago in 1879. He wanted to go back to Germany as American consul, but his attempts in 1879 and 1881 to be nominated by Presidents Hayes and Garfield failed.²⁶ Disappointment and anger probably contributed to his break with the Republican party in 1882.²⁷ Brentano now became an advisor and writer for the *Chicago Demokrat*, and as an independent Democrat he supported Grover Cleveland for the presidency in 1884.²⁸

With his strong convictions and sharp pen, Brentano ended up with few friends among organized German-Americans. The German Press Club and the Turnvereine refused to send delegations to his funeral in 1891.²⁹ As a freethinker, he never enjoyed the political support of Christian churches.³⁰

Lorenz Brentano obviously had leadership qualities that were recognized in both the German and American political settings. After his immigration, he went through a decade of adjustment, of learning by trial and error. His first starts as a

²⁵ *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, March 6, 1879.

²⁶ Congressman G.L. Fort to Secretary of State William Evarts, March 17, 1879, Letters of Application and Recommendation, National Archives, Diplomatic Branch. Louis Schade, the editor of the *Washington Sentinel*, recommended Brentano to Secretary of State James G. Blaine on May 26, 1881, with the argument, among others, that "no German-American has thus far been appointed." *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Chicago Times*, Aug. 2, 1884, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society. Schurz and other German-Americans also broke with the Republican party in the 1880s in protest against its conservative development.

²⁸ *Chicago Demokrat*, August 2, 1884, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society. Obituary, *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, Sept. 18, 1891.

²⁹ Notice in unidentified German-language newspaper, Sept. 21, 1891, clipping, Brentano Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

³⁰ Obituary, *Chicago Times*, Sept. 19, 1891.

journalist and as a lawyer in Pennsylvania were failures. The years as a farmer in Michigan may have been intellectually and economically unsatisfactory, but they gave him the time needed for orientation on the American political scene and for establishing contacts with other liberal, reform-minded German immigrants, and with the American founders of the Republican party. This reorientation became the foundation for his second and probably decisive step: the move to one of the urban centers of German immigration and the work for its flourishing newspapers. When he arrived in Chicago he was already a leader in search of followers. The newspaper was the only means of communications available to him for reaching potential followers. He did not rise out of ward politics, but his political power from 1861 on derived from his ability to influence voting German-Americans in and far beyond Chicago. In the words of one of his most persistent critics, the *Chicago Times*: "As a publicist, working almost wholly among American citizens of his own nationality, he acquired notable influence, which was rewarded with honorable public offices."³¹ Once he had established himself in American political journalism, his German past added luster to his reputation, at least with the more liberal-minded German-Americans. But it also haunted him; the ultra radicals still blamed him for losing the revolution in Baden. The second institutional pillar of Brentano's leadership was the Republican party. Spreading and organizing the new political movement among his own ethnic group provided Brentano with a special opportunity for political leadership. The crisis situation of the Civil War with its intense partisanship and ultimate test of political loyalty clearly accelerated Brentano's integration into the American political process.

III. Peter Victor Deuster, Democrat of Milwaukee, 1879-1885

Peter Deuster was sixteen years old in 1847, when he and his Catholic parents moved from a village near Aachen to a farm near Milwaukee. He learned the

³¹ Obituary, *Chicago Times*, September 19, 1891.

printing trade, in 1854 began editing a newspaper in Port Washington, Wisconsin, and served as clerk for the circuit court and the land office. In 1856, he moved to the booming city of Milwaukee and co-edited the German-language daily *See-Bote*, which, under his proprietorship from 1860 on, became a strong voice for Catholic viewpoints and Democratic policies.³² By 1863 Deuster had made his name, and he was elected to the Wisconsin House of Representatives as a Democrat; in 1870, he successfully ran for the State Senate.³³

In 1878, at the age of 47, Deuster won Wisconsin's Fourth Congressional District - comprising Milwaukee, Ozaukee and Washington counties - with a plurality of only 135 out of 23,530 votes cast.³⁴ The fact that this made him Wisconsin's first German-born congressman did not go unnoticed in Wisconsin's press.

In his first term, Deuster served on the standing committees for Commerce and for Expenditures on Public Buildings. In his second term (1881-83) he moved up to the Foreign Affairs Committee and proudly and actively continued on it through his third term (1883-85); in addition he joined the select committee on American Shipbuilding.

In debate, the fact that he represented the heavily German Fourth district was no topic for commentary. The circumstances of the election were only brought up

³² Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 187.

³³ On the Germans and other immigrants in Milwaukee politics up to 1860 see Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, chap.7. On Deuster's early politics Frank L. Klement, "Deuster as a Democratic Dissenter During the Civil War: A Case Study of a Copperhead," *Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, vol. 55 (1966), 21-38.

³⁴ Deuster was reelected in 1880 with the safe margin of 2,411 because there was no third-party candidate. In 1882 the Fourth District was changed to include only the city and county of Milwaukee; Deuster won 9,688 to 8,320. *Wisconsin Blue Book*, vols. 1879-1885, section Election Statistics. The 1880 census reports for the city and county of Milwaukee over 83,000 inhabitants; of those 38,000 were born in Germany, 4,000 in Ireland, 2,000 in England and Wales, and over 1,000 each in Sweden/Norway and in Canada.

by another Wisconsinite, Republican George Hazelton of Boscobel, in connection with the all-American issue of an "electioneering fund". Hazelton told Deuster to his face: "The rich men like Mr. Mitchell who own the banks and the railroads, the men who constitute the money power there, are the men who sent you here."³⁵ Without further clarification, the debate moved on to other points.

In his first full speech before the House, Deuster rejected the coining of a cheaper "light-weight" silver dollar with the known full set of sound-money arguments. Not a trace of "ethnic" elements in substance or rhetoric is to be found in this professional performance.³⁶

A Republican initiative in 1879 to extend the law designed to prevent election fraud in immigrant cities like New York was rejected by Deuster because its practical consequences would hurt naturalized citizens more than others. Relishing his expertise, Deuster recounted the 1875 case of two naturalized Americans from Prussia who were detained during a visit home. The Prussian police considered their naturalization certificates a forgery, since they knew the five years residence requirement in the U.S. could not possibly have been fulfilled by the two emigrants. The American Secretary of State, Deuster triumphantly documented, insisted on the certificates' validity and denied the Prussian authorities' competence to second-guess an American naturalization judge. Similarly, he claimed, American election officers were not to second-guess the finding of the immigration court in the same city.³⁷ Deuster clearly spoke on this topic not to gain an advantage for his particular ethnic group but more generally to prohibit a measure that would have expressed distrust in the integrity of immigrants.

A small step in Germany-related international affairs was taken by Deuster in January 1880, when he launched a joint resolution to appropriate \$20,000 for

³⁵ *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 1st Session, April 24, 1879, p. 850.

³⁶ *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 1st Session, May 15, 1879, pp. 1368-1369.

³⁷ *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 1st Session, April 21, 1879, pp. 652-653.

American participation in the international fishery exhibition to be held in Berlin in April 1880. Deuster deplored that no preparations had yet been made by the U.S. Commissioner for Fish and Fisheries to go to Berlin, where "every civilized country will be represented" and where American progress with fish hatching should be displayed to the world. With slight changes, Deuster's proposal passed.³⁸ Two years later, when he repeated his request, this time for \$50,000 for American participation in the fishery exhibition in London in 1883, he was enthusiastic about the success in Berlin. Seven regiments of the German army were now being fed American codfish. But even more important, Deuster claimed, was an unforeseen consequence: hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over Germany and beyond were impressed by what they saw of "the general wealth and abundant resources of the country". Indeed, he reasoned, "examination of the statistics of the emigration from Germany for 1880 indicates a remarkable increase in the number of emigrants during the months following the date of the opening of the Berlin exhibition."³⁹

Another open "homeland issue" Deuster did not hesitate to address on the floor of the House was humanitarian aid for the victims of a recent flood in the Rhine valley. In January 1883, he had a bill to this effect read and referred to the Committee on Agriculture.⁴⁰

Deuster also became involved in a classic instance of ethnic foreign policy, of immigrants trying to influence American relations with the country they came from. It so happened, that the German Jewish liberal politician Eduard Lasker, on a tour through the United States, died in New York on January 5, 1884. He had been a leader of the Nationalliberale Partei and a member of the Prussian Diet and the

³⁸ *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 2nd Session, Jan. 15, 1880, p. 345; Feb. 4, pp. 704-707.

³⁹ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, June 19, 1882, Appendix, p. 401.

⁴⁰ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 2nd Session, Jan. 29, 1883, p. 1734.

Reichstag. As a lawyer defending constitutional civil rights (including those of socialists), he had been a well-known critic of Bismarck's. The House of Representatives on January 9, unanimously resolved "that this House has heard with deep regret of the death of the eminent German statesman Edward Lasker. That his loss is not alone to be mourned by the people of his native land, where his firm and constant exposition of and devotion to free and liberal ideas have materially advanced the social, political, and economic condition of those peoples, but by the lovers of liberty throughout the world."⁴¹ When the American minister in Berlin delivered the letter to Bismarck's office to have it passed on to the Reichstag, Bismarck returned it to sender through his ambassador in Washington. This infuriated, among others, Lasker's liberal friends in Germany, and on January 27, 1884, the executive committee of the Liberal Union sent a letter of thanks and wishes for the further development of the friendship between both nations to the House of Representatives. This letter, together with a translation, Deuster (and not the Speaker) placed before the House on February 28, 1884. He used the occasion to criticize the autocratic chancellor, the principle of monarchical government, and Germany's hierarchical society "in which social, and in a great measure, political position is a birthright more than an achievement or reward for merit." Deuster clearly relished the role of mediator on the national stage, not between the two governments, but between the two peoples (i.e. the two halves of his own bicultural existence):

In presenting this communication, in my official place as a member of this body, as a native of Germany, and as an adopted citizen of the United States, I desire to express my earnest conviction that the action of the Liberal Union is a true index of the feelings of united Germany, and that the action of Prince Bismarck will not rise above the dignity of a matter of

⁴¹ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, Jan.9., 1884, p. 329.

personal vexation and will in no way affect the kindly relations now existing between the two countries.⁴²

Deuster's friend from Oshkosh, German-born Republican Richard Guenther, followed up by deploring that "there seems to exist an impression at present in this country at least among a portion of our citizens, that the people of Germany are hostile toward this country and its institutions." Guenther insisted that Bismarck's rude returning of the letter with the Lasker resolution did not reflect the sentiments of the German people; nor did "his autocratic action regarding the prohibition of American products." The letter was referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, but not before another member, John Kasson of Des Moines, Iowa, impatient of Deuster's and Guenther's personal foreign relations initiative, had warned that "we have nothing whatever to do with the relations existing between the executive officer of a foreign government and the legislative branch of that government."⁴³

Only a few weeks later, Deuster had referred to the Foreign Affairs Committee his request for information by the Secretary of State about attacks in "semi-official newspapers at Berlin" on the American minister.⁴⁴

Almost daily routine for all congressmen was the presentation of constituents' petitions on the Clerk's desk (without any accompanying speeches for or against). Deuster received and deposited his share of them, only few of them can be classified as relating specifically to the German-Americans as an ethnic group. Obviously close to the newspaper editor's heart were petitions from the Wisconsin Editors and Publishers Association for abolishing the duty on type and on material used for making printing paper. Separate petitions on the same subject Deuster

⁴² *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, Feb. 28, 1884, pp. 1463-1464.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p.1464. In July 1884, Kasson was to leave for Berlin as the United States minister to Germany.

⁴⁴ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, March 10, 1884, p. 1758.

laid on the table came from the publishers of *Erziehungsblaetter* and the *Freidenker*.⁴⁵

Deuster tried a major lawmaking initiative in April, 1880: he submitted a resolution for appointing a special committee for the revision of the naturalization laws, because "the laws governing the naturalization of persons of foreign birth are illiberal, defective, inadequate, and incomplete and their revision is therefore an urgent necessity." The outspoken resolution was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary -- and was never again heard of.⁴⁶ Next, Deuster proposed terminating the treaty of naturalization between the United States and the North German Union and concluding a new one with the German Empire that would secure "more liberal and just provisions respecting the rights of [American] citizens, native born or naturalized," when they visited Germany.⁴⁷

Deuster's next initiative actually led to the Passenger Act of 1882, replacing the ineffective Passenger Act of 1855. In April 1880 he laid before the House extensive documentation collected by the Commerce Committee on the overcrowding and dangerously unsanitary conditions on many European immigrant ships. His draft law precisely regulated the size of berths, ventilation and cubic feet per berth, the number of water closets and cooking ranges; vessels carrying more than fifty passengers other than cabin passengers had to have a "medical practitioner" on board, and two compartments had to be equipped as hospitalrooms; explosive compounds and acids were not to be transported on passenger vessels; the master of the vessel was to be held personally responsible

⁴⁵ *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 2nd Session, March 4, 1880, pp. 1332-1333; March 8, p. 1395.

⁴⁶ *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 2nd Session, April 26, 1880, p. 2771.

⁴⁷ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, January 16, 1882, p. 428. A year later, Deuster was still pursuing this objective as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, "Naturalization Treaty: Mr. Deuster's Bill," *The New York Times*, January 30, 1883, p. 1.

and could be fined for violations. On April 18, 1882, the bill was explained to the House by Deuster's Republican colleague Guenther. Deuster himself underlined the urgency of the bill: The port of New York, he reported, registered 1,561,126 immigrants in the decade 1870 to 1879. 2,518 had died at sea.⁴⁸

In the 1881 discussion on refunding the national debt by issuing 3% bonds, Deuster spoke up in favor, as a member of the Commerce Committee, with economical common sense, without partisan, or regional or ethnic group rhetoric.⁴⁹ Similarly, Deuster as Commerce Committee member advocated establishment of a board of commissioners of interstate commerce to regulate railroad rates - an idea that was to find majority support six years later with the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887. Deuster in February 1881 spoke knowledgeably of

the interests of cities like Chicago, Saint Louis, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Saint Paul, and many other places, where numerous railroad lines compete not only with each other, but with the cheaper water transportation; and where each road, in striving to build up and maintain its own commerce and its commercial supremacy, is often compelled to carry freight to the seaboard for less than a reasonable rate.

Overwhelming economic regional needs and experience, not ethnic group interests informed Deuster's rhetoric, and he did not hesitate to speak of "my duty as one of the Representatives of the West."⁵⁰ He played the same role when he submitted to the House the petition of wholesale lumber dealers of Chicago to admit pine lumber from the Dominion of Canada free of duty. In his supporting speech, he deplored the rapid deforestation of Wisconsin and combined "the immediate interests of my own State" with "a question of great national importance ... , the

⁴⁸ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, April 18, 1882, pp. 3012 - 3023.

⁴⁹ *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 3rd Session, Jan. 18, 1881, Appendix, p. 32.

⁵⁰ *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 3rd Session, Feb.22, 1881, Appendix, pp. 211-213.

frequent warnings that have come of late from all sides against the rapid extinction of our forests." He then summarized the forestry statistics of the 1880 census and painted as alarming a picture of American forests from Maine to the Rocky Mountains as environmental historians looking at the same data a century later could ask for.⁵¹ Even more directly locally motivated was Deuster's support for a thorough investigation of how the army was (mis-) managing the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, paid for by the federal government. One of these veteran hospices was located in Milwaukee. Since complaints about inhumane treatment of sick old men by tyrannical officers all across the country had been published, Deuster was interested in distinguishing the good from the bad and clearing the name of "his" institution.⁵²

Deuster joined those western congressmen who were no longer satisfied with the Department of Agriculture as Lincoln had established it in 1862 and worked toward increasing its powers until, in 1889, the Secretary of Agriculture was actually admitted to the Cabinet. In May 1882, Deuster introduced a bill to create a powerful department of "agriculture and science" to incorporate all relevant bureaus and other agencies in charge of forestry, mining, statistics etc., to be headed by a Secretary entitled to a seat in the Cabinet. Cooperation with various organizations in the States would be close, dry farming methods would be improved, and so on.⁵³ The great national project, needless to say, had no ethnic group component whatsoever.

Nationalism and patriotism were the organizing principles, not ethnicity, when Deuster eulogized Godlove S. Orth, Republican of Indiana, who only recently had served with him on the Foreign Affairs Committee. As a "diplomatist" and "statesman", Orth's ambition had been "to build the greatness of a nation", and he

⁵¹ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 2nd Session, Feb. 14, 1883, pp. 2656-2658.

⁵² *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, May 26, 1884, p. 4519.

⁵³ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, May 8, 1882, pp. 228-229.

left behind "the traces of a strong mind imprinted upon important acts of legislation, upon national history itself."⁵⁴

When the Chinese Exclusion Act was debated in 1882, Deuster spoke up in favor of excluding unskilled Chinese laborers from immigration. He reproduced the full litany of real and imagined nativist observations about Chinese immigrants. He emphasized at the outset that he considered the question "from the peculiar stand-point of one himself the son of an adopted citizen of this country" and then drew the line between good and bad immigrants:

This Republic owes its marvelous growth, its wonderful development, its pre-eminence among the nations of our modern times largely to the influx of immigration from the Old World, an immigration totally different from that which found its way to the Pacific coast from Asia. The European immigrant, akin in race to the population of the American colonies which were originally settled by Europeans, became then, and still becomes, an indistinguishable part of our population. He adopts American customs, and, what is more, American ideas and love of personal liberty; he assimilates with and disappears entirely among the native-born, making all that is worth preserving of American life and thought the sacred heritage of his own children. The school-house, the workshop, the avenues of commerce become the scene of this peaceful transformation of kindred elements into a harmonious body that bids fair to establish in due time the most powerful, the most enlightened, the most progressive nation upon the face of the earth.

But not so with the Chinese immigration, past, present or future. The Chinaman does not inquire into our liberal ideas as underlying the American system of government; he does not mean to become a willing contributor to the support of our public schools; he has no desire to build a home and raise a family among us, nor would it be desirable, politically, socially, or morally, that he should do so, because he does not change his social and political views so as to conform to the enlarged sphere of thinking afforded him by our system of popular government and social life; even his bones go back to his native country.

⁵⁴ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 2nd Session, Jan. 31, 1883, pp. 1868-1869.

In addition, Deuster repeated the labor unions' argument that cheap Chinese labor will undermine the wages for all labor and "cause starvation among our own laborers." Proponents of the bill liked Deuster's speech so much they yielded him additional time on the floor, since he was "the only adopted citizen who has yet addressed the house on this subject."⁵⁵ But there was also opposition to the bill. Charles G. Williams, a Republican lawyer of Janesville, Wisconsin, wanted to keep the gates open for Chinese immigrants and rejected the romanticized view of European immigrants. As a boy, living near the Erie Canal, Williams had seen poor, dirty and ignorant immigrants from Europe and remembered names they were given: "Irish and Dutch cattle", "Swede and Swiss and Norwegian hogs". Williams explicitly rejected Deuster's racist pride in European superiority and reminded the House of the ongoing "persecutions [of Jews] in Russia, the conscriptions in Germany, the oppression and tyranny in Ireland".⁵⁶

Deuster also supported the ending of contract labor immigration that Federal law had encouraged in 1864. In the discussion leading up to the 1885 (anti-) contract labor law, he clearly took the side of the "protectionists" to prevent the pauperization of American labor. But he moved to strike from the bill the suggested severe punishments of the master of a vessel for having contract laborers on board. Deuster's Republican colleague Richard Guenther, speaking after him, reminded the House of his earlier vote for the exclusion of Chinese contract laborers and prided himself for consistency and objectivity: "I am a protectionist, I want to protect American labor against degrading competition ... I would vote to exclude my own German countrymen from this country provided they came here with such intentions and under such circumstances as these Chinese did."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, March 18, 1882, pp.2030-2032.

⁵⁶ p. 2039.

⁵⁷ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, June 19, 1884, p. 5364.

Deuster gave his most forceful pro-labor speech in April 1884, possibly as part of his last and unsuccessful reelection campaign. Speaking in support of the bill to establish a bureau of labor statistics, he described the relationship between workers, financiers and congressmen in stark terms: "There is a war between capital and labor, and the legislative power of the Government has been called in as arbiter and peacemaker. ... The controversy between capital and labor is a momentous one, and its end can not be predicted." He referred to "a recent and gigantic strike" (against the Western Union Telegraph Company) and characterized "the money power" as "the golden aristocracy". He praised as the truly productive forces "the laboring classes, the skilled artisans of the land". To be able to mediate conflicting claims in the future, the Federal government needed to collect data on wages paid in various industries and regions, and on investments made and the emission of "watered" stock by fraudulent boards of directors. Deuster was no socialist. He only rejected schemes like the watering of stock whose effect was "to keep down the laborer and to increase the wealth of the capitalist." He criticized as unfair that entrepreneurs were protected from competition of imports from Europe, while their workers had to endure "the competition incident to foreign immigration." In the past, government had helped capital, now it was time for the government to redress the balance by mediating in the interest of labor.⁵⁸ There is no ethnic component in the whole speech, no sentence about the weakening of labor unions through ethnic diversity or rivalry, no reference to German precedents or German-American experience in Wisconsin or the like.

In December of 1882, a bill to provide for a new building for the Library of Congress was discussed with some nationalist oratory. It was Deuster in the role of the responsible housekeeper and member of the Committee on Expenditures on Public Buildings, who submitted the matter-of-fact amendment agreed to that a board of experts - including librarians, architects and engineers - be asked to write

⁵⁸ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, April 19, 1884, Appendix, pp. 489-490.

an exhaustive report taking into account the experience of all major libraries of the country. Other speakers in this debate referred to the National Library in Paris and to the British Museum. Deuster refrained from any reference to German "Kultur".⁵⁹

Federal institution-building was a natural way to express national pride. Deuster contributed his share in 1884, when he supported the bill to provide \$4,000 per year for a new bureau of navigation in the Treasury Department to coordinate "the building up of our merchant marine." He deplored that the American merchant marine was "a midget upon the high seas," although the country had the longest line of seacoast of any nation, and "our mountains, our fields, and our forests contain all the materials necessary to build and equip vessels of all kinds and descriptions." Aware of the fact that "the nations of the earth compete for the world's carrying trade", Deuster, free of any laissez-faire ideology or explicit geopolitics, wanted the Federal government to actively strengthen American commercial seapower.⁶⁰ This theme was so close to his heart that a few days later he devoted probably his longest speech on the floor of the House to supporting a bill to encourage the foreign carrying trade of American vessels. It mandated repealing antiquated Federal regulations such as the post-Revolutionary requirement that all the officers of an American vessel be citizens of the United States and that American consuls in foreign ports be paid a fee by the owners of American merchant ships. Again, Deuster spoke of "our earnest aim to reconquer for our merchant marine the proud position which in former days [before 1860] it held on the high seas." He pointed to the merchant vessels of Great Britain, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway as now carrying a larger share of the world's trade than American ships. He wanted the United States to "enter the contest for the maritime and commercial supremacy of the Atlantic and of the Pacific" and claimed there was a "popular desire for a renewed supremacy

⁵⁹ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 2nd Session, December 12, 1882, pp. 224-225.

⁶⁰ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, April 21, 1884, Appendix p. 175.

of the American flag upon the high seas" that Congress should no longer ignore.⁶¹ Deuster was not aiming at pork-barrel legislation; he was not trying to create business for a Milwaukee shipyard, he wanted to boost America's business and power.

Deuster's Germanness was no taboo. It could even be made fun of on the floor of the House of Representatives. In an admittedly rare scene, on March 24, 1880, when the angry Speaker of the House had the Sergeant-at-Arms actually round up a dozen members who had left the chamber and undercut the quorum, each culprit had to account for his absence. One schoolboyish excuse after another was brought forth, causing more laughter among the righteous than remorse among the sinners. Before Deuster could answer the Speaker's stern "What excuse have you to offer?" someone moved that "the gentleman from Wisconsin be allowed to speak his native tongue." The minutes record "laughter" and Deuster's reply: "Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt I could offer a better excuse in my native tongue." His non-ethnic explanation for having left his seat caused another wave of "great laughter."⁶²

The inevitable beer question came up when the internal revenue act of 1882 was debated. Deuster offered the classic amendment to repeal the tax on fermented liquors, ale, beer, and porter (which in the previous fiscal year had grossed \$13.7 million): "These ought to be exempt just as much and for the same reason that you would exempt coffee or tea. These are the beverages of the poor man, and it is conceded all over this broad land, and everywhere else, especially in Europe where the test of long experience has demonstrated the fact, that it promotes temperance." Without further debate Deuster's amendment lost by the

⁶¹ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, April 26, 1884, p. 3429-3431.

⁶² "After I witnessed the minority of this House enacting the celebrated comedy of Shakespeare's "Love's Labor Lost" [sic] during the whole afternoon, I felt so drowsy I left and wanted to see my wife." *Congressional Record* 46th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 1858-1859.

clear margin of 63:90 votes.⁶³ Deuster had given his major anti-prohibition speech on March 27, 1884, when he supported a bill to forego taxing distilled spirits still in warehouse. He had it reprinted, garnered with several pages of statistics, under the title "Does Prohibition Prohibit?" All the continental European immigrant arguments in defense of the normality of drinking are there:

The tree in the center of the garden [of Eden] was a temptation because it was forbidden. ... The intemperate use of intoxicants is confined almost exclusively to those reared amid customs which proscribe the social glass. ... [Drinking alcoholic beverages] has been sanctioned by all nations of the earth since the dawn of time ... [and] cannot be abrogated or interfered with without invading and endangering the safeguards of personal freedom. ... You may drive the liquor trade under cover, but it will still flourish."

The accompanying statistics demonstrate the importance for the Federal budget of the various taxes raised from the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages and from import duties. For the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1883 revenue derived from the 115 million gallons produced in or imported into the United States added up to \$100.751 million.⁶⁴

One argument Deuster did not use: that dry German-Americans would lose their ethnic identity. It is as Americans that they have the right to drink what they feel like. Besides, beer was an American beverage. Deuster taught his co-legislators some American history: "The Plymouth Pilgrims established a brewery in Massachusetts. They must indeed have been quite fond of beer, as we find in Mourt's Journal of the Plantation, published in 1632, that shortly before the landing of the Mayflower a consultation was held on board, and that one of the principal reasons for landing as soon as possible was that the stock of beer was nearly

⁶³ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, June 24, 1882, p. 5321.

⁶⁴ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, March.27, 1884, Appendix, pp. 35-37.

exhausted."⁶⁵ Clearly, this is not divisive multiculturalism with a group claiming distinctive, exclusive characteristics that set it apart and preserve its identity. It is, rather, an appeal to a pleasure shared by most humans, a recognition of the all-inclusive anthropological constant of craving for alcohol. German-Americans have the right to drink beer not because they or their forebears came from Germany, but because they are humans living in the freest country of the world.

A closely related ethno-economic conflict of interests came up for decision in February 1883 in the shape of the import duty on green and other colored glass bottles. Deuster and his Republican colleague Guenther moved for an amendment of the tariff schedule. They put before the House the calculation of New York bottle importers in which the price for bottles was given in German Marks. The recent import tax increase by the Tariff Commission of 200% on bottles, they demonstrated, will ruin their business. Deuster in his own statement of support only spoke of the good of the American economy. American bottle makers, he claimed have so far been able to survive without a prohibitive import duty. At stake now is "a far greater and more important home industry, that of the manufacture of export beer":

That industry has grown to enormous proportions during the past few years. Our American beer goes to Mexico, South America, Australia, and even to Europe. ... Our American beer must compete in the foreign markets with the products of England, of Germany, and other countries where these same glass-wares are manufactured cheaply, and to compel them to pay such an exorbitant rate upon bottles would therefore virtually be a blow against our exporting interests, and make that competition abroad difficult, if not cripple it very seriously.⁶⁶

Only a year later, in February 1884, hearings before the Ways and Means Committee closed with American manufacturers of glass bottles describing the

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 37. Deuster referred the scholars among his colleagues to "the edition by H. M. Dexter, page 39".

⁶⁶ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 2nd Session, Feb.2, 1883, p. 2012.

precarious existence of their trade and pointing out the low wages paid in Europe, especially "in Bremen, the point from which most of the imported bottles come."⁶⁷

In his third term, the immigrant legislator called for amending the Constitution of the United States. On January 8, 1884, he submitted a text patterned on the negative list of the First Amendment: "Neither the Congress of the United States of America nor the legislature of any State or Territory therein shall enact any laws prohibiting or abridging the manufacture or sale of any article of merchandise composed or prepared in whole or in part of any product of the soil." The Declaration of Independence and American liberty demanded no less: the pursuit of happiness, "individual action and conduct which interferes with no rights of others" needs protection, a mysterious, unnamed "impetus to a complete revolution of the spirit of American institutions" needs to be fended off. Without further debate the clever text in defense of products derived from barley and malt was referred to the Judiciary Committee.⁶⁸

Deuster, together with Guenther, played an active role in staving off the American recognition of an international copyright until 1891. His arguments against the bill lobbied for by the American Copyright Association could not have been more chauvinistically American and hardly more narrowmindedly in favor of the American reprinting business. To open the debate, Deuster had the Clerk of the House read the article "A Scheme to Make Books Dear" from *The Chicago Tribune* of February 9, 1884. It demanded "free trade in intellectual importations" and chided American authors "who advocate this international copyright on the low ground that they want protection from the competition of foreign authors. ... There can be no reciprocity between the United States and other nations in the protection of authors. There are scores of foreign authors read in this country to

⁶⁷ "Last of the Public Hearings on the Morrison Bill", *New York Times*, Feb.23, 1884, p. 4.

⁶⁸ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, Jan. 8, 1884, p. 294.

one of ours read abroad."⁶⁹ His own objections Deuster justified with a curious mix of exaggerated pride in American culture ("No people read more than the American people, thanks to their free institutions, and thanks, also, to their magnificent free-school system.") and economic anxiety concerning the printing trade well known to Deuster as a newspaper editor: "All the publishers of reprints in the United States, the printers, paper manufacturers, type and stereotype founders, bookbinders, and many thousands of workmen employed in the production of reprinted works, would lose their occupations." Deuster pretended American publishers were already voluntarily paying European authors for reprinting their works.⁷⁰

Deuster's years in the House of Representatives fell within the 1873 to 1896 cycle of depression of the American economy. Competition in foreign trade, tariff schedules, and the balance of trade with the leading European exporters - especially Britain, France and Germany - were, therefore, of permanent concern to Deuster on the Commerce Committee and on the Foreign Affairs Committee. As his last major initiative to make American manufacturers more competitive with European producers, Deuster suggested in May 1884 to permanently forego any import tax on "any kind of raw material which may in any manner be consumed by the people or by the factories of the United States." His prime exhibit were woolen goods. If only American factories could import cheap wool from Latin America, they could compete, for instance, with German cloth. But because of the high tariff of up to 150%, certain cloths fabricated in Berlin cost only one half of what the American weavers had to charge. The Berliners used their "colonial wools" at a

⁶⁹ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1201.

⁷⁰ *Congressional Record*, 48rd Congress, 1st Session, Feb.18, 1884, p. 1201: "The custom which now obtains with American publishers of publishing new European works from advance sheets, for which they pay the author a remuneration, has heretofore proved sufficient for the purposes for which the passage of an international copyright law is claimed."

little over half the price American manufacturers had to pay for the raw material. American competitiveness in cotton goods proved, Deuster argued, that when the raw material was available at low cost, American manufacturing know-how and technology was equal to or even superior to that in Europe. American sales in Europe of machinery, tools and other hardware, and fire-arms proved it. Deuster rejected the claim of American protected manufacturers that the tariff also protected the American laborer: "Owing to the tariff the mine-owner of Pennsylvania amasses riches, but not the miner. ... In farming, which is an unprotected industry, the laborer receives about twice as much, board included, in Wisconsin as in England." Deuster's final appeal to the House of Representatives sounded like an economic Monroe doctrine:

We must attribute to our tariff alone the commercial conquest of an immense portion of this continent by European nations, and unless we are now ready to change this tariff so that it will let in free of duty every species of raw material, we will have to continue indefinitely our acknowledgment of a foreign commercial supremacy in a hemisphere where none but an American political and commercial predominance ought to be tolerated.⁷¹

Deuster lost his reelection bid in 1884 possibly because of the split of the vote among four candidates. The seat was won with 16,783 to 15,907 votes by Republican State Senator and flour miller Isaac Whitbeck Van Schaick. Deuster went back into the newspaper business. President Cleveland sent him as American consul to Krefeld in February 1896. He lost this coveted appointment after McKinley's victory and returned to Milwaukee in October 1897. He died in 1904.⁷²

IV. Senator Carl Schurz and the "foreigner" Episode of 1874

⁷¹ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 1st Session, May 2, 1884, pp. 3704-3709.

⁷² Obituary in *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Jan.1, 1905.

I found only one instance, so far, of explicitly negative public rhetoric in Congress turning on the fact that a member was a naturalized citizen. That citizen was high-strung Carl Schurz. The former U.S. minister to Spain and former brigadier general of volunteers represented Missouri in the the United States Senate from 1869 to 1875. On February 24, 1874, he spoke for three hours against increasing the amount of national-bank notes in circulation and against less regulated "free banking" because he feared inflation and fewer European investments. In extemporaneous reply, Indiana Senator Oliver Morton criticized Schurz for having misapplied book-learning, especially doctrines of political economy that were not eternal and universal truths :

Doctrines drawn from the experience of old and of small countries are not adapted to a country like ours that is growing and developing and is now but in its youth. The Senator from Missouri has attempted to apply those doctrines. He seems not to comprehend the country in which he lives or the times in which he lives. The Senator is what they call in France a *doctrinaire*, a political *littérateur*; he takes his learning from the books...

Morton then answered Schurz' rhetorical question whether to encourage a potential German investor to put his 100,000 Marks into American real estate:

If he [Schurz] advises his friend not to send his money here, it only proves that he does not understand this country; he does not comprehend the times in which he lives. If he seriously supposes that this Congress or any member of this Congress is going to propose anything that will endanger a loan of money on the part of any European, he does not understand the country any better than he does that of China, from the history of which he quoted.⁷³

The word "foreigner" was not uttered by Morton, and Schurz' status as a naturalized citizen or the country of his birth were not mentioned according to the *Congressional Globe*. Schurz, however, claimed the next day on the floor of the Senate:

⁷³ *Congressional Globe*, 43rd Congress, 1st Session, p. 1727-1728.

Yesterday, when I pronounced opinions different from those of the Senator from Indiana, that gentleman put the 'foreigner' at me, alluding to the fact of my having been born on foreign soil, and concluding that I did not understand this country. I will not inquire whether this was in good taste or not, but I would merely say that I remember the time when I, with others, helped to promote the political interests of the Senator from Indiana, and those who thought like him did not look upon me as a foreigner at all then, and they thought that I understood this country admirably well. But as soon as I happened to differ with his views, he at once discovered that I was not born in this country and do not know anything of its affairs. I think it would be just as well for the foreign-born constituents of the Senator from Indiana to understand that as long as they agree with him he recognizes their full rights of American citizenship, but as soon as they dare to differ with him in politics he will at once let them know that they are foreigners and had better hold their tongues.⁷⁴

In response, Senator Morton explained without apologizing:

When I said I thought the Senator did not understand this country, I did not mean by that to say that all of our foreign-born citizens do not understand this country - no such thing. The Senator has no right to make himself the representative of all our foreign-born citizens that way. I think my friend tried the experiment some two or three years ago of putting himself forward as the representative of citizens of foreign birth, and attempted in that way to lead them out of one party and use them in the formation of a new one. I think this experience was not very satisfactory, and it would hardly be worth his while to try the experiment again.

Schurz came back:

When I say that his allusion to my foreign birth yesterday, in the connection and in the manner in which he made it, was a little offensive, I suppose he cannot find that surprising; not that I am ashamed of the place in which I was born, for surely I am here as a representative of one of the States, and having been sent here by Americans to represent them as an American citizen, enjoying the full right to express my own views,

⁷⁴ *Congressional Globe*, 43rd Congress, 1st Session, p. 1771.

that right ought not to be slighted by any one who is my equal but not my superior, although I happened to be born upon foreign soil.

Senator Morton insisted on the innocence of his remark:

Mr. President, there is a little assumption in the remarks of my friend - but as he makes them good-naturedly I shall receive them in the same way - that I intended to refer to the fact of his foreign birth as an objection, or as an argument against him. Those who know me, and who know my political life, know there can be no foundation for that. Among many of my earliest and most earnest friends in Indiana have been men of foreign birth, and they are to-day; and I think I may say to my friend, without offense, that I have represented them as truly and I am as good a friend to them to-day as himself. I spoke of Germany as "his country," because he came from Germany. I did not speak of it or intend to mean that it was his country now. He is an American by adoption, an American by naturalization. But I was referring to the country from which he came, and of which he spoke repeatedly, and of which he often speaks to us. He had just come from that country, and he spoke of it repeatedly, I believe, in his speech; and I referred to it naturally as his country, not meaning to impute to him that he was not faithful to his obligations as an American citizen.

Schurz carried on:

To put an end to this whole controversy, do I understand the Senator from Indiana to say he used that expression only in a Pickwickian sense? If he does that, then I will say that I used mine in a Pickwickian sense, too.

Morton, however, did not want to belittle Schurz' German connection and referred to another, not at all humorous dimension: ethnic foreign policy:

Well, Mr. President, I was not exactly in a Pickwickian mood yesterday. ... I used the expression very naturally, and in reply to the Senator, who had referred to Germany and referred to his visit there. ... My friend is partial to his country - I cannot blame him for that - because I remember some two or three years ago my friend arraigned our Government upon this floor for having violated our neutrality with Germany in the sale of arms to France, and insisted that we had been guilty of a breach of international law that was even cause of war.

Schurz interjected:

I did not insist upon anything of the kind.

Morton:

I excuse my friend because of that natural feeling that every man must have for the fatherland.

This arrow shot, Morton ended the exchange with a forced smile: "... if he insists that he was speaking in a Pickwickian sense, I will say that I was also."⁷⁵

Perhaps Schurz kept quiet now because he sensed that the former Governor of Indiana and seasoned expert in ethnic politics just might be his rhetorical superior.

V. Conclusions

What can we conclude from these case studies about the interaction of ethnicity, democratic politics and national government? Brentano and Deuster did not hide their ethnic backgrounds or betray their ethnic origins or their constituents' interests. But they fully accepted the rules of the established political game. They did not go to Washington as ambassadors of an ethnic group or as single issue advocates. They went to Washington only after they had become thoroughly integrated into their home town's and home state's political culture and system. They had learned to identify with territories whose populations were ethnically mixed. Their Americanization had taken place long before they stepped on the train to the capital. They arrived there, as all the others, first of all to represent local and regional interests. Because of the settlement pattern the regional interests of Chicago and Milwaukee were no ethnically monolithic interests. The congress of hometown boosters was playing an all-American game. The American system of federal government, which was built on loyalty to a territory and representation of its interests by simple majority representation with clear-cut responsibilities, served well to integrate an ethnically diverse population politically. (A European-type

⁷⁵ February 25, 1874, pp. 1774-1775.

parliamentary system with a stronger role of nation-wide political parties and proportional representation may not have served this purpose so well.)

On the national level, Brentano and Deuster blended into the system and rightly felt fully accepted. No wonder, they both wanted one more term in Washington than their party or the voters gave them. Both also contributed to defining American national interests. In doing so, they could be ardent nationalists, e.g. when they advocated strengthening the merchant marine or when they practiced ethnic foreign policy. Making the Bancroft treaty with the German government effective was a case in point. Especially Deuster as member of the Foreign Affairs committee did not hesitate to bring his Germany-related expertise and interests into play: Purely political declarations like the Lasker-resolution commending German liberals were rare, bickering over the import duty on (beer-) glass bottles, regulating transatlantic shipping to protect immigrants and supporting American shipping in its international competition were the more usual objects of deliberation. The Chinese Exclusion bill made it easy for Deuster to merge any German-American preferences with the reigning Euro-American racism that at the time defined American nationalism.

Fuchs should have explained more explicitly that the civic culture underlying the day-to-day functioning of state and national government and administration is vulnerable. Once established, their continued functioning cannot be taken for granted. Civic cultures - as well as economic systems - have deteriorated in the past, in the United States and in other countries. The relative success of the political integration during the 19th century of immigrants from all over Europe into one national whole was made possible by electoral politics and representative government that discouraged sharp ethnic group distinctions and rewarded coalition building to pursue territorially defined interests. It was loyalty not to class or race or ethnic group but to place (within a clearly defined federal system of government) that explains a good part of the activities of the German-American as well as the other congressmen during the period of mass immigration between the Civil War and the First World War.



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