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IMMIGRANTS AS AMERICANIZERS:  
THE AMERICANIZATION MOVEMENT OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

A Thesis Presented

by

ALEXIS CLAIRE HANLEY

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,  
University of Massachusetts Boston,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2012

History Program

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IMMIGRANTS AS AMERICANIZERS:  
THE AMERICANIZATION MOVEMENT OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

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ALEXIS CLAIRE HANLEY

Approved as to style and content by:

---

Vincent J. Cannato, Associate Professor of History  
Chairperson of Committee

---

James Green, Professor of History  
Member

---

Timothy Hacsí, Assistant Professor of History  
Member

---

Paul Bookbinder, Program Director  
Graduate History Program

---

Roberta Wollons, Department Chair  
History Department

## ABSTRACT

### IMMIGRANTS AS AMERICANIZERS: THE AMERICANIZATION MOVEMENT OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

August 2012

Alexis Claire Hanley, B.A., Salve Regina University  
M.A., University of Massachusetts Boston

Directed by Professor Vincent J. Cannato

This thesis aims to prove that the Americanization movement was crucial in that it provoked immigrants to devise their own ways in which they could demonstrate their loyalty to America and forge links between Americanism and their cultural pride. Immigrants transformed themselves into a new type of American by exhibiting love for both their home and adopted countries. On the one hand, they were acutely aware of the ever-present demand to exhibit their dedication to America during the Great War, but they also took much of the patriotic ardor that was forced upon them and reshaped it in order to support and promote their own ethnic causes.

The native-born Americanizers responsible for Americanization publications underestimated immigrant potential and desire to participate. Although immigrants did benefit from a certain number of opportunities offered by native-born Americanizers, what was expressed in the Foreign Language Press and other immigrant writings reveals

that the immigrants were better suited to acclimate themselves rather than those appointed by the government, public schools, or private organizations. While native-born Americanizers sought ways to teach immigrants about America and its history, traditions, language, and government, many remained unmindful of the fact that the newly arrived Southern and Eastern European immigrants were practicing one of the earliest forms of cultural pluralism and were also interested in teaching native-born Americans about their own cultures.

The following case studies are used to analyze various Americanization methods employed during the Americanization Movement: 1) The works of Frances A. Kellor and Americanization literature by John Foster Carr and the Daughters of the American Revolution; 2) The Carnegie Studies published during the early 1920s; and, 3) Foreign Language Press articles from The Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey as well as immigrant works, including those by Carol Aronovici and Israel Zangwill.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandfather, who continues to inspire and amaze me every day. Ačiū labai.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAFLN American Association of Foreign Language Newspapers

BOC Detroit Board of Commerce

CFLP Chicago Foreign Language Press

CFLPS Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey

CIA Committee for Immigrants in America

DAR Daughters of the American Revolution

FLP Foreign Language Press

FLIS Foreign Language Information Service

IAR *Immigrants in American Review*

IRC Inter-Racial Council

IRL Immigration Restriction League

IWW International Workers of the World

NAC National Americanization Committee

NADC National Americanization Day Committee

NACL North American Civic League

WPA Works Progress Administration



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### I Am an American

My father belongs to the Sons of the Revolution,  
My mother, to the Colonial Dames.  
One of my ancestors pitched tea overboard in Boston Harbor;  
Another stood his ground with Warren;  
Another hungered with Washington at Valley Forge.  
My forefathers were America in the making;  
They spoke in her council halls;  
They died on her battle-fields;  
They commanded her ships;  
They cleared her forests.  
Dawns reddened and paled.  
Staunch hearts of mine beat fast at each new star  
In the nation's flag.  
Keen eyes of mine foresaw her greater glory;  
The sweep of her seas,  
The plenty of her plains.  
The man-hives in her billion-wired cities.  
Every drop of blood in me holds a heritage of patriotism.  
I am proud of my past.  
I am an American.

#### I am an American.

My father was an atom of dust,  
My mother a straw in the wind,  
To His Serene Majesty.  
One of my ancestors died in the mines of Siberia;  
Another was crippled for life by twenty blows of the kn[o]ut;

Another was killed defending his home during the massacres.  
The history of my ancestors is a trail of blood.  
To the palace-gate of the Great White Czar.  
But then the dream came –  
The dream of America.  
In the light of the Liberty torch  
The atom of dust became a man  
And the straw in the wind became a woman  
For the first time.  
“See,” said my father, pointing to the flag that fluttered near,  
“That flag of stars and stripes is yours;  
It is the emblem of the promised land.  
It means, my son, the hope of humanity.  
Live for it – die for it!”  
Under the open sky of my new country I swore to do so;  
And every drop of blood in me will keep that vow. I am proud of my future.  
I am an American.<sup>1</sup>

–Elias Lieberman

From the early 1890s to the mid-1920s, over 22 million Europeans immigrated to the United States, making it one of the largest migrations in history.<sup>2</sup> This influx, combined with a fear that the new arrivals could undermine democratic values and Anglo-Saxon culture, resulted in an extensive and unprecedented movement to Americanize the immigrant during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The movement provided an alternative to the notion that the very existence of America’s democratic foundations, founding myths, and individual freedoms were sufficient enough to unify the nation. The movement primarily focused on education and participation;

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<sup>1</sup> Elias Lieberman, *Paved Streets* (Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1917), 1-2; Edward Hale Bierstadt, *Aspects of Americanization* (Cincinnati: Steward Kidd, 1922), 17-18. Lieberman was born in St. Petersburg, Russia and immigrated to the United States with his family in 1891; he became an English teacher, high school principal, and poet. “I Am an American” was first published in his 1917 work, *Paved Streets*, and frequently thereafter. His study on American labor law, *Unions Before the Bar*, was also published in 1950.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey E. Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 13.

Americanizers believed it was necessary to make resources available to help the “new”<sup>3</sup> immigrants become accustomed to involvement in political life, the English language, and American history and civics.<sup>4</sup> The hope was that ensuring the immigrant was educated would mitigate the danger of foreign influences such as Bolshevism and avoid a loss in labor resources, often a result of the tendency of many immigrants to return to their home countries.

In 1920, Elias Lieberman, author of “I Am an American,” reported on a conference held by English teachers “anxious to promote Americanization.” The group determined that the term “Americanization” was generally used too loosely; thus, they unanimously adopted the following definition: “Americanization is the process of teaching the foreign-born the idioms not only of our language but of our thought; of familiarizing them with American traditions and American ideals; and of encouraging action in harmony with such teaching.”<sup>5</sup> Today, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the term “Americanization” as the instruction of immigrants in English, as well as United States history, government, and culture, while to “Americanize” an individual or group is to cause them to acquire or conform to American standards.<sup>6</sup> The website of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services outlines the responsibilities of U.S. citizens and the characteristics each American ought to embody: All Americans should support and defend the Constitution, participate in the

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<sup>3</sup> The immigrants that came from Southern and Eastern Europe were considered “new” in comparison to the “old” Irish, German, and British immigrants who came to the U.S. during the early-to-mid 19th century. Both the terms “old” and “new” typically apply to Europeans and exclude those from Asia, Mexico, and elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Elias Lieberman, “The Iron Hand or Sympathy? A Problem of Americanization,” *The Outlook* (March 10, 1920), 434-435.

<sup>6</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2012.

democratic process, become involved in their local communities, defend the country if the need should arise, respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others, and recognize that “we are a nation bound not by race or religion, but by the shared values of freedom, liberty, and equality.”<sup>7</sup>

These definitions touch on a variety of highly subjective and contentious questions pertaining to Americanization. What is the most favorable way for an immigrant to become Americanized and what are the most important aspects of the Americanization process? Furthermore, who is responsible for ensuring that immigrants, whether newly arrived or in the process of becoming acclimated, embrace these standards? The definitions referenced indicate that Americanization is not a process by which *both* native-Americans and immigrants participate. Alternatively, the ideal approach is a collaborative one whereby the former should welcome the latter into their communities and society as a whole not only by freely sharing their beliefs and culture, but also embracing the new.

Historically, the majority of native-born Americans have regrettably attempted to instruct and cause immigrants to acquire the aforementioned characteristics in a strict and intolerant manner. Take, for example, an Italian editor’s conception of the movement, which was printed in a 1920 issue of the Pennsylvanian Italian newspaper *L’Aurora*: “Americanization is an ugly word. Today it means to proselytize by making the foreign-born forget his mother country and mother tongue.”<sup>8</sup> The pressure of total war during the

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<sup>7</sup> “Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities,” U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Website. See USCIS.gov.

<sup>8</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 254. Also see Edward George Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 257.

World War I period, as well as the Great Red Scare of 1919 and 1920, aroused hysteria, admittedly hampered the flexibility of the movement, and undermined voluntary tactics of Americanization. Those Americanizers caught up in the impulsiveness and pressure that resulted from large-scale immigration, followed by the outbreak of war, made every effort to promote “a past that was neatly fitted into the larger pageant of American history.” These authoritative strategies were often adopted at the expense of what social and cultural historian John Bodnar refers to as ethnic memory and vernacular culture.<sup>9</sup>

As a result, most historians to date have approached the topic of Americanization from a negative perspective. Numerous scholars have suggested that the Americanization movement of the early twentieth century was “monolithic,” “culturally imperialistic,”<sup>10</sup> and a “short-term indoctrination in the ‘American way.’”<sup>11</sup> Some critics have gone so far as to categorize it as “cultural genocide.”<sup>12</sup> These conclusions are the products of research that primarily focuses on native-born approaches and responses to Americanization, as well as efforts on a national rather than a local level. As demonstrated by Edward George Hartmann in *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant*, the Americanization movement was conducted at the federal, state, local, public, private, and grass roots levels.<sup>13</sup> Each segment had particular goals and methods. The tendency to overlook these distinctions does a great disservice to those who played a significant role in the alternate

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<sup>9</sup> John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 69-77.

<sup>10</sup> Robert A. Carlson, *The Americanization Syndrome: A Quest for Conformity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 96; Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 3. Mirel does not agree with this interpretation, but many historians and educational theorists make this assumption about the movement. Also, see further discussion by Carlson regarding criticisms that surfaced on the left as soon as the movement waned.

<sup>11</sup> George E. Pozetta, ed., *Americanization, Social Control, and Philanthropy* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991), 233.

<sup>12</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*.

Americanization initiatives and social efforts that promoted and facilitated more open-minded routes to incorporate immigrants into mainstream American culture.

One of the aspects most frequently overlooked by those who participated in Americanization undertakings and discourse was the immigrants' effect on the nation.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the movement, native-born Americans remained fixated on maintaining social control and supported the Americanization methods they believed would unwaveringly benefit and protect the country, often at the expense of the immigrant population. These narrow-minded efforts provoked immigrants to explore new avenues of Americanization and allowed them to redefine the process. Although attendance at official patriotic events, participation in night schools, and applying for first papers were all greatly encouraged by means of Americanization propaganda, disorganization and unrealistic expectations often left immigrants to fend for themselves.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the immigrants' unique ability to Americanize themselves. Immigrant Americanization methods, which focused on voluntary and inclusive approaches, were more favorable, more effective, and had a more decisive and positive impact on the nation than native-born Americanization methods. More specifically, becoming acquainted with American history and learning to appreciate its value and significance served as a common thread and was viewed by both native-born and immigrants alike as an indispensable aspect of Americanization. While learning English and civics allowed immigrants to thrive in the New World, taking interest in the American historical narrative and taking part in patriotic celebrations enabled immigrants

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<sup>14</sup> Bierstadt, *Aspects of Americanization*, 16.

to demonstrate their commitment to their new nation and its democratic ideals, regardless of whether or not they became proficient in English or naturalized citizens.

This paper argues that the Americanization movement was crucial in the sense that it provoked immigrants to devise their own ways in which they could demonstrate their loyalty and forge links between Americanism and their cultural pride. Immigrant communities established their own organizations to meet their needs and express their devotion to America, often by revising the American historical narrative to credit their ethnic groups with helping to build the nation. These associations flourished despite the fact that native-born Americanizers generally viewed the immigrants' geographic and linguistic enclaves as suspicious and detrimental to the good of the nation. These immigrant agencies, especially the Foreign Language Press (FLP) served as havens and a means to stay connected with the homeland on the one hand, but also as an "unconsciously evolving bridge to the general American society" on the other.<sup>15</sup>

In the words of historian Jeffrey E. Mirel, author of *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants*, "In the process of becoming Americans, the immigrants changed how America came to understand itself." Mirel refers to the immigrants' stance as "patriotic pluralism." "The immigrants, as represented in the foreign language press...were active, creative, and tenacious in their efforts to use Americanization education to further their individual and group interests and to use what they learned in this process to promote a new vision of American society." They "Americanized on their own terms" by remaining steadfast in their allegiance to the

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<sup>15</sup> Milton M. Gordon, "The American Immigrant Revisited," *Social Forces*, Vol. 54. No. 2 (Dec., 1975), 473.



United States while simultaneously striving to maintain what they believed to be the most important features of their culture.<sup>16</sup>

In order to gain a more extensive and inclusive understanding of the movement, this study will analyze the overall progression of the campaign as well as the varying approaches and perspectives of the individuals and organizations involved in the Americanization movement. The primary focus will be on the years between 1900 and 1925 and on Eastern and Southern European immigration to the East Coast and Midwestern United States.<sup>17</sup> Although it will by no means be comprehensive, this paper will focus on three distinctive case studies: Frances A. Kellor's approach to Americanization based on her career and writings and the Americanization literature of John Foster Carr and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR); The Carnegie Corporation's Americanization Studies of the early 1920s; and excerpts from The Chicago Foreign Language Press (CFLP) as well as immigrant works by Carol Aronovici and Israel Zangwill. These case studies will broadly illustrate how diverse methods and goals developed in spite of efforts, sometimes-inadvertent, to bar immigrants from participating in the Americanization process. This paper will determine how each had a significant impact on the way we perceive our nation today. The primary accounts that illuminate the movement's objectives, successes, and failures—those of the Americanizers, social scientists, scholars, and immigrant groups directly involved or

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<sup>16</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 10-12.

<sup>17</sup> It must be noted that the topic of Asian immigration to the U.S. is also important, but so momentous that it would require a separate study. Furthermore, by the time period in question the U.S. government had excluded Chinese and Japanese immigrants. See Bill Ong Hing, *Defining America Through Immigration Policy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 40-43.

affected—should also serve as a guide for contemporary immigrant policies and conventions.<sup>18</sup>

Frances A. Kellor was the chief organizer of the Americanization movement. This study will examine many of her theories, methods, and works, namely *The Immigrants in America Review*, a quarterly edited by Kellor, and her final study on Americanization, *Immigration and the Future*. Kellor promoted the involvement of all facets of the United States—the public, immigrants, grassroots organizations, and most importantly, in her opinion, the Federal government and industry—to ensure that Americanization succeed through the changing of America and its institutions.<sup>19</sup> Despite her lofty aims, it does appear that she took the concept of efficiency in the schooling of immigrants to extremes. She was concerned with protecting American society more so than immigrants. As will be noted, this was the case with many progressive undertakings; although progressives' goals were admirable, the ways in which they sought to reach these goals proved detrimental to the Americanization process. Despite this, Kellor's leadership and activism over the course of the movement drew attention to the fact that immigrants possessed the ability to become loyal and active citizens and demonstrated that a unified effort, which exercised communication with and understanding of immigrants and their communities, was key to America's success.

Kellor's efforts will be examined in conjunction with Americanization materials written, published and distributed under the direction of John Foster Carr, as well as

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<sup>18</sup> Otis L. Graham & Elizabeth Koed, "Americanizing the Immigrant, Past and Future: History and Implications of a Social Movement," *The Public Historian* (Autumn, 1993), 24.

<sup>19</sup> John Press, *Frances Kellor, Americanization, and the Quest for Participatory Democracy*, PhD diss. (New York University, 2010), 3; also see 5-6 for a brief overview of her endeavors.

manuals circulated by patriotic organizations, such as the DAR. Carr believed that libraries and their holdings, if carefully selected, could teach immigrants to think like Americans. Carr's *Guide to the United States for the Jewish Immigrant: A Nearly Literal Translation of the Second Yiddish Edition*, published in 1916 under the auspices of the Immigrant Publication Society, as well as The DAR's *Manual of the United States for the Information of Immigrants and Foreigners*,<sup>20</sup> provide insight into what many native-born Americanizers believed immigrants needed to conform to in order to be considered dedicated Americans. The *Manual* and *Guide* passed over ethnic interests and pluralistic Americanization approaches and instead promoted what they viewed as the common public interest; that is, middle-class Anglo-Saxon values and culture.<sup>21</sup>

This study will also consider three of the ten Carnegie Studies volumes that most closely relate to the pillars of Americanization: *Old World Traits Transplanted*, by W.I. Thomas, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control*, by Robert E. Park, and *Schooling of the Immigrant*, by Frank V. Thompson, which pertain to immigrant cultures, the immigrant press, and education respectively. The authors' views were strikingly different from those of individuals such as Carr and Kellor. They maintained that complete assimilation was inevitable, but that the process could be hastened if immigrants were given the "freedom to make their own connections between old and new experiences."<sup>22</sup> They were hopeful that this voluntary approach would allow the native and foreign-born to realize their

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<sup>20</sup> The DAR's *Manual* was published in 1921, 1923, and 1928; this study refers to the 1921/1923 publications.

<sup>21</sup> Rivka Lissak, "Liberal Progressives and 'New Immigrants': The Immigrants' Protective League of Chicago, 1908-1919," *Studies in American Civilization*, XXXII (1987), 79-103 in Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 102-103.

<sup>22</sup> William Isaac Thomas, *Old World Traits Transplanted* (New York & London: Harper & Brothers, 1921), 308.

oneness, like-mindedness, and love of liberty. Simultaneously, democracy would ideally permit what is now widely referred to as multiculturalism to flourish.<sup>23</sup>

Most importantly, The *Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey* (CFLPS) a translation of 22 different Chicago FLP newspapers published throughout the Americanization movement will be examined. Unlike Kellor's writings, Carr's *Guide*, the DAR's *Manual*, and the Carnegie Studies, the CFLPS allows historians to analyze the debate on a more local rather than national level. It also demonstrates the newcomers' ability to fight against strict assimilation and "100 percent Americanism," while also remaining committed to the nation's democratic ideals and participating in its traditions in order to prove their loyalty to America. Learning American history and writing themselves into the historical narrative was a fundamental component of the immigrants' Americanization approach.

Carol Aronovici's writings on Americanization, published in the early 1920s provide insight into why immigrants were so critical of the native-born approaches to Americanization. Aronovici, an immigrant and scholar, held that America needed to be interpreted in new ways based on positive changes made to the country as a result of the new immigration. Likewise, Israel Zangwill's famous play, *The Melting Pot*, often misinterpreted by critics, considered the possibility of a new type of American and America, ideally enriched by immigrant heritages and traditions. His work is another

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<sup>23</sup> The term multiculturalism originated in Sweden in 1957, while Canada was the first to adopt it and incorporate it into their national policy. The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines the term as "the notion that people in a given society should coexist with one another, without having to fear or resent that their cultural identity will be [sic] not be accepted if it does not fit with the normative cultural climate of that society," 316.

example of how immigrants sought to illustrate their love for America, frequently proving that they were more devoted Americans than those of native birth.

Not only did immigrants challenge the traditional American historical narrative, but they also greatly discredited the strict assimilationist and “100 percent Americanism” methods. These were not nearly as effective as the alternative twofold Americanization approach, whereby immigrants remained connected to their homeland and Old World culture while also coming to wholeheartedly appreciate America’s history, culture, language, and government. Based on the three case studies selected, it is evident that this often occurred irrespective of extensive guidance from official Americanization literature, federal or state Americanization efforts, English classes, or appeals on behalf of native-born Americanizers.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORIOGRAPHY

The Americanization movement poses many challenges for historians. For one, there is a vast array of secondary source material available within a wide range of disciplines, all which fall under the general topic of Americanization. Americanization has to do with the political, social, economic, and cultural transformation of immigrants in the United States, as well as the process by which the native-born acquainted themselves with foreign-born culture and practices. Many have taken an interest in the history of Americanization, including historians, economists, sociologists, educators, lawyers, librarians, and politicians. Furthermore, as noted by scholar J.M. Beach, one of the greatest difficulties for contemporary historians “is the wide ahistorical usage of the term ‘Americanization’ in a diverse array of studies on immigration, assimilation, nationalism, and cultural socialization.”<sup>24</sup> Essentially, despite the importance of the topic

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<sup>24</sup> J.M. Beach, “Dare to Know: What is Americanization? Historiography of a Concept, Social Movement, and Practice,” (August, 2011) <http://jmbeach.blogspot.com/2011/08/what-is-americanization-historiography.html>

and its implications for present-day immigration practices, the fragmented literature available has often been misconceived.<sup>25</sup>

Initially, the entire Americanization movement was portrayed as intolerant and coercive in all respects. In their survey of secondary literature relating to the Americanization movement, historians Otis L. Graham, Jr. and Elizabeth Koed note that most historians fail to observe the efforts of religious and civic institutions, settlement houses, and immigrants.<sup>26</sup> Graham and Koed make a very poignant statement: “The lessons of the past that are ignored often allow the misdirection of future policy. As often, policy error comes from the influence of superficial and incomplete presumed lessons that are hastily assembled from a single historical source, or worse yet, from individual or collective hazy memory.”<sup>27</sup> Their statement speaks to historical research and collective memory in relation to the Americanization movement. The authors’ main concern is evident: if the negative historical representation of the term “Americanization” remains, future policy makers will be hesitant to consider the possibility and usefulness of similar efforts undertaken with and by future immigrant groups.

The fact that negative analyses are so widespread and receive so much attention implies that the majority of Americanization studies have focused on the “conventional” approach to Americanization of the federal government, specifically on the methods of the Bureau of Education in the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of

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<sup>25</sup> Otis L. Graham & Elizabeth Koed, “Americanizing the Immigrant, Past and Future: History and Implications of a Social Movement,” *The Public Historian* (Autumn, 1993), 37; Alan M. Kraut, *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harland Davidson, 1982), 35.

<sup>26</sup> Graham & Koed, “Social Movement,” 35-36.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

Naturalization in the Department of Labor, government efforts at the state level, and private philanthropies, namely Americanization factory programs backed by big business. This narrow view, which is often based on the most extreme examples of Americanization efforts, disregards both immigrants' participation in and reactions to the process. Most importantly, however, is that, as historian John Bodnar argues, Americanization was not all about centralized authorities, the federal government, and official Americanization efforts, but was just as much about immigrants defending their vernacular culture and their "desire both to honor and break their ancestral and familial ties of *descent* and to express their *consent* to a new culture of individualism and new political structures."<sup>28</sup>

While early works on the topic did distinguish between the initial "Liberal Americanization" and the "100% Americanization" approach, which prevailed under the pressure of total war and towards the end of the movement, most Americanization studies have acquiesced to the "collective hazy memory" that Graham and Koed mention. In their article published in a 1993 issue of *The Public Historian*, they also make the following criticism of many historians:

Any positive contributions from Americanization efforts must be measured primarily in the lives of individual immigrants themselves. But historians of the movement have not drawn much from immigrant sources with respect to the question: In the struggle to become an American in the fullest sense, what helped the immigrant the most, what were the turning points?<sup>29</sup>

It is evident that immigrants opposed Americanization methods which did not tolerate, much less embrace, their Old World culture and memories; however, "Americanization

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<sup>28</sup> John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 42.

<sup>29</sup> Graham & Koed, "Social Movement," 39.



was very substantially an immigrant-generated enterprise, impressive evidence that rapid assimilation was seen as the key to making it in America.” Often immigrants that resided in America for some time were inclined to pressure newcomers to assimilate so that their own group would not be regarded with contempt by native-born and acclimated foreign-born alike.<sup>30</sup> Essentially, it is important to consider that both liberal Americanizers and immigrants “worked to break down ethnic divisions,” resulting in “a positive influence in the building of a more unified democracy.”<sup>31</sup>

More recent works have taken a different approach toward Americanization by bringing immigrant efforts and perspectives into focus. Bodnar’s *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* is especially noteworthy because, although it is not specifically about the Americanization movement, its main theme speaks to one of the core conflicts of the movement: the struggle between those who wanted to preserve and celebrate America’s Anglo-Saxon traditions and “official memory,” versus those who were intent on preserving at least a portion of their “vernacular memories” and culture. Bodnar suggests that, “the real question [has never been] whether vernacular interests would go away but which interests would predominate from time to time.”<sup>32</sup> It can also be argued that the struggle to protect immigrant culture during the Americanization movement laid the groundwork for a more vigorous and assertive drive for preservation in the 1930s and beyond.

A historiographical overview of Americanization is valuable in that it underlines the progression of historical work and the more inclusive narrative that has become

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<sup>30</sup> Graham & Koed, “Social Movement,” 37; Alan M. Kraut, *The Huddled Masses*, 112.

<sup>31</sup> Graham and Koed, “Social Movement,” 41.

<sup>32</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 248.

increasingly prevalent. Comparing Edward George Hartmann's *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* and Jeffery E. Mirel's *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants* provides a cursory example of how more recent books differ from earlier works on Americanization. Hartmann's book, published in 1948, was the first comprehensive study of the movement and dealt with the official, private, and governmental organizations involved in Americanization. Using official records and publications, Hartmann successfully related the progression of federal, state, and municipal involvement in the Americanization process. Although he included a section on immigrant perspectives and responses published in FLP editorials,<sup>33</sup> the rest of the book accounts only for the reasons native-born individuals took part in the movement.

On the other hand, Mirel's 2010 work, which looks at the role education played in Americanization, especially in Detroit, Cleveland, and Chicago public schools, insightfully argues that the Americanization movement was far more contested than it originally appeared. According to Mirel, the roles public education and the FLP played in Americanization were significant and less haphazard than other methods. Educators primarily focused on preparation for citizenship and the dissemination of democratic ideals; these were aspects of American life that natives and immigrants could share in common, a concept that FLP readers and editors embraced as well. While immigrants did accept key aspects of Americanization that were set forth by the government agencies that Hartmann chronicled, they also agitated for Americanization approaches that would respect their cultural backgrounds and recognize contributions made to the country by

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<sup>33</sup> Edward George Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), refer to chapter IX.

their ethnic groups. Mirel presents Americanization as a constant negotiation and ever-evolving process. Hartmann concludes that the movement to Americanize the immigrant was undertaken in order to solve a problem; when it appeared that this problem was not solved and the Americanizers' goal was not reached, the movement abruptly ended in 1921.<sup>34</sup> Mirel takes the movement beyond the 1920s and into the 1930s and 1940s. He demonstrates that, during these two decades, immigrants continued to fight for patriotic pluralism, especially through the FLP, and for an increasingly pluralistic understanding of America.<sup>35</sup>

Mirel's interpretation of Americanization is most certainly a revised one and therefore warrants a thorough synopsis of his theories on Americanization. He places Americanization in the context of the struggle between ethnic and civic nationalism in American history. Ethnic nationalists believe the state and the nation rely on "ethnic or racial homogeneity" as opposed to ideals that one can acquire or behavior that one can learn. Civic nationalists believe that the nation should be composed of those united by "patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values" regardless of race or ethnicity.<sup>36</sup> According to Mirel, the most important Americanization debate was not between restrictionists, assimilationists, and amalgamationists,<sup>37</sup> who supported Anglo-Saxon cultural supremacy, and cultural pluralists, who supported cultural and racial equality. Instead, despite their differences, Mirel groups the assimilationists, cultural

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<sup>34</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 266-267.

<sup>35</sup> Jeffrey E. Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 158-160.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Amalgamationists believed in the mixing of new groups in the U.S. and hoped that it would produce a new and superior nation. They were opposed to the complete assimilation of immigrants into mainstream Anglo-American culture. See Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 33.

pluralists, and amalgamationists together under the heading of “civic nationalism” and places racial restrictionists in a separate category.<sup>38</sup>

FLP editors and immigrants challenged the ethnic nationalism of racial restrictionists and also rejected the civic nationalism of the other three groups in favor of what Mirel refers to as “patriotic pluralism.” Unlike cultural pluralism, which suggests that patriotism and pluralism are contradictory, Mirel maintains that immigrants were emotionally attached to both their cultural and religious traditions *and* American democracy. Mirel expands and supports this reasoning by including primary source documents published by and for the immigrant communities. He is able to effectively argue that the immigrants learned Americanization lessons, such as a common history, allegiance to the country and its government, and national unity, but also “put their distinctive stamp on them,” thereby creating a new type of America and American.<sup>39</sup>

Examining other historians’ arguments provides further insight as to how interpretations of Americanization have varied and changed since Hartmann’s study. Many historical treatments of the subject are incorporated into larger histories, such as John Higham’s *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, published in 1955. Higham’s book tells the story of Americanization, but does so within the broader context of nativism, nationalism, anti-radicalism, the Red Scare, patriotism, and xenophobia. This approach is beneficial as a great deal of the Americanization movement was a result of the widespread fear that newcomers severely threatened the nation. He also argues that once a significant number of Americans, essentially the

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<sup>38</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 15.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

general public, became concerned with Americanization, it turned into a “crusade,” which differed from the initial liberal and welfare-focused aims of settlement workers. Eventually, in order to achieve unity during the war, Americans drew on the “crusading impulse” that also “flowed through” imperialism and progressivism.<sup>40</sup> Higham, like Hartmann, argues that there were always two opposing sides throughout the movement: the humanitarian side, which had its roots in the settlement house movement of the 1890s and the strict anti-hyphen, “100 percent Americanism” strain.<sup>41</sup> He concludes that although the Americanization movement did depend on coercive measures, it also “rested on a faith in the power of ideals” and a belief in the immigrants’ ability to respond to them.

Oscar Handlin’s<sup>42</sup> well-known work, *The Uprooted*, first published in 1951, argues that the experience shared by immigrants was alienation. Once immigrants reached America, they were not allowed the opportunity to find comfort in or seek help from their Old World traditions and memories. He emphatically states, “The history of immigration is a history of alienation and its consequences.”<sup>43</sup> The immigrants were faced with the shock of an extreme situation: being forced to make day-to-day choices without the familiarity of their Old World society and its institutions.<sup>44</sup> Handlin also suggests that the demand for immigrants to assimilate forced them to acknowledge

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<sup>40</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 206.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 250-251.

<sup>42</sup> Handlin is credited with the realization that immigrants were not a part of American history, but *were* American history. Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), 3.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

that they would always be outsiders and “could never rely on [their] roots to hold [them] up.”<sup>45</sup>

Similar to Mirel’s patriotic pluralism thesis, this study argues against Handlin’s conclusion. The fact that immigrants were indeed uprooted and often faced feelings of demoralization and inferiority cannot be argued and is well documented by Handlin,<sup>46</sup> however, immigrants also relied on their roots by maintaining a pride in their ancestry. Instead of “witness[ing] in themselves a deterioration” whereby “personal decline and a noticeable wavering in standards”<sup>47</sup> were the norm, immigrants found strength in their new surroundings and continued to rely on the support of their communities, as well as the notion of individual freedoms. The persistence of immigrant institutions into the second generation and ethnic allegiance into the third and fourth generations confirms immigrants’ reliance on their dual-identities.<sup>48</sup>

John Bodnar’s *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*, published in 1985, opposed Handlin’s long-standing theory. “Bodnar’s model is based on the thesis that what immigrant groups shared in common was not a tumultuous process of transformation beyond their power to resist.”<sup>49</sup> In *The Transplanted*, Bodnar argues that immigrant thoughts and actions promoted their unique culture, mentality, and consciousness. Although they did not completely understand the social and historical

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<sup>45</sup> Handlin, *The Uprooted*, 254 & 271.

<sup>46</sup> June Granatir Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism: Slovaks and Other New Immigrants in the Interwar Era* (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA, 2004). Alexander supports this conclusion. She suggests new immigrants were “haunted by the stigma of inferiority inflicted by American society.” Refer to page 12 of the introduction.

<sup>47</sup> Handlin, *The Uprooted*, 139.

<sup>48</sup> David J. Rothman, “The Uprooted: Thirty Years Later” A review of *The Uprooted* by Oscar Handlin, *Reviews in American History*, Vol, 10, No. 3 (Sept., 1982), 315.

<sup>49</sup> Plummer Alston Jones, Jr. *American Public Library Service to the Immigrant Community, 1876-1948*. PhD diss., (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 20.

changes taking place around them, they managed to create a new type of culture. In his words, “This culture was not a simple extension of the past...or simply an affirmation of a desire to become an American.” Instead of feeling victimized, immigrants took action and strategized by using knowledge from their past, making estimates about the future, and looking upon their present situation in a favorable light.<sup>50</sup>

The philosopher Horace Kallen was one of the first to propagate the theory that immigrant subservience to Anglo-Saxon culture was not inevitable, and is best known for coining the term “cultural pluralism.” According to Sydney Ratner’s article entitled “Horace Kallen and Cultural Pluralism,” some historians believe Kallen introduced the term in 1906 or 1907, while teaching at Harvard University;<sup>51</sup> others believe that he first used the phrase in his 1924 work *Culture and Democracy in the United States*.<sup>52</sup> In his 1915 article “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot,” he championed diversity and condemned assimilation and Anglo-Saxon dominance; instead, he believed ethnic cultures to be indestructible and that ethnicity had the potential to promote national unity.

Later, in his book *Cultural Pluralism and the American Idea*, published in 1956, Kallen contended that the Americanization movement changed dramatically over time. Originally, it meant conforming to native-born standards; this encouraged immigrants to transform their organizations from self-help, support, and defense groups to more

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<sup>50</sup> John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 209-210. Bodnar’s thesis is also based on immigrants and their encounter with capitalism. Bodnar argues that social change was stimulated by capitalism and immigrant responses were not “linear,” as other historians argued. They found ways to ease tensions between the “family-household,” the center of immigrant life, and the challenges of capitalism.

<sup>51</sup> Sidney Ratner, “Horace M. Kallen and Cultural Pluralism,” *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 4. No. 2. (Oxford University Press, May 1984), 185, 189.

<sup>52</sup> Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 13. Also see “Horace Meyer Kallen.” *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1994). *Gale U.S. History In Context*.

assertive associations that intended to preserve their “ethno-cultural pasts.” Kallen believed that Americanization was still evolving in the 1950s and was gradually becoming more inclusive.<sup>53</sup> Kallen, like Hartmann and Higham, viewed the movement as having two disparate sides; however, Kallen believed the liberal side that supported cultural pluralism did not end with the dwindling of the settlement house movement, but was perpetuated by the immigrants themselves, long after the “official” Americanization movement was thought to have ended in the 1920s.

Robert A. Carlson’s *The Americanization Syndrome: A Quest for Conformity* first published in 1975,<sup>54</sup> exemplifies problematic Americanization studies. Carlson defines Americanization as the demand for conformity to societal norms based on “Puritan self-righteousness” and a religious mission to preserve Protestant principles. He traces America’s quest for conformity and uniformity through education and defines cultural pluralism as an *alternative* to Americanization. Kallen, who conceived the term, suggests that cultural pluralism is a *type* of Americanization. Carlson concludes that Americanization, especially Americanization education, was entirely unnecessary. He also suggests that the only available alternatives were “immigration restriction, banishment, genocide, dependence on the environment alone, and cultural pluralism.” Although he agrees that Americanizers provided an alternative to harsher measures, he still considers it a form of “cultural genocide.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Horace Kallen, *Cultural Pluralism and the American Idea: An Essay in Social Philosophy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1956), 96-97.

<sup>54</sup> An article entitled “Americanization as an Early Twentieth-Century Adult Education Movement” was first published in the *History of Education Quarterly* in 1970. Carlson then expanded on these ideas and published *The Americanization Syndrome: A Quest for Conformity* in 1975; it was then revised and expanded and republished in 1987.

<sup>55</sup> Robert A. Carlson, *The Americanization Syndrome: A Quest for Conformity* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 12.



June Granatir Alexander's study of Slovak organizations during the interwar years demonstrates how Slovaks and other immigrant groups developed ways to maintain their ethnic identity. Her explanation of Eastern and Southern European immigrants' approaches to Americanization is similar to Mirel's "patriotic pluralism" theory. Her work spans the years between 1917 and 1945 and details not only Americanization, whereby immigrants demonstrated their patriotism, but also a simultaneous ethnicization, whereby immigrants sought to preserve their ethnic identity. She finds that, "in the first part of the twentieth century ethnic activism surfaced in times of patriotic ardor."<sup>56</sup> Alexander also analyzes Americanization within the context of the Great War. She argues that, despite pressures from those who supported "anti-hyphenism"<sup>57</sup> and "100 percent Americanism," the pressure placed on immigrants to display their "Americanism" required immigrant groups to celebrate their ethnicity.

She refutes the standard argument made in other Americanization studies, that the atmosphere of fear and intolerance during the Great War precipitated a turn away from the movement's humanitarian beginnings. According to Alexander, links between American patriotism and ethnic identity were first forged around 1915; about the same time that Frances Kellor's Americanization Day took place.<sup>58</sup> Although cohesion over diversity remained the *modus operandi*, the public displays of loyalty that native-born Americanizers so often encouraged gave immigrants the opportunity to write themselves into the American historical narrative, commemorate their heritage, and forge

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<sup>56</sup> Alexander, *Ethnic Pride*, 11.

<sup>57</sup> Hyphenates were considered immigrants whose loyalties were divided during the World War I era. *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>58</sup> Alexander, *Ethnic Pride*, 19-20.

connections between American principles and immigrants' historical struggle for freedom. Alexander also argues that immigrants could be both hyphenates and patriots and that much of President Wilson's wartime rhetoric encouraged dual interests.<sup>59</sup> Alexander's own words best summarize this alternate view of Americanization in the context of World War I: "Rather than scouring the country of ethnic consciousness, the wartime climate provided opportunities both to mobilize and inject life into 'foreign colonies.' In an ironic twist, the demands of superpatriotism, combined with the realities of wartime repression, fostered ethnic activism."<sup>60</sup>

The aforementioned works most closely relate to the progression of historical interpretations of the Americanization movement. Historians have expanded the traditional narrative to include immigrants' unique approach to Americanization, which is also what this study aims to accomplish. More recent studies, especially Alexander's and Mirel's, have diverged from the conventional, overly simplistic, and one-sided analysis of Americanization and "given immigrants a voice."<sup>61</sup> There is evidence to support the fact that immigrants became Americans in a variety of ways and, in doing so, altered the definition of what it means to be an American.

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<sup>59</sup> Alexander, *Ethnic Pride*, 22, 32.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, *Ethnic Pride*, 6-7. Alexander refers to this as history from the inside out. She explains that her approach to the topic allowed her to find out what immigrants truly meant by Americanization and why many supported certain aspects of the idea.

## CHAPTER 3

### BRIEF HISTORY: THE AMERICANIZATION MOVEMENT IN CONTEXT

The origins of Americanization lay in the social settlement movement of the 1890s.<sup>62</sup> Before the word “Americanization” became a familiar and established term, social settlement workers advocated humanitarian approaches to the so-called “immigrant problem.” The decade from 1900 to 1910 marked the largest influx of immigrants into the United States in the country’s history.<sup>63</sup> Between 1905 and 1914, the yearly flow was never less than three-quarters of a million.<sup>64</sup> The newcomers from Southern and Eastern Europe were mostly Jewish, Eastern Orthodox Christian, or Roman Catholic and were most familiar with autocratic governments.<sup>65</sup> Social settlements recognized that assimilative influences were too abrasive and therefore “aimed at Americanization only

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<sup>62</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 119.

<sup>63</sup> Bill Ong Hing, *Defining America Through Immigration Policy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 52.

<sup>64</sup> Robert A. Carlson, “Americanization as an Early Twentieth-Century Adult Education Movement” *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter, 1970), 442.

<sup>65</sup> Jeffrey E. Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 13.

in the loosest sense of the term.” They did not emphasize English or civics classes and looked to better immigrant neighborhoods, not necessarily to strengthen the nation.<sup>66</sup>

Eventually, contrary to the humanitarian social settlement approach, various cities, especially in the Eastern United States, more than thirty state governments,<sup>67</sup> voluntary organizations, and the federal government all became involved in “social engineering”<sup>68</sup> These endeavors aimed to change the behavior and attitudes of immigrants within a short period of time in order to fully assimilate them into American society. This approach, antithetical to that of the social settlements, was rooted in the ideology of organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), which was founded in 1890. The DAR sought to instill loyalty into the foreign born through American history, education, and patriotism.

The author of *Old World Traits Transplanted*, one of the Carnegie Studies published in 1921, perceptively assessed this approach: “There is a current opinion in America of the ‘ordering and forbidding’ type, demanding from the immigrant a quick and complete Americanization through the suppression and repudiation of all the signs that distinguish him from us.” According to the Superintendent of the New York Public Schools, quoted in the *New York Evening Post* in 1918: “Broadly speaking, we mean [by Americanization] an appreciation of the institutions of this country, absolute forgetfulness of all obligations or connections with other countries because of descent or

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<sup>66</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 236.

<sup>67</sup> Otis L. Graham & Elizabeth Koed, “Americanizing the Immigrant, Past and Future: History and Implications of a Social Movement,” *The Public Historian* (Autumn, 1993), 29.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

birth.”<sup>69</sup> Clearly, three decades after the inception of the DAR and the social settlement movement, the former’s approach often prevailed over the latter’s.

During the 1890s, social settlement houses appeared in cities such as New York and Chicago. Settlement leaders, such as the well-known Jane Addams of Chicago’s Hull House,<sup>70</sup> not only took an interest in immigrants’ welfare, but also contended that immigrants could make a favorable contribution to American society and culture if given the opportunity.<sup>71</sup> In the words of John Higham, settlement workers “went beyond traditional humanitarianism in two respects: in wanting to work with the people of the slums as well as for them, and in wanting to learn from them as well as teach them.”<sup>72</sup> This early humanitarian approach reflected only one side of what later became known as the Progressive Movement, which greatly influenced the Americanization Movement.

### Progressivism

Originally, many native-born Americans were confident in a laissez-faire approach towards immigrants; in other words, the new immigrants would assimilate as the “Old” Irish and Germans immigrants had, resulting in the triumph of Anglo-Saxon institutions and culture and thereby creating an ideal American type.<sup>73</sup> A significant change in the approach came when many social workers, educators, employers, government officials, business leaders, unions, intellectuals, and even immigrant leaders,

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<sup>69</sup> William Isaac Thomas, Robert E. Park & Herbert A. Miller, *Old World Traits Transplanted* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1921), 281. See footnote #1 for *N.Y. Evening Post* quote.

<sup>70</sup> Hull House, also founded by Ellen G. Starr, was one of the first settlement houses in the United States and was established in September of 1889. Riva Lissak, “Liberal Progressives and ‘New immigrants’: The Immigrants’ Protective League of Chicago, 1908-1919,” *Studies in American Civilization*, XXXII (1987) in George E. Pozetta, ed., *Americanization, Social Control, and Philanthropy* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991), 203.

<sup>71</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 120-121.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>73</sup> Carlson, “Adult Education Movement,” 440.

noted that the real danger did not lie in the fact that the new immigrants could *not* be assimilated, but that the American population was not putting enough effort into ensuring that assimilation would indeed occur.<sup>74</sup>

The concept of social intervention, accelerated by Progressive Era ideas, offered a “third” solution to the immigrant “problem” and eclipsed confident acceptance and restrictionist views. As the United States continued to transform from a rural to an urban and industrial nation, by 1900, capitalists and party bosses dominated American life, a circumstance that Progressives aimed to eliminate. During the Progressive movement, from the late nineteenth century to World War I, Progressives shared the view that “the social order could and must be improved and that such change must not await God’s will, natural laws, including the laws of the marketplace, or any other beneficent force.” They sought to mitigate the poverty, class war, political corruption, and harsh working conditions left in the wake of the industrial revolution. They also sought to strengthen regulatory agencies in order to safeguard both workingmen and consumers from trusts.<sup>75</sup> Progressivism also referred to a “new consciousness,” which promoted a new view of the world that would help raise the laboring class to middle-class standards of living and impose order and democracy on all of society.<sup>76</sup>

This “struggle for social justice” encompassed a remarkable assortment of reforms led by a variety of reformers. For the most part, however, it was mostly the middle-class that participated during the movement. Most notably, Roosevelt ran for

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<sup>74</sup> Edward George Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 23.

<sup>75</sup> “Trusts refers to large companies that tended to monopolize the market and make decisions that were not in the public interest.

<sup>76</sup> Page Smith, *America Enters the World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 311, 739.

president on the Progressive Party ticket in 1912; he sought election on a platform that promised to establish individual interests as the chief concern of the state and ensure the government would protect Americans from private exploitation.<sup>77</sup> Above all, “[Progressivism] was deeply rooted in an older morality — Puritanism plus lots of exercise with Roosevelt; Puritanism plus high thinking with Wilson—and it was in a sometimes uneasy alliance with the new scholarship, with science, and the handmaid of science, research. They—science and research—became the new divinities....”<sup>78</sup> Much of this research coincided with the drive to ameliorate conditions of the urban poor, especially immigrants.<sup>79</sup>

The “new” immigrants were not always factored into the Progressives’ reformist equation;<sup>80</sup> oftentimes, while protecting the immigrant, reformers overlooked their ability to participate in the process by their own means. In fact, Progressives and Americanizers, often one and the same, consistently treated newcomers as unsocialized children who required extensive education in order to fit in with the prevailing social and cultural conventions of American society.<sup>81</sup> This corresponded with the widespread notion that if immigrants “knew better, they could truly see their own interests and govern themselves.”<sup>82</sup> The Americanizers’ argument that the new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were capable of becoming responsible and intelligent American citizens

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<sup>77</sup> Carl Resek, ed. *The Progressives* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), 308.

<sup>78</sup> Smith, *America Enters the World*, 346.

<sup>79</sup> Resek, *The Progressives*, xxiii, 65.

<sup>80</sup> Smith, *America Enters the World*, 346.

<sup>81</sup> Stephen Meyer “Adapting the Immigrant to the Line: Americanization in the Ford Factory, 1914-1921” *Journal of American History*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Autumn, 1980), in Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 262.

<sup>82</sup> Eric Rauchway, “Progressive Movement,” *Dictionary of American History*. Stanley I. Kutler, ed. 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed. Vol 6 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2003), 496.

mitigated restrictionist dominance and helped to delay anti-immigration legislation, thus allowing the flow to continue.

Frances Kellor's career is an example of the dual impact social welfare and Progressivism had on the Americanization movement. Liberal Progressives believed immigrants were more likely to maintain an American standard of living if they were allowed access to government services and protected from exploitation.<sup>83</sup> Much of Kellor's early work addressed issues of exploitation and urban social problems, before she turned to national preparedness and discipline. Prior to 1905, Kellor spent time living at the College Settlement House in Manhattan's Lower East Side as well as Chicago's Hull House.<sup>84</sup>

The Great War transformed the original settlement house doctrine, based on the notion that the American public should respect immigrants' cultural contributions, into a crusade to preserve American ideals and rid America of "hyphenates." The new approach focused on reforms, policies, and social efforts that prioritized national unity, instead of open-mindedness. "Combating indifference as much as nativism, social workers in the latter part of the progressive period planted the seeds of a public welfare program directed specifically at immigrant needs. This program flowered, however, under other influences."<sup>85</sup> For native-born Americanizers, public and national interests eventually eclipsed humanitarian and ethnic interests. This change caused immigrant groups to assert more authority over their own Americanization efforts and take a greater interest in

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<sup>83</sup> John Press, *Frances Kellor, Americanization, and the Quest for Participatory Democracy*, PhD diss. (New York University, 2010), 76.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>85</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 120.



both American life, as well as concerns relating to their national group and ethnic community life.

### Nativism and Restrictionism

Nativist fears tend to rise and fall based on changing factors, such as the strength of nationalist sentiments, economic prosperity or depression, and the ebb and flow of immigration. The United States has a long history of anti-foreign traditions. Since the term nativism was coined around 1840,<sup>86</sup> nativists have aimed to protect the interests of native-born inhabitants of the United States, often at the expense of immigrant interests. Nativists favor local and traditional customs, are especially opposed to outside influences, and tend to support restrictive legislation. According to immigration policy historian Bill Ong Hing, “immigration policies are not simply reflections of whom we regard as potential Americans, they are vehicles for keeping out those who do not fit the image and welcoming those who do.”<sup>87</sup>

The Southern and Eastern Europeans who immigrated to the United States were not the first to be viewed as a major threat to America. From 1845-1854 about 2.9 million immigrants, 1.2 million Irish and more than 1 million Germans, came to cities such as Boston and New York.<sup>88</sup> Nativists feared these immigrants for the same reasons they later feared the new wave of Southern and Eastern Europeans: they were of a different faith, they had heavy accents or did not speak English, they were thought to be disease-ridden, settled together in “slums,” and took away jobs from those already living in the United

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<sup>86</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 4.

<sup>87</sup> Ong Hing, *Defining America*, 2.

<sup>88</sup> K. Lee Lerner, Brenda Wilmoth Lerner, and Adrienne Wilmoth Lerner, eds., “The Know-Nothing and American Crusader,” *Immigration and Multiculturalism: Essential Primary Sources* (Detroit: Gale, 2006), 48-52.

States. In the 1850s, the Know Nothing Party flourished and became one of the first nativist parties to gain significant public approval.<sup>89</sup> The party sought to increase the naturalization period for immigrants from five to twenty-one years and prohibit Catholics from holding office.

Nativists firmly believed that Europe was “dumping on the United States an alarming number of illiterates, paupers, criminals, and madmen who endangered the ‘American character’ and ‘American citizenship.’”<sup>90</sup> Largely based on these fears, Charles Warren, Prescott F. Hall, and Robert DeCourcy Ward, all Harvard College and Harvard Law School graduates, founded the Immigration Restriction League (IRL) in Boston in 1894. The IRL advocated legal reform of American immigration policy in favor of racial restrictionism. Although influential, the League never became a mass movement. In fact, very few individuals attended IRL meetings and even fewer became active members.<sup>91</sup> The IRL was however responsible for drawing up a literacy bill in 1895, which was vetoed by three separate presidents over a twenty-year period before it was finally passed in 1917.<sup>92</sup>

By the early twentieth century, the IRL had also allied itself with the eugenics movement. The League’s members hoped that a scientific approach to race would help its cause. Take for example a quote cited in an article entitled “National Eugenics in Relation to Immigration” published in the *North American Review* in 1910, which

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<sup>89</sup> Before its disappearance in 1860, the Know Nothing Party managed to elect six governors in 1855; Massachusetts elected Know-Nothing candidates to every statewide office in 1854, including the governor's office, the entire state senate, and virtually the entire state House of Representatives. Wernick, Robert. "The Rise, and Fall, of a Fervid Third Party" (*Smithsonian* Nov., 1996).

<sup>90</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 103.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>92</sup> Ong Hing, *Defining America*, 51 & 58.

demonstrated this viewpoint: “You cannot change the leopard’s spots, and you cannot change bad stock to good; you may dilute it, possibly spread it over a wide area, spoiling good stock, but until it ceases to multiply it will not cease to be.”<sup>93</sup> The author argued that the “condition” of race or desirable heritable characteristics could not be altered through a change in environment.<sup>94</sup> Nativists and racial restrictionists did not believe that “nurturing” immigrants through education and more favorable living and working conditions would have any effect on their “nature” or racial stock, as Americanizers argued.

The Dillingham Commission Report, a forty-two-volume work presented to Congress in 1911, was one of the most important studies on immigration during the Progressive Era and the Americanization Movement. The Dillingham Commission, also known as the United States Immigration Commission, began its investigation in 1907. The Commission concluded that immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe posed a threat to American society and should therefore be excluded. One of the volumes included a “Dictionary of Races or Peoples,” which was fraught with stereotypes and oversimplified illustrations of immigrant groups. For example, Southern Italians were described as “excitable, impulsive, highly imaginative, impracticable...[and] having little adaptability to highly organized society.”<sup>95</sup> The “Recommendations” section in the Commission’s *Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission* stated:

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<sup>93</sup> Robert De C. Ward, “National Eugenics in Relation to Immigration, *The North American Review*, Vol. 192, No. 656 (July, 1910), 67.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>95</sup> U.S. Immigration Commission, *Dictionary of Races or Peoples*, Vol. 5, 1911, 82.

The commission as a whole recommends restriction as demanded by economic, moral, and social considerations, furnishes in its report reasons for such restriction, and points out methods by which Congress can attain the desired result if its judgment coincides with that of the commission.”<sup>96</sup>

In terms of Americanization, the Commission believed complete assimilation was necessary; immigrants should abandon native customs and standards of living.<sup>97</sup>

However, the Commission was uncertain that assimilation would occur at the pace and to the degree required to protect the nation and therefore recommended restriction.

The enactment of the immigration restriction acts of the 1920s was based upon the racist argument that the new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were incompatible with America. In 1921, the Emergency Quota Act was adopted as a temporary measure and restricted the annual number of immigrants from any given country to 3 percent of the total number living in the United States in 1910. In 1924, the formula was altered to allow only 2 percent of each nationality based on the 1890 census, which was taken prior to the major wave of Southern and Eastern European immigration, greatly reducing the number accepted once again.<sup>98</sup>

It is important to note that voices of inclusion did exist. The first two decades of the twentieth century signaled a growth in the belief that the new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe not only *needed* to be Americanized for the good of the country, but *could* be. The majority of Americanizers did not agree with the racial-nativists’ theory that the “new” immigrants were inassimilable; according to the racial-nativists, immigrants did not have the capacity for self-government and were predisposed

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<sup>96</sup> U.S. Immigration Commission, *Abstracts of the Immigration Commission with Conclusions and Recommendations and Views of the Minority*, Vol. 1, 1911, 48.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>98</sup> Ong Hing, *Defining America*, 68.

to radical tendencies, as a result of their lower cultural and social status. Regrettably, with the outbreak of the First World War, “like-mindedness,” the more liberal definition of Americanization, was no longer sufficient. Cultural differences were viewed as a hindrance to national unity<sup>99</sup> and immigrants were greatly encouraged by private, state, and federal agencies to take advantage of opportunities presented to them to proclaim their allegiance to the United States.

### The Great War and Its Effects on Americanization: Forced or Voluntary Patriotism?

As the United States prepared to enter the First World War, the Committee for Immigrants in America (CIA) printed the following advertisement in their September 1915 issue of *The Immigrants in America Review* to publicize their new “Campaign for Preparedness,” otherwise known as “the civilian side of national defense.”<sup>100</sup>

Does It Interest You

AS

A Business Man

to increase the efficiency of your immigrant employees, to prevent accidents, to understand their needs and eliminate industrial misunderstandings and to maintain our American standard of living?

An Educator

to lend a hand in making English our national language, to reduce illiteracy, to help immigrants become citizens and learn a trade and get on in America?

A Government Official

to make the immigrant an asset to America by his distribution, employment, protection and education, as a matter of preparedness for the nation?

A Worker Among Immigrants

to learn what is being done for the assimilation of the immigrant all over the country and what local conditions are and how they are met and what you can do to help?

A Member of a Patriotic Society

to promote better citizenship throughout the nation?

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<sup>99</sup> Graham and Koed, “Social Movement,” 31.

<sup>100</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 243.

### A Neighbor

to eliminate hyphenated Americanism and help your immigrant neighbor to make a strong America?<sup>101</sup>

The advertisement indicates the considerable amount of emphasis placed on Americanization during this period. Prior to the outbreak of World War I, the general American public was not greatly concerned with questions regarding the immigrant population in the United States. Suddenly, every American — all sectors of the population, including businessmen, educators, government officials, workers, and community members, — were expected to participate in Americanization. Americanization organizations, such as the CIA, successfully propagated the notion that the fate of the country was contingent on American immigrants' ability to learn the English language and embrace American standards of living, their desire to become citizens, and their commitment to national solidarity. Royal Dixon, an admirer of Frances Kellor's work, an editor of *The Immigrants in America Review*, and vice-president of the League of Foreign-Born Citizens explained Americanization's universal importance, especially in the context of World War I:

For it is, indeed, every man's chance, if he will grasp it, to serve his country definitely and fruitfully, if he does no more than urge on the work of Americanization. If he takes an active hand, as he can readily do, he is assisting not merely this or the other foreigner to a higher level of understanding, but he is strengthening the nation as well.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> The Committee for Immigrants in America, *The Immigrants in America Review*. Vol.1, No. 3, (Sept. 1915), 2.

<sup>102</sup> Royal Dixon, *Americanization* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 51.

Americanization became something of interest to native-born Americans and immigrants alike;<sup>103</sup> “Many Peoples, But One Nation” was a typical Americanization slogan that both groups were expected to espouse. As the fear of divided loyalties increasingly took precedence, the slogan simply became “America First.”<sup>104</sup> The ultimate goal of the CIA was twofold: by publishing a quarterly and charging two dollars per year, its members hoped to gain public support from native-born Americans by sharing with them “all the supplements on current questions, practical suggestions, briefs, the services of an expert, courses, syllabuses, outlines, pamphlets and legislative bills for the development of a national domestic immigration policy.”<sup>105</sup> The CIA believed that the majority of native-born Americans lacked patriotism, which resulted in a failure to inspire immigrants with a love for America.<sup>106</sup> The CIA hoped that encouraging native-born Americans to demonstrate their patriotism and become more involved in matters concerning Americanization would make a favorable impression on immigrants.

The push for national solidarity on behalf of native-born Americans and organizations such as the CIA had a profound effect on the way in which immigrants chose to participate in Americanization. Immigrants transformed themselves into a new type of American by exhibiting love for both their home and adopted countries. On the one hand, they were acutely aware of the ever-present demand to exhibit their dedication to America and the war effort, but they also took much of the patriotic ardor that was forced upon them and reshaped it order to support and promote their own ethnic

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<sup>103</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 105. According to Hartmann, Americanization became a “national crusade” in 1915.

<sup>104</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 243.

<sup>105</sup> *Review*, Sept. 1915, 2.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

causes.<sup>107</sup> The Great War presented immigrants with challenges, but also provided them with opportunities to prove their devotion to America and take part in the war effort.

The drive to rid America of “dual citizens” and “hyphenated” Americans reminded immigrants of their desire to become acquainted with the new culture of America *and* remain familiar with the culture of the Old World. That is not to say that these sentiments did not exist prior to the most explicitly coercive phase of the crusade during World War I. In 1911, an editorial published in the Polish newspaper *Dziennik Zwiazkowy*, entitled “The Meaning of American Citizenship” suggested a variety of reasons why Poles should become American citizens. The editorial stated,

Being a citizen of the United States does not in the least prevent us from loving our mother country or from working for her interest, and by becoming citizens of the United States we can accomplish a great deal for Poland through the influence we can exert on this nation’s policies.”<sup>108</sup>

By making accommodations to American life, immigrants hoped to better their ethnic group’s situation in America as well as the circumstances of their native country. Many groups, including Ukrainians, Poles, Slovaks, Czechs, and Lithuanians believed it was their duty to support the American war effort, but also had faith that patriotic actions, such as buying war bonds, would help to liberate their home countries.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> June Granatir Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism: Slovaks and Other New Immigrants in the Interwar Era* (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA, 2004), 10.

<sup>108</sup> “Meaning of American Citizenship,” *Dziennik Zwiazkowy* (November 17, 1911), 4, CFLPS, Polish, III G.

<sup>109</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 145.



## Federal and Grassroots Americanization Efforts

As noted by historian John F. McClymer, “the first requirement for an understanding of Americanization is a reliable inventory of the groups, agencies, and organizations that participated in the movement. This in itself is a herculean task.” In 1918, the NAC’s roster of parties interested in Americanization programs contained over 100 entries.<sup>110</sup> The federal agencies most closely involved with Americanization were the Bureau of Naturalization in the Department of Labor and the Bureau of Education, specifically the Division of Immigrant Education, in the Department of the Interior, which was funded by the NAC.<sup>111</sup>

Federal Americanization agencies operated in a “legislative vacuum” despite extensive efforts to control decisions regarding Americanization. Infighting, disagreements between bureaus, and a failure on the part of the executive branch to give the necessary instruction greatly restricted their influence.<sup>112</sup> Both Bureaus focused on publicity as much as they focused on ensuring that immigrants had the opportunity to engage in Americanization activities. The Bureau of Naturalization joined forces with public schools in 1914 and recommended that citizenship classes be set up throughout the nation.<sup>113</sup> The Bureau of Education dedicated its efforts to calling attention to the

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<sup>110</sup> John F. McClymer, “The Federal Government and the Americanization Movement, 1915-1924” *Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives*, 10 (Spring 1978), 22-41 in Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 236.

<sup>111</sup> Congress appropriated no funds to the Bureau of Education’s Americanization work. At the end of 1919, it became illegal for federal agencies to use private funds and was therefore forced to close its Americanization division in the Autumn of 1919. The Federal Bureau of Naturalization; however, continued its work. McClymer “The Federal Government and the Americanization Movement,” 239; Hartmann, *Movement*, 234-235.

<sup>112</sup> McClymer, “The Federal Government and the Americanization Movement,” 236.

<sup>113</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 104.

importance of Americanization, specifically the education of adult illiterates.<sup>114</sup> In 1914, the Bureau of Education began a national investigation of the facilities for the education of immigrants. They found that few standards existed. Methods in the classroom were mostly experimental, while both public and private agencies treated the immigrant “problem” in their own distinct ways and rarely cooperated with other agencies.<sup>115</sup>

The Bureau of Naturalization’s *Student’s Textbook*, was issued in 1918 and sent to public schools in order to prepare candidates for the responsibilities of citizenship as well as the naturalization examination itself. The *Textbook* exemplifies many of the inadequacies of the Federal Bureau’s Americanization approaches. In the first volume of the Carnegie Studies, *Schooling of the Immigrant*, the author Frank V. Thompson summarized the *Textbook’s* major weaknesses noting: “The language...is altogether unsuited to the understanding of the men and women for whom it is intended. In places it is difficult, and the thought abstract” and it “is utterly lacking in pedagogic suitability.”<sup>116</sup> To support this assertion, he included the following excerpt from a section on “The National Government,” which dealt with the Bureau of Fisheries: “The Bureau...has fifty principal hatcheries, located at suitable places in the United States, which in the fiscal year 1916 produced 4,800,000,000 fish and fish eggs.”<sup>117</sup> The inclusion of such superfluous information was commonplace in Americanization literature.

Thompson went so far as to suggest that the book be entirely rewritten or for Congress to repeal the legislation that allowed the Bureau of Naturalization to publish

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<sup>114</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 101.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>116</sup> Frank V. Thompson, *Schooling of the Immigrant* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1920), 349, 352.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 348.

and distribute the *Textbook*.<sup>118</sup> Most importantly, Thompson expressed his concern over the Bureau's tendency to insist upon "purely formal knowledge of facts concerning history and government" giving rise to "parrotlike repetition by candidates of stereotyped answers to still more stereotyped questions."<sup>119</sup> Those who participated in official Americanization efforts, including Americanizers, such as Frances Kellor and critics such as the Carnegie authors, constantly argued for a more systematic and effective course of action.<sup>120</sup> The push for systematic and scientific Americanization along formal lines often ended up fostering a sense of desensitization toward the core values being taught.

Long after the Bureau's work ended, Americanization continued, especially as a result of immigrant efforts. Throughout the 1920s, immigrant groups formed, expanded, and promoted their own Americanization programs. The FLP continued to print articles that provided their readers with background information on American history and democratic politics and encouraged readers to participate in American life and become American citizens.<sup>121</sup> In May 1928, years after the "official" Americanization crusade drew to a close, the Greek newspaper *Saloniki* printed the following:

Americanization is a great privilege and a great honor. It is the best "ization" in the world. It grants freedom in religious beliefs, freedom to love your mother country, freedom to function according to your habit and custom, to use your language, to maintain your church, protected by the laws of the land; freedom to celebrate your racial and religious holidays, but, on the other hand, in wearing the honored toga of Americanization, one must be a loyal and true citizen of this greatest Republic."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Thompson, *Schooling*, 350. Thompson also noted that schools throughout the country actually rarely used the textbook; instead, they favored textbooks issued by standard publishers. See page 348.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 351-352.

<sup>120</sup> Frances Kellor, *Immigration and the Future* (New York: George H. Doran, 1920), 28; Thompson, *Schooling*, 373-374.

<sup>121</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 137.

<sup>122</sup> Mr. Alfange, "The Greeks of America," *Saloniki* (May 19, 1928), 9-10, CFLPS, Greek, IIIB2. Also cited in Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 133.

An earlier Greek editorial, “Our Societies and Clubs Must Be Americanized in Order to Succeed,” also expounded this notion:

We are living in the best country of the world; let us take advantage of this and go along with the cosmopolitan and progressive American ideas. Then, and then only, utilizing our inherent Greek sagacity, coupled with the newly acquired American methods and ideas, we shall be able to excel and go forward to new heights.”<sup>123</sup>

Based on these excerpts, it is clear that immigrant groups, especially editors and journalists writing for the FLP, recognized the significance of Americanization and spent a great deal of time discussing the advantages of combining unique ethnic characteristics and old traditions and customs with American political life and culture. Their writings on Americanization appear profound, especially when compared to Federal Americanization publications, such as the *Student’s Textbook*.

### Industrial Americanization

The North American Civic League (NACL)<sup>124</sup> was one of the first organizations to assume leadership in the Americanization campaign and strove to help industrial leaders, as well as the American public, realize that “the industrial future of the country depended largely upon the education of adult foreign-workers.”<sup>125</sup> Its members believed that it was necessary for immigrants to learn the traditional American ways of life, namely *laissez-faire* ideas and the English language, in order to prevent disturbances within the American workforce. According to the NACL, the likelihood that capital and

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<sup>123</sup> “Our Societies and Clubs Must Be Americanized in Order to Succeed,” *Loxias* (May 2, 1917), 3, CFLPS, Greek, IIB2.

<sup>124</sup> The NACL later became the Committee for Immigrants in America (CIA).

<sup>125</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 92.

labor would clash increased when immigrants remained un-Americanized.<sup>126</sup> The NACL also stressed to industrial employers that immigrant Americanization was “not only a patriotic move but also an economic necessity.”<sup>127</sup>

The NACL’s industrial efforts began in 1910 and were amplified as a result of industrial protests and labor radicalism, namely the 1912 textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts and 1913 silk strike in Paterson, New Jersey. The International Workers of the World (IWW), an organization founded in 1905 in Chicago, helped to facilitate both strikes by recruiting unskilled workers and advocating socialism. The IWW was especially threatening to industrial leaders because it was able to organize unions from workforces that comprised various nationalities, previously divided. The NACL’s 1912-1913 *Annual Report* placed most of the blame for the unrest on un-Americanized immigrants: “None of these incendiary movements would have the sinister form which makes them dangerous, had it not been for the mishandled non-English speaking population, it is hoped that the sharp object lesson of 1912-1913 will bring about corrective action.”<sup>128</sup>

The onset of the First World War increased concerns over immigrant workers’ allegiances in defense industries. In 1914, The Ford Motor Company established an English program, and the city of Detroit initiated an “English First” campaign in 1915. They both exemplify “corrective actions” taken by native-born Americanizers and industrial leaders. Historian Jeffrey E. Mirel adeptly summarizes the important role the city of Detroit played in the Americanization movement: “By 1916, many people across

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<sup>126</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 88.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>128</sup> As quoted in Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 94. Quoted from the North American Civic League, *Annual Report*, 1912-1913, 5-6.

the country pointed to the Motor City as *the* national leader in adult Americanization.” Furthermore, “[the] idea of bringing classes into the factories became among the most important innovations in Americanization education, not only in Detroit but across the nation as well. It also became one of the most controversial.”<sup>129</sup>

In the summer of 1915, the Detroit Board of Commerce (BOC) set out to publicize night school programs and convince non-English speaking workmen that it would be in their favor to register for English and citizenship classes when schools opened the following September.<sup>130</sup> Factories and shops throughout the city displayed “English First” posters provided by the NAC and included notices in workers’ pay envelopes. All textbooks issued to immigrant children contained a card issued by the BOC, which read, “Do your Mother and Father speak English? Take this card home. It will tell them where to go to learn.”<sup>131</sup> Esther Everett Lape, a CIA consultant in charge of publicizing the campaign, shared her positive outlook in an article written for the *Immigrants in America Review*: “With cooperation of this kind [between educational authorities, industries and various social agencies] the campaign to make Detroit a city of English-speaking factories within a year seems not visionary.”<sup>132</sup> In many ways, the campaign was indeed a success. The superintendent of the Detroit Board of Education estimated a 125 percent increase in evening school registration.<sup>133</sup>

Although the NAC and BOC considered the campaign to be a success based on increased enrollment in educational Americanization programs, many of the companies

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<sup>129</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 75; 79.

<sup>130</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 129 and Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 77.

<sup>131</sup> Esther Everett Lape, “‘The English First’ Movement in Detroit,” *The Committee for Immigrants in America, The Immigrants in America Review*. Vol.1, No. 3, (Sept. 1915), 47.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>133</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 78.

that participated in the campaign pressured their workers to take part in Americanization classes. Industrial managers used “scientific management” to ensure that production remained high and workers stayed loyal.<sup>134</sup> The Ford Motor Company’s program is a prime example of this approach; however, it is also important to keep in mind that, as Mirel points out, “Ford and other companies were the exception, not the rule.” Other companies simply encouraged attendance instead of making it compulsory.<sup>135</sup>

In order to entice immigrant workers to become more efficient at work and alter the conditions of their domestic life, Ford introduced the Five Dollar Day in January of 1914.<sup>136</sup> The company divided a worker’s income into two parts: his wages and profits. The worker received the second portion, his profits, only if he met certain work and home life standards. The Ford Sociological Department, later called the Ford Educational Department, was responsible for examining workers’ home environments to discern if they met proper “American standards.” If this was not the case, Ford withheld the worker’s profits; if there was no improvement found after six months, they were fired.<sup>137</sup>

Ford’s paternalism was based on the expectation that immigrant workers should forgo everything related to their old life. In 1915, a number of Ford investigators wrote accounts of their welfare work, which they called “human interest stories.” One investigator, F.W. Andrews, wrote about a Russian immigrant who fell on hard times after coming to America, until he acquired a job at the Ford Factory. When Andrews visited the immigrant’s home to determine if he was eligible for the Five Dollar Day, he

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<sup>134</sup> John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 98-99.

<sup>135</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 80-81.

<sup>136</sup> Meyer, “Adapting the Immigrant to the Line,” 69-70 in Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 255-256.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 70, 256.

found the apartment to be in extremely poor condition and discovered that the family rarely had enough to eat. Andrews not only arranged for a new home for the family, new clothing, and new furniture, but also went so far as to have their old furniture and belongings burned in the back yard. Andrews concluded,

There upon the ashes of what had been their early possessions, this Russian peasant and his wife, with tears streaming down their faces, expressed their gratitude to Henry Ford, the FORD MOTOR COMPANY, and all those who had been instrumental in bringing about this marvelous change in their lives.”<sup>138</sup>

In addition to being expected give up their native culture by completely and suddenly altering their home life, immigrant workers were also expected to give up many of their religious traditions and to publicly demonstrate their newly acquired Americanism. In January 1914, the Ford Motor Company fired up to nine hundred Greek and Russian employees who had missed work to celebrate the Eastern Orthodox Christmas.<sup>139</sup>

The Ford English School’s graduation was “one of the most spectacular aspects of Americanization in the Ford factory.”<sup>140</sup> The pageant-like ceremony was meant to represent each worker’s transformation from immigrant to American. Ford School graduates appeared on stage wearing the traditional garb of their homelands. They were then filed into a large cauldron or “melting pot,” which school’s teachers stirred with ladles to represent nine months of completed English instruction. The 52 nationalities that entered the pot emerged dressed in American style clothing waving small American flags.<sup>141</sup> Despite the Ford factory’s efforts to control its workforce, immigrant workers

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<sup>138</sup> Meyer, “Adapting the Immigrant to the Line,” 73 in Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 259.

<sup>139</sup> The Eastern Orthodox Christmas was celebrated thirteen days after December 25<sup>th</sup>. See Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 83.

<sup>140</sup> Meyer, “Adapting the Immigrant to the Line,” 77 in Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 263.

<sup>141</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 248; Meyer, “Adapting the Immigrant to the Line,” 77 in Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 263; Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 82-83.



“created their own attitudes and modes of behavior for urban and industrial life” by teaching one another the “rules of the game.” As noted by Stephen Meyer, industrial leaders eventually became aware that they could not use Americanization to fully control their workers. By offering them a monetary incentive, the reasons behind the program became secondary — “Even for unschooled immigrants, money, and not patronizing benevolence, talked in the industrial age.” The program failed for this reason, as well as the fact that the company faced a serious financial crisis in 1920 and 1921 and could no longer afford to keep up with the program.<sup>142</sup>

#### Protecting American Society: Socialism, Anarchism, Prohibition and The Red Scare’s Effects on Americanization

Wartime patriotism declined with the end of World War I. Despite this, the armistice did not impede Americanization activities on the part of native-born Americanizers. As a result of the Red Scare, in the words of Edward George Hartmann, “a second set of fortuitous circumstances kept the Americanization drive at full steam at a time when one would normally have expected it to suffer a decline.”<sup>143</sup> By the end of the First World War, many Americans believed that Bolshevism, socialism, and trade unionism threatened not only factory production, but also American democracy.

The “Red Scare” of 1919-1920 led to a crusade against foreign-born leftists, which was aimed at maintaining loyalty after the armistice. Suddenly, preaching Americanism through paternalism was not enough to protect America; instead, severe sentences, including deportations, became the primary solution. Take, for example, a

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<sup>142</sup> Meyer, “Adapting the Immigrant to the Line,” 78-79 in Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 264-265.

<sup>143</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 268.

Waterbury, Connecticut clothing store salesman who in 1920 was sentenced to six months in prison for having told a customer that Lenin was one of the brainiest political leaders in the world.<sup>144</sup> Such responses stemmed from the general consensus that “radicalism permeated the foreign-born population, that it flourished among immigrants generally and appealed hardly to anyone else.”<sup>145</sup> In the DAR’s 1919-1920 report, the president-general Mrs. George Thatcher Guernsey bluntly stated, “nothing will save the life of this free Republic if these foreign leeches are not cut and cast out.”<sup>146</sup>

Similarly, the Eighteenth Amendment, ratified in 1919, which prohibited the production and sale of alcohol, was also intended to protect American society. Many native-born Americans hoped that the law would increase industrial efficiency, and improve conditions in immigrant neighborhoods and working class homes. In the words of John Higham, prohibition was meant to regulate behavior through an “unprecedented regimentation of morality by law.”<sup>147</sup> Just as many progressives sought to ameliorate the living conditions of immigrants, “drys” or those who supported prohibition believed that ridding the country of the excesses of the saloon would undoubtedly benefit the country. By targeting these saloons, prohibitionists simultaneously targeted establishments that assisted in the Americanization process.

Historian Michael Lerner, adeptly summarizes this theory in the Ken Burns’s documentary, *Prohibition*:

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<sup>144</sup> Stanley Coben, “A Study in Nativism: The American Red Scare of 1919-1920, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 79 No. 1 (March, 1964), 52.

<sup>145</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 227.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

The saloon is so many different things to different people. If you lived in a squalid tenement house it was your living room. It was your social club. It was maybe where your translator was. Your bartender was there to watch out for you. Your bartender might have done a lot more for you than the local priest did or the local cop.

Or, as the narrator notes, “Beer and whiskey were not the saloon’s sole attraction. A man could cash his paycheck, pick up his mail if he didn’t yet have an address of his own, read the paper, learn English, play cards or billiards, find out who was hiring, even get himself a city job.”<sup>148</sup>

In 1917, two years prior to the establishment of prohibition, the “Literacy Law” was passed, which required all aliens over sixteen years old to read English or another language or dialect. It also ordered the deportation of any foreigner who spoke of revolution or sabotage after they entered the United States.<sup>149</sup> The Anarchist Act of 1918, a reaction to the Russian Revolution of 1917, expanded the provisions of the 1917 literacy law by authorizing the expulsion of subversive foreigners with no time limitations.<sup>150</sup> In 1919, twenty-nine bombs were mailed to prominent American businessmen, including Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. This plot, as well as widespread industrial unrest the same year, escalated fears of revolution and contributed to the government’s decision to establish a “Radical Division” in the Department of Justice’s Bureau of Investigation. The Palmer Raids, directed by Palmer, took place under the new Radical Division in November of 1919 and January of 1920 and targeted

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<sup>148</sup> Ken Burns, *Prohibition* (WETA, Washington, DC and The Prohibition Film Project, LLC, 2011), Episode One: A Nation of Drunkards.

<sup>149</sup> Ong Hing, *Defining America*, 51. Terry O’Neill, *Immigration: Opposing Viewpoints* (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 1992), 295.

<sup>150</sup> Ong Hing, *Defining America*, 62, 215.

thousands of suspected Communist agitators. By the summer of 1920, arrests totaled about 6,000.<sup>151</sup> As Frances Kellor pointed out in her book *Immigration and the Future*,

While many native born were...engaged in spreading Bolshevist doctrines, aliens alone were raided and arrested, because the Attorney General could secure convictions only under the deportation law and not in the courts. This led the public to believe that immigrants were the chief offenders.<sup>152</sup>

She went on to note that American industry suffered as a result of the Red Scare and the Raids: “American business is now beginning to pay the cost of these methods in the loss of immigrant man power, in lessened production, in resentment toward American methods of justice and in the general loss of moral among the hitherto well disciplined and amenable immigrant workingmen.”

The FLP did not shy away from discussing the nation’s hypocrisies. In an editorial printed in the *Magyar Tribune* in 1928, the author asked, “How free are we? How democratic are we? A few examples illustrate the untruth of these elegantly phrased slogans said to be the American spirit. Prohibition is one proof of how little we respect the sanctity of personal liberty.”<sup>153</sup> In 1919, one German newspaper went so far as to label the Prohibition Amendment Bolshevist, stating, “should the...Amendment become law...then the original intent and purpose of the Constitution, namely, to protect citizens against tyranny and oppression, would be nullified. To force this...Amendment through...is...not patriotism but downright Bolshevism.”<sup>154</sup> While one of the native-born Americanizers main goals was to teach the foreign-born a love for democracy, immigrants were aware of the fact that certain methods and laws, such as deportation and

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<sup>151</sup> Ong Hing, *Defining America*, 216, 220.

<sup>152</sup> Kellor, *Immigration and the Future*, 145.

<sup>153</sup> Dezso Tomor, “Liberty and Democracy,” *Magyar Tribune* (July 27, 1928), 1, CFLPS, Hungarian, I H.

<sup>154</sup> “Prohibition More Dangerous than Bolshevism,” *Abendpost* (Jan. 22, 1919), 2, CFLPS, German, I B 2.

prohibition, were antithetical to the values taught in Americanization classes and propounded in Americanization literature.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Kellor, *Immigration and the Future*, 145.

## CHAPTER 4

### NATIVE-BORN AMERICANIZERS: METHODS, MOTIVES, AND RESULTS

Frances A. Kellor was the chief organizer of the Americanization movement. The study will examine many of her works, theories, and methods, which have precipitated a debate among historians as to what type of “Americanizer” she truly was. The way historians interpret Kellor has also affected the way in which the movement is interpreted as a whole. Historians Otis L. Graham, Jr. and Elizabeth Koed refer to Kellor as the “leading liberal Americanizer,”<sup>156</sup> John J. Miller approvingly nominates her “Miss Americanizer,”<sup>157</sup> while Robert A. Carlson notes that, she espoused social control and national efficiency and was therefore “... a latter day Horace Mann in her zeal for homogeneity in American life and thought” and became “the Americanization movement’s leading advocate of the unfair exchange.”<sup>158</sup> John Higham suggests that she represents “both sides” of the movement in that she was “half reformer, half

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<sup>156</sup> Otis L. Graham & Elizabeth Koed, “Americanizing the Immigrant, Past and Future: History and Implications of a Social Movement,” *The Public Historian* (Autumn, 1993), 30.

<sup>157</sup> John J. Miller, “Miss Americanizer,” *Policy Review*, 83 (May-June, 1997), 64.

<sup>158</sup> Robert A. Carlson, “Americanization as an Early Twentieth-Century Adult Education Movement” *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter, 1970), 449-450; Robert A. Carlson, *The Americanization Syndrome: A Quest for Conformity* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 84.

nationalist.”<sup>159</sup> John Press argues that, while Kellor may have turned to coercive methods during WWI, she “switched back” to her original humanitarian position after the War and, overall, her efforts were essentially an effort to negotiate between coercive Americanizers and immigrants.<sup>160</sup> Regardless, her involvement and position as leader in copious organizations throughout the entire movement, from its humanitarian beginnings in the settlement houses, to the last post-war Americanization drive, exemplify her central role and exceptional persistence. Through various organizations, Kellor promoted the involvement of all facets of the United States — the public, immigrants, grassroots organizations, and most importantly, in her opinion, the Federal government and industry — to ensure that Americanization succeed through the changing of America and its institutions.

Above all, Kellor advocated like-mindedness in order to conserve and protect human resources on behalf of the nation. Most importantly she argued that, in addition to “the home, the school, the church, [and] the neighborhood,” business and industry should also alter their managerial approach to include Americanization education.<sup>161</sup> Despite her lofty aims, it does appear that she took the concept of efficiency in the schooling of immigrants to extremes. She was concerned with protecting American society more so than immigrants. Although she strongly opposed the exploitation of immigrants by *padrones*<sup>162</sup> and native-born Americans, and abhorred racial prejudice, her chief aim was

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<sup>159</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 239.

<sup>160</sup> John Press, *Frances Kellor, Americanization, and the Quest for Participatory Democracy*, PhD diss. (New York University, 2010), 3; also see 5-6 for a brief overview of her endeavors.

<sup>161</sup> Frances Kellor, “Americanization by Industry,” *Immigrants in America Review* (April 1916), 16.

<sup>162</sup> Foreign labor leaders.

to protect the immigrant and ameliorate conditions in order to avoid unwanted strikes and mitigate the prevalent “birds of passage” mentality.<sup>163</sup>

Kellor feared that if newcomers did not fully understand what America stood for and did not feel welcome, this would encourage their desire to return home or to engage in labor unrest and result in a negative impact on the economy. This was one of Kellor’s primary concerns throughout her career as Americanizer. Take for example one of her articles published in 1916 entitled “Immigrants in America: A Domestic Policy,” in which she suggested that the government, industry, and philanthropy, as well as the average American citizen, should all work together in order to formulate a domestic immigration policy and a “national view-point.” In her words, “There can be no sure and enduring nationalization until there is agreement upon principles and standards, co-operation, the subordination of selfish interests and race prejudice to patriotism, and intelligent division of the field of labor.”<sup>164</sup> She went on to point out that the American government did not pay sufficient heed to “immigrants’ qualifications or efficiency — they all go into the caldron of common labor,” thus leading to labor difficulties and “restlessness and dissatisfaction.”<sup>165</sup>

Although much of her work stemmed from concern over the protection of America’s economy, the self-interest of business organizations, and capitalizing on immigrant labor, Kellor was also passionate about ascertaining how to harness immigrants’ talents and Old World traits, while also remaining committed to promoting

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<sup>163</sup> Birds of passage was a term used for those immigrants who would come to the United States for a period of time only to save money or better themselves before returning to their home country.

<sup>164</sup> Frances Kellor, “Immigrants in America: A Domestic Policy,” *Immigrants In America Review* (March 1915), 10.

<sup>165</sup> Kellor, “Immigrants in America: A Domestic Policy,” *Review* (March 1915), 12-13.



national public spirit and protecting the immigrant. Essentially, she believed rapid assimilation would lead to improved living conditions and consequently mitigate nativist sentiments.<sup>166</sup> Above all, she believed improving working and living conditions and teaching immigrants how to live in America would conserve human resources. An excerpt from her article “Who is Responsible for the Immigrant?” highlights her stance on the issue:

Under present conditions the carrying of the American message to the immigrant is a large task. He has much to learn. We know that he does not spend his wages wisely, that he does not eat the right food nor wear the right clothes for this climate, and that, as he lives now, he is cut off from Americanizing influences. He needs to be taught how Americans live, that no man can do good work under conditions now existing in average labor camps, that he must have fair wages, and that America is the place to spend them.<sup>167</sup>

Kellor indeed recognized that “racial societies” were necessary, especially in the early stages of Americanization, to translate the new political and social ideas to the immigrant;<sup>168</sup> however, she also recognized their capacity to hinder assimilation, especially in the economic sphere. Her final book on the topic of immigration, *Immigration and the Future*, written in 1920, is an invaluable source because it provides insight into Kellor’s thoughts *after* she had experimented with various Americanization tactics throughout the course of the movement. She shared what she believed to be its major successes and failures, while also proposing many “open” questions in the conclusion, which she subsequently left unanswered.

Kellor continued to argue that answers to these decisive immigration questions were contingent on continuity in public opinion, further research, and an increase in

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<sup>166</sup> Miller, *Miss Americanizer*, 64.

<sup>167</sup> Frances Kellor, “Who Is Responsible for the Immigrant?” *The Outlook* (April 25, 1915), 912-914; also see Carlson, “Education Movement,” 449.

<sup>168</sup> Kellor, “Immigrants in America: A Domestic Policy,” *Review* (March 1915), 10.

government control and leadership, all of which she advocated early on in her career, albeit to a lesser extent. She also noted that, based on immigrants' social, political, and educational isolation and America's "shortsighted policies," the immigrant turned to his own racial group to avoid economic discrimination, thus creating "two economic systems; one for the immigrants, under foreign born leadership; and the other for the Americanized immigrant and native born, under native born leadership."<sup>169</sup> Like other progressives, Kellor, strove to eliminate the network of private business services, therefore eliminating "their role as mediators between immigrants and the American socio-economic and political system, and as interpreters of American institutions."<sup>170</sup>

It is significant that Kellor undertook her Americanization work within the context of the Progressive Movement. Historians continuously dispute the true nature and goals of the movement. Some argue that progressives sought to preserve and extend American democracy, in Kellor's case, by bringing immigrants and native-Americans together through participation in various reforms.<sup>171</sup> Others argue that the movement did not embrace the entire nation. Despite their good intentions, progressives alienated those they were trying to help and actually limited the freedom of many individuals, especially immigrants, in their attempt to protect them from corrupting influences such as party bosses, racial leaders, and corporate power.

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<sup>169</sup> Frances Kellor, *Immigration and the Future* (New York: George H. Doran, 1920), 43.

<sup>170</sup> Riva Lissak, "Liberal Progressives and 'New immigrants': The Immigrants' Protective League of Chicago, 1908-1919," *Studies in American Civilization*, XXXII (1987) in George E. Pozetta, ed., *Americanization, Social Control, and Philanthropy* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991), 85.

<sup>171</sup> Robert J. Allison, "Progressive Movement: Was the Progressive Movement Really Progressive? *History in Dispute*, Vol. 3: American Social and Political Movements, 1900-1945: Pursuit of Progress (Detroit: St. James Press, 2000), 204; Press, *Frances Kellor*, 250.

In the words of historian Robert J. Allison, progressives were “not content with freeing ‘the man on the make’ from the crushing influences of corporate power or political bosses, the progressives sought also to protect him from his own damaging impulses.”<sup>172</sup> Concerning the general movement, this manifested itself in the form of prohibition, crusades for greater control over the lives of the immigrant poor and working class, and vesting the Federal government with the power to oversee and resolve disputes between capital and labor. Kellor wholly supported what Theodore Roosevelt coined as “New Nationalism” in a speech he delivered in 1910. Roosevelt called for a new type of democracy, which put “the national need before sectional or personal advantage” and called for the Federal government to protect the interests of all Americans. According to the New Nationalism, the success of the nation depended on “the moral and material welfare of all good citizens,” those who were “honest, capable of sound judgment and high ideals, active in public affairs, -but, first of all, sound in their home...”<sup>173</sup>

Both Kellor and Roosevelt’s definition of a “good citizen” and the methods by which immigrants would become good citizens incorporated elitist aims. Although progressives’ *goals* may have been egalitarian, the *methods* by which Progressive Americanizers sought to attain these goals revealed their belief in the newcomers’ backwardness, which suggested that they were unable to care for themselves.<sup>174</sup> As stated by Roosevelt, participation in public life was not enough; immigrants were expected to alter their home life as well. Kellor’s writings indicated the extensive government and reformist involvement necessary in order to transform them into ideal citizens and

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<sup>172</sup> Allison, “Progressive Movement,” 211.

<sup>173</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, “The New Nationalism,” 1919. Teachingamericanhistory.org, document 501.

<sup>174</sup> Lissak, “Liberal Progressives” in Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 80, 96.

promote their advancement within their new environment. Based on the ideals of Progressivism and New Nationalism, she maintained that *complete* integration of the immigrant into American life was necessary: "...where he works, where he lives, where he banks his savings and makes his investments, where he buys, where he travels, and in what he reads..." should all be controlled by native-born Americanizers.<sup>175</sup>

With the onset of World War I, standards for Americanization became increasingly stringent and the loyalty of the foreign-born frequently came into question. After 1915, many programs and organizations headed by Kellor took the lead in expressing this change; the "America First" program, for example, which was launched in October of 1915, emphasized "stimulating naturalization, breaking the immigrant's ties with the Old World, and teaching him an American culture" and drifted further from humanitarian sympathies. More specifically, as a result of increasing tensions with Germany, the Americanizers sought to integrate their objectives with the war-preparedness campaign by "interpreting Americanization as the civilian side of national defense."<sup>176</sup> Throughout 1919 and 1920, with the Red Scare looming and an increase in immigrant and workers' use of disruption as a tool to fight for social and economic justice, Americanization was viewed as the antidote. In fact, it provided an alternative to extreme repression, including deportation.<sup>177</sup> Kellor's alternative approach was to eclipse Bolshevik propaganda with "American advertising" in the foreign language press.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Kellor, *Immigration and the Future*, 146.

<sup>176</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 243.

<sup>177</sup> Press, *Frances Kellor*, 249; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 255.

<sup>178</sup> Robert E. Park, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1922), 452-453; also see footnote No. 54.

Kellor had an astonishing ability to bring various groups together to work toward ending social ills and agitating for newcomers and natives alike to take an interest in their fellow Americans. Although historians have depicted many of Kellor's initiatives as coercive, thus making them antithetical to the democratic spirit progressives championed, there is no question that Kellor understood the plight of immigrants. Although Kellor wrote extensively on Americanization methods, she firmly believed in the need for *action*. In her wartime work, *Straight America*, she stated that she was convinced of two things: "That America *can control its own destiny*, that one of the greatest obstacles has been slothful neglect, another obstacle, nativism; and that the way to attain control of our destiny is by aggressive, not passive, Americanism." [Italics in original]<sup>179</sup> Contrary to the nation's democratic founding principles, she held that native-Americans were ignoring their obligation to refrain from discriminatory and exploitative tendencies.<sup>180</sup>

Despite her nationalistic fervor and fanatical patriotism, her crusade to gain public support for a national Americanization policy had positive consequences, which endured long after Americanization began to fade during 1920-1921.<sup>181</sup> With the dissolution of the official movement, nativism triumphed, especially with the passing of the National Origins Act of 1924. However, Kellor's leadership and activism over the course of the movement drew attention to the fact that immigrants possessed the ability to become loyal and active citizens and demonstrated that a unified effort, which exercised

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<sup>179</sup> Frances Kellor, *Straight America: A Call to National Service* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 67.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-55; Kellor suggested that immigrants' poor living conditions were not solely their fault and native-Americans should work to raise these standards.

<sup>181</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 260.

communication with and understanding of immigrants and their communities, was key to America's success.

### Kellor's Organizational Leadership

Kellor studied sociology and social work at the University of Chicago and the New York Summer School of Philanthropy. Early in her career, she lived in settlement houses and investigated the victimization of women and immigrants by employment agencies; these early beginnings marked her initial focus on social welfare. Her later ventures demonstrated her propensity toward building and strengthening national discipline and efficiency, which stemmed from her progressive background.<sup>182</sup> Later, Kellor was chosen as secretary of the New York State Commission on Immigration, which was formed in 1908 to investigate the progress of immigrant conditions, assimilation, and education.<sup>183</sup> She also became the head of the New York Branch of the North American Civic League (NACL), which worked to further the recommendations of the State Commission and to rouse native-Americans' interest in the plight of immigrants.<sup>184</sup> In the spring of 1914, the League chose to pursue their mission on a national scale; they changed their name to the Committee for Immigrants in America (CIA) and reorganized to promote their group as a "clearing house" for all information having to do with the Americanization of immigrants.<sup>185</sup> Kellor ran the CIA and served as editor of its journal, the *Immigrants in America Review* (IAR), a quarterly that was

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<sup>182</sup> In 1912 she left her government position to help Theodore Roosevelt in his bid for presidency and became head of the Progressive Party's research and publicity department. See Press, *Frances Kellor*, 5; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 239.

<sup>183</sup> Edward George Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 53-54.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 56, 63.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

published from March of 1915 to July of 1916. The publication was intended “to vitalize American public opinion into the adoption of a national policy with reference to admitted aliens.”<sup>186</sup>

In May 1915, the CIA organized and sponsored the National Americanization Day Committee (NADC), on which Kellor served as an officer and which later became the National Americanization Committee (NAC). The NAC urged that July 4, 1915 be recognized as a day where all peoples of the United States could come together to exhibit their faith in America.<sup>187</sup> The planning and celebration of this event is often viewed as the commencement of the height of the movement. The committee circulated posters and pamphlets, sent letters to appeal to town mayors, corporations, schools, churches, patriotic organizations, and civic and fraternal organizations, to name a few.<sup>188</sup> As a result, over 100 cities observed the day.<sup>189</sup> In 1917, Kellor was also appointed head of the Division of Immigrant Education, a branch of the Bureau of Education, which was sponsored by the NAC. She also headed the War Work Extension of the Division of Immigrant Education, which sought to form a war policy for aliens through legislation, “propaganda in the foreign-language press, sponsorship of safe racial groups within ethnic communities, and organization of patriotic pageantry for the foreign born.”<sup>190</sup>

In March of 1919, the Inter-Racial Council (IRC) was established and was also lead by Kellor. The council was a private business-oriented organization that joined in on

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<sup>186</sup> Kellor, “Immigrants in America: A Domestic Policy,” *Review* (March 1915), 2.

<sup>187</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 112.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 115-118, 121.

<sup>189</sup> Hartmann states 150 cities observed the day, see *Movement to Americanize*, 121, while the *Review* cited 107, see *Review* 16, September 1916 edition.

<sup>190</sup> Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 239-243.

the post-war crusade against Bolshevism.<sup>191</sup> The new agency looked to the foreign-language press to help decrease radicalism, with a special focus on labor unrest, by gaining control over the majority of the FLP's advertising. Soon after its formation, the Council itself purchased the American Association of Foreign Language Newspapers (AAFLN). These details indicate just how pivotal the FLP was to the Americanization process.

### Americanization Literature by John Foster Carr and the Daughters of the American Revolution

Kellor's efforts are comparable to the Americanization materials written, published, and distributed under the direction of John Foster Carr, as well as manuals circulated by patriotic organizations, namely the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Carr believed that libraries and their holdings, if carefully selected, could teach immigrants to think like Americans. Plummer Alston Jones, Jr., who wrote a significant portion of his dissertation on Carr, suggests that he was a true "Anglo-Conformist." Although he did not doubt the immigrants' ability or desire to become Americanized, he did believe that they should do so as quickly as possible. He also did not support the "reciprocal transfer of immigrant traits to the American."<sup>192</sup> Interestingly, despite the original popularity of the movement, especially with the American public, it appears that librarians found the availability of "appropriate" sources limited.

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<sup>191</sup> Carlson, *Americanization Syndrome*, 96. The IRC was a descendant of the CIA and NAC, which disbanded after the war; it consisted of many of the same members as the earlier organizations. See Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 218, 221.

<sup>192</sup> Plummer Alston Jones, Jr. *American Public Library Service to the Immigrant Community, 1876-1948*, PhD diss. (University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, 1991), 216-217.



Carr specialized in the production and distribution of “immigrant-oriented” materials, including magazines, books, and pamphlets, all designed to help the immigrant better understand American history, government, literature, and customs.<sup>193</sup> In 1914, he founded the Immigrant Publication Society; the non-profit organization’s mission was to “open to all who are interested in promoting the welfare of the immigrant and through his education, the welfare of the country.”<sup>194</sup> Carr’s *Guide to the United States for the Jewish Immigrant: A Nearly Literal Translation of the Second Yiddish Edition*, was published in 1916 under the auspices of the Immigrant Publication Society. It provides insight into what many Americanizers believed immigrants needed to conform to in order to be considered dedicated Americans. The section entitled “Special Advice to the Immigrant” states, “A Jew, like any other foreigner, is appreciated when he lives the American social life. Until then he counts for nothing. Join American clubs, read American papers. Try to adapt yourself to the manners, and customs, and habits of the American people.”<sup>195</sup> This is one of the many excerpts that speaks to his hard line and exclusive view of Americanization requirements.

The Daughters of the American Revolution’s *Manual of the United States for the Information of Immigrants and Foreigners*,<sup>196</sup> compiled by Elizabeth C. Buel,<sup>197</sup> and Carr’s *Guide* included information useful to the immigrant. The *Manual* included a summary of the necessary steps in order to become a naturalized citizen, an introduction

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<sup>193</sup> Jones, *Library Service*, 210.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>195</sup> John Foster Carr, *Guide to the United States for the Jewish Immigrant: A Nearly Literal Translation of the Second Yiddish Edition* (New York: American Library Association and Immigrant Education Society, 1914), 63.

<sup>196</sup> The DAR’s *Manual* was published in 1921, 1923, and 1928; this study refers to the 1921/1923 publications.

<sup>197</sup> Elizabeth C. Buel was the “honorary regent” of Connecticut’s DAR Society.

to the Constitution, and labor and immigration laws, while the *Guide* contained information on a list of “societies helpful to the new arrival,” postal rates and regulations, a list of Jewish aid societies in the Yiddish edition, as well as money and weights and measures used in the United States. On the other hand, much of the material was presented in a paternalistic manner and much of what was included would have been rather unproductive in helping to acclimate the immigrant. For example, the *Manual* included four full pages on the American flag,<sup>198</sup> but only one page on helping the immigrant to find work. Both included information that may have seemed superfluous to the newcomer in the early stages of their encounters with America, such as an overwhelming list of populations of states and their capitals.<sup>199</sup>

Throughout the *Manual* and *Guide*, the authors suggested that the process of Americanization would be effortless for both the immigrant and native-born American and overlooked the fact that past immigrants had not become accustomed to American society rapidly, but over the course of many years and across generations. In the introduction Carr stated, “The Irish and Germans... came to us as poor as the Russian Jews, the Italians or the Greeks of to-day. Like these, too, they began to make their living humbly by hard and honest work. They have forgotten the poverty, unhappiness and oppression that drove them away from the old world. They have prospered, and they are now all Americans.”<sup>200</sup> Carr and the DAR favored the Anglo-Saxon ideal; they believed that as long as the immigrants were willing to give up their Old World traits as quickly as

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<sup>198</sup> In the later 1928 edition this expanded to an extensive nine pages; see pages 40-45, 47 & 50-51.

<sup>199</sup> Elizabeth C. Barney Buel and The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, *Manual of the United States for the Information of the Immigrants and Foreigners* (Washington DC: Press of Judd Detweiler, Inc., 1923), 50-51. Also see Carr, *Guide*, 58-59.

<sup>200</sup> Carr, *Guide*, 6.

possible, without venturing to imbue American society with their language and culture, Americanization would be uncomplicated and successful.<sup>201</sup> When they referred to learning English, which Americanizers determined to be a crucial aspect of Americanization, the authors trivialized the effort involved. The *Manual* declared,

The English language is a beautiful language...Go to evening school. You will learn easily in school with a good teacher...Try to read the American newspapers. The people around you will be glad to help you. Be patient and industrious...Do not live in the crowded parts of a city, among those who speak a foreign language. Associate with those who speak English and make friends with them. Live among them if possible. Learn their customs and the American way of living.<sup>202</sup>

The *Guide* echoed these recommendations: “Practice what you know patiently and industriously. Do not be discouraged. The best help you can get will be from those who speak English. Make friends with Americans. If possible, for the first six months go and live among Americans.”<sup>203</sup> This statement represents many Americanizers’ dismissive attitudes toward immigrant neighborhoods. They consistently disregarded the self-sufficiency and positive aspects of immigrant communities; in addition to preserving European culture, they had the capacity to aid its inhabitants in adjusting to life in the New World.<sup>204</sup> Although Carr and the DAR mentioned immigrant organizations in their writings, they insisted that only the native-born could be trusted without exception in times of need.<sup>205</sup> The *Manual* and *Guide* passed over ethnic interests and pluralistic

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<sup>201</sup> Jones, *Library Service*, 216-217.

<sup>202</sup> Barney Buel and DAR, *Manual*, 16-17.

<sup>203</sup> Carr, *Guide*, 15-16.

<sup>204</sup> Jeffrey E. Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 101; Jones, *Library Service*, 214.

<sup>205</sup> See Barney Buel and DAR, *Manual*, “If You are in Trouble,” 83; also see discussion of savings accounts in Carr, *Guide*, 52-53.

Americanization approaches and instead promoted what they viewed as the common public interest, that is, middle-class Anglo-Saxon values.<sup>206</sup>

Ironically, Carr continuously made a point of emphasizing that his writings and the use of American institutions in the Americanization process were anything but paternalistic. In a 1908 letter to a member of the DAR, Carr wrote, “Through them alone [public schools and libraries] does it seem possible to hope for such results achieved in [a] [sic] democratic and businesslike way *without air of preaching or patronizing.*” [Emphasis added]<sup>207</sup> Later, in his 1914 work *Immigrant and Library: Italian Helps*, he suggested that a library, “gives him [the immigrant] a sense of joint right and ownership with us in the best things of our country, and this *with no suggestion of patronizing interest.*” [Emphasis added]<sup>208</sup> Paradoxically, after referring to appropriate hygiene and cleanliness practices, he emphatically stated, “This is the American way. And in America you should do as Americans do.”<sup>209</sup>

Carr also advocated a fair amount of censorship; in an article in which he gave advice regarding the necessity of having foreign language books in public libraries, he stated “the foreign book forms the bridge...from one language to another.” He went on to add, “Of course, the foreign books must be carefully chosen. If the librarian depends upon the chance and irresponsible advisor, she will soon find her shelves crowded with books of radical socialism, anarchism, bartenders’ guides, books of religious propaganda,

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<sup>206</sup> Lissak, “Liberal Progressives” in Pozetta, ed., *Social Control*, 102-103.

<sup>207</sup> As quoted in Jones, *Library Service*, 220.

<sup>208</sup> John Foster Carr, *Immigrant and Library Italian Helps, with lists of selected books* (New York: American Library Association and Immigrant Education Society, 1914), 8.

<sup>209</sup> Carr, *Guide*, 50.

trash.”<sup>210</sup> Essentially, Kellor, Carr, and the DAR shared numerous progressive educational goals and advocated similar Americanization methods. Many of their ideals and goals were unrealistic. As the following study will demonstrate, the unbalanced exchange by which immigrants were expected and often required to give up their heritage prematurely was indeed supported by many reformers, but also reprimanded by immigrants through their writings and publications, namely the FLP. Kellor, Carr, and the DAR routinely stated in their writings that Americanization was for the good of the immigrants, but above all their true objective was to preserve American traditions and to ensure that Americanization policies would benefit the country in the economic, political, and social spheres.

### Conclusion

Indirectly, Kellor, Carr, and the DAR’s Americanization approaches set America forward in regards to the immigration “problem,” by prompting a push toward multiculturalism, carried out by newcomers. Throughout her career as Americanizer and as reflected in her writings, Kellor concerned herself with devising a solution to “the great problem of assimilation of immigration.”<sup>211</sup> Later in her crusade, she came to the conclusion that if Americanization failed, it would largely be due to the immigrants’ misgivings, a result of forced and unequal transfer of culture and ideals during the process. The threat of native-Americanizers’ methods gave rise to new approaches to Americanization — a mix of patriotism and retention of ethnic traditions on behalf of the immigrants. In other words, native-born Americanizers held a stringent view of what the

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<sup>210</sup> John Foster Carr, “Books in Foreign Languages and Americanization,” *Library Journal* 44 (April 1919), 245-246.

<sup>211</sup> Kellor, *Immigration and the Future*, 152.

results of Americanization should entail. Based on these goals, many restrictionists and progressives alike viewed the movement as a failure, especially as the major “crusade” tapered off and widespread criticism arose.<sup>212</sup>

One of Kellor’s statements provides further insight into the need for immigrants to provide their own solutions to their Americanization needs. In *Immigration and the Future*, she wrote of what she believed to be the only four possible outcomes for an immigrant: “The immigrant... shut the door, perhaps needlessly, in the face of well intentioned Americans... Then he cast up his own balance sheet and, according to its showing, went forward with the Americanizer, or stayed with his racial leader, or joined the Bolshevik, or returned home – whichever course he thought held the most promise for his future.”<sup>213</sup> At times native-born Americanizers did indeed advocate multiculturalism, but only to a certain extent and only when it was seen as beneficial to American society and traditions. When compared to the FLP and immigrant writings, it is evident how consistently narrow-minded these materials were and how often authors obscured the distinction between paternalism and fellowship.

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<sup>212</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 300. Higham briefly mentions the fact that the movement was discredited starting around 1920; see also Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 254-258 in which he cites specific criticisms voiced by immigrants and immigrant leaders.

<sup>213</sup> Kellor, *Immigration and the Future*, 147.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE CARNEGIE STUDIES OF THE EARLY 1920S

The Carnegie Corporation undertook one of its first major projects when its trustees chose to commission a series of studies on Americanization in 1918. Andrew Carnegie, who believed in the importance of education and its capacity to give other newcomers the opportunity to better their lives, created the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The foundation's mission was to promote "the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding."<sup>214</sup> The goal of the Americanization Studies was twofold. First, the authors sought to investigate the entire Americanization process, while taking note that there was a reason for the original separateness of immigrant organizations from American society and that allowing these organizations to flourish was the most beneficial way for the immigrants to learn about American society and to prepare them to make use of American institutions.<sup>215</sup> Second, they also championed reciprocity. They sought not only to demonstrate that a greater number of native-born Americans needed to participate in the process, but understand through the process that Americans and

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<sup>214</sup> Vartan Gregorian, "The Keys to the Future," *Carnegie Reporter*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Fall, 2011).

<sup>215</sup> William Isaac Thomas, Robert E. Park, and Herbert A. Miller, *Old World Traits Transplanted* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1921), 306-307.

American society would need to adapt to the attitudes and convictions of immigrants.<sup>216</sup>

The Corporation's trustees held a much different view of the Americanization process.

They believed that Americanization was a question of national security and should therefore involve significant change solely on the part of the immigrant.<sup>217</sup>

For many Americans, the war had proved that there was indeed much more work to be done in order to unify the country and ensure that newcomers would support America in both peacetime and war. Ten volumes were published in 1921 by Harpers & Brothers Publishers on the following subjects:<sup>218</sup> Education; Neighborhood Agencies and Organizations; Immigrant Heritages; Rural Development; Health Standards and Care; Adjustment of Homes and Family Life; The Immigrant Press; Naturalization and Political Life; Legal Protection and Correction; and Industrial and Economic Amalgamation.<sup>219</sup> The corresponding titles were as follows: Volume 1, *Schooling of the Immigrant*; Volume 2, *America Via the Neighborhood*; Volume 3, *Old World Traits Transplanted*; Volume 4, *A Stake in the Land*; Volume 5, *Immigrant Health and the Community*; Volume 6, *New Homes for Old*; Volume 7, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control*; Volume 8, *Americans By Choice*; Volume 9, *The Immigrant's Day in Court*; Volume 10, *Adjusting Immigrant and Industry*.

The authors of the studies did not advocate the term "Americanization" and hoped that its use would diminish. They argued that the "assimilation" process should not destroy the immigrants "attitudes and memories, but build upon them" and that America

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<sup>216</sup> Thomas, Park, and Miller, *Old World Traits*, xii, intro to the republished edition.

<sup>217</sup> Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 332.

<sup>218</sup> Technically, they appeared between the years of 1920-1924. The proposed eleventh volume, a summary by the studies' director and general editor Allen T. Burns, was never completed or published.

<sup>219</sup> This list was provided in the forward to the original editions.



meant “the essential equality of all nationalities.” A portion of the publishers note, which appeared at the beginning of each study and varied very slightly from volume to volume, read: “With all our rich heritages, Americanism will develop best through a mutual giving and taking of contributions from both newer and older Americans in the interest of the common weal. This study has followed such an understanding of Americanization.” By arguing this, they redefined long-standing Americanization ideology. Their views were strikingly different from those of individuals such as Carr and Kellor, yet, the authors of the studies still believed in the potential of Americanization, which is presumably part of the reason why they undertook their studies and participated in the project.

The authors maintained that assimilation was inevitable, that it was impossible for immigrants to remain in separate groups and, most importantly, that the process could be hastened if immigrants were given the “freedom to make their own connections between old and new experiences.”<sup>220</sup> This is also a common theme throughout many primary and secondary sources concerning Americanization; the most effective Americanization method was to allow immigrants to take part *voluntarily*. The studies’ stated goals were, above all, to report on the methods of Americanization organizations already at work and methods already being implemented. Many Americanizers, including Kellor, criticized the government and educational institutions for focusing too heavily on theories — in other words, what *should* be done to help immigrant groups acculturate.<sup>221</sup> As stated by

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<sup>220</sup> Thomas, Park, and Miller, *Old World Traits*, 308.

<sup>221</sup> Frances Kellor, *Straight America: A Call to National Service* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 1-2. In her introduction she asked, “What is the Matter with America?” and stated that too much of America’s energy went to “talk” and its powers and resources for Americanization therefore lay dormant. Also see Royal Dixon, *Americanization*, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 85.

Milton M. Gordon, in his review of the studies entitled “The American Immigrant Revisited,” by using newly collected data, interviews, reports, surveys, bodies of work previously published on the subject, and first-hand observational accounts, the authors determined that immigrant communities served as “their [the immigrants’] unconsciously evolving bridge to the general American society.”<sup>222</sup>

### Immigrant Cultures, The Immigrant Press, and Education

Three of the volumes most closely relate to the pillars of Americanization: *Old World Traits Transplanted*, by W.I. Thomas,<sup>223</sup> *The Immigrant Press and Its Control*, by Robert E. Park, both written by notable sociologists, and *Schooling of the Immigrant*, by Frank V. Thompson, superintendant of the Boston Public Schools and a specialist on immigrant education. Although the aspects of Americanization that each individual volume reported on are useful when studying the Americanization movement, Thomas, Park, and Thompson’s works speak to what Americanizers considered to be the core components of Americanization. *Old World Traits* examined the *gradual* process involving immigrant traditions and organizations.<sup>224</sup>

The work is especially valuable because it incorporated primary sources, such as immigrant autobiographies, letters, foreign-language newspapers, and government reports, in order to challenge approaches of the predominant state, federal, and private

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<sup>222</sup> Milton M. Gordon, “The American Immigrant Revisited,” *Social Forces*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Dec., 1975), 473.

<sup>223</sup> Although *Old World Traits Transplanted* was primarily written by Thomas, he was not given full credit during his lifetime. A member of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, he was terminated after he was arrested for violating the 1910 Mann Act, also known as the “White Slave Trafficking Act.” The charge was thrown out of court, but the event was highly publicized and sullied Thomas’s reputation. Park and Miller also worked on the volume, but were given full credit until 1951. See intro to *Old World Traits Transplanted*, vii and Gordon, “The American Immigrant Revisited,” 471-472.

<sup>224</sup> Gordon, “The American Immigrant Revisited,” 472; Thomas, *Old World Traits*, new intro., xiii.

Americanization agencies and programs. Specific immigrant experiences and reactions to initial exposure to American society made up the core of the study. These first-hand accounts demonstrated immigrants' penchant for disregarding "individual acts" in lieu of self-expression through immigrant organizations and as a national group.<sup>225</sup> Most importantly, Thomas believed in assimilation; for him, a gradual and voluntary process would eventually lead to the integration of cultures. As stated in chapter two, the most notable challenger of this theory was philosopher Horace Kallen. He believed immigrant ethnic cultures were indestructible and coined the term "cultural pluralism" in 1906 or 1907, while teaching at Harvard University.<sup>226</sup>

*The Immigrant Press* dealt with the foreign newspaper's capacity to teach the immigrant "almost all that he knows about the larger political, social and industrial life about him."<sup>227</sup> By surveying the immigrant press and its European backgrounds, Park focused on how it preserved many Old World traits, but also modified immigrants' language and culture in favor of a more Americanized version, what Park referred to as "nationalizing and denationalizing influences."<sup>228</sup> In addition, the study emphasized the power of advertising in the FLP. Many Americanizers, including Kellor, believed national advertising to be one of the greatest methods of Americanization.<sup>229</sup> Consistently concerned with America's economy, she also viewed the immigrant as a "factor in the international trade situation" and went so far as to recommend that America

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<sup>225</sup> Thomas, *Old World Traits*, 38.

<sup>226</sup> Sidney Ratner, "Horace M. Kallen and Cultural Pluralism," *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 4. No. 2. (Oxford University Press, May 1984), 185, 189.

<sup>227</sup> Robert E. Park, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1922), 113.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 79, 52.

<sup>229</sup> Frances Kellor, *Immigration and the Future* (New York: George H. Doran, 1920), 118, 124-126.

use immigrants as “salesmen” of American goods when returning to or visiting their countries of origin. Presumably, their knowledge of American products was to be based on their familiarization through advertising in the FLP.<sup>230</sup> Park stated that the advertisements in the FLP revealed more about the organization of the immigrant community than the rest of the papers’ content.<sup>231</sup> While Park believed in moderate control of the FLP, especially through business and advertising, he was opposed to the “subjugation” of the immigrant and strongly believed that “new relationships [could] breed new loyalties from...old heritages.”<sup>232</sup>

Mirel states that Thompson’s description of the goals of Americanization education — that both native-born Americans and immigrants should hold certain ideals in common — was so insightful and far-reaching that his definition of what it means to be an American still holds true today.<sup>233</sup> In *Schooling of the Immigrant*, Thompson provided extensive advice on teaching methods and fundamentals, especially concerning immigrant English instruction. He also made it clear in his study that education could ideally provide a gateway to naturalization. Although he noted that immigrants should become familiar with the practice of self-government, especially if they came from a country lacking autonomy or individual freedoms, national unification would succeed in

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<sup>230</sup> Kellor, *Immigration and the Future*, 191-194. Also see John Press, *Frances Kellor, Americanization, and the Quest for Participatory Democracy*, PhD diss. (New York University, 2010), 224-225; the AAFLN claimed that, “National Advertising [was] the Great Americanizer.”

<sup>231</sup> Park, *Immigrant Press*, 113.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 376.

<sup>233</sup> Jeffrey E. Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 5.

the United States only if native-born Americans overcame their “assumption of superiority.”<sup>234</sup>

Above all, Thompson, as well as Park and Thomas, argued the importance of “the realization of the oneness of the native and the foreign born.”<sup>235</sup> In other words, the native and foreign-born had the same aspirations based on human nature; the greatest obstacle was rectifying the fact that, “usually neither the immigrant nor the native is aware of this, and each thinks that the other is essentially different.”<sup>236</sup> This observation demonstrates that Thompson, as well as the other Carnegie Study authors, believed that the native and foreign-born could realize their oneness, like-mindedness, and love of liberty. Simultaneously, democracy would ideally permit what is now widely referred to as multiculturalism to flourish.<sup>237</sup>

By describing the existing methods of Americanization, the authors proved that immigrants became Americans in various ways, through public schooling, night classes, and exposure to American mass media. They also hoped to prove that immigrant organizations and institutions, including private, parochial, and bi-lingual schools enhanced this process. Essentially, the authors argued that both native-born and immigrant institutions and approaches would allow immigrants to change and build on their relation to the Old World in an additive, rather than a subtractive manner. For example, Thompson discussed the advantages and disadvantages of sending immigrant

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<sup>234</sup> Frank V. Thompson, *Schooling of the Immigrant* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1920), 327, 365.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 366-368.

<sup>237</sup> The term multiculturalism originated in Sweden in 1957, while Canada was the first to adopt it and incorporate it into their national policy. The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines the term as “the notion that people in a given society should coexist with one another, without having to fear or resent that their cultural identity will...not be accepted if it does not fit with the normative cultural climate of that society,” 316.

children to private versus public schools. As a frame of reference, he cited resolutions made by the Franco-American Congress in 1919 “regarding the problem of Americanization and the use of the mother tongue” and concluded that,

While desirous of meeting the reasonable standards of the land of their adoption, these [immigrant] groups wish to preserve in some degree their native language and national culture. They do not challenge the state for its insistence on English as the medium of instruction in schools, but they protest against prohibition at the same time of the teaching of their mother tongue. The resolutions encourage naturalization and the exercise of the franchise. We must be tolerant of the fact that these newer Americans cannot abandon at once the old ties of racial and national culture.<sup>238</sup>

While Thompson believed that private school education should be regulated by the state to ensure that civic education and English instruction remained a priority, he also held that this should not interfere with “educational and personal liberty.”<sup>239</sup>

### Historic Significance

Most texts concerning the Americanization movement mention the Carnegie Studies only in passing, if at all; however, as noted in Gordon’s 1975 review of the reprinted 1971 editions,<sup>240</sup> the simple fact that the studies were revisited by specialists and scholars and reprinted with new forwards speaks to their value. The authors discussed various aspects and approaches that had not yet been seriously taken into account. In many ways, it appears that the authors wanted to ensure that coercive and non-empathetic Americanization tendencies, which became especially prominent during World War I, would be omitted or reduced based on their findings. In his review Gordon explains,

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<sup>238</sup> Thompson, *Schooling*, 136-137.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-129.

<sup>240</sup> The new editions were published by the Patterson Smith Publishing Corporation.

These volumes were indisputably part of the long and difficult fight against racist ideas in America carried on by liberal intellectuals and scientists in the first half of the twentieth century. As such, their intellectual tradition merges imperceptibly with the climate of thought and opinion which produced the civil rights movement and the struggle for racial equality in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s.<sup>241</sup>

Gordon also argues that a focus on the human condition and a belief in humanity as the great equalizer could unite a diverse nation based on this similarity.<sup>242</sup> There are many examples throughout the text of the Carnegie Studies, which prove that the authors were in favor of this approach. One of the most notable is from Park's *Immigrant Press*. After citing examples of items that the majority of native and foreign-born Americans desired, such as the phonograph, phonograph records, and automobiles, he went on to say:

In examining the advertisements in the foreign-language press, we usually discover that the immigrant, in his own world, is behaving very much as we do in ours. He eats and drinks; he looks for a job; goes to the theater; indulges in some highly prized luxury when his purse permits; occasionally buys a book; and forgathers with his friends for sociability. This is sometimes and in some cases a revelation.<sup>243</sup>

Therefore, although the studies provided some excellent foundational, structural, and organizational guidance for Americanizers, they touched on questions of morality and attempted to convince the public and all those involved in the process that their opinion should be based on more than preconceived notions of immigrants and their abilities.

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<sup>241</sup> Gordon, "American Immigrant," 473.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 474.

<sup>243</sup> Park, *Immigrant Press*, 133-134.

## Americanizers' Perceptions of Immigrants' Worth: Economic or Cultural Assets to the Nation?

More specifically, Gordon comes to two conclusions regarding immigrants and their adjustment in America: first, “they were left largely to fend for themselves – a convenient source of cheap labor for an expanding industrial economy” and secondly, “what saved them was their capacity for hard work, their patience to endure, and the strong cultural values which led them to build...the immigrant community.”<sup>244</sup> According to Peter D. Salins, author of *Assimilation, American Style*, upholding the Protestant ethic was one of the major requirements of Americanization.<sup>245</sup> It is rather ironic that the Protestant work ethic was recognized as an “Anglo-Saxon trait;” it was immigrants whom built America and whom native-born Americans rely on to this day to do menial labor that they were never willing or no longer willing to do. In the words of Salins, “immigrants...have always been willing to work very hard – much harder than most natives.”<sup>246</sup>

As early as 1886, Andrew Carnegie clearly identified immigrants as a rich resource and referred to immigration as “the golden stream which flows into the country every year” and estimated that each immigrant was worth approximately \$1,500.<sup>247</sup> John Foster Carr also considered immigrants a monetary asset and therefore believed immigration should remain unrestricted. These needs became more acute as a result of better education in schools; fewer Americans were content to settle for a job that required

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<sup>244</sup> Gordon, “American Immigrant,” 473.

<sup>245</sup> Peter D. Salins, *Assimilation American Style* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 6. Salins defines someone who upholds the Protestant ethic as being self-reliant, hardworking, and morally upright. He defines the other two most important aspects of Americanization as accepting English as the national language and respecting America’s democratic principles, which are more common aspects of Americanization.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>247</sup> Andrew Carnegie, *Triumphant Democracy* (London: S. Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, limited, 1886), 27.



manual labor.<sup>248</sup> Viewing matters concerning immigration in simply economic terms prevented many Americanizers from acknowledging the fact that the need for labor, which resulted in widespread immigration, also inevitably coincided with a reassessment of America's approach to inclusive and pluralistic ideals. Although Kellor frequently wrote of immigrants' gifts and sought to understand the immigrants' psychology, habits, traits, cultures, and political situations<sup>249</sup> it was evident, as previously mentioned, that she was primarily concerned with the well-being of the country. She devoted the latter half of one of her last publications on immigration to "whether future immigration [would] pay."<sup>250</sup>

In the chapter "Future Migration," in her book *Immigration and the Future*, Kellor was critical of the Carnegie Foundation's Americanization studies; she noted that they, "concern domestic matters only and are retrospective, rather than perspective; and so take us but to the threshold of the new immigration epic."<sup>251</sup> It can be argued, however, that looking to the future was precisely what the authors aimed to do by utilizing their research to more fully understand how immigrants participated in the process of Americanization in the past. Ironically, the authors made these arguments on the heels of the Red Scare of 1919-1920. The volumes were published the same year Congress passed the initial immigration quota law, which imposed the first stringent

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<sup>248</sup> Plummer Alston Jones, Jr. *American Public Library Service to the Immigrant Community, 1876-1948*. PhD diss., (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 239.

<sup>249</sup> Press, *Frances Kellor*, 224. As quoted in "The Place and Purpose of American Association Foreign Language Newspapers."

<sup>250</sup> Kellor, *Immigration and the Future*, 131.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

limits on immigration and attempted to ensure that, “in a generation the foreign-born would cease to be a major factor in American history.”<sup>252</sup>

### Conclusion

According to John Higham, during the 1920s, fervent nationalism — largely a product of the Great War and a major drive behind Americanization — lost its influence. As a result, “the historic confidence in the capacity of American society to assimilate all men automatically” diminished.<sup>253</sup> In hindsight, despite these hindrances, the authors of the Carnegie Studies were, in many ways, the forefathers of multiculturalism. During a time when restrictionists and racists captivated public opinion, Thompson and the other authors made the point that Americanization should be the “responsibility of all” and that everyone must adjust to their new responsibilities in order to preserve and fortify democracy in America.<sup>254</sup> Every aspect of immigrants’ lives did not have to be integrated; like-mindedness regarding individual rights, citizenship, respect for the nation’s laws, and loyalty to the United States were sufficient indicators that an individual belonged in the United States.<sup>255</sup> Oftentimes, as the following examination of the FLP will demonstrate, immigrant groups practiced and proclaimed these essential American values, especially their patriotism, more assertively and perhaps more wholeheartedly, than native-born Americans.

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<sup>252</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 311.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

<sup>254</sup> Thompson, *Schooling*, 384-385.

<sup>255</sup> For a more extensive summary of what Thompson believed all Americans should share in common, see Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 5.

## CHAPTER 6

### IMMIGRANT PERSPECTIVES:

#### THE CHICAGO FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRESS AND IMMIGRANT WORKS

The *Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey* (CFLPS) was published by the Chicago Public Library Omnibus Project of the Works Project Administration of Illinois in 1942. The purpose of the project was to translate a selection of news articles into English; these articles originally appeared in the Chicago area's foreign language press between 1861 and 1938. The entire project consists of 120,000 typewritten pages, which were translated from 22 different newspapers, many of which were the most long-running and distinguished foreign newspapers of the time period. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign digitized the collections, thus making them available online to the general public. This section examines a selection of articles from the first quarter of the twentieth century that relate to the progression of the Americanization movement. Materials published by the following immigrant communities of Chicago are included in the survey: German, Chinese, Dutch, Hungarian, Serbian, Polish, Jewish, Lithuanian, Danish, Albanian, Czech, Croatian, Greek, Swedish, Spanish, Russian, Norwegian, Italian, Ukrainian, Filipino, and Slovakian.

Focusing on one immigrant group would provide an inaccurate and incomplete representation of immigrant reactions to the Americanization movement. As noted by historian Alan M. Kraut, distinguishing between different immigrant groups is imperative. “The time is long gone when immigrants from diverse societies and cultures can be discussed collectively as if they were the same...No immigrant arrived tabula rasa. Each newcomer sifted his decisions through a filter of experiences and perceptions unique to his group, as well as those unique to his person.”<sup>256</sup>

### Working with Immigrant Sources: Challenges and Advantages

A number of challenges are inevitable when doing research using primary source documents based on immigrant writings. For example, it is difficult to find or incorporate the perspectives of those immigrants who were illiterate and therefore could not express their viewpoints through diaries, letters, or other publications. Instead, it is necessary to rely on immigrant authors who knew English well enough to have their works published and who are were not always entirely representative of their community or nationality. For many historians, becoming proficient in the languages of the various groups that came to the United States from 1880-1921 is not necessarily a feasible option. In addition, as in the case of the FLP, one or two individuals, usually the editors, spoke for the entire community when publishing articles. Furthermore, as stated in the library guide for the CFLPS, the translations were completed many years after the original articles were published. The translations provide useful information on the ethnic communities that existed, as well what the government, specifically the WPA, and the Chicago School

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<sup>256</sup> Alan M. Kraut, *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1982), 5.

of Sociology were most interested in at the time. Also, those who lived in the neighborhoods described in the articles often completed the translations under the WPA; therefore, they may have slightly altered some of the translations in order to depict their communities in a favorable light.<sup>257</sup>

In his study on patriotic pluralism and Americanization education, Mirel also relies on the CFLPS as a primary source. According to him, one of the CFLPS's strengths is that it allows historians to analyze the debate on a more local rather than national level. In Mirel's words, "Case studies are necessary because Americanization campaigns and Americanization education programs were overwhelmingly *local* enterprises" [Italics in original].<sup>258</sup> In 1921, as the crusade's vigor decreased, Thompson rather dejectedly noted, "At present we are proceeding to do through communities unassisted what should be done by communities assisted by states and aided by Federal agencies." He went on to say that, "The immigrant has climbed without our helping hand."<sup>259</sup> Although he was arguing, just as Kellor had throughout her career, for a more organized approach aided by the federal government, he also recognized the fact that immigrants promoted what Mirel calls a "redefined version of Americanization."

Although the CFLP newspapers fought against strict assimilation and "100 percent Americanism," they also remained committed to the nation's democratic ideals and, in this sense, believed they should be recognized as loyal Americans.<sup>260</sup> Although

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<sup>257</sup> As stated under "Strengths and Weaknesses of the CFLPS," CFLPS Online Library Guide. <http://uiuc.libguides.com/cflps>

<sup>258</sup> Jeffrey E. Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 6.

<sup>259</sup> Frank V. Thompson, *Schooling of the Immigrant* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1920), 24.

<sup>260</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 155-157. In his book Mirel gives a more in depth description of what he describes as a redefined version of Americanization.

the individual editors of certain FLP newspapers were not always representative of their community as mentioned above, it can also be argued that they did for the most part reflect public opinion. As explained by Park, “in selecting his materials the editor is not as arbitrary and willful as is popularly assumed. He chooses what he knows will interest his public. In this way the public exercises a control over the form and content of the press...”<sup>261</sup> Essentially, if the FLP did not reflect the views and opinions of its readers, it would have ceased to exist.

#### The FLP: “An Organ of Social Control,” Propaganda, and Public Opinion

The very existence of the FLP led to a debate over who should handle it and how. In general, both native-born Americanizers and immigrants alike viewed the press as a way to command authority and hold sway over public opinion. In *The Immigrant Press and Its Control*, Park explained that, “The press, in so far as it succeeds in capturing and centering the public attention, becomes an organ of social control, a mechanism through which the community acts, so far as the community can be said to act. It is this that defines the function of the press and makes its role in the community intelligible.”<sup>262</sup> As demonstrated in their writings, it is evident that Americanizers such as Kellor and Carr believed that printed materials geared toward newcomers were indispensable to their specific approaches and the overall Americanization movement.

As noted by Page Smith, most immigrants did not have newspapers in their homelands, therefore, “to have a newspaper in America was to have already adapted a

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<sup>261</sup> Robert E. Park, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1922), 330.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

critically important American institution.”<sup>263</sup> Distribution statistics alone speak to the FLP’s clout; both Kellor and Park cited that its estimated circulation for the year 1920 was 10,000,000.<sup>264</sup> Park also noted that almost every ethnic group in the United States “maintain[ed] a printing press and publish[ed] some sort of periodical.”<sup>265</sup> According to reports from 1920, as cited by Mirel, the figures were more modest, but still impressive. “The United States had 140 daily foreign language newspapers with a total circulations of almost 2 million; 594 weeklies with over 3.6 million in circulation; and 109 monthlies with a circulation of 756,000. In addition, 111 newspapers and periodicals were printed in both English and a foreign language, with a total circulation of 422,000.”<sup>266</sup>

In 1919, members of Kellor’s IRC, many of whom were business leaders, bought out and took over the AAFLN, the agency that supplied the FLP with advertising. This was a component of Kellor’s ever-evolving plan to Americanize the immigrant. By 1919, one of her chief Americanization goals was to discourage immigrants from falling prey to Bolshevism. In a speech to the National Association of Manufacturers on May 21, 1919, she explained that pro-American control of the FLP was necessary in order to ensure that “the papers would be for America!” She believed the FLP had the potential to become one of the “best antidotes to Bolshevism.”<sup>267</sup> Park cited Kellor’s explanation and support of propaganda as a type of useful advertising: “There is a third kind of advertising, called ‘propaganda,’ which is teaching English and telling about American institutions, which

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<sup>263</sup> Page Smith, *America Enters the World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 134.

<sup>264</sup> Park, *Immigrant Press*, 296; Frances Kellor, *Immigration and the Future* (New York: George H. Doran, 1920), 109.

<sup>265</sup> Park, *Immigrant Press*, 7.

<sup>266</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 102. Mirel’s statistics are based on Joshua Fishman’s *Language Loyalty in the United States* (London: Mouton, 1966).

<sup>267</sup> Edward George Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 233.

the association believes should be carried as advertising for America, and the Inter-Racial Council is handling a fund for this purpose.”<sup>268</sup>

Two examples of such propagandizing advertisements were published in the *Jewish Forward* on June 2, 1919: “Are You Going Back to Your Old Home?” called attention to the poor conditions that still existed in Europe as a result of the war.

“America Has Received You When You Came Here She Wants You Now to Remain Here” was particularly patronizing.

Now that you are already here and that you have begun – begun successfully – why not remain?...Say to-day to yourself: ‘I am in a good land, a land which fought, not for selfish purposes, but to make the whole world a better place to live in. I want to remain in America and will think like an American. I will dress myself like an American. I will talk American, and will remain an American!’<sup>269</sup>

Kellor sought to make it clear that her Americanizing propaganda was practical and beneficial compared to other types, which were dangerous and unreliable.<sup>270</sup> In *Advertising and Selling* published on July 5, 1919, Kellor supported the type of Americanization propaganda the Inter-Racial Council was undertaking.<sup>271</sup> One year later in *Immigration and the Future*, she stated that, “the danger increases every hour in which propaganda is substituted for information.” In other words, it was no longer enough to feed the FLP with “proper” propaganda, but alien propaganda had to be dealt with as well. Above all, she believed the United States needed “to establish a source of public

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<sup>268</sup> Park, *Immigrant Press*, 453.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 454-455.

<sup>270</sup> Frances Kellor, *Immigration and the Future*, 135-136. Here she lists the “formulae” used in Bolshevik propaganda.

<sup>271</sup> Park, *Immigrant Press*, 453.



opinion which will be free from bias or control by any one interest, and which will serve to create standards upon the subject [of future immigration policies]...<sup>272</sup>

Despite the IRC's involvement in such propaganda initiatives, it must be noted that it did fight against repressive measures, such as alien baiting and deportation, during the Red Scare. In fact, the IRC strongly opposed Senate Bill 3718 – “A Bill to Exclude Certain Foreign Publications from 2nd Class Mailing Privileges,” which would have barred FLPs from using second-class mail unless they complied with certain Post Office Department regulations. According to Hartmann, this would have meant “the use of the English language in a portion of the paper as well as other provisions which would have made the further publication of many of the newspapers an impossibility.”<sup>273</sup>

### The Great Disconnect

It is evident that a great deal of propaganda presented to immigrants was meant to encourage them to realize the benefits of becoming a “true” American. Many native-born Americanizers presumed that immigrants had to be convinced to accept their duties and prompted to recognize the opportunities available to them in America. However, the FLP and other immigrant sources suggest that immigrants were well aware of their duties and aptitudes. They believed in America and its ideals to such an extent that they were confident their devotion would help free their home countries during World War I. Other non-political issues, such as immigrant versus native-born American approaches to sanitation, demonstrate that much of the Americanization literature, namely Carr's, overlooked the fact that both groups held many interests in common. For instance, an

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<sup>272</sup> Kellor, *Immigration and the Future*, 27.

<sup>273</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 224-225. The IRC went as far as to send an attorney to Washington to fight Bill 3718.

article published in the Lithuanian newspaper *Lietuva* on August 27, 1915 entitled “Common Interests of Lithuanian-American Factions” stated,

By comparing the colonies of various nationalities, at least from the standpoint of health and hygiene, we find that the Lithuanians are living in a less favorable district than, let us say, the Germans...It is necessary to make various improvements in the locality in which we live. That is of common interest to all the inhabitants of the locality...It is of common common [sic] interest to all Lithuanian-Americans to improve the health conditions in the districts in which they live.<sup>274</sup>

This excerpt suggests that immigrants were not unaware that the conditions they faced in their neighborhoods, through no fault of their own, did not correspond with the “American ideal.”

In contrast, publications under the guidance of Americanizers such as Carr and Kellor made rather candid and paternalistic suggestions regarding immigrants’ hygiene and living conditions. For example, Carr’s guide suggested, “It is never dangerous in America to sleep with your windows open...PREVENTION IS THE BEST CURE FOR DISEASE. AVOID BAD AIR, BAD FOOD, BAD WATER, BAD HABITS. Avoid strong drinks. Strong drinks make weak men. DRINK A GOOD DEAL OF WATER EACH DAY.”<sup>275</sup> Such statements may come across as only mildly paternalistic and are understandable in light of the prevalence of disease as a result of sanitary conditions and extensive urban population growth during the period; however, he also added, “This is the American way. And in America you should do as Americans do.”<sup>276</sup> Carr went

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<sup>274</sup> “Common Interests of Lithuanian-American Factions,” *Lietuva* (August 27, 1915), CFLPS, Lithuanian, III A.

<sup>275</sup> John Foster Carr, *Guide to the United States for the Jewish Immigrant: A Nearly Literal Translation of the Second Yiddish Edition* (New York: American Library Association and Immigrant Education Society, 1914), 48.

<sup>276</sup> Carr, *Guide*, 50.

beyond sharing helpful hints about hygiene and sanitation and frequently implied that American standards were unquestionably superior.

It seems that much of the literature published by Anglo-conformist and strict assimilationists oversimplified solutions and underestimated the immigrants' ability to adapt, or misinterpreted reasons for their actions and their apprehension in certain situations. Again, this assertion is supported by another article from *Lietuva* regarding transitions from country to city life: "The effects of this transition would be considerably mitigated if it were not demanded of the immigrants that they change their habits, and if they were allowed merely to improve on these habits."<sup>277</sup> In 1915, *Lietuva* reported on a "Lecture to Americans About Lithuanians." The speaker addressed an audience of "wealthy and highly educated Americans" on Lithuanian history, literature, and folklore. According to the article, the audience was "surprised to learn of the richness of Lithuanian folklore, and of the fact that the Lithuanian language is a highly developed and very ancient language."<sup>278</sup>

While native-born Americanizers sought ways to teach immigrants about America and its history, traditions, language, and form of government, they often remained unmindful of the fact that the newly arrived Southern and Eastern European immigrants were also interested in teaching the native-born about their heritage. Immigrants were capable of successfully practicing and promoting cultural pluralism and becoming Americans in ways that did not always coincide with conventional Americanization methods. In the words of Hartmann,

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<sup>277</sup> "A Conference of Lithuanians and Americans," *Lietuva* (December 19, 1918), CFLPS, Lithuanian, III A.

<sup>278</sup> "Lecture to Americans About Lithuanians," *Lietuva* (March 5, 1915), CFLPS, Lithuanian, II D 6.

Mere acquiring of education and citizenship by an individual did not necessarily mean that he would be a 'good American' then anymore than it does today. Actually, the number of immigrants who became Americanized along the formal lines advocated by the Americanization groups must have been small, indeed, when compared with the great bulk of their fellows who never saw the inside of an American schoolroom or settlement house.<sup>279</sup>

Bierstadt's outlook was similar:

The foreign-language press serves more than one purpose: it keeps the immigrant of the first generation in some touch with his homeland, with its politics, its general interests, and even, in some instances, with the gossip of his own small neighborhood. The desire of the newly arrived immigrant for this type of information is not only natural but even praiseworthy. He who shifts from the old love too easily will certainly be fickle in his newer affections.<sup>280</sup>

The Americanizers responsible for Americanization literature underestimated immigrant potential and desire to participate. Although immigrants did benefit from a certain number of opportunities, such as English classes, in order to capitalize on their interest in participating in civic duties, what was expressed in the FLP reveals that the immigrants were better suited to acclimate themselves than those appointed by the government, public schools, or private organizations. The immigrant writings chosen for this section as well as the articles documented in the CFLPS by WPA workers demonstrate that the new immigrants were far from fickle in their affections for their newly adopted country or their home countries.

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<sup>279</sup> Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize*, 271.

<sup>280</sup> Edward Hale Bierstadt, *Aspects of Americanization* (Cincinnati: Steward Kidd, 1922), 84-85.

### Carol Aronovici: An Immigrant Scholar's Perspective

Carol Aronovici, both an immigrant and scholar, articulated a great many of the misgivings held by the American immigrant population against forced and hasty Americanization methods. After emigrating from Romania, Aronovici received his master's and doctorate degrees and went on to become the California State Commissioner of Housing and Immigration in 1919.<sup>281</sup> In 1920, his article "Americanization" was published in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. In it, he sought to dispel the myth that hasty and forced Americanization was most beneficial to the nation. He made the following observation, similar to those made by the Carnegie Studies authors: "It seems obvious that Americanization is a growth not to be achieved by the turn of the hand. It must be gradual, it must be sincere, it must be based upon conviction."<sup>282</sup> The most prominent argument he made, however, was for what he termed "intelligent citizenship."<sup>283</sup> He also contended that America needed to be interpreted in new ways as a result of positive changes made in its cultural milieu, thanks to the new immigration.

In "Americanization" he emphasized the risks of forced citizenship, especially in the context of the earlier portion of the movement, during the era of extreme World War I patriotism and nationalism. He explained, "The Americanization movement centered its attention upon the making of legal citizens without regard to the essential requirements of intelligent citizenship. I have always had more respect for the alien who refuses to accept

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<sup>281</sup> He is also said to have taught the first course in city planning ever offered in the United States at the University of Pennsylvania. See "Dr. Aronovici Dies: Expert on City Planning and Public Housing Was 75," *New York Times*, August 1, 1975, 25.

<sup>282</sup> Carol Aronovici, "Americanization," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Social Science*, Vol. 93 (January 21, 1921), 22.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

American citizenship before he is ready for it than for the man or woman who seeks such citizenship not as a prize for service but as a protection against suspicion.”<sup>284</sup> More specifically, he noted:

A foreigner is an individual who has been removed from his normal native environment with its customs, language, aspirations, folk ideals, racial and national loyalties, economic adjustment and legal control and placed in a new environment which he has neither the means nor the power to understand. It would be a remarkable mentality that would honestly accept American life unchallenged and it would be a dangerous and dishonest alien who would pretend to know and love this country without going through a long and painful process of assimilation.<sup>285</sup>

A year later, in *Aspects of Americanization*, Bierstadt corroborated Aronovici’s statements. According to Bierstadt, “If he [the immigrant] once clearly understands the mental and spiritual attitude which in its time begat America, and still does not believe in it wholly and sincerely, that is his privilege. It may be his misfortune and it may be ours, but it is not for us to criticize. Far better a sincere alien than a half-convinced American.”<sup>286</sup> The contrast between these observations and those made in the Americanization literature previously discussed is remarkable. In the literature by Carr and the DAR, immigrants were made to believe that Americanization was an easy and uncomplicated task. Aronovici, as well as the other authors identified, aimed to disprove these misconceptions.

When compared to most other individuals who supported Americanization, Aronovici’s writings prove that he held an atypical view on questions regarding English language instruction. He wrote, “I have often said that I would rather the immigrant

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<sup>284</sup> Aronovici, “Americanization,” 137.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>286</sup> Bierstadt, *Aspects*, 153-154.

would love America in German than hate America in English. To fear that the speaking of a foreign language is detrimental to loyalty is as absurd as to think the Swiss are not a united nation because French, German and Italian are spoken in Switzerland.”<sup>287</sup> This statement challenged a declaration issued by former president Theodore Roosevelt six years before, on October 12, 1915. As reported in the *New York Times*, in a famous speech to the Knights of Columbus he stated, “There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americans... a hyphenated American is no American at all.”<sup>288</sup> Moreover:

No man can be a good citizen if he is not at least in the process of learning to speak the language of his fellow citizens. And an alien who remains here without learning to speak English for more than a certain number of years should at the end of that time be treated as having refused to take the preliminary steps necessary to complete Americanization and should be deported.<sup>289</sup>

It is important to keep in mind that Roosevelt delivered his speech in the midst of World War I antagonisms. The article that was printed directly next to the piece that reported on Roosevelt’s hyphen speech spoke of escalation in German and British submarine warfare.

In his article, Aronovici criticized such hysterical wartime approaches: “Where there was unity the war created antagonisms and where there was loyalty we made very effort to instill fear. We came out of the war less Americanized than we went into the war, and it was all due to the Americanizers and their lack of understanding...”<sup>290</sup> He also indirectly criticized Kellor’s concept of efficiency in education and scientific Americanization approaches.<sup>291</sup> He noted, “Americanization is a process not a doctrine; a

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<sup>287</sup> Aronovici, “Americanization,” 135.

<sup>288</sup> “Roosevelt Bars the Hyphenated,” *New York Times* (October 12, 1915), 1.

<sup>289</sup> “Roosevelt Says There is No Room in This Country for Hyphenated Americans,” *The Lewiston Daily Sun* (October 14, 1915), 10; Dixon, *Americanization* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 148.

<sup>290</sup> Aronovici, “Americanization,” 136.

<sup>291</sup> Robert A. Carlson, “Americanization as an Early Twentieth-Century Adult Education Movement” *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter, 1970), 449.

growth not a science, and...experience and participation are its dynamic forces.”<sup>292</sup>

Above all, he believed in a voluntary approach on behalf of the immigrants, that they should be given the opportunity to choose what studies they would undertake.

“Immigrant education as represented by the schools and the social agencies has the one serious defect of being devoid of spontaneity.”<sup>293</sup> He also held an optimistic view of the possible outcomes of the Carnegie Studies and other works, such as William I. Thomas (author of *Old World Traits Transplanted*) and Florian Znaniecki’s study *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. He was hopeful that the authors’ data and pluralistic approach to the study of immigrants would prove “to what extent an intelligent Americanization movement would assist in making these cultures a part of our heritage out of which will be realized a new world.”<sup>294</sup>

#### Israel Zangwill’s *The Melting Pot*: A Powerful Metaphor and Its Long-Standing Misinterpretations

The protagonist of Israel Zangwill’s play *The Melting Pot* also had hope for the future and held faith in the idea that America might become a “new world” “where all races and nations [could] come to labour and look forward!”<sup>295</sup> The play opened in Washington D.C. in 1908. Since its debut, the term “melting pot,” a place where different people and cultures are mixed together, has often been used to describe America. The term has also mistakenly been used to refer to the complete assimilation of immigrants into Anglo-American culture.<sup>296</sup> Zangwill’s *The Melting Pot* gave rise to a debate as to

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<sup>292</sup> Carol Aronovici, *Americanization* (St. Paul: Kellor Publishing Co., 1919), 38.

<sup>293</sup> Aronovici, “Americanization,” 138.

<sup>294</sup> Aronovici, “Americanization,” 138; *Americanization*, 31.

<sup>295</sup> Israel Zangwill, “The Melting-Pot,” The Macmillan Company, 1909 & 1914, 185.

<sup>296</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 33.



whether or not the “melting pot” really existed and, if so, if this was the best way to think about and approach ethnicity in America.<sup>297</sup>

A German immigrant’s reaction to the play was included in the first volume of the Carnegie Studies. He believed that Zangwill<sup>298</sup> was suggesting that immigrants give up their speech, customs, and views of life and therefore declared, “the open or secret attempt to do away with our German cultural type...in the smudge kitchen of a national melting pot...will...revenge itself.”<sup>299</sup> J. Goebel shared the same sentiments in *Kampf um deutsche Kulture in Amerika* stating, “For us [German-Americans] the teaching of this play is simply a mixture of insipid phrases and unhistorical thinking. It is just the contrary of that toward which we strive...”<sup>300</sup> Conversely, an editorial in the German *Illinois Staate Zeitung*, supported the play’s perceived message and used the term in a favorable manner: “Here [in Chicago] is the glowing oven of the melting pot of races and nationalities, of which the Jewish philosopher and poet Israel Zangwill speaks. Not the eastern metropolis New York, whose population is probably more cosmopolitan than ours, but is looked upon...as a foreign city, rather than American.”<sup>301</sup>

Just what was Zangwill trying to say about immigrants in America and Americanization? For one, the inaccurate interpretation of the play’s meaning — that immigrants should ban all past associations in order to become Americans — is one that has continued to appear since the play first became popular. After creating the metaphor, Zangwill did not intend for it to become a synonym for assimilation. As Jeffrey E. Mirel

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<sup>297</sup> Guy Szuberla, “Zangwill’s Melting Pot Plays Chicago,” *Melus*, History and Memory (Fall, 1995), 3.

<sup>298</sup> Zangwill, a Russian Jew born in London, was an author, philosopher, and Zionist leader.

<sup>299</sup> Thompson, *Schooling of the Immigrant*, 62.

<sup>300</sup> J. Goebel, *Kampf um deutsche Kultur in Amerika*, 1914, pp. 11-13, cited in Park, *Immigrant Press*, 61-62.

<sup>301</sup> “The United Associations,” *Illinois Staate Zeitung* (May 29, 1918), 1, CFLPS, Greek, I C.

notes, Zangwill was more of an amalgamationist and believed that the mixing of races in the United States would form a new, and ideally more superior, type of American.<sup>302</sup> The French-American farmer and writer J. Hector St. John De Crèvecoeur first conceived the belief that a finer human type would result from the combining of traits from newly arrived immigrants. In his *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) he asked, “What is an American?” and described him as a new man that resulted from a strange mixture of blood that could be found in no other country.<sup>303</sup>

In the play, the main character is David Quixano, a Russian Jewish refugee who falls in love with a Russian Christian noblewoman named Vera. Throughout the play, David constantly questions what America means to him and searches for answers. He concludes that the divisions between men, with their roots in the Old World, will disappear if newcomers are faithful to America and its principles. David is also a talented musician; during the play, he writes a symphony that is inspired by America and the “seething of the Crucible.”<sup>304</sup> In the first act, in response to his uncle, he exclaims: “No, uncle, the real American has not yet arrived. He is only in the Crucible, I tell you—he will be the fusion of all races, perhaps the coming superman. Ah, what a glorious Finale for my symphony.”<sup>305</sup> Zangwill believed that races would indeed melt together, but each immigrant group’s traditions, language, and religion would all contribute and have a positive effect on the new American “superhuman.”

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<sup>302</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 16, 33.

<sup>303</sup> J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Encyclopedia of World Biography*. Detroit: Gale, 1998. *Gale U.S. History In Context*; Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 33.

<sup>304</sup> Zangwill, “The Melting-Pot,” 33.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

Zangwill also believed that America was unique in that it had the capacity to bring immigrants from various countries with different traditions together, despite any previous animosity that may have existed. For example, near the close of the first act, David shares his excitement with his uncle because Vera seems to understand his views on America. David exclaims, “Oh, uncle, you don’t know what it means to me to have somebody who understands me. Even you have never understood—” His uncle responds: “Of course she’s interested in your music...but what true understanding can there be between a Russian Jew and a Russian Christian?” David replies: “What understanding? Aren’t we both Americans?”<sup>306</sup>

As noted by Alan M. Kraut in *The Huddled Masses*, many immigrant newspapers complained that the play was overly idealized.<sup>307</sup> Although Zangwill may have, in certain sections of the play, romanticized the immigrant experience, the relationships between immigrant groups, and the Americanization process, it is likely that he intended for his work to convey a rather complex message, one that would resonate with all immigrants. If anything, by idealizing the immigrants’ experience he was encouraging them to keep their faith in America and to maintain hope for the future.

Neil Larry Shumsky considers a rather uncommon, yet valid, interpretation of the play in his article “Zangwill’s ‘The Melting Pot’: Ethnic Tensions on Stage.” He argues that:

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<sup>306</sup> Zangwill, “The Melting-Pot,” 41-42.

<sup>307</sup> Kraut, *The Huddled Masses*, 146.

A careful reading shows *The Melting Pot* to be much more complex than the simple notion that Americans can create a homogenous culture. To begin with, the character of David is ambiguous. Some elements of the play imply that he is not wholly persuaded by his own statements and is deeply divided between his ideas about the melting pot on the one hand and a strong attachment to tradition and heritage on the other. At times he seems unable to decide whether the melting pot is either feasible or desirable.<sup>308</sup>

It is evident that Zangwill touched on the internal conflicts that many immigrants experienced when attempting to make sense of the Old World in relation to the new. Although David associates Americanization with forgetting about his past and his heritage and frowns upon his uncle for maintaining his religious traditions,<sup>309</sup> by the end of the play he also realizes that he cannot fully abandon his heritage or forget past events. Eventually David, now engaged to Vera, discovers that her father was the leader of the pogrom in which his family was killed back in Russia. This prompts him to share his regret for giving up his people and his home in favor of “Christian love” and idealist views of America.<sup>310</sup> Late in the final act, he reverses his outlook once again and concludes that he *will* be able to forget as a result of his faith in the melting pot.<sup>311</sup> As noted by Shumsky, it is evident that Zangwill attempted to “depict the reality of the immigrant mind” and demonstrate that “millions of Americans experienced the same tension as David.”<sup>312</sup> Although these tensions did exist, immigrants also found ways to reconcile their attachments to the Old World and pride in their home country with the feeling of obligation to become more American.

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<sup>308</sup> Neil Larry Shumsky, “Zangwill’s ‘The Melting Pot’: Ethnic Tensions on Stage,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (March 1975), 31.

<sup>309</sup> Zangwill, “The Melting-Pot,” 95-96, 42.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 158

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>312</sup> Shumsky, “Zangwill’s ‘The Melting Pot,’” 37.

## Reinterpreting American History: Revisionism or a “New American Type?”

As with any movement or campaign, the way the Americanization movement has been interpreted and remembered is based on public memory and how individual Americans responded to it. According to John Bodnar, “American history is replete with examples of minority groups mounting spirited defenses of their own versions of the past and resisting pressures to acquiesce to nationally dominant traditions.”<sup>313</sup> This is a key feature of the Americanization movement. More recently, historians have placed more of their focus on the immigrants’ efforts to embrace the nation’s past, as well as its democratic ideals. These historians have also acknowledged how this alternative process helped to establish and advance the theory of cultural pluralism. Using patriotic observances that occurred in the Midwest during the 1920s as examples, Bodnar demonstrates “the curious ways in which vernacular and official interests could blend.”<sup>314</sup> Although immigrants sought to “place the immigrant past within the framework of national history,” they were also capable of celebrating their culture and creating a “separate memory.” That is not to say that this “separate memory” did not also coincide with the larger national historical narrative.

Immigrants used American history to advance the Americanization process. It is arguable that they revered American patriots, historical figures, and American history itself more so than native-born Americans and, in many ways, their approach to American history was more heartfelt and personal than native-born Americans. An article published in the *New York Times* entitled “Jews Make the 4<sup>th</sup> a Liberty Festival” reported

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<sup>313</sup> John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 43.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

on the previous days Independence Day celebrations and touched on why American history was so important to immigrants. Lillian D. Wald gave an address to the members of the neighborhood surrounding the Henry Street Settlement house on the Lower East Side of New York, which she founded in 1895. She especially focused on the significance the signing of the Declaration of Independence held for immigrants.

We of this neighborhood are peculiarly obligated to dedicate ourselves to the ideals laid down by the master minds that created the nation because there are so many among us who have known persecution and wrong, who have made great sacrifices for ideals, who have come to America believing that there could be realized our highest ideals...The American people, made up of the blood of all nations, best comprehend that there is no real hatred among them, that differences that separate are infinitesimal compared with the things held by all in common, that the real thing is not lip loyalty, but true and deep devotion to the principles of democracy, the preservation of life and liberty and unalterable opposition to war and destruction, to the insane tearing down of civilization.<sup>315</sup>

Carol Aronovici and Israel Zangwill shared these same views; to them, what made an American was their devotion to democracy and their desire to come together with those from other nations to celebrate America's history and uniqueness.

Immigrants also frequently attempted to write their own national heroes into the American historical narrative in order to demonstrate that they played a unique and important role in building the nation. Both the native-born and foreign-born used history as a means to an end. Native-born Americans often used it to uphold Anglo-Saxon cultural supremacy, one hundred percent Americanism, and conformity, while the foreign-born used it to credit themselves with building and defending America and to highlight their talents and achievements. Despite these underlying motives, immigrants still respected the American historical narrative. They did not seek to replace American

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<sup>315</sup> "Jews Make the 4<sup>th</sup> A Liberty Festival," *New York Times*, July 5, 1915, 14.

heroes or sully the national story. In the words of Jeffrey E. Mirel, they “sought to supplement the traditional story with an expanded cast of characters.”<sup>316</sup>

Throughout her book *Immigration and the Future*, Frances Kellor frequently mentioned that immigrants should learn about American history in order to become Americans; however, she did not suggest specifically how this should be done or what exactly they should learn, which was typical of many studies on Americanization from the period. Likewise, in *Schooling of the Immigrant*, Thompson suggested that civics and American history were important factors in Americanization, but focused primarily on adult English instruction. In, “Schooling in Citizenship,” Thompson recommended a course of study for “ninety-day men,” those immigrants who had very limited time to learn about the United States before they had to go before naturalization judges. Regarding history instruction, he proposed that a very short course should teach students about “the great social movements, such as the development of the modern industrial system and life,” while during longer courses they should learn “the history of the United States, with special emphasis upon such great social movements as the peopling of the continent, the industrial revolution, the rise of concentrated industry, and the beginnings of the organization of labor.”<sup>317</sup>

As noted in chapter four, those who published official Americanization material expected immigrants to memorize facts as quickly as possible, with very little reflection involved. Lists of fixed questions and answers for naturalization tests, for example, were

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<sup>316</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 119. Also see Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 13-14, 214.

<sup>317</sup> Thompson, *Schooling*, 355-356.

distributed to immigrants to be memorized, not learned and appreciated.<sup>318</sup> Although Thompson was against the dissemination of “purely formal knowledge of facts concerning history and government,”<sup>319</sup> it appears that he believed immigrants should primarily learn about industry and labor, presumably because it most closely related to what they encountered in their daily lives. It is also interesting to note that the chapter entitled “The United States—A Brief History” in the *Daughters of the American Revolution’s Manual of the United States for the Information of Immigrants and Foreigners* did rather matter-of-factly observe that various nationalities were involved in the Revolutionary War: “Lafayette and Rochambeau helped the Americans. They came from France. Later, France sent an army and navy to help. Baron Steuben, a German, De Kalb, a Bavarian, and Kosciusko, a Pole, helped our soldiers.”<sup>320</sup> The “Brief History”, which begins with Columbus, “an Italian,” discovering America in 1492 and ends with the drafting of the Constitution in 1787, is extremely brief, which makes the short acknowledgement of other cultures all the more noteworthy.

The new interpretation of American history was fortified during World War I, when aggressive Americanization approaches were most prevalent. FLP editors took the initiative and made it a priority to teach their readers about American history. As noted in *The Work of the Foreign Language Information Service: A Summary and Survey*:

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<sup>318</sup> Thompson, *Schooling*, 347.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 351-352.

<sup>320</sup> *Manual of the United States for the Information of the Immigrants and Foreigners* (Washington DC: Press of Judd Detweiler, Inc., 1923), 28.



During the war the great mass of immigrant people for the first time were brought into the country's common life and purpose. They 'belonged' in the real sense, and they responded to America's call for service, for money, for life itself without reserve, and with a patriotism not outdone by the descendants of the Republic's original founders.<sup>321</sup>

The Foreign Language Information Service (FLIS) was a division of the United States Committee on Public Information organized in 1918.<sup>322</sup> It enlisted foreign-born individuals, familiar with the English language, to interpret the "nation's purpose and needs" to other immigrants and to help publicize the activities and services their groups undertook during the war.<sup>323</sup> One of the ways the FLIS attempted to "assimilate the alien," was to offer lectures on American history in various languages. The FLIS's 1921 survey noted that, "as a result of the many appeals from the foreign born groups, the Service has printed and circulated 95,000 pamphlets in Russian, Ukrainian, Hungarian and Polish, on the following topics: 'How Americans Won Their Liberty,' 'Abraham Lincoln,' [and] 'America in War and Peace.'"<sup>324</sup>

Although the FLIS stated that many foreign groups made appeals for information on American history, as well as other topics, FLP editors, and presumably their readers, believed that history and Americanization could be taught most effectively by their own group. For example, an excerpt from a Lithuanian newspaper demonstrates that the editors believed that Lithuanians would receive the best education from other Lithuanians. "Lithuanian immigrants can be successfully approached only by those who know the Lithuanian language, understand the character of Lithuanians, and are well

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<sup>321</sup> Foreign Language Information Service, *The Work of the Foreign Language Information Service: A Summary and Survey* (New York City: Foreign Language Information Service, 1921), 9.

<sup>322</sup> See Park, *Immigrant Press*, 458-460 for his take on the FLIS and how it differed from the Inter-Racial Council.

<sup>323</sup> Foreign Language Information Service, *The Work of the Foreign Language Information Service*, 8.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

acquainted with America. In other words, this can be done only by Lithuanian-Americans who are well acquainted with this country and are more or less educated.”<sup>325</sup>

Apart from native-born Americanization tactics, which utilized various forms of propaganda, immigrant groups also found ways to make their own historic interpretations and ethnic celebrations more accessible and appealing. In her study on Slovak organizations in America, June Granatir Alexander notes that publicity tactics for “Slovak Days,” or annual nationality days, “show how local activists developed a strategy of using American popular culture to perpetuate an interest in ethnic affairs. To impress Slovak youths as well as ‘other nationalities,’ including ‘Americans,’ they also routinely incorporated America’s national symbols into ethnic undertakings.”<sup>326</sup>

As Jeffery E. Mirel insightfully explains, immigrants often read themselves into American history. FLP editors used the annual cycle of patriotic holidays to teach about American history, specifically their own versions. He notes that throughout the year the papers touched on a variety of topics: exploration and the founding of America in conjunction with Columbus Day, the Colonial Era and Thanksgiving, the Revolution around the Fourth of July and Washington’s birthday, as well as the Civil War and Lincoln’s Birthday.<sup>327</sup> They also cited examples of how certain parts of their history were comparable to America’s and tried to dispel the overwhelming notion many native-born Americans held, that immigrants were not familiar with democracy or compatible with American politics.

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<sup>325</sup> Common Interests of Lithuanian-American Factions,” *Lietuva* (August 27, 1915), CFLPS, Lithuanian, III A.

<sup>326</sup> June Granatir Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism: Slovaks and Other New Immigrants in the Interwar Era* (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA, 2004), 10. Alexander notes that Slovak Days became most prevalent during the 1930s.

<sup>327</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 119.

There are far too many relevant articles in the CFLPS to cite; however, a few prominent excerpts demonstrate, that when teaching and learning about American history, immigrants were both patriotic, while remaining true to their ethnic backgrounds. In 1927, the German newspaper *Abendpost* printed an article about General Niklas Hershheimer and referred to the 150th anniversary of his death as “a distinguished page in German-American history.” Hershheimer, also known by the Americanized name of Herkimer, was a general who died of wounds after the Battle of Oriskany in New York state. The article notes that the battle “is mentioned in American history as one of the deciding factors in the War of Independence” and that the German immigrants of New York state also came together to “check the King” as “free citizens fighting for home and country.”<sup>328</sup> These types of stories were meant to highlight the fact that the foreign-born had fought for freedom alongside native-born Americans long before World War I and that American history and German history could be viewed as one and the same—as “German-American history.”

A 1915 Polish article compared Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who fought for the Americans during the Revolution and later led a nationalist uprising against Russia in Poland in 1794, to Abraham Lincoln. The article read, “One and the same powerful motive ruled the spirits of these two great men: a boundless love of freedom” and noted that they even shared the same birthday, February 12. It went on, “These two men who grew up in environments entirely different arrived at the same notion, that only a free and enlightened people can be a strong foundation for a nation.” This editorial is yet another example of how FLP editors sought to prove that people from their homelands played

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<sup>328</sup> “A Distinguished Page in German-American History: General Niklas Hershheimer,” *Abendpost* (August 14, 1927), 1-3, CFLPS, German, III D.

important roles in America's history and that national heroes could transcend national boundaries. The same editorial communicated this theory stating, "Today every child in Europe knows who Abraham Lincoln was, and every child in the United States honors the name of the nation's defender, Thaddeus Kosciusko."<sup>329</sup>

Many immigrants served in the Civil War as well, which made Decoration Day, now Memorial Day, an important day of observance. Furthermore, in the words of Mirel, "the entry of the United States into World War I provided the nation's vast immigrant communities the opportunity to *make* American history, rather than read themselves into it via their ancestors."<sup>330</sup> This is precisely what they did.

By publishing such articles, immigrants were also remarking on Americanization. If their ancestors helped to build America and defend democracy, and continued to do so, then they possessed the ability and held the right to Americanize on their own terms and by their own means. This type of historical narrative — one that was more inclusive and paid tribute to the sacrifices made by Americans from various backgrounds — also paved the way for a new type of American, Americanized by embracing American democratic ideals and values *as well as* ethnic pride. The efforts of these individuals continue to have an impact on our nation today.

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<sup>329</sup> "Kosciusko—Lincoln," *Dziennik Zwiazkowy*, February 12, 1915, 1-4, CFLPS, Polish, I J. The Lithuanians also claim Kosciusko as one of their own national heroes.

<sup>330</sup> Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 128.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

In July of 2012, I attended the Fourteenth Annual Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival, held in Boston and organized by the Lithuanian-American community of Boston. During the introductions, the announcers consistently referred to the participants as Lithuanian-Americans and each opening speech and informational segment was given in both English and Lithuanian. These details may seem minor, but they reflect trends and traditions that can be traced to the Southern and Eastern European groups, not only Lithuanians, that immigrated to the United States from the 1890s to mid-1920s. Fraternal and social organizations, such as the Lithuanian Folk Dance Group of Boston<sup>331</sup> and other neighborhood associations, religious institutions, and political clubs, helped keep alive the cultures that European immigrants brought with them to America. They also played an important role in fostering relationships between native-born Americans and Eastern and Southern European immigrants. For instance, since its founding, “one of the main

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<sup>331</sup> The Lithuanian Folk Dance Group of Boston, Samburis (“The Ensemble”) was the first to be founded in the United States (1937). See brochure, *Lietuvių Tautinių Šokių Šventė: XIV Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival Brochure* (Lithuanian Foundation, Inc., 2012), 31.

goals of the group [Samburis] has been to introduce the art of Lithuanian folk dance to the American public.”<sup>332</sup> These organizations prepared immigrants for a new life in the United States, but also provided them with opportunities to celebrate their vernacular culture.

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On January 11, 2012, *The New York Times* published an opinion piece entitled “The Next Immigration Challenge.” The author, Dowell Myers, Professor at the Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California, suggests that federal and state policies should do more to encourage immigrant assimilation. The billions of dollars that the government spends on border patrol should instead be spent on enhancing immigrants’ abilities by focusing on education, job skill development, and finding ways to make them feel more welcome in their communities.<sup>333</sup> The essay discusses illegal immigration and corresponding concerns relating to domestic immigration policy, which are also hot-button issues for the 2012 presidential election. As demonstrated by the article, questions concerning United States immigration frequently arise in American public discourse and have done so since our country was founded.<sup>334</sup> Who should be able to acquire citizenship? What attributes constitute a *true* American? Have immigrants strengthened or jeopardized America? According to Samuel P. Huntington, author of “The Hispanic Challenge:”

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<sup>332</sup> Lietuvių Tautinių Šokių Šventė: XIV Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival Brochure, 31.

<sup>333</sup> Dowell Myers, “The Next Immigration Challenge,” *New York Times* January 11, 2012.

<sup>334</sup> Bill Ong Hing, *Defining America Through Immigration Policy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 7.

The persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. Unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream American culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves...and rejecting the Anglo-Protestant values that built the American dream. The United States ignores this challenge at its peril.”<sup>335</sup>

This side of the argument suggests that Latino immigrants are failing to assimilate; they are often undocumented and are therefore unable to climb the economic ladder, or attend college, and are in constant fear of deportation. Also, as of 2004, half of those entering the United States spoke a single non-English language, a first in United States history, according to Huntington.<sup>336</sup>

On the other hand, recent studies conducted by Myers and two of his associates demonstrate that, “Immigrant parents and children, especially Latinos, are making extraordinary strides in assimilating.”<sup>337</sup> Grassroots organizations and national collaborative organizations, such as Welcoming America, do recognize immigration challenges and both sides of the immigrant debate. Welcoming America promotes respect between foreign-born and U.S.-born Americans and strives to “create a welcoming atmosphere — community by community — in which immigrants are more likely to integrate into the social fabric of their adopted hometowns.”<sup>338</sup> Juxtaposing these two perspectives reflects a prominent pattern within the context of American immigration history. Fears of the “other” — someone who lies outside the convention — are continual yet periodically lie dormant. Nativist sentiments swell with large immigrant influxes, the

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<sup>335</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “The Hispanic Challenge,” *Foreign Policy* (March/April, 2004). Also quoted in Robert A. Levine, *Assimilating Immigrants: Why America Can and France Cannot* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2004), 1.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>337</sup> Myers, “The Next Immigration Challenge.”

<sup>338</sup> Refer to the official website of “Welcoming America,” [welcomingamerica.org](http://welcomingamerica.org).

outbreak of war, and economic stresses, thus leading the American public and civic leaders to question the effectiveness of America's principles to assimilate outsiders.

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The following conclusions can be made based on the evidence presented in each case study. Each group that participated in the Americanization movement — the native-born Americanizers, social science and education scholars, and immigrants themselves — had reasons for approaching Americanization in the ways that they did. Americanizers, such as Frances Kellor and John Foster Carr, were in favor of rather hasty and stringent Americanization methods. They believed these methods would protect the country from negative influences, such as Bolshevism, and help to prevent divided loyalties during World War I. Their approach was greatly influenced by both the Settlement House Movement and the Progressive Movement, which promoted a scientific and efficiency-based approach to society's ills. Although their methods were often forced and intolerant, it is important to keep in mind that, unlike restrictionists, native-born Americanizers did not believe in Nordic superiority and racial purity. They were convinced that immigrants were capable of becoming true Americans; however, they were not nearly as open-minded to the fact that newcomers were competent enough to play a leading role in the process. The Carnegie Studies authors maintained that one of the most important aspects of the Americanization process was to ensure that native-born Americans overcome their “assumption of superiority” and realize that they held more in common with the foreign-born than perceived. Most importantly, Thomas, Park, and Thompson were more conscious of the fact that Americanization was a slow and complex process and, contrary



to Kellor and Carr's recommendations, they believed voluntary participation would yield the best results.

Although immigrants did express their objection to the pressure they sometimes felt to break away from their Old World traditions, they often confronted the negative aspects of Americanization by participating in the process to the greatest extent possible and finding new ways to demonstrate their love for America and its founding principles. They achieved this by writing themselves into the historical narrative in an effort to prove that they helped to build the nation, long before the Americanization Movement began. Their approach to Americanization closely relates to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services present-day definition of what it means to be an American. All Americans should support and defend the Constitution, participate in the democratic process, become involved in their local communities, defend the country if the need should arise, respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others, and recognize that "we are a nation bound not by race or religion, but by the shared values of freedom, liberty, and equality."<sup>339</sup> These are indeed the attributes that constitute a true American.

At the start of this project, I was under the impression that the Americanization Movement mostly consisted of a one-sided venture whereby native-born Americanizers taught immigrants how to become Americans. This study reveals that, contrary to many past conclusions historians have made about Americanization, immigrants successfully participated in the Americanization movement, helped redefine what it means to be an American, and had a significant impact on the way we perceive our nation today.

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<sup>339</sup> "Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Website. See USCIS.gov.

Although it is evident that a present-day fear of foreigners exists and endangers a more inclusive approach to newly arrived immigrant groups, we should keep in mind that, in the past, immigrants have found effective ways to balance loyalty and adaptation to America with the preservation of Old World culture. They also have the ability to do so in the present, regardless of their countries of origin. Moving forward, we must be aware of the danger in allowing official culture to completely overcome vernacular culture and traditions.

Essentially, the way immigrants participated in the Americanization process has made the present America possible. Part of what makes America so unique is the relationship that exists between pride in ancestry *and* being an American. Although vernacular interests have changed since the Americanization movement, they have most certainly survived. That being so, the statement that Theodore Roosevelt made in 1915 regarding “hyphenates,” — “There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americans...a hyphenated American is no American at all” — is inaccurate. The hyphen still exists in American society and the survival and celebration of hyphenated Americanism, supported by immigrants during the Americanization movement, has greatly influenced our nation by proving that vernacular and official interests can blend.

Although ethnic narratives do need to be reconciled with the national narrative, the immigrant side of the Americanization movement challenged narrow-minded approaches to this process and ensured that immigrant culture remained a factor in American life. It is my hope that studies such as this one will prompt others to think more broadly about the history of the Americanization movement and to acknowledge those who played a significant role in the alternate Americanization initiatives and social

efforts that promoted and facilitated more open-minded routes to incorporate immigrants into American society.

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