THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES OF EUROPEAN
IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1882

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CHAPTER I

EARLY EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION

Introduction

To any American citizen who cares to reflect upon it, the fact that his country is peopled by immigrants or descendants of immigrants is clearly evident. In fact, in one sense all the inhabitants of the United States, except the aboriginal inhabitants, are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants.

According to Hansen:

Popular usage recognizes a distinction between those settlers who reached America before 1776 and those who came later. The former are described as "colonists," the latter as "immigrants."

It is in this sense that the term "immigrant" is used in this study. There have been roughly three main periods of immigration into the United States. First, the immigration from colonial times to about 1882, which is known as the "old" immigration, came from northern and western Europe. It included the Germans, the Scandinavians (Norwegian, Swedes, and Danes), the English, the Irish, and the Scotch-Irish. These immigrants were of the same racial elements as the

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colonists. They, therefore, were less difficult to assimilate and caused less social disturbances than later immigrants.

Second, by the year 1882 there was beginning to be a notable difference in the racial elements that were to make up the bulk of the immigration into the country. The change was so great that it became known as the "new" immigration. The "new" immigration included Italians, Poles, Jews, Greeks, Portuguese, Russians, and a varied assortment of other Slavs. In addition, there came smaller groups of people from the Near East, including Turks, Armenians, and Syrians. This movement differed from that from the northern and western Europe in a number of ways. There was believed to be a distinct difference in race, and it is true that the proportion of Mediterranean stock was greater in the "new" immigration. But the most significant contrasts were probably cultural rather than racial.2

Third, the last period of immigration is the "refugee" or "displaced person" immigration. Although it coincides with the last half of the "new" immigration period, it has distinct features and significance all its own. These immigrants have been knocking at our doors by the thousands since about 1916. They are the peoples who have been driven from their homes by the advancing armies of the enemy in the last two major conflicts in Europe -- World War I and World

2Donald R. Taft, Human Relations, p. 77.
War II. They represent people from almost every nation in central and eastern Europe and from all walks of life, the intelligensia as well as the peasant. In later chapters the economic and social influences in the United States of each of these groups will be discussed.

Number and Source of Immigration

Until 1820, no exact records were kept of the number of immigrants who came to the United States. During the 131 years in which records have been available approximately 39,000,000 immigrants came to America. Of this number nearly 33,000,000, or 85 percent, came from Europe; the other American countries contributed 4,500,000, or 11 percent, Asia a little less than 1,000,000, or about 3 percent, and the remainder of the world -- Africa, Australia, the Pacific Islands, or unspecified parts of the earth -- about 2 percent. It is estimated that of those 39,000,000 who entered the United States from other nations 30,000,000 have remained.

During a period of 131 years the largest total was from Germany, with its peak in 1882. The peak migration from southern Europe was from Italy, in 1907. The great English and Irish migrations reached their peaks earlier, that of the Irish in 1851 and of Great Britain in 1888. The eastern European migration -- from Austria, Hungary and Russia -- like that of southern Europe, came during the early part of this century, with peaks in 1907 and 1915, respectively. The
largest number of Chinese came in 1882 and of Japanese in 1907. The Mexican came mostly from 1924 to 1930. 3

Thus the immigration picture changed from year to year and from decade to decade. The changes were both in number and in racial elements. Many factors, economic, religious, social, and political, determined the cause of immigration. Such factors have been famine abroad, religious and political intolerance, shifting birthrates, United States depressions, war, the advent of steam and of great industries. The causes of the "ebb and flow" of immigration to the United States were summarized in the Congressional Digest:

The first immigrants came in a thin trickle, to Jamestown, and Plymouth and New Amsterdam . . . . While there had been some resentment and friction in the colonies among the various ethnic groups, these stemmed largely from religious differences. There was little thought of restricting immigration by colonial fiat since more people were needed to insure safety of life and property and to increase the value of land . . . .

The tide of immigration between 1780 and 1820 numbered about 250,000. But transportation was so risky, sickness on board so rife, and death so frequent that the first immigration act passed by Congress, in 1819, was designed primarily to improve conditions of passage. It provided the first enumeration of immigrants only incidentally. Similar motives lay behind immigration acts of 1847, 1849, and 1855.

Now, however, sentiment was beginning to crop up for an application of the brakes on alien entry into the United States -- a feeling which continued in erratic spurts during the 60-year period between 1820 and 1880 when 10,000,000 persons arrived in America.

3 Francis J. Brown and Joseph Slabey Rousek, One America, pp. 14-17.
Early in the 1830's the "Nativist" movement grew up in opposition to the influx of aliens. But . . . . War with Mexico and the discovery of gold in California, served to divert national attention, and the movement died out temporarily. But in the late '40's and the '50's crop failures in Germany and the potato famine in Ireland sent more millions to America, while California gold began to draw numerous Chinese to the West Coast. The resistance to immigration revived in the form of the "Know-Nothing" political party -- so dubbed because of its secretiveness. This party gained considerable influence until the Civil War swept it away . . . .

In the 1860's several developments led to stepped-up immigration. One of these was the conversion of ocean ships from sail to steam. The second was the need for labor during the Civil War.

As a result of the first development, steamship companies at home and abroad began actively to drum up passenger trade for voyages to America. Generally, passenger conditions still bordered on the hideous . . . . Smallpox, typhus, and cholera scourged many vessels.

The second development prodded Lincoln into prodding Congress for a law to help revive the failing immigration of early war years. In 1864 Congress established an Immigration Bureau in the State Department which operated for four years and did succeed in nearly doubling the immigration rate.

As the alien flood continued in the postwar era and as the great industrial expansion set in throughout the nation, Congress finally concluded that some of the drawbacks of unrestricted immigration were assuming serious proportions. In 1875 an act was passed excluding certain types of undesirable aliens.

In 1882, after the California gold and railroad construction work had drawn 200,000 Chinese to the United States, Congress enacted a law excluding all Chinese laborers . . . . later excluding all Chinese from settling.

Until 1890 European immigration to America had been more than 80 percent from northern and western Europe. But with the decline of birth rates in these countries, their industrial revolution, their increased political and religious tolerance, etc., the trend shifted to southern and eastern Europe.
where conditions were just the reverse. Simultaneously the tremendous expansion of industry and agriculture in America served as an incentive to migrants.

This period, until after World War I, turned out to be the heyday of the immigrants. Nearly twenty-four million arrived, more than a million a year in six of the ten years from 1905 to 1914. Italy sent over four million; the Balkans nearly as many; Russia contributed in excess of three million.

The Spanish American War, World War I and depressions cut down the alien drift, but only temporarily; Congress began to consider legislation in earnest.

In 1885 a contract-labor law was adopted, primarily to protect American labor from the importation of cheap foreign labor. Medical inspection was required of all incoming aliens, and those with "loathsome or contagious diseases" were excluded. So were paupers, polygamy, insane persons, professional beggars, epileptics, anarchists, criminals, the feeble-minded, unaccompanied minors, and those without visible means of support.

In 1917 Congress passed the nation's basic immigration law. All the restrictions placed upon immigration to 1917 were retained and two were added. Henceforth immigrants would have to be literate and those from certain geographical zones were excluded.4

Then Congress passed another series of laws in 1921, 1924, and 1929, whereby it hoped not only to limit the number of immigrants but to determine the racial element as well.

The last of the Congressional acts relative to immigration -- The Alien Registration Act of 1940, the act of 1943 setting an annual quota of 150 Chinese and the act of 1946 which increased the quota from the Philippines from 50 to 100 and set a quota of 100 for India -- do not affect the immigrant under discussion.

Causes of Early European Immigration

Why did these early immigrants brave the almost unsurmountable difficulties of travel and the hardships of life that beset them on every hand in the United States? The cause of any migration for the most part is the outcome of over-population in the homeland. This creates a need for further sustenance, more space and new opportunities. Students of immigration are in agreement that the great bulk of immigration was impelled by the desire to obtain a better living. The economic cause overshadowed all others. When confronted with these essential economic needs a race or part of it moves out. De Tocqueville wrote of American immigration in 1835: "No power on earth can close upon the immigrant that fertile wilderness which offers resources to all industry and a refuge from all want."^5

From colonial times until the present the United States has been "The Land of Promise" to the crowded, starving people of other lands. While this is true of the whole immigration movement, religious and political causes played a relatively greater part in case of the "old" immigrant than of the "new." Economic discontent in England, Ireland, France, Germany, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands was fanned at times by religious and political dissatisfaction. The flight of the Pilgrims from England, of the Quakers to

^5 Quoted by Prescott F. Hall in Immigration, p. 15.
Pennsylvania, and of the Huguenots expelled by Louis XIV, are well known to everyone. Again after the revolution of 1848 in Germany, and after the partition of Poland, many political refugees came to this country and helped build up our Middle States. However, this number was small when compared with the much greater number who came for economic reasons.

The conditions in the home country had much to do with emigration. The economic depression early in the nineteenth century forced many in Germany and Switzerland to adopt a standard of living much below that to which they had been accustomed. Their inability to buy tended to demoralize the industries, which resulted in unemployment for many of the lower class. There was a feeling that Germany and Switzerland were overpopulated, a condition which could be relieved only by emigration. The famine in Ireland led to the Irish emigration. In some countries, also, where military service was compulsory, the opportunity of escaping that service for two or three years was a motive that helped emigration. This motive had its economic side, also, for military service interfered with employment, which in turn prevented saving. The result of this economic pressure in the home country was that the United States was likely to receive as immigrants

6Ibid., p. 20.
7Lawrence Guy Brown, Immigration, p. 65.
the most enterprising and strongest of the hand-workers. The most enterprising and strongest of the hand-workers.

There is no doubt that one of the chief influences affecting immigration during the nineteenth century was the prosperity of the United States. There was a marked relationship between industrial and commercial activities in the United States and the volume of immigration.

In 1837, for example, the total immigration was roughly speaking, 79,000; after the panic of that year it fell off in 1838 to 38,000. In 1842, the total was 104,000; in 1844, after a depression, it was 78,000. By 1854, as a result of the famine in Ireland and the political revolution in Germany, it had increased to 427,000; but in 1860 at the opening of the Civil War it fell to 90,000. After the close of the war it increased until, in 1872, it was 458,000; but with the panic it fell, in 1874, to 261,000. From that time it increased to a maximum of 730,000 in 1882. Owing in a measure to the passage of the first restrictive law and the contract labor acts, it fell off in 1885 to about 400,000. Beginning with 1894, and lasting several years there was a period of commercial depression, to which the agitation of the currency question in part contributed; and in 1896 immigration reached the low mark of 229,000.

Knowledge of industrial conditions in this country was conveyed abroad through many channels. Perhaps the most common were the newspaper and the personal letters of friends or relatives. In some instances, people in Europe even sent out representatives to look into the conditions in the United States before they came. Henry Bradshaw Fearon, an Englishman, was one of these. In a letter written in 1819 he tells what the immigrant would find here:

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9Hall, op. cit., p. 17.
he will find a country possessed of the most enlightened civil and political advantages; a people reaping the full reward of their own labor, a people not paying tythes, \textit{sic.} and not subjected to heavy taxation without representation; a people with a small national debt; a people without an enormous standing army; a people in possession of an extent of territory capable of sustaining an increase of millions and tens of millions of population; and a people rapidly advancing towards national wealth and greatness.\textsuperscript{10}

These letters and the glowing stories of the returned immigrants with his American clothes and money were more causes of immigration. When times were good and the immigrants made money, it not only increased the desire to come on the part of the other immigrants but it made their coming possible. The money for the passage or a prepaid ticket was sent by a friend or relative already in the United States.

Times of depression had the opposite effect. Immigration fell off, especially among the skilled laborers. This was due to the fact that many public works went on in times of commercial stagnation, while the mills and factories which employed the higher class of skilled labor were to a greater extent shut down. Further, unskilled labor was mobile, it could take up any unskilled occupation in any locality, and being largely unmarried unskilled laborers could accommodate themselves to lower wages. Foreign skilled workmen knew that if they came to this country in time of

\textsuperscript{10}Henry Bradshaw Peason, \textit{American Sketches} (1819), p. 437.
depression, they ran the risk of being forced into the ranks of the unskilled, and they preferred to stay at home. 11

Other factors also operated to encourage immigration. Ease of transit, assistance to immigrants and the immigrant bank all aided immigration into the United States before 1890. It is obvious that the cost and degree of hardship involved in coming to this country must have been an important factor in determining the volume of immigration at any particular time. Before 1855, steerage conditions were very crowded and unsanitary, and immorality was prevalent. 12 Between 1860 and 1882 there was "the transition from the sailing vessel to the steamship as the prevailing type of immigrant carrier." 13 From 1859 to 1882 the average steerage rate as indicated in Boston and London newspapers was about $30.00. Beginning with January 1, 1883, the price was reduced to $21.00. In 1885, it was reduced to $15.00. Special railroad rates were usually made in connection with steamship rates both to interior points in this country, and in Europe from the immigrant's home to the seaboard. 14 In early days, some European countries, especially Switzerland, England, 15

11 Hall, op. cit., p. 19.
12 Henry Pratt Fairchild, Immigration, pp. 86-87.
13 Ibid., p. 91.
and Ireland, assisted their paupers and criminals to emigrate to the United States. 16

Convicts, paupers, crippled and diseased persons have many times been shipped to America "to be rid of them" by individuals, societies, municipal corporations or even by the government.

One of the most potent causes of emigration is the assistance given the poor of certain races by rich individuals or philanthropic associations. Thousands of Roumanians and Russian Jews, forced by persecution to emigrate, are assisted by the Jewish societies or individuals in the towns through which they pass and are thus helped to the seashore. Many are passed on through Hamburg and Rotterdam or some other continental port to London. Here they are met by representatives of the "Hebrew Shelter." This institution was founded in 1885 for providing a temporary refuge, and to assist Hebrews on route to America. 17

The immigrant banks, ticket agencies, and other similar enterprises were conducted mainly by immigrants in the United States. It was the chief business of these institutions to exchange money, send money abroad, sell steamship tickets, and do other kinds of business that directly concerned the immigrant. 18

The Influence of the Immigrant before 1900 on Economic Life in the United States

In the early days of immigration into the United States it is certain that the immigrant in most instances was a homeseeker.

16 Hall, op. cit., p. 29.
18 Jenks and Lauck, op. cit., p. 23.
It (nineteenth-century immigration) was
predominantly a rural phenomenon; the emigrant
was a son of the soil; his interests were simple,
the wants and ambitions of the countryman. 19

In Europe a man could not satisfy these wants, for the
price of land in many countries was prohibitive, especially
when the poverty of the masses was considered. In other coun-
tries, systems of land tenure obtained which made it impossible
for a landless man to become a landowner. When the beauty and
cheapness of the land in the United States was featured in
the emigrant guidebook distributed by agents of steamship
companies seeking passengers to America, the peasant at last
saw a way to realize his dream. So a very large proportion
of them, agriculturists abroad, went to our rural districts,
took up land and became farmers in the United States. 20

The immigrants usually preferred the part of the country
where the climatic conditions and the geographic environment
were not in extreme contrast with those to which they had
been accustomed at home. So two-thirds or more of the Ger-
mans who came to the United States in the nineteenth century
settled inland. The Germans spread through the Northern
States. They were especially numerous in New York, New Jersey,
Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin. Hewes'
diagram of 1903 showing the distribution of the foreign born

19 Hansen, op. cit., p. 19.
20 Jenks and Lauck, op. cit., p. 27.
living in the United States, revealed that the Germans were mainly in agricultural communities. While Self says: "The emigrants (from Germany) in 1821 were declared to be of the best agricultural and industrial classes, taking money with them." They, also, have many descendants in the South in Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, Louisiana and Texas.

The famine in Ireland started the Irish immigration. Most of them at home, men and women, were tillers of the soil, but in the United States, they much preferred the towns and cities, particularly those of the North Atlantic States, where they were not far from the ocean, as in Ireland. Dublin has not so many natives of the Emerald Isle within its limits as there are in Greater New York. Two-thirds of the Irish in this country live in New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Along our Pacific Coast the Swedes and Norwegians are most largely represented in Washington, whose general aspect and coast line deeply indented with fiords, so strongly resemble their own mountainous inland and rugged shores. A


24 Ibid., p. 552.
large number of the Scandinavians also settled in the Northwest where the climate was so like their own. As they were a most desirable class of people, pamphlets describing the beauty and richness of the vast wheat lands were scattered by thousands in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Immigration agents were sent to those countries to stimulate the boom, organize parties of homeseekers, and ship them through to the Northwest. They alone of all the foreigners who have come to us in great numbers, have inclined largely to rural life. It is due to them chiefly that three-fourths of all the people of Minnesota are of foreign birth or lineage and that four-fifths of North Dakotans are of foreign extraction. The Mormon immigration came largely from Sweden and Denmark. These immigrants who went to the land usually became owners and, therefore, producers. They added little to the labor supply but much to the development of the country.

The economic effect of immigration most discussed was that upon the labor market. It was alleged that immigration produced at certain periods an over-supply of labor, and caused a fall in the rate of wages and the standard of living of the working man. This was not the case when men were needed to clear the wilderness, till the soil, and fight the Indians, and when immigrants came of their own volition. The

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25 Ibid., p. 553.
26 Self, op. cit., p. 357.
majority of the immigrants up to about the middle of the nineteenth century came of their own volition. Religious and political persecution and economic crises in Europe were sufficient incentives to induce many immigrants to brave the hardships of ocean travel in order to reach the United States. The voyage was long. Sometimes the supply of food and water — all too frequently unfit for human consumption — was exhausted, leaving the immigrants for days on short rations or on no rations at all. These early voyages were without sanitation, privacy, or moral safeguards. Typhus, cholera, and smallpox scourged the passengers. The governor of New York in 1854 said that many of these ships brought over from Europe on each passage more than one thousand persons. 27

After the sailing vessels were replaced by the steamships the situation was changed somewhat. In 1889 Altgeld wrote in the Forum:

"... the American laborer does not suffer very much from competition with the immigrant who comes of his own volition. The latter coming here to improve his condition and that of his family soon joins his American brother, and asks wages which will enable him to do this. But the condition of the laborer has been made deplorable by the importation of shiploads of men under contract. These do not come with the motives or with the ambition of the class we have been considering; they have no thought of becoming citizens but are practically slaves. ... Steamship companies, to get their passage paid by American employers, bring them over by the thousands, so that many of the centers in

the East have been filled by them and the American laborer is being crowded out.²³

It was this vast amount of unskilled labor that came into the United States the latter part of the nineteenth century that lowered the wages and the standard of living of the laborers. However, Noble took the opposite viewpoint:

On the economic grounds the influence of the immigrant seems to be good... of these workers four-fifths are unskilled laborers. Thus of the two agents in production, capital and labor, the immigrant furnishes almost wholly labor; and of the two elements of labor, skill and muscle, he furnishes chiefly muscle.²⁴

While this muscle was in demand during the early development of the United States he adds:

Although the economical influence is good, yet what he contributes to the productive power of the community is something less urgently needed now than during our first century.²⁵

Noble, no doubt, had in mind the fact that most of our public land had been taken up; and that canal and railroad building had both passed their zenith in the first century of our growth.

By the close of the nineteenth century the United States was no longer an agricultural country but had become an industrial nation. What did the immigrant contribute to our


²⁵Ibid., p. 240.
industrial development? Parker gives the following facts:

In 1870 this element (the foreign born population) comprised 14.44 percent of all the people of this land. This 14.44 percent furnished 21.62 percent of the persons engaged in all occupations. In other words, one-seventh of the entire population did something more than one-fifth of all the work . . . . To show the dependence upon foreign-born workers, the proportions in fifty principal cities were as follows in 1880: the percentage of the foreign-born in all occupations was 40.07; in professional and personal services, 44.26; in trade and transportation, 34.35; in manufacturing, mechanical and mining industries, 41.38.31

These percentages show us conclusively that not all of the early immigrants were unskilled. In fact Hansen says:

Every literary traveler who has described a visit to the steerage has recorded his surprise at finding, "check by jowl with stolid'peasant," a clergyman, a physician, an artist or a classical scholar. When they were asked what turn of fate had sent them on so venturesome a journey, the usual response was: "For every position at home there are ten applicants. The churches are full, the schools are full, and the universities are overcrowded. Perhaps in the New World, where material needs have overshadowed the intellectual, I may find a place for my special talents." In this way academic overproduction abroad helped to stock America with ready made professional men.32

Hyde in his article "The Foreigner in American Civilization" describes the activities of the skilled laborer in these words:

32 Hansen, op. cit., p. 130.
The skilled craftsman upon his arrival found positions of responsibility awaiting him; the native inhabitants did not have any considerable knowledge of mechanical arts, and it therefore devolved upon the foreigner to take the position the American was incapable of filling. The school teachers were largely recruited from the ranks of the aliens; early in the century all the booksellers but two in Philadelphia were foreigners, and of the five newspapers in that city two were owned by Englishmen and two by Irishmen.33

Among these desirable immigrants was a great number of another class, poor and ignorant, having neither trade nor money; some became laborers but many finally became dependent on public charity.34 Of this type of immigrant Noble writes:

... He adds to the class in which disease, mortality, crime, pauperism and ignorance are most prevalent, and therefore, even if he were as civilized as the American in the same social position, his influence would nevertheless tend to lower the social average of the community. ... He competes from a lower plane of living. Employers will make the best bargain they can and the more civilized workingman is forced toward the lower standard. Here is the most serious aspect of immigration.35

Rabbi Solomon Schindler in his article on "Immigration" says that this undesirable class was not only burdensome but dangerous, and warned against them in these words:

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34 Ibid.
35 Noble, op. cit., p. 246.
People who are driven from their homes, either on account of overpopulation, famine, religious and social intolerance, bring neither talent, energy, nor will with them; they bring despair and discontent. Furthermore, they bring their old and feeble or children not yet able to work. Such immigration should be prevented if possible, or regulated if it cannot be prevented.\textsuperscript{36}

Hyde bears this point out:

We find by comparison a far greater proportion of the delinquent classes among the inhabitants of foreign-born than among those of native ancestry.\textsuperscript{37}

This same tendency to blame social ills upon the immigrant held even after he had become naturalized. This is refuted by Altgeld in his article of about 1890, "The Immigrant's Answer":

It has been charged against the naturalized citizen that he has, at different times, engaged in riots and disturbed social order; but in most of these cases it will be found that as many American-born as foreign-born have participated, the fact being that nationality has nothing to do with the matter, but that the disturbance grows out of industrial or political excitement.\textsuperscript{38}

While Self says:

Aside from certain unruly elements in a few cities, and the re-enforcement of the Mormons, little or no complaint can be justly made of the multitudes who came.

Immigrants constitute a much larger percentage of the population in the Northwest than in

\textsuperscript{36} Rabbi Solomon Schindler, "Immigration," \textit{Arama}, Vol. III (December, 1890), p. 419.

\textsuperscript{37} Hyde, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 395.

\textsuperscript{38} Altgeld, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 690.
the old States, yet public order and general integrity are no less assured there than on the Atlantic seaboard.39

The early immigrants, being somewhat similar in nationality, ideals, and habits to the native Americans, were fairly easily absorbed into the community. They became citizens. They entered, as we have seen, into the industrial and intellectual life of the community and contributed much to the transformation of the United States from a wilderness to a fairly settled country.

39Self, op. cit., p. 361.
CHAPTER II

THE NEW IMMIGRANT IN HIS RELATIONS TO
AMERICAN ECONOMIC LIFE

Difference Between the "Old" and "New"
Immigration

The change in the racial character of American immigra-
tion dates from the last decade of the nineteenth century.
Prior to that time it was preponderantly North European in
origin. In fact, 95 percent of the immigrants before 1890
had come from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Belgium,
France, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. Most
historians term this the "old" immigration.¹

With the decline in the proportion of immigration from
the above countries, a rapid increase in the arrivals from
Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Russia became noticeable.

McLaughlin says of this change:

"This marked change in the complexion of Im-
migration can be appreciated from the fact that
in 1875 we received 3,631 from Italy, 7,658 from
Austria-Hungary, and 8,931 from Russia, while in
1903 we received 230,622 from Italy, 205,001 from
Austria-Hungary, and 136,093 from Russia. In other
words, the immigration from these countries was
only 9 percent in 1875, while today (1904), it con-
stitutes about 67 percent of our total population."²

¹ George M. Stephenson, A History of American Immigration,
p. 10.

² Allan F. McLaughlin, "The Immigrant: Past and Present,"
Nor did Italy, Austria-Hungary and Russia furnish all the immigration from Southeastern Europe. There was a generous sprinkle from Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Poland, Rumania, Spain and Turkey, pushing the immigration from Southeastern Europe up to fully 81 percent by 1907. This immigration from Southeastern Europe is designated as the "new" immigration. There are three main reasons why this "new" immigration took the place of the "old" immigration. The first of these was the development of transportation; many direct steamship lines from the Mediterranean ports to the United States were opened up. Also there was internal transportation built into the remote districts of Europe. Second, the industrial development of Northern Europe, toward the turn of the century, caused the economic advantages of the United States to seem less attractive. Third, when the representatives of more backward countries with a lower standard of living came, immigrants from more advanced countries declined in numbers.  

The chief difference between the "old" and the "new" immigrant lies in the reason for his coming. The immigrant of those early days was not so much allured by the promise of

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3Stephenson, op. cit., p. 10.


5Henry Pratt Fairchild, Immigration, pp. 131-33.
high wages nor by the desire to better his financial condition as he was actuated by the desire to create a home, and to free himself from the restraint and persecutions of the old world. He was at once a pioneer, a woodsman, and a farmer. Still later, he was an adventurer in industrial development. He left behind him many evils -- compulsory military service, religious or racial persecution, grinding taxation, wars in which he had no interests, and prohibitive systems of land tenure. He found in this country land for all, freedom from racial or religious persecution, and respect for the rights of the individual, regardless of social position. Since he had a similar background, aspirations, and in many instances a similar language to the Americans, and since his energy and ability were needed to develop this new land of the United States, the early immigrant was considered not so much as a competitor but more of an asset.

Such was not the case with the immigrant from 1890 to 1917. He was quite different in race, culture, and religion, as is vividly portrayed by Hartmann:

The "new" immigrant came from those regions of Europe . . . which were comparatively backward from a political, social, and economic point of view when compared with the regions of Europe which had sent America its earlier types of

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7 See Chapter I of this thesis.
immigrants. The standard of living among these people was decidedly lower, illiteracy rates ran high, experience with self-government was practically nil, and a subject or race status seemed to be the general rule. Very few had the common background of Protestant Christianity, which had distinguished the great majority of their predecessors and which was so characteristic of the majority of native Americans at that time. On the contrary, most of the new-comers were either members of the Roman Catholic communion or Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

Such were the inherent and cultural differences in the immigrants themselves which affected their economic adjustment. However, these differences in the immigrants were not so marked as were the differences in the economic conditions into which immigrants came before the third quarter of the last century and those into which they came in the first quarter of this century. Then they could have a farm for the asking; after 1890 there was no more free land, nor was there so much construction work upon railroads, canals, and highways to the frontiers. These later immigrants, therefore, went into the foundries, factories, sweatshops, and mines, with the result that there was competition between aliens and native workingmen. The United States had changed from a purely agricultural country to one equally industrial.

This change in the economic condition of the country led to a change in the distribution of the immigrants. They

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8 Edward George Hartmann, The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant, p. 15.

9 Lawrence Guy Brown, Immigration, p. 135.
concentrated in the urban districts in so-called "foreign colonies," where it was harder for them to make a proper adjustment. The tragic results of this concentration, both to the immigrant and to the United States, will be discussed in a later chapter.

Needless to say, this concentration of the new immigrants in industrial and mining towns in order to labor in factories, foundries, and mines threw them more directly into economic competition with the native whites. The old immigrant on the farm was not viewed as directly competing with his American neighbor. This is an important point. Economic competition always tends to increase the feeling of nationalistic prejudice. Periods of crises have the same results. World War I revealed the fact that most immigrants had not been assimilated; they had not even had an opportunity to do so, so complex had become our social life in the urban environment. The new immigrants from Europe with a peasant culture and a rural background had to settle here in a strange, complex urban environment. So our immigration problem after 1882 was what it was not alone because southern and eastern Europeans migrated to America, but also because of the changed situation in which they had to live.

Some Economic Effects of the New Immigration

Ibid., p. 136.
Since the new immigrants went into competition with American labor, it is necessary to look into the changed economic status of the immigrants. On the whole, the new immigrant's chief motive for coming to the United States was economic, for he came, as we have seen, from the more backward countries of southeastern Europe. He was of the peasant type, unskilled and often illiterate. He had little money; therefore, on his arrival he made his way to the alien settlement in the slums of the mining and industrial communities where there was a demand for his services. All other residential communities resisted the coming of the new group that had an inferior status to their own. There the immigrant had to remain until he was able to improve his economic status. The slums and the conditions he found there will be described in detail in a later chapter. While the great number of immigrants aggravated the conditions in the slums the majority of the immigrants did not like the slums. Marius Eli Ravage has given us a typical description of how immigrants felt toward the slums:

That walk from Couza's residence, with my bundles, to Rivington Street was a nightmare. I know that the idea prevalent among Americans is that the alien imports his slums with him to the detriment of his adopted country, that the squalor and the misery and the filth of the foreign quarters in the large cities of the United States are characteristic of the native

Ibid.
life of the peoples who live in those quarters. But that is an error and a slander; the slums are emphatically not of our making. So far is the immigrant from being accustomed to such living conditions that the first thing that repels him on his arrival in New York is the realization of the dreadful level of life to which his fellows have been sunk. And when by sheer use he comes to accept these conditions himself, it is with something of a fatalistic resignation to the idea that such is America.\textsuperscript{12}

The effect of immigration on the labor market was especially marked.

As shown by the report of the Ford investigation of 1888, the pauper and the lower classes of European have crowded into the American factories to such an extent in many of the large industries -- notably the cigar-trade, the tailoring trade, and the shirt manufacturing trade -- that was fifteen years ago 90 percent American and 10 percent foreign, is now 90 percent foreign and 10 percent American.

... Fifteen years ago the cigar-makers in New York were earning $18 per week ... foreigners were imported ... and the wages were reduced ... to an average of $8. per week.\textsuperscript{13}

In mining regions also the new immigrant replaced the old. Originally most of the workers were British, Irish and German. By 1920, in the lower grades of work, they were largely "Slav," and the former miners either occupied higher grades of work or had been crowded out entirely and gone elsewhere.\textsuperscript{14} The standard of living of these mine laborers was

\textsuperscript{12} Marius Eli Ravage, \textit{An American in the Making}, p. 66.

\textsuperscript{13} W. H. Wilkins, "Immigration in the United States," \textit{Nineteenth Century}, Vol. XXX (October, 1891), pp. 588-89.

\textsuperscript{14} Prescott F. Hall, \textit{Immigration}, p. 127.
very different from that of the American, whom they replaced at eighty or ninety cents a day. While the Americans sent their children to school, supported churches, lived in decent houses and wore presentable clothes, the new immigrant was content to swarm in shanties like hogs, to contract scurvy by a steady diet of the cheapest salt pork, and to take no sanitary precaution against diseases.\textsuperscript{15}

Ostrolenk took the opposite viewpoint. He said that the immigrants came here to improve their economic status, and although they were exploited for a short period, the immigrants were among the most loyal supporters of all movements to improve labor conditions. In fact, it was a common charge, at one time, that labor movements in the industrial centers were largely foreign made.\textsuperscript{16}

Hindus voices this same opinion:

\begin{quote}
American life . . . . has stocked his mind with a fund of new ideas that drive him into new modes of behavior. That is why he is in revolt against the world he formerly accepted. That world, with its long hours of labor . . . . with its individual bargaining, with its rigid discipline, its demand on worker's docility, represses him now as it never did formerly. He now joins the union and goes out on strike readily enough, and stays out until he exhausts himself in the effort to bring the employer to terms. There is not a more determined, a more stubborn strikem in
\end{quote}


American industry than is the new immigrant. Witness the labor conflicts in the steel, textile, packing, clothing, and mining industries. One need be no prophet to foretell that the time is not far distant when all of these industries will be solidly unionized. That is the direction in which the immigrant worker is traveling or rather in which American life is pushing him.17

Only a casual look at American industry today will prove how correct Hindus' prophecy was. The reasons why the immigrant was slow to join the unions were three. The first is to be found in the immigrant's previous experiences. For, unless he came from certain parts of Hungary or Finland, the peasant brought with him no knowledge of socialism or radicalism, or even of trade unionism. In the old home he may have heard of socialism and revolution, but he had associated these words with movements opposed to landlords, monarchs, or foreign invaders, not with schemes or theories of social and economic change. He had had no revolutionary experiences, no radical traditions, and no acquaintance with labor organizations. Trade-union terms were quite unknown to him.18

The second reason is to be found in the trade union. No one will deny that the immigrants have been a major factor in the labor problems of our country, especially in the cities, where they had congregated in such large numbers.

The availability of a comparatively large supply of southern

18 Ibid., p. 847.
and eastern European immigrants had assisted in the expansion of industries, the completion of construction projects, and the development of our mines and lumber industries. On the other hand, there was little doubt that these immigrants had seriously retarded the advance of wages in those industries where they could be used to advantage. A specific example was found in the case of the section hands on the railroad, where wages varied little during a period of fifteen years.19

This entrance of large numbers of the new immigrants into the operating forces of the mines and manufacturing establishments of the cities had the effect of weakening the labor organizations of the original employees, and in some instances caused their entire demoralization and disruption. Thus the need and difficulty of organization were greatly increased. The traditional attitude of the unions toward immigration was one of opposition. Restrictive measures, in particular the contract labor law, met with their approval and support.20 However, immigrants were later drawn into the unions, as we find in an article by Starr in 1943:

Undoubtedly the labor unions will justifiably oppose the introduction of cheap and unorganized labor into the United States in the future as they have done in the past . . . .

The unions in the United States protested rightly in the early days against the abuses which arose when the industrial lords of the


20 Ibid., p. 310.
United States joined hands with the shipping companies in order to secure a supply of cheap labor from Europe to destroy trade union attempts to lift the American standard of living. Too often the individual worker brought into this country was mercilessly exploited because he neither knew his rights nor was organized to get them when he knew.21

Therefore, when the immigrants were once admitted to the country, the unions were under the necessity of either receiving them or of suffering from their competition. A large body of unskilled laborers, with low standards, unaffiliated with the unions was most prejudicial to the success of unionism.22 Because of this foreign competition many successful unions were led to admit, assist, and seek the assimilation of the newcomers within their organizations. Several different methods were used to accomplish this end. Employers centralized the employing function in the hands of employment managers to prevent some foremen from exploiting immigrant labor. They often hired foreign-language speaking representatives to aid new immigrant employees in their adjustment. The safety-first movement in industry indirectly stimulated Americanization work, for it was found that the foreign-born were especially liable to accidents. Other activities engaged in by the unions were such as providing lunchrooms where the different nationalities could eat together;

22 Jenks and Lauck, op. cit., p. 310.
furnishing medical aid with home visitation, and developing recreational activities. 23

However, alien people differed as to their adaptability to union control. Some of the people of southeastern Europe were looked upon as natural strike-breakers. Italians were introduced as strike-breakers in the coal mines of Colorado, New Mexico, and Washington. In this way the immigrants discouraged the efforts of the trade unions. 24 The Irish, on the other hand, were natural organizers, and tended to monopolize the direction of the unions. 25 Also, thousands of Italians joined the building unions and became officials in labor unions. Luigi Antonini was head of the American Labor Party of New York. 26 The thrift and industry of the new immigrants made them unwilling to enter into labor disputes involving the loss of time or to pay regular dues. If they were compelled to affiliate with a labor union as a preliminary step toward acquiring work, they manifested little interest in its tenets or policies of organization. Furthermore, the fact that the new immigrants were usually of non-English-speaking nationals and of a high degree of illiteracy, made their absorption by the labor organizations very slow and expensive.

24 Kinks and Leuck, op. cit., p. 222.
26 Carl Wittke, We Who Built America, p. 439.
The third reason for immigrants not joining the union was the desire on the part of earlier arrivals to exploit the new immigrant of the same nationality. This exploitation resulted in a group of peculiar economic institutions which were developed by the immigrants. Such institutions included the padrone system, the contract labor system, the immigrant bank, immigrant aid societies, and the sweating system.⁷⁷ These institutions did much toward keeping the wages, and in turn the standard of living, low among the immigrants. Following is a brief summary of these institutions:

The word "padrone" is the Italian expression for master or boss, which in America refers to the person who makes contacts with American life for recent arrivals from his own country. Such a person is able, because of the ignorance of his victims, to hold them in bondage by planning their activities day by day, dictating where they live, where they shall work, and seeing that they have little chance to learn English. Board, lodging, and a small salary are provided by the boss.

Through the contract system the American employer is able to reach the foreign worker. Between the capitalist and the alien laborer, the immigrant who has already accommodated himself to American life plays a leading role. At one time these agents went abroad to secure workers, but more recently the method of securing aliens is through a representative in Europe. The importer often advances the passage money and secures men who are willing to work a year for a few hundred dollars.

The Immigration Banks were not banks, but immigrants who had been in America sometime. Since the immigrant has come to the United States chiefly for economic reasons he is greatly interested in saving money . . . . Ignorance of American ways have led to doubt concerning the reliability of

⁷⁷Fairchild, op. cit., p. 274.
American Banks. Consequently, he trusts someone from his own country, a saloon keeper, merchant, steamship agent, real estate agent, his landlord, or his boss. "Poor" bookkeeping and dishonesty result in a great deal of loss for many of the laborers...

The sweatshop system provides work in the home, largely in the clothing industry, for women and children as well as men, who work for long hours at a low wage, under the unhygienic conditions of a slum tenement. Ignorance of American ways makes this type of occupation possible with those who cannot communicate enough with others to make a better occupational adjustment.

Immigrant or home aid societies exists as benevolent organizations to make the adjustment of immigrants easier. (However) some of these homes were operated for private gain and were unhygienic.

Although most of this exploitation was the work of earlier immigrants upon newcomers, it tended to create, in the mind of the immigrant, a dislike and distrust of America and American ways. He somehow blamed the United States, as he thought these things could not have happened in the old country. This slowed up the economic adjustment of the immigrant. The conditions under which the immigrant labored in most of these systems were unhygienic and tended to impair the health of the immigrant.

The great number of immigrants in the laboring class of the United States led many to believe that immigration added to unemployment. We have seen how the low wages accepted by the new immigrants pushed the old immigrants and the native workers out of the cigar-making factories and the Pennsylvania

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mines. However, Ostrolenk took the view that immigration rather tended to increase employment. He stated that in the twenty year period of greatest immigration from 1890 to 1910 the country admitted 12,500,000 immigrants. But instead of being a period of unemployment there was an increase in the number of gainfully employed by 15,000,000. During this period, the production of coal more than trebled, steel increased seven-fold, and American railroad tonnage nearly trebled. This shows that this period of greatest immigration sharply stimulated industry.29

However, this increase in employment might not be accounted for entirely by the increase in immigration. During this period there was an increase in population from 63,000,000 in 1890 to 93,000,000 in 1910. This was a gain of 30,000,000 persons, many of whom reached the age of gainful employment. Also, there was a gain in the number of women gainfully employed from 4,000,000 in 1890 to 8,750,000 in 1910, a gain of over 4,000,000. In 1890, 49.2 percent of our population was gainfully employed, but by 1910 the percentage had risen to 53.5 percent.

Nevertheless, there were lulls in business activities due to the fact that the masses of the working class could not buy and consume the products of their labor, because they have always been and still are underpaid. With immigration

29 Ostrolenk, op. cit., p. 211.
continuing to some, native workmen could not compel their
employers to pay them higher wages. When depression with
its curtailment of production or improved industrial methods
forced men out of work, it was the immigrant who was first
to lose his job.

Some of the people who deplored the concentration of
so many unemployed immigrants in the cities suggested that
they be sent to the farm. Young showed how impossible this
solution was:

With the present speculative prices of land
in our best agricultural areas, and the deflated
prices of farm products, the purchase of a farm
solely through its (the immigrant's) earning is
almost impossible. To send immigrants to our
rural districts means to build a class of farm laborers with precarious subsistence.
Farm equipment is too expensive. Its improved
efficiency is pushing natives into industry.

However, all the immigrants of the period of new immi-
gration did not wait for American enterprise to give them
employment, but some developed industries of their own.

In spite of trade depression, labor uprisings
and scarcity of raw materials, two conspicuous
industries new to America are flourishing among
the more than 50,000 Italian-born who make Chicago
their home. The first, which is an inevitable
result of the Eighteenth Amendment is that

31 Ibid., p. 623.
32 Donald Young, "Public Land and Immigration," American
Academy of Political and Social Science Annals, Vol. CXLII
(March, 1929), pp. 156-57.
of making wine in the home. . . . The second infant industry is the making of Italian cheese and macaroni. The United States is already exporting spaghetti to Naples. . . . Since the war, the Italian government has forbidden export of cheese, and the Italian . . . with true American initiative began to make it themselves. Now they have made provolone, mozzarella, and ricotta which rival those choice products of the Sorrentine peninsula.\textsuperscript{33}

Not all the labor markets were flooded during this period, for shortly after World War I the demand for domestic servants was reported greater than the acceptable supply in cities of our Northeastern States and in some parts of the West, while in the Middle West and South there appeared no such shortage.\textsuperscript{34} Household servants are chiefly women and the immigrants, like the American women, preferred the factory.

The reduction of the number of immigrants was suggested by some as a method of relieving the ills of our laboring classes. These two effects seem to have resulted from the two percent quota law of 1924:

\begin{quote}
The American Engineering Council estimated a reduction of 300,000 workers a year as compared with years before the war. The Industrial Conference Board concludes that the scaling down of immigration to about a fifth of what it was before the war has the immediate effect of stabilizing the growth of our population, with the attending results of a sustaining wage level.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}


Although wages were low, most immigrants managed to save money. Thrift among the immigrants exhibited itself in two ways: in the accumulation of bank accounts, and in the purchase of homes and business property. The first was usually remitted to the old country to bring the rest of the family across. Then as soon as the family was settled, their savings were invested in property.

It takes an immigrant who has been in this country only a few weeks really to appreciate the advantages of real-estate investment, it seems. Foreign-born pushcart vendors, laborers, factory hands, and domestics, Italians, Germans, Swedes, as the case may be, "listen with wide-eyed amazement to the stories they hear of rising realty values," and hasten to place their first surplus funds in the land of their adoption. Mr. George F. Nixon, head of a Chicago real-estate firm, has records of thousands of sales to foreign-born wage-earners; homes, commercial buildings, income property, and vacant lots have been bought by janitors, waiters, and bootblacks. 36

The article above continues to say that these immigrants sell small pieces of property and invest in larger ones. The Greeks are inclined to buy business property before homes; 37 while the disposition to acquire homes is most noticeable among the North Italian, Slovaks, Scotch, and Magyars. 38

What then is the economic value of our immigration? The American Jewish Committee gives us the following values in dollars and cents:

In 1909 the Census Bureau, in its work, "A Century of Population Growth," concluded that during the 19th century, Immigration contributed thirty million souls to our population and forty billion dollars to our wealth.

The ten states with the highest percentage of foreign-born had a per capita income almost twice as high as that of the ten states with the lowest percentage of foreign-born. The per capita income in 1946 of the ten states of highest immigration was $1,344 per annum. In the ten states of the lowest immigration the per capita income for the same year was only $759 per annum.39

It has been very difficult to determine just to what extent the immigrant has helped to shape the economic life of the United States, or whether his influence has been good or bad. However, no one will deny that the influence of the immigrant has been felt in every phase of our economic life.

CHAPTER III
THE NEW IMMIGRANT AS AN ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL FACTOR IN URBANIZATION

The Immigrant's Place in Our Changing Population

In the course of a century and a half the United States has developed from a small primarily agricultural nation, relatively isolated from the affairs of the rest of the world, to a large primarily urban, industrialized world power. The population changes which have occurred during the course of this development necessarily have been closely associated with the economic and social history of the country.

In this shifting scene, the immigrant has at times been in the limelight and at times he has been in the background. From almost the very beginning of the United States the immigrant has played his part in the growth of America, but nowhere has his influence been so marked as in the growth of the cities.

The tendency to go to the cities was one the immigrant shared with the native. The general movement of the rural population to the city began about the latter part of the nineteenth century. The "old" immigrant went to the country largely because at the time they came in large numbers there
was an abundance of free land. In other words, the United States after 1892 was a settled land, and immigration had to be adjusted to a partly industrial country.\(^1\) Therefore, we found the "new" immigrants tending to congregate in the largest cities, and in the most congested sections of those cities.

In 1890, 51.4 percent of the foreign-born population of the United States were living in cities of at least 2,500 population. In 1900 the percentage had increased to 66.3, while 58.3 percent of the entire foreign-born population were huddled into the few great cities having a population of over 100,000. In the same year only 36.1 percent of the native-born population were living in cities over 2,500. This tendency appears to be increasing in strength, and is more marked among the members of the new immigration than among the older immigrants. Thus in 1910 the percentage of foreign-born living in cities of the specified size had risen to 72.2.\(^2\)

In the modern period, according to Wittke, the horde of immigrants arriving in New York in one single year was greater than the whole barbarian invasion that conquered Rome. Our large cities became a Babel of tongues. Steamship companies wanted profits; industries wanted cheap labor; and the immigrant wanted a chance to rise from his low status in life to the American middle class. So irresistible were these forces, that by 1930 the number of residents of the United States

\(^1\)Donald R. Taft, *Human Relations*, p. 78.

States born abroad or with one or both parents foreign-born was approaching forty millions. Three and a half millions of these had come from Poland, four and a half from Italy, and two and three-quarters from old Russia.\(^3\)

The majority of the Poles were city dwellers, common laborers in factories, mines, and streets. In the Pennsylvania anthracite fields and mill towns, employers used agents to recruit Poles and Slovaks to replace Irish pick and shovel workers. Poles were employed in great numbers in textile mills, stockyards, packing houses, and sugar refineries. Nearly one half of the Poles in the United States were found in the industrial states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Their largest settlement, however, was in Chicago, where the total Polish stock exceeded 500,000.\(^4\)

The Italian immigrant to the cities became a common laborer, employed on construction gangs. In New York, he crowded out the Irish and Poles in building of subways and streets. In Philadelphia, he joined the street-cleaning force.

Over one half of Russians found jobs in New York and Pennsylvania, where they usually had the lowest, most unskilled kind of labor in mills and mines. Other nationalities came in varying numbers. Large American cities -- such as

\(^3\)Carl Wittke, We Who Built America, p. 407.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 422.
New York, Cleveland, Detroit, and Milwaukee -- had sizeable colonies of Jugoslavs. In the Chicago area, there were some 50,000 Slovenes, and Cleveland had about the same number. Many were employed in the garment trades and textile districts of the East. Others settled in the anthracite regions in Pennsylvania and in New York, or the steel and coal areas around Pittsburgh, Wheeling, and Youngstown. Fully three-fourths of the total number of the Jugoslavs depended on coal and metal industries for a livelihood.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 425-27.}

The greatest number of Bohemians or Czechs came after 1870, primarily for economic reasons. A large percentage of the Bohemians were artisans. Soon the Bohemian Colonies of Chicago, New York, St. Louis, and Cleveland grew steadily in importance. By 1920, Chicago had a Czech colony of nearly 100,000 and Cleveland one of nearly 50,000. By 1930, the total Czechoslovak stock in the United States was nearly 1,400,000.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 410-11.}

Jenks and Lauck say:

The wide-spread existence of immigrant communities or colonies in the United States may be realized, when it is stated that in the territory east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio and Potomac Rivers there is no town or city of industrial importance which does not have its immigrant colony or section composed of Slavs, Magyars, North and South Italian, or members of other races from southern or eastern Europe. In the bituminous coal mining territories of West Virginia, Alabama,
Arkansas and Oklahoma, immigrant colonies in large numbers have been developed in the same way as those in the coal mining regions of Pennsylvania. Eastern Europeans have also attached themselves to the iron and steel producing communities of the Birmingham District in Alabama, and a large Italian colony, as is well known, exists in New Orleans, a considerable number of whose members are employed in the cotton mills of the city and in the manufacture of cigars and cigarettes.

South Italians, Cubans, and Spaniards have entered the manufacturing establishments of Tampa and Key West, Florida, and have built up colonies in these cities.7

However, according to Jenks and Lauck, cotton mill owners outside of New Orleans had little success in introducing immigrant labor in their operating forces because of the refusal of the cotton-mill workers, recruited from isolated farm and mountain sections of the southern states, to work alongside recent immigrants.8

Since the beginning of the "new" immigration period, the majority of the immigrants came for economic reasons. Good times in the United States were soon known in Europe through the work of the steamship companies, the contract boss, and letters from relatives in the United States. Therefore, since economic prosperity in the United States has in late years been industrial, the cities received a great increase in immigration during prosperous years.

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8 Ibid.
On the other hand, Europeans learned of depression in the United States, and a consequent drop in the number of immigrants occurred. Both restrictions on immigration and depression tended to cause immigration to drop to nothing for a while. Such small increase from 1933 to 1944 was due to the entrance of refugees from war-torn countries of Europe, and these did not go to any appreciable extent to the cities.

The "New" Immigrant as a Source of Cheap Labor

The new immigrant, although chiefly of peasant stock, bred to the land, had found that the demand for their services came from industrial and construction projects, and from mining communities, which needed a supply of cheap labor. Population follows the opportunities for employment, and the cities had offered more attractive labor opportunities than the rural districts.9 With frontier settlement no longer possible the majority had settled of necessity in the slum areas of the large cities where "Little Italys" or "Little Polands" arose with their problems of Americanization. In fact, long before the twentieth century, urban orators had begun to emphasize the undesirable effect of the immigrant labor in depressing wages and lowering the standard of living for the native worker. Therefore, the immigrant became closely

associated with the laboring class and inherited its psychology and status in an industrial economy.10

The new immigration was composed chiefly of men. A large proportion were merely "birds of passage," for they came not to acquire citizenship, but to save enough money to return as quickly as possible to their fatherland. As a result, they were less concerned with the American standard of living than earlier immigrants who looked upon the United States as their permanent home; they would accept lower wages; they were slower to join labor movements; they were content for the time being to live in the worst quarters of industrial towns; and they took little interest at the outset in social and economic questions which exercised their fellow workmen who had a more permanent stake in American society. This large group of homeless men created some of the major problems of the immigrant colonies in the city.

The alarming fecundity of the newer immigrants quickly over-populated the foreign quarters that sprung into existence in many American industrial urban centers.

Immigrants in the Slums

Why did the immigrant tend to congregate in these alien quarters? Fairchild has summarized this tendency of the foreign-born as follows:

10 David Frederick Bowers, Foreign Influence on American Life, p. 50.
(1) They land, almost without exception, in cities, and it is often the easier thing for them to stay there. It takes some capital, knowledge, and enterprise to carry the immigrant any distance unless he has definite connection in some other place; (2) economic opportunities are much more abundant and varied than in the country; (3) such occupations as are available in the city require much less capital than the characteristic country occupation; (4) In the city the newly arrived immigrant can keep in touch with others of his own race and tongue. In the compact colony of his fellow countrymen, he may be sure of companionship, encouragement, and assistance when needed; (5) Knowledge of English is much less essential in the city than in the country. The presence of others who can speak the same language makes it possible for an immigrant to make a living without knowing a word of the language of his adopted country; (6) not only is there more chance of friendly relief from fellow-countrymen, in case of necessity, in the cities, but public relief agencies and private benevolences are much more available; (7) The excitement and novelty of American City life is very attractive to many immigrants.

Another important reason was that the slums were the only sections of the city where there was little or no effort made to keep the immigrants out. Outside the slums the new arrival did not find a welcome. His coming was resisted by all other residential communities who felt that the immigrant's status was inferior. Consequently, the immigrant of the first generation had to live in the slums. Just outside the business districts where the central business section would naturally later expand. As the central business district

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11 Fairchild, op. cit., p. 231.

invaded the surrounding area, it created nearby residential sections into slums. Such sections had once contained the best homes and the largest churches of the city, but property owners refused to make repairs on the dwellings in the areas, since they would soon be sold for some commercial enterprise. Deterioration was the result. Drab tenement buildings and cheap boarding houses formed the main architectural pattern of the region. Community pride was gone and social disintegration was produced.13

Ernst in his description of "Tenement Life" showed how the arrival of large numbers of immigrants helped in the development of the modern New York slums:

Housing facilities could not keep pace with the incoming tide of foreign workingmen and their families, and the insistent demand for shelter at low rentals resulted in the development of a second type of tenement. When owners discovered that converted dwellings yielded substantial profits in rents, they constructed new buildings designed especially as tenement houses. Usually such a building contained a narrow hall opening from a street or court; on each floor, including the cellar, two suites of rooms opened into the hall. Front and rear rooms of the building contained windows, but the bedrooms and closets in the middle were dark . . . . As immigration intensified the housing shortage, the insistent demand for rooms and apartments induced owners to rent basements, attics, and even lofts and stables to eager but poor homeseekers.14

13Ibid., p. 204.
14Robert Ernst, Immigrant Life in New York City, pp. 48-49.
Therefore we found Little Poland, Little Italy, the Jewish Ghetto, and Chinatown in the slums. Along with the foreign colonies were the underworld regions, boarding-house districts, and the brightlight district. In the underworld there was a concentration of vice, crime, and drug addiction. The boarding-house sheltered the mobile population, the hobo, the criminal, the childless family and the misfit of all types.¹⁵

The boarding-house is a place of anonymous relationship. One knows no one, and is known by no one. One comes and goes as one wishes, does very much as one pleases, and as long as one disturbs no one else, no questions are asked.¹⁶

The brightlight areas harbored amusement centers, cabarets, night clubs, and restaurants with "atmosphere." They were places where conventional individuals were thrilled by an evening in the unconventional life of the city. In the slums there was neither community traditions nor public opinion.

The life of the slum is lived almost entirely without the conventional world. Practically its only contacts with the conventional world are through the social agency and the law.¹⁷

The first generation immigrants created their own little society within their own national group and held to their old

¹⁵Brown, op. cit., p. 205.
¹⁶Harvey Warren Zorbaugh, The Gold Coast and the Slum, p. 92.
¹⁷Ibid., p. 152.
customs and ideals. Every aspect of their lives was more or less controlled by this closed community except their economic and political contacts with the outside world. They were, therefore, protected some from their poor surroundings. This was not true of the second generation immigrants, who were torn between the old and the new. The second generation felt the full force of the slums. Fairchild summed up this influence thus:

"The influence of the slum must of necessity be hampering and degrading to its denizens. No poorer training school for American citizens could be devised. Not only is life prejudicial to health and morals, and destructive to ambition, but it precludes practically all incidental or unconscious contact with the uplifting influences of American life. Almost the only actively assimilating agency with which the slum dweller comes into immediate relationship is the public school, and this lacks much of its value as an assimilating force in districts which are so largely foreign that the pupils meet few, if any, children of native-born parents." 18

The Immigrants and Crime

Many persons in the United States were of the opinion that the immigrant, especially in the city, had added greatly to our criminal class. However, there was little statistical data to prove this. Peters cited the following statistics to prove the contrary:

Statistics cited by Professor Edwin Hardin Sutherland, head of the department of sociology at the University of Indiana and author of a

18 Fairchild, op. cit., p. 252.
number of books on criminology, show that the immigrants in general contribute less than their quota to the criminal population of the United States. The arrest rate per 100,000 adult population in 1937 was 514.2 for the native whites and 212.1 for foreign whites. Statistics available for 1935 give the figure for prison commitment per 100,000 adult population as 556.5 for native whites and 402.4 for foreign whites. 19

To the question "Are Our Criminals Foreign?" Frederick M. Thrasher said:

The unqualified and emphatic reply must be "No!" In proportion to their numbers in the general population, the foreign-born contribute less to crime in this country at the present time than do native-born Americans. "All scientific studies agree on this point." It is true that foreign-born persons migrating to this country show a higher criminal rate than their compatriots at home who do not experience the disturbing effects of being transplanted to a strange land. In American-born children of foreign-born parents, however, the situation is reversed. American-born children of foreigners are much more likely to commit crimes than native-born persons of native parentage. And the reason for this, strange as it may sound to the 100 percent American, is not because they are children of immigrants, but because they are Americans and are no longer controlled by the conditions and customs which keep their parents in the paths of rectitude. In one important sense it may be said that Americanization is the chief cause of crime in the United States. 20

Despite the opinion of the above apologists for the immigrant, the foreign-born often added to our crimes. For unfamiliarity with the language, laws, customs, and

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institutions often involved them, many times unaware, in conflict with our laws and municipal regulations and made them technically criminals, though they were not actually so. Thus handicapped and unable to enter into our ways of thinking and into sympathy with our customs and manners, they also lost sympathetic contact with their children, upon whom the national assimilative forces acted with much greater force and rapidity.\textsuperscript{21}

It is not strange, therefore, that juvenile delinquency prevailed in a larger degree among this element of our population than among any other element. It was among our second generation immigrants that boys' gangs were most prevalent. The boys' gangs were just an adjustment that resulted from the failure of the family and community to meet the boys' problems. This failure was especially characteristic of the foreign family and community, which economic necessity has segregated in the slums. Hence it was the slum, particularly the foreign slum, that was gangland. For gangland was but the results of the boys' creation of a social world in which he could live and find satisfaction for his wishes.\textsuperscript{22} Besides creating juvenile delinquency and training criminals, the gang acted always as a source of disorder in the community. It was a problem for the school, for the park, for the playground, and for the settlement worker.

\textsuperscript{21}John Griffin Thompson, \textit{Urbanization}, p. 498.

\textsuperscript{22}Zorbaugh, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 155.
The Immigrant and the Cultural Life of the City

As has been mentioned, the school was about the only cultural force of American life with which the immigrant came in contact. Even there the cities throughout the United States had done little to aid the immigrant in adjusting to his new environment. For the most part our educational advancement and reconstruction in our school system had proceeded without much reference to the particular problems growing out of the needs of children of immigrants with totally different cultural background from American children.

Little need be said of the relationship of the school to the local life of Near North Side; (Chicago) there is none. The schools, centrally directed and standardized, are interested in turning out "Americans" at so many per year, not in making adaptations to the problems of Little Sicily, a gang world, or a life in furnished rooms.\(^23\)

This aptly described the average American school with its set standards. Brown and Roucek, using the city of Bridgeport in 1925 as an example, showed the percent of foreign children in schools of many of our cities and the tragic results:

\[\ldots\] taking the city as a whole, in the typical classroom of forty children, twenty-six had both parents of foreign birth; four had one parent foreign-born, and ten had both parents American-born. This situation displays the fact that seventy-five percent of the children of Bridgeport

\(^23\) Zorbaugh, op. cit., p. 187.
in this year had distinctly foreign background, with cultural background different from that of the American child. . . . In eleven schools more children come from homes where no English is spoken than from homes in which English is spoken by the family.

This foreign language and background which was not taken account of in a curriculum adjusted to the needs of the children resulted in tragic situation. American children familiar from birth with fundamental concepts, attitudes, and points of view are pitted against children completely unfamiliar with these concepts, with the results that the percentage of failure among the immigrant is inordinately high. The seriousness of this condition is that failure and feelings of inferiority are characteristic of the immigrant children.24

Then there was an attempt to put schools in foreign communities. This did away, somewhat, with this feeling of inferiority, but it had the disadvantage of not bringing the foreign child into contact with the American child and American ways. The immigrant child, therefore, lost much that he might have gained through this contact. However, many foreign children, especially those of the Catholic faith, never entered the public schools. Each nationality established its own parochial school which preserved the language and culture of the old country rather than that of America.

McLaughlin hit a brighter note in regard to the immigrant's education. He said that most of our foreigners were going to the states that had the best school systems and are thus better fitted to reduce the illiteracy of the foreign-born:

The fact that illiteracy in New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Massachusetts has decreased in spite of the thousands of aliens received every year, speaks well not only for the public school systems of these states, but also for the adaptability of the immigrant and his desire for education.  

He continued:

One often hears the query, "What is the effect of a mass of illiterate foreigners upon society?" There is little effect. The illiterate foreigners in our large cities are ostracized socially, as strictly as the Negro in the South.

While the majority of the immigrants was nominally Christian, there was nevertheless a sufficient demand for religious guidance to constitute a tremendous foreign missionary problem within our own land. Many of the religious denominations saw the need and put missionaries on Ellis Island. Nevertheless, the majority of American churches paid little attention to the religious and moral needs of the foreign population and the opportunity for service which it offered. This service would have been of benefit to the immigrants themselves and to their adopted country. This neglect on the part of the churches was attributed to ignorance of actual conditions, to fastidiousness, or to race prejudice, if not actual indifference. However, a large percentage of our foreign population brought its religion with it. This

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26 Ibid.
was noted by the vast increase in the number of denominations
and sects organized in this country which followed the im-
migration of the nineteenth century, 27 and the beginning of
the twentieth century.

As was mentioned in Chapter II, the immigrants in the
city came into many contacts with America and American life
through the activities of the labor unions which helped them
to make a better economic adjustment.

This wave of new immigration not only affected the econ-
omy of the city, but it had changed the physiognomical char-
acteristics of the city as well. On the streets of our
larger cities the "lightish hair, and wide-apart eyes of
Celtic blue" of the Nordic type had given way to

. . . . intent black eyes, set close together
above the escarpment of a large, more trenchant
nose; more definiteness above the eyebrows . . . .
there you have the newer New York face; what we
shall probably . . . be calling the urban
American face. 28

So the United States had to adjust to this newer type
of immigration. Since immigration affected the health, the
standard of living, the language, the customs, the education,
the religious practice, the industrial methods and the labor
condition, the progress of a city depended upon her policies
toward the immigrants within her gates.

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(April, 1913), p. 526.
CHAPTER IV
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS OF
THE NEW IMMIGRANT

The influence which immigration had upon the social and cultural life in the United States was no less a problem than that of its influence on the economic life of the United States. Many of our immigrants had not expected to stay in the United States permanently. The new immigrants came to the United States purely for economic reasons and just as soon as they should have saved enough money to make a satisfactory economic adjustment at home, they intended to return. Not only did these "birds of passage" tend to upset the economic condition of the country, but they had little interest in learning the customs and conforming to the American culture. They helped to keep the foreign colonies foreign. Even when there was a desire on the part of the immigrant to become a part of American society, it was a difficult problem. When habits, attitudes, desires, interests and philosophy of life had already developed in relation to one cultural organization so that a complete adjustment had been made, it was difficult to change to another pattern. In fact, it often led to maladjustment in another social order.
By this time, the United States had changed from a primarily agricultural state into a highly industrial state. Yet, practically all of the new immigrants coming into the United States were peasants representing a fairly simple social organization. Brown compared the old life of the immigrant and the new life in which he found himself thus:

There is a tremendous difference between the environment of the European peasant in his native land and in urban America. In Europe his situation was dominated by flora and fauna; here he lives in a world of machines. In his original habitat, customs and traditions were controlling forces; here they tend to break down. In rural Europe his attitudes, beliefs, ideas, and fears were tied up with nature; here they fail to find their counterpart in an industrial environment.¹

This in brief showed how difficult was the problem of assimilating the immigrant into American culture. The process of social and cultural adjustment resulted in crime, pauperism, delinquency, insanity, vice, and illiteracy, as well as in the normal adjustment to the institutions established by the immigrant, such as, the immigrant press and religion.

Crime, Pauperism, Delinquency, and Vice

Much has been written about the large percentage of criminals and paupers among aliens. This was to be expected when large numbers of people from other lands established their own communities in congested city areas. There they

¹Lawrence Guy Brown, Immigration, p. 232.
lived in the poverty belt and inherited all the ills of that class of society. There the foreign-born parents and the American-born children lived together in an atmosphere of unrest and turmoil, because neither understood the other. The resulting social pattern was one of conflict and of intolerance that brought in its wake, all too frequently, delinquency and the breaking down of the home.2

There are confined in the penal, reformatory, and charitable institutions of the eleven states from Maine to Maryland (in 1904), including Delaware, 23,135 aliens. The Irish, Slavs, Germans, Italians, and English make up 65 percent of the total. There are 9,390 Irish; 5,372 Slavic; 4,426 Germans; 2,623 Italians; and 2,622 English. In the state of Pennsylvania, there are 5,601 aliens confined in these institutions, 90 percent of whom are from the same five races.3

The actions of foreign governments and of charitable and philanthropic organizations in deporting to America the destitute, the worthless, and the criminal has already been mentioned in connection with assisted immigration. Wilkins gave the following earlier statistics to show the effect of this on the United States:

In Massachusetts, in 1885, the proportion of foreign-born in the population, fourteen years of age and over . . . . 34 percent; proportion of foreign-born convicts 40.6 percent; prisoners 36.8 percent; and paupers 44 percent . . . .

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The Secretary of New York reported in 1887 that there were in county poor-houses 9,283 foreign-born paupers, 9,172 native paupers; and in city poor-houses there were 34,187 foreign-born, and 18,000 native paupers.¹

In Pennsylvania the facts were similar. In the anthracite regions it appeared that although the population increased 25.4 percent from 1880 to 1890, convictions increased 43.1 percent; and although the Slav population increased 45 percent, Slav criminals increased 69.2 percent. In this same region in 1904, it was found that the number per thousand receiving outdoor relief was about three times the general for the state.⁵

Some of this was due to the accidents characteristic of coal mining, which left women and children to be cared for by the public. Another reason was that the Slav miner was a hard drinker, and this habit inevitably had its effect on the rate of pauperism.⁶

Crime and delinquency did not seem to be characteristic of any nationality but rather a poor adjustment to a social condition. It was generally the native-born children of immigrants, those of the second generation, who were involved in delinquency and crime. The members of the second

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generation were not so successful in finding isolation in terms of the European culture as were their parents. They were forced to make outside contacts. They were supposed to conform to one culture at home and to another at school, with the result that they did not have a world in which to live but had to vacillate between two cultures. The immigrant community touched only minor aspects of their personality; so it did not demand their loyalties. Still they were not able quite to accept the new form of social control by law. If they succeeded economically, they usually moved out into better living quarters; otherwise they became a part of the underworld by their adjustment to gang life. In the unconventional world of the gang, they had status and a well-defined role to play. They became adjusted to the only culture where they had a feeling of belonging and developed a conception of themselves as people who count.

The immigrant's surroundings offered excellent training in crime. Frazer gave this vivid description of life in a foreign settlement as viewed by the immigrant child:

"Two drunken women in a brawl, clawing and screaming, kicking and fighting, faces bloody, clothes askew. He gapes fascinated, entranced. A shrill whistle. Hst! Beat it! The bull! A big blue official shoulder ramming its way through the crowd, brutally cuts short the reel or walking along with mama when suddenly—Bang! Bang! Bullets splatter the wall. Passers-by dive alertly towards doorways. He sees two men dash out from a jewelry shop, smoking guns in hand, and start blazing away, ad. lib."
It is a hold-up, but what should he know of that.\(^7\)

Frazer also said that the one American institution which the children of foreign-quarters love was the motion picture. In the majority of these film houses the pictures were incredibly cheap, trashy, melodramatic scenes of violence with a moral tacked on at the end. Many of them depicted a struggle against the law. From these the immigrant child got mistaken notions, which were the first step-off into many juvenile crimes.\(^8\) Will Irwin voiced the opinion that the people of the United States were to blame for allowing the slums to exist. When we tolerated those same conditions in the stock which settled New England and Virginia, we generated the same kind of criminals. City slums spawned Al Capone, Baby-face Nelson, and Alvin Karpis, all of backward alien stock. Backward rural areas gave birth to John Dillinger, Pretty-boy Floyd, Verne Miller, and Harve Bailey, whose names show their American blood.

Many of the first generation immigrants were technically criminals when they had no intention of violating the law. They just did not understand many of the city ordinances. When they were brought into court it was hard for the immigrant to get a fair deal.

\(^7\) Elizabeth Frazer, "Our Foreign Cities," Saturday Evening Post, CXCVI (September 8, 1923), p. 74.

\(^8\) Ibid.
The law too often fails him both ways; when he-offends it permits him to be treated with unjustified severity; when he is innocent, it does not protect him against mean-spirited and vexatious exploitation.9

So, the immigrant developed this attitude toward the government:

In the state he had little interest. Its aims he distrusts, its powers he fears. He accepts it as something inevitable and indispensable and cruel. He strives to avoid contact with it. He will lie to a policeman, refuse to answer questions of the census taker for fear the state would use the information to his hurt.10

Arthur Woods, former Police Commissioner, New York City, after having made several arrests of immigrants for violating city ordinances, ordered the police to secure observance of the city ordinances and health ordinances on their posts by educating the people and not by arresting them. They got good results by organizing the boys as police helpers.11

The greatest burden on the community came from the frequent committing of lesser crimes, caused by drunkenness and general lawlessness. However, two other criminal types, homicide and anarchists, brought more publicity and attention


to foreign sections. The names of the injured in the Haymarket outrage in Chicago were nearly all foreign, though one was a native American. In 1891 came the Italian agitation in New Orleans followed by lynching, which was the subject of much correspondence between the United States and the Italian government. There seemed to be little doubt that the Mafia and kindred societies of violence and crime existed in the United States.12

The number of anarchists was not large but they were placed among the excluded class in the Act of 1903. "The anarchist and ultra-socialist do not as is commonly supposed, derive their support from the Teutonic element; their ranks are rather recruited from among these members of the Semitic and Slavonic races."13

Insanity and Disease

The census of 1890 showed that, not counting the feebleminded and idiots, 33.2 percent of the insane in the United States were of foreign birth, as compared with 28.8 percent in 1880. As the foreign-born constituted in 1890 only 14.77 percent of the total population, they furnished two and one-third times their normal proportion of the insane. From a


statistical standpoint it was no doubt true that a part of this proportion was due to the greater number of foreign-born and to the hardships incident to the environment. For example, the Scandinavians composed 16.5 percent of the population of Minnesota in 1896 and furnished 28.3 percent of the insane. In 1890 the Scandinavians furnished 50.7 percent of the insane. This outstanding increase could be explained by the hardships and struggles of life on the frontier.\footnote{14}

In March, 1904, representatives of the New York State Lunacy Commission recommended strongly to the Department of Commerce and Labor the need of more stringent regulations to prevent the landing of foreign-born insane; and they further reported that, in the Greater New York District, 60 percent of the insane patients were foreign-born.\footnote{15}

In 1913 the alien population in the United States was furnishing considerably more than its proportionate number of feeble-minded and insane persons. More accurate statistics were available for New York State than elsewhere in the country. It was authentically reported that about one percent of the school population of New York City, or about 7,000 children, were distinctly feeble-minded. In addition to these, there was an equal number of idiots and imbeciles, and a large class


of morally defective children and border line types. Census statistics showed that the parents of 30 percent of the feeble-minded children in the country at large were aliens or naturalized citizens.\footnote{16}

The popular belief that immigrants constituted a menace to the public health was not without foundation. In consideration of the danger to the public health from immigration three factors were taken into account: (1) the physique of the immigrant; (2) his destination; and (3) the presence or absence of communicable disease.\footnote{17}

Good physique was more general among the immigrants before 1904. With the change in the racial character of immigration, a pronounced deterioration in the general physique of the immigrants and a much higher percent of loathsome and dangerous diseases was noticeable. Thousands of immigrants of poor physique were recorded as such by the medical authorities at Ellis Island. But such were generally allowed to enter by the immigration offices because it did not appear that the physical defect would make the immigrant a public charge.\footnote{17} These persons of poor physique tended to lower the general vigor of the community.


Destination was scarcely less important than physique, and it was the rule that aliens having the low physical standard would invariably herd together in the airless, sunless, and over-crowded tenements of the city, or in the equally crowded and even more unsanitary dwellings of the mill or mining town. The conditions accompanying the early stages of the immigrant's adjustment even tended to break down the physical health of the sturdy Italians and Austrians, or even of the Jews, who were more accustomed to the unsanitary conditions of city life. The alarming increase of tuberculosis among the Jews and people from the Mediterranean countries and the high death rate of Slavic children in the anthracite region showed the results of a poor physique. This prevalence of tuberculosis among recently landed immigrants was the effect of horrible over-crowding in infected filthy tenements by immigrants whose poor physique made them ready prey for communicable disease. In addition to the congestion in the tenements, the insufficient food and insufficient fuel and clothing, especially among immigrants from Mediterranean countries, were considered as factors in the development of tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis of the lung was rarely found in the routine examination of the immigrant at the time of arrival, but

19 Ibid., p. 234.
because of lowered vitality and poor living conditions was soon developed.

Immigrants helped to spread other communicable diseases. It was asserted that they had caused fourteen out of the nineteen epidemics of smallpox in Chicago since 1863, and to them was due the prevalence of smallpox in New York in 1902. 20

In the fall of 1903, an epidemic of trachoma, spread by immigrant children, affected 10 percent of all the children in the schools of Manhattan, and required the expenditure of $250,000 to stamp it out. In 1904, fines were imposed upon the steamship companies for bringing 310 diseased persons, chiefly afflicted with trachoma. Favus and trachoma were practically unknown in the United States before the immigration from southeastern and eastern Europe. 21

It is stated that half of the 64,000 registered blind persons in the United States are needlessly blind and that the maintenance of one blind person for life by the community costs an average of $10,000. 22

While popular education in hygienic and sanitary measures would prevent the spread of trachoma, it was equally as important to prevent the development of new cases. Therefore, every consideration demanded the absolute exclusion of trachoma in immigration. In 1911 a total of 2,504 cases of

21 Ibid., p. 158.
22 Reed, op. cit., p. 321.
trachoma were certified in immigrants. Many of these were admitted, however. At New York, for instance, where 1,167 cases were certified, sixty-three cases were landed. 23

These two diseases, favus and trachoma, constituted 97 percent of the total cases of loathsome or dangerous diseases found in arriving aliens. 24

This bad effect on the health of the United States was one argument for restriction. However, McLaughlin, a strong apologist for immigrants, wrote in 1903:

So far as the fear of loathsome and contagious disease is concerned the danger is comparatively slight. The immigrants are subjected to a rigid physical examination at Ellis Island by the officers of the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital Service. The double system of inspection practiced there makes it practically impossible for any immigrant suffering from a loathsome or dangerous contagious disease to pass without detention. 25

In 1905 he wrote in a similar vein:

Our present immigration laws are effective against many of the most undesirable classes of immigration and our immigration officers, by their vigorous enforcement of these laws, have acquired a reputation in Europe which has a deterrent effect upon the undesirable classes. Every defective alien deported to Europe advertises the fact that we will not permit

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23 Ibid., p. 323.


paupers, diseased persons or persons likely to become a public charge, to land.²⁶

The foreign-born were so great a burden on the hospitals that the money contributed to support these institutions was not sufficient. It was stated that twenty of the principal hospitals of New York City showed an annual aggregate deficit of about $450,000.²⁷

General Illiteracy

Social institutions depend for their existence upon the ability of men to exchange their ideas and act together intelligently for common purposes. In as much as the chief means of doing this was the spoken and written word, the illiteracy of any community was a matter of great importance.

As early as 1900, the necessity of universal elementary education had become an axiom with the American people. Its practical expression was found in the vast sums expended annually for educational purposes. The result of compulsory education in the United States was shown in the following figures. In 1900, there were 15,367,147 persons attending school during some portion of the year. There were 6,160,069 illiterate persons over ten years of age, constituting 10.7 percent of the total population over ten years of age. This

²⁷ Hall, op. cit., p. 158.
was a considerable reduction from 13.3 percent in 1890 and 17.0 percent in 1880. The various elements of the population varied considerably in respect to illiteracy. The native white showed an average of 4.6 percent as against 44.5 percent for colored persons, and 12.9 percent for foreign whites. 23 Illiteracy varied also in different parts of the United States. In the states which received a great proportion of aliens every year, the percentage of illiteracy was low, while in states where the percentage of foreigners was lowest, as in Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, the percentage of illiteracy for the states was very high. 29 Nebraska had the least, 2.3 percent; Louisiana had the most, 38.6 percent. 30

By 1902, the illiteracy in the native born American was decreasing, while in the foreign born it was increasing. This condition was practically unavoidable because of the ignorant adult immigrant. This tended naturally to correction in the second generation; for compared with 900,000 of the foreign-born element of school age, there were 12,400,000 of the second generation of school age. In Massachusetts alone 20 percent of illiteracy in the foreign born was offset by 1 percent in

23 Hall, op. cit., p. 139.


30 Hall, op. cit., p. 140.
the native born. This showed the immediate effect of our schools on the children of the deplorably ignorant class of newcomers. 31

About 1904 the fact was brought out that among white children between the ages of five and fourteen, 71 percent of those born of foreign parents were attending schools, as against 66 percent of those born of native parents. It was, of course, creditable to the foreign element that the children were anxious to obtain an education. However, the question of illiteracy in the United States was largely a question of presence or absence of schools, because most of the new immigrants settled in the Northern and Eastern States where the educational system was the most developed, the laws against the employment of children the most strict, and the difficulty of evading the compulsory education law the most pronounced. If we consider secondary education, that is education of children from fifteen to twenty years of age, the percentage of children of native white parents attending school was 33.5, that of children of foreign white parents 22.8, which showed that throughout the country as a whole the children of native parents tended to receive a more complete education. However, in the white population of ten years of age and over, it appeared that the illiteracy of those of

native parentage was 5.7 percent as against only 1.6 for those of foreign parentage. But, striking as this was, it would not be safe to argue from it, that the children of immigrants were everywhere less illiterate than those of natives. The concentration of immigrants in certain states above mentioned in connection with school attendance accounted largely for the low illiteracy of their children. The figures for children of natives and of foreigners, for example, were respectively in New York State, 1.3 and 1.1; in Massachusetts, 0.5 and 1.2; in Pennsylvania, 2.6 and 1.6; in Texas, 5.1 and 13.2.32

The fact that illiteracy in New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts decreased in spite of the thousands of aliens received every year, spoke well not only for the public school system of these states, but also for the adaptability of the immigrant and his desire for education.33

The school system of the United States had much more to accomplish than just to banish illiteracy. Frazer stated that:

...through her educational system, America must show herself as she really is, and aspires to be, to these alien people, so they may be brought through love, gratitude, and admiration to make her ideals their own. By protection, by justice, by sympathetic appreciation of their many and


serious handicaps, by steady opportunities offered to lay hold of this great fellowship of democracy, she must prove to these aliens already within her gates that with good will toward all and malice toward none, she stands willing to make good her world challenge that a government of and by and for free peoples is not a mad, harebrain scheme but a feasible enterprise. 34

Adult Illiteracy

An "illiterate" immigrant as defined by the Immigration Bureau was one fourteen years of age and over who could neither read nor write any recognized language or dialect; whether it be the language or dialect of his native or resident country, or, as in the case of Yiddish, one used by a particular sect or community. 35

When immigration was defined in this manner, almost all of the school children were eliminated and "illiterate immigrants" would refer to those over fourteen years of age or adults.

In 1900 there were about 190,000 of these illiterate immigrants over fourteen years of age who were not likely to receive any more schooling after their arrival, since fourteen years was the limit of compulsory education in most states. It was noted that illiteracy of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe was nearly ten times as great as that of immigrants from northern and western Europe.

34 Frazer, op. cit., p. 80.

35 Hall, op. cit., p. 80.
About 50 percent of the aliens who had come from Southern Italy by 1903 were unable to read and write any language, and the rate of illiteracy among the rest of the Mediterranean and Slavic immigrants ranged from 20 to 70 percent, while among the Teutonic and Celtic immigrants the rate of illiteracy was less than 1 percent to 4 percent. This change in the type of immigrant, which had taken place during the past fifteen years, resulted in raising the average of illiteracy of all aliens from 5 percent in former years to 25 percent about 1903.36

The question of illiteracy was brought forcibly to the attention of the American people by the result of the examinations held by the army authorities in World War I. These examinations showed that approximately 25 percent of the draft army were unable to use effectively the English language and that much had to be done with the foreign-born and the first generation born in the United States if assimilation, political and social, was to be attained. The United States, according to the 1920 census, was one of the most illiterate of civilized nations. Two million of these illiterates were in nine of the Southern States, while New Jersey had 127,661 illiterates.37


Reports came from all over the country of the vast numbers of foreigners who had not become citizens. For instance, in the coal mines, it was found about 1920 that 379,000 of the 732,000 coal-miners were foreign-born. More than four-fifths of them were from non-English speaking countries -- principally Italy, Austria, Poland, Hungary, and Russia. However, the majority of the coal-mine workers were not recent comers, over 77 percent having been in the country ten years and over -- nine-tenths of them five years or more. Furthermore, nearly half of them were still aliens.38

This knowledge brought to the front all kinds of movements and societies to Americanize the immigrant and to make him a citizen. There were the night schools, the Y. M. C. A., and the settlement houses.

It was felt that, although the immigrant came into contact with the community through his children mingling with Americans in the school and through his work, nevertheless, alien parents could have no part in shaping community affairs. Therefore, it was not good for American-born children to get their ideas of citizenship obligation from, and owe obedience to those who were not citizens.39 This gave impetus to the demand for the naturalization of the immigrant. Many states


39 Ibid.
passed laws to aid naturalization. New York took the lead in providing governmental machinery by creating a special Bureau of Industries and Immigration in 1910.\textsuperscript{40} In 1900 the percentage of naturalization was 58.0. There was a slight slump in 1910 to 46.2; an increase in 1920 to 49.0; and an increase to a new high in 1930, when 62.0 percent of foreign-born males over twenty-one years of age were naturalized and 58.4 percent of the corresponding group of females.\textsuperscript{41}

Adult education became the vogue. Night schools sprang up all over the country. The first state legislation in support of evening classes in English and civics for foreign-born was passed by New Jersey in 1907.\textsuperscript{42} The Y. M. C. A. took an interest in this work and soon there were Y. M. C. A. classes in 150 cities in the United States, with an enrollment of between 5,000 and 6,000 immigrant men. In addition to classes in English, illustrated lectures were given to the newcomers. These dealt with all phases of American life and included such subjects as personal hygiene, sanitation, geography, industrial safety, and government.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{40} Edward George Hartmann, The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{41} Francis J. Brown, and Josef S. Roucek, Our Racial and National Minorities, p. 676.

\textsuperscript{42} Hartmann, op. cit., p. 36.

Social action early expressed itself in many of the programs of the settlement houses located in the large industrial areas, where workers and nurses circulated among the members of the immigrant population, teaching them the fundamentals of personal hygiene and sanitation and introducing them to the better aspect of American life. Leaders of the settlement movements, such as Jane Addams, Stanton Coit, and Jacob A. Riis, were alert to the great assimilative role which their institutes could play for the immigrant.

The most outstanding work of this kind was an experiment in the way of a night school in the labor camps. The school was conducted by Miss Sarah Moore, an experienced teacher and social worker. Working under the auspices of the Italian Immigration Society, Miss Moore opened her school in Asperswall, Pennsylvania, September 5, 1905. Instead of the conventional lessons about things outside the working man's interests, Miss Moore compiled her own text and copybooks based on the study of special phraseology needed, such as "Get out of the way!" "Be quick," and "Get off the track."

The response which the immigrants made to the Americanization program was varied. Some found it helpful.

Americanization classes helped many adults over the difficult language barrier. Parents and even grandparents went to school to catch

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44 "Assimilating the Adult Immigrant," Outlook, Vol. LXXXVIII (February, 1908), pp. 244-45.
up with the younger generation and to overcome the feeling of inferiority. They have not always been welcomed, but when intelligently and sympathetically conducted they have been important factors in the process of turning bewildered foreigners into happy and confident citizens of the borough. 45

Others resented the movement.

To one who knows the soul and spirit of the immigrant, who has passed through the painful experience of analyzing, sorting, and accepting American life, the spectacle of the rabid and ignorant Americanization efforts was disheartening. It did not represent America as the foreigner had pictured it in his dreams before landing upon these shores. It flavored more of Hungary where Magyarization of several millions of people was attempted by means not consistent with American tradition, or of Russia of the Tsarish days with the persecution of the Jews and the denationalization of the Poles. 46

The Americanization movement disappeared but adult education spread to include all the people — native as well as foreign.

The Immigrant Press and the Immigrant Church

Many of the adjustments which the immigrants experienced resulted from the immigrant press and the church. The nationalistic tendencies of the immigrants were kept alive by the foreign-language press and the church as long as the immigrant

45 Ralph Foster Weld, Brooklyn is America, p. 245.

felt the need of the home ties. Nearly all the language
groups in the United States have had their own native language
press. The immigrant press, though printed in a foreign lan-
guage and partly designed to prevent assimilation, often led
to a genuine interest in things American, because it published
news regarding activities in the United States. Here for the
first time, with few exceptions, the European peasants found
newspapers written about things that interested them, in the
language they spoke. Indeed, some said that many of these
alien groups read more in America than in their homeland,
where, perhaps, their publications were often suppressed. In
Europe the papers were written in the culture of the domi-
nant nationalities, while in America their papers were written
in the vernacular of the common people. Since the papers
were written for them, they were not often high grade, but
it was an advancement for the peasant to read at all. Here
for the first time the reading habit was established among
them. The Socialists were credited with the popularization
of some of the foreign language press. They needed a popu-
lar use which was informed, and the reading habit thus forced
in turn established a thinking habit. This was not only bene-
ficial to the immigrants themselves but also to the whole
country.

The type of advertising in the foreign press was a key
to the degree of assimilation of the immigrant group. Some
papers advertised almost exclusively foreign goods or goods sold by foreign nationals, while others contained the advertisement of American stores and recommended American commodities. At first the language press was largely a connecting link with the old country and printed news which reminded the immigrant of his past. This gradually changed until the press became more of the American type as they strove to attract the subscription of the American-born children of the immigrants.

During World War I it was hard for these papers to assign their loyalties, and a few of them were denied the use of the mail. The early immigrant press was religious in tone and spoke to those who came to stay. The later immigrant press was more concerned with the politics of the old world and some were organs of national societies, like the Polish National Alliance. Others reflected free thought tendencies, as among the Jews. But the foreign language press as a whole was conservative, and in most instances it supported the major political party. The radical press was always in the minority and its influence declined. The immigrant press reflected the wide variety of interests and views of its readers, with the result that there were no unified foreign viewpoint and no foreign bloc vote in this country.47

47 Donald R. Taft, Human Relations, pp. 261-82.
The fact that the number of immigrant papers tended to
decrease was one of the indices that each group had developed
an interest in American life that was more potent than was
its interest in European social relationships. In 1895 there
were 789 German papers in the United States. In 1929 there
were 219. In 1894 there were fifty-three Scandinavian papers
in the United States. The number increased until there were
149 in 1909, and decreased until there were only eighty-three
in 1929. The Italians had only five papers in 1886, but had
130 in 1929. This was always the case with the more recent
immigrants who still thought in terms of Europe. The Hebrews
did not have a single paper in 1886 but printed forty-one in
1929. Polish papers increased in number from three in 1884
to ninety in 1929.48

In the struggle for existence, the commercial type
usually won out, and more and more adopted American models.
Signs of the Americanization of the immigrant press included:
the development of the chain newspaper; the growing dislike
of being spoken of as "immigrant" papers; greater interest
in American as compared with old world affairs; divisions
among papers according to American issues; less appeal than
formerly to race or national pride; increasing use of English;
printing of cartoons and comics.49 Foreign newspapers served

48 Brown, op. cit., p. 255.
49 Taft, op. cit., p. 282.
their respective groups and contributed to American culture; but like other immigrant institutions they tended to die out as the immigrant became assimilated. In fact, some thought the degree of assimilation of an immigrant group could be measured by the circulation of its immigrant press.

The immigrant church was a bond that united the immigrants in the United States. From whatever section of Europe they came, original immigrants usually worshiped in separate churches, with separate organizations. These organizations were under the leadership of a priest or pastor who spoke their own language. Considerably over half of the religious denominations in America, which numbered 54,000,000 members, had organizations which partly or completely used a foreign language.50

This influence toward segregation of aliens from native Americans was quite strong. Another segregating influence was the maintenance of religious separation among immigrants by denominations. The immigrant invariably joined the same denomination here with which he was affiliated before emigration from his native land. Not even racial ties were able to destroy denominational lines.51

The immigrant church was a stabilizing force which prevented social disorganization. The religious institutions


of the immigrants were of much greater worth to them than any American institution forced upon them, because they respected their cultural background.

There was little tendency to promote association between the natives and the immigrants, and a spirit of indifference to the whole immigrant question was noticeable in the fact that there was a general lack of native and religious and welfare work among the immigrants. However, after the turn of the century the people of the United States began to recognize the assimilating force of the foreign churches, and they adopted procedures and programs utilizing the foreign churches. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York instituted a program of social activities, sewing, schools, music classes, day schools, kindergartens, and Boy Scout troops in a number of Italian parishes for the immigrants and their children. Other Catholic churches did similar work among the foreigners. The Protestant denominations, also, were conscious of the "new cultural heritage" trend, as it applied to Americanization and hastened to start missionary work among the immigrants.

Immigration seemed to have resulted in religious tolerance.

The strengthening of Catholicism begun by the early Irish has been the result of the new immigration and has had cultural by-products. It would also seem that we owe a large degree of religious

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52 Brown and Roucek, Our Racial and National Minorities, p. 618.
toleration to the mingling of faiths through immigration. The Puritan was not tolerant. Neither is the Ku Klux Klan. But the general agreement that religion is a matter about which we must agree to disagree seems to have been forced upon us as a result of migration.\textsuperscript{53}

The parochial and other language schools were maintained by immigrants in order to preserve their native language and customs, but they, too, lost their influence on the second generation.

Immigration also affected international relations:

Whatever we may think of the feasibility of one's Americanism when he still holds affection for the home country, we must recognize that we cannot break all ties or destroy all affection for one's country of birth. The justice dealt out to the home countries through the influence of American international relations is bound to have its effect upon the immigrant groups in America coming from these countries.\textsuperscript{54}

The presence of so many foreigners in the United States has made it somewhat more difficult to fight an unjust war against their home government.

Our many immigration laws tended to prevent the criminal, the insane, the diseased, and the generally undesirable immigrant from entering the United States. On the other hand, the schools, churches, press, and other organizations helped to assimilate those that had already gained admission.

\textsuperscript{53} Taft, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 288.

\textsuperscript{54} Arenovici, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 138.
CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM OF ADMITTING THE

"DISPLACED PERSON"

Entrance of the Displaced Person

The phenomenon of individuals fleeing from their homelands to escape oppression or persecution is not new in human history. As long as there have been wars, political strife, religious intolerance -- and that includes the greater part of recorded history -- people have had to flee from their native land. The uniqueness in the present-day flight of human beings is to be found in the magnitude of the movement and in its compulsory character. Never before were so many countries involved either as sources of refugee emigration or as places of refuge. Also unprecedented is the fact that people were forced to leave their homelands on account of their descent or "race." The individual was left no choice, for while it is possible to change one's faith or political views, one cannot change one's ancestry. Similarly without parallel was the new doctrine of nationalism which resulted in the deification of the State and the exclusion of all conflicting loyalties, whether political, social, or religious. This extreme nationalism led to depriving the nonconformist
of the rights of citizenship, leaving him unprotected by any government.¹

Such were the conditions in Europe which gave rise to the term "Displaced Persons" as applied to these recent refugees. Their movement has several distinct features not heretofore noticed in the emigration of refugees.

The recent refugee movement has also been marked by (1) the extremely cruel treatment of the victims of political, religious, and "racial" persecution; (2) by the difficulty which these victims encountered in areas; (3) by the reluctance of the countries not immediately affected to admit them because of the deep economic depression and later because of the war; and (4) by the breaking-up of families on a scale previously unknown.²

Such has been the refugee movement which began two decades ago.

There has always been a generous sprinkling of refugees among the immigrants to the United States. In fact, there is some justification to the claim that the foundations of this nation were laid by people escaping oppression. The Puritans, the Huguenots, the Quakers, the Scotch-Irish, and the Spanish-Portuguese Jews were all refugees. But never has there been such a "deluge of refugees" as there has been since 1933, when Hitler rose to power and started Germany on a career of tyranny and aggression. A refugee remarks:

¹Maurice R. Davis, Refugees in America, p. 1.
²Ibid.
It often strikes me that refugees have a new way of counting time: pre-Hitler -- post-Hitler. "... For a whole generation of Europeans that name has become a terrible sign -- post marking the break of a century."

Approximately 250,000 of these refugee immigrants were admitted to the United States from 1933 through 1944. The total immigration from Europe during this period was 365,955. Thus the refugees constituted about two-thirds of the immigration from Europe.

However, it was very difficult to determine who were refugees, for the refugees were not accorded special privileges or considerations in the law or procedure, except an occasional deviation from the general practice. Under American laws, these persons during the period before 1945 were received solely as immigrants under national quotas. As refugees, they were subject to the laws, statutes, and regulations affecting all other aliens. If the refugee had been admitted for permanent residence, he enjoyed the same rights of domicile, of freedom of movement, of privilege to work, and of political integration accorded any alien coming from a foreign country. Hence, it is almost impossible to separate the problem of the refugee in the United States from that of other immigrants, save where cases, selected studies,

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4 Clenence A. Peters, The Immigration Problem, p. 151.
or records of refugee agencies make such distinction prac-
ticable.  

Wartime and postwar immigration -- regular immigrant and
refugee -- has been comparatively small. Apart from the tem-
porary phenomenon of the 50,000 non-quota G. I. brides, who
were exempt from the Quota Act, immigration since World War II
has been even lighter than in the 1930's. During the second
half of 1945 most of the 25,795 immigrant aliens who were ad-
mitted came from Canada and Latin America. Only 6,172 were
charged to European quotas.  

In the light of the history of immigration into the United
States the number of refugees who have entered the United
States since 1933 has constituted a very small movement, yet
it has attracted as much attention as if it had been several
times its actual size.

A part of this unusual interest in the refugee has
arisen from the almost universal opposition of the American
people to any further immigration from Europe or Asia. In
part it results also, from the dramatic character of the move-
ment and the type of people it involved. The average American
is familiar with the Ellis Island immigrant, but not the immi-
grant with an international reputation as scholar, scientist,


writer, or artist; or an immigrant experienced in business and industry; or the immigrant arriving penniless and in a state of high nervous tension, bearing scars of persecution and of concentration camp brutality.  

Sympathy for the refugee brought the question of immigration to the front again, after quota laws of the 1920's had practically choked off all foreign immigration except from the Western Hemisphere. Those who held to the tenet that this country has always been a haven for the oppressed could not neglect the cries of the homeless, aimless, and destitute peoples that still remained in European concentration camps.

Almost everyone in Europe, as responsible officials see it, would move to the United States if given a chance. Virtually all the displaced persons now in European camps are asking to come here. From Italy, Germany, Greece, France, and elsewhere large numbers of people are pressing to get to this country.

From all over the United States there came pleas for the relaxation of our immigrant laws. Representative Cellar (Democrat) of New York, wanted to let in an additional 2,000,000 through a plan to make available all unused immigration quotas since 1924. There were other plans before Congress which would bring in up to 400,000 displaced persons from Europe above the present quota.

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9 Angly, op. cit., p. 125.
Neither the United States nor any of the other non-European countries endowed with what some considered a surplus of living space had done much about any of these people except to contribute to their daily ration and maintain camps for them, through their contribution to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Appalled by the tragedy of these "Displaced Persons," President Truman, on December 22, 1945 (without an act of Congress), directed that the United States "set an example to the other countries of the world" by receiving these people, up to the legal limit of the quotas. Under his orders, priority was given to orphans and close kin of immigrants already here. The State Department sent officers to the occupied zone to issue visas. However, instead of the estimated 3,000 or more per month, the Displaced Persons who reached our shores in the first eight months numbered only 3,452.10

Again on July 7, 1947, President Truman, in his message to Congress urged congressional assistance, "... in order that the United States might fulfill its responsibilities to thousands of homeless, suffering refugees."11 President Truman did not ask Congress to make a general revision of the immigration laws of the United States. He recommended that

10 Ibid.

our present standards be kept in regard to admission of Dis-
placed Persons. No criminals, paupers, subversives, nor
those likely to become public charges were to be allowed.

Under the Displaced Persons Act of June 25, 1948, the
United States agreed to accept without regard to quota limi-
tations, 205,000, who were sponsored by individuals or volun-
tary agencies before June 30, 1950. It stipulated that all
Displaced Persons were to come from war occupied zones of
Germany, Italy, and Austria, and defined "Displaced Persons"
as those who had been displaced from their homes during the
war period of September 1, 1939, to December 22, 1945.

In April, 1950, the Senate finally passed a liberalized
Displaced Persons bill, long promised by the administration.12
This bill, known as the Kilgore bill, was approved June 16,
1950. It extended the Displaced Persons program until June 30,
1951, and raised the number of Displaced Persons to be admitted
under the program to 344,000, in addition to 54,744 Germans
expelled after the war by neighboring nations, and 20,000 non-
quota war orphans. It made eligible 5,000 Italians dislodged
from the Trieste area taken over by Yugoslavia, 18,000 members
of General Anders' Polish army now in Britain, 10,000 Greeks
made homeless by civil war, and some 4,000 White Russians who
fled from Communist held Shanghai to the Philippines.13


Thus we see that the number of refugees entering the United States has gained momentum through the years. These refugees will of necessity affect the life of the United States in many ways.

Economic, Social, and Cultural Effects of the Refugees

Will this newest of our immigrant -- the refugee -- upset our economy? There are those who are of the opinion that it will not. Economically it will benefit us to admit the Displaced Persons because $200 will secure him passage to America, whereas an expenditure of $135 a year has been necessary to maintain him "in the twilight of existence" in the German camps of the American zone. In 1947, for example, the American army spent $115,000,000 in caring for these people. At the end of the year only temporary relief was accomplished for these hundreds of thousands. This will have to be repeated until resettlement in this country enables the Displaced Person to function as a human being, one who can give as well as take. 14

The problem of getting a job and earning a living in a new country is difficult enough for an ordinary immigrant. It is far more serious for the refugee, for a number of reasons. Most of the adult refugees have gone beyond the elementary

school level in Europe and nearly half of them have attended college or professional school.  Therefore, lacking a knowledge of English, they are unable to carry on the profession or occupation of a businessman, a teacher, a physician, or a writer, for which they are trained. There is also little demand for these kinds of occupations. Being comparatively advanced in age and usually lacking in funds, they find it difficult to enter another occupation. Consequently, many of them are forced into unskilled labor, since the unskilled laborer can do his work without a knowledge of English.

However, the Displaced Persons are eager to make their own way, says Deutschman. Men with five or six degrees are today working at washing dishes, former engineers as farmers, etc. But fully four out of five Displaced Persons who arrived here since January, 1946, are self-supporting within the year. While some think they will take jobs from American laborers, others claim that there is labor going to waste in D. P. camps (at a cost of $250,000,000 a year), that America could use to alleviate specific shortages. For example, the 20,000 D. P. tailors could fill vacancies in the great industries of Rochester, New York, and 100,000 displaced agricultural workers could repopulate America's "breadbasket" (the states

15 Peters, op. cit., p. 158.

16 Davie, Refugees in America, pp. 119-20.
of Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, and the Dakotas which lost an aggregate population of 650,000 during the war.17

Furthermore, Davie reports from a survey made in the period from 1933 to 1944 that immigrants actually created employment for Americans and other refugees by initiating new business enterprises.18 In New York City, hundreds of these new industries make and sell articles which formerly had to be imported, such as leather goods, gloves, perfumes, Karlsbad wafers, and Viennese Knitted goods.19 While in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies Garment Workers, the Russian Jewish refugees set up organizations which eliminated the sweatshop and established an American standard of living for the clothing trades -- something our native-born reformers had struggled vainly to do through half a century.20

There were those who took the other viewpoint. In 1938 Reynolds complained that there were 6,000,000 non-citizens living in the United States competing with American citizens for work. Four million of these had jobs in excess of $1,000,

while our unemployed number between seven and ten million and another three to five million had only part time jobs. He continues: "Of all the countries in the world the United States is the only one which has failed to protect its employment opportunities for its citizens."21 Many people were afraid the refugees would be tainted with communism, but the American Communists were opposed to the refugees entering the United States. The labor unions on the other hand, could see no harm in small contingents of Displaced Persons. Both the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. are committed to this policy. If the Displaced Persons threatened to strengthen the Communist nuisance, the labor unions that are fighting the Communists would know it.22 Neither the A. F. of L. nor the C. I. O. appeared worried that immigration would aggravate unemployment or threaten the job security of any American holding a union card.23

The displaced persons have constituted only one three-hundredths of one percent of our labor force; there have been no criminals, nor any housing problems created as a result of their coming.24

22 Johnson, op. cit., p. 401.
Many Displaced Persons have taken old places and fixed them up. Statistics compiled by the executive departments of the national government, state governments, and relief agencies, and submitted to the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, show that Displaced Persons upon arrival have contributed to national welfare, says Emmanuel Celler. Communities into which they have come demand more immigrants. They are scattered throughout the country but are chiefly urban people. However, they rarely form colonies (except in New York and Chicago), but scatter throughout the city, where their pattern of distribution is more like that of the second- and third-generation Americans than of the foreign-born. This reflects their higher economic and social status and their relatively small number. They seek to enter into American life.25

Anyone who has preferred exile from homeland and family to subservience to dictators is truly American in his ideals. Rather than yield to either promises or threats from the invader of conscience, he chose to forfeit security. We have, then, among the Displaced Persons a spirit that has been tried and proven. These are men of valor, not weaklings, who have chosen to fight for the right in opposition to the practice prevalent in dictatorships, of making right yield to might. Mentally they have had the stamina to withstand years of

25 Davies, Refugees in America, p. 151.
persecution by clinging to the stubborn hope that freedom
will be theirs. Truly they are the "survival of the fittest,"
whose presence in our midst will be an inspiration. 26

Each new wave of Displaced Persons has meant
a body of new citizens who had learned by bitter
experience how to value American liberty. They
have been a good offset to those old Americans who
by long use have come to take liberty for granted,
if not of questionable value.

It appears that when a branch of the tree of
liberty becomes old, it can bear only bitter and
wormy fruit. A fresh scion is needed, of persons
to whom liberty is a reality — the most price-
less possession of man. 27

These refugees also contribute to the enrichment of our
culture. We cannot read American history without reading the
history of the immigrant. In the field of science eminent
names like Alexis Carrel, Nobel prize winner, and Albert A.
Michaelson, Jewish physicist, prove that in the past America
has benefitted socially by the high quality of professional
training among our immigrants. Industry thrives on the names
of Carnegie, Kandens, Bell and Bendix. The fine arts flour-
ished under masters like Damrosch, Stokowski, Romberg, Herbert,
and St. Gaudens. We have evidence for believing that the high
standard set by earlier immigrants will persevere. Of those
whom fortune and unfilled quotas have favored during the last
decade, more than one hundred have been listed in "Who's Who
in America," and this in spite of the small percentage of

26 Gabrieline, op. cit., p. 247.
27 Johnson, op. cit., p. 404.
The population they represent -- two-tenths of one percent. In the literary world there are such outstanding figures as Maurice Maeterlinck, Thomas Mann, and Sigrid Nudset, Nobel prize winner in the group, and also Andre Maurois, Emil Ludwig, Franz Werfel, and Walter Mehring, whose presence here has added lustre to American literature and has been an inspiration to American writers. 28

Twenty-six musicians are recognized in the same list of note-worthies; conductors like Arturo Toscanini, and Bruno Walters; pianists like Artur Schnabel, and Rudolf Serkin; in addition to such renowned artists as Lottie Lehmann, Ignor Stravinsky, and Darius Milhaud. 29

In quantity scientists claim the lion's share in this list of quality. Altogether 300 hundred refugees are listed in current editions of "Who's Who in America" and "American Men of Science." Nine of them are Nobel prize winners. The role of these scientists was very important during the war. Their presence here reduced the scientific and technological achievement of Axis countries and increased our own. Ernst Berl turned his skill in chemistry, developed for Austro-Hungary in World War I, against the Axis nations in World War II. Today men like Hans Bethe, Enrico Fermi, Albert Einstein, and James Franck are only suggestive of the type of service being

28 Davies, Refugees in America, p. 344.
29 Ibid., p. 346.
rendered by these celebrated men of science. There are outstanding men in other professions, also, like physicians, lawyers, engineers, and architects and even religious functionaries.

All these contributions of refugees to our civilization which have been set forth at such length in the above pages are magnified by the enthusiastic advocates of the admittance of a greater number of refugees to our country. Such advocates have scoured the records for the most favorable things to be said in behalf of the refugees.

But just as the refugees are a small percent of our population, the outstanding intellectual refugees are a small percent of the total refugee population. Not all of them by any means are Einsteins. However, since they were more or less successful in their home countries, they have felt that their services would be needed in America. Not finding a satisfactory response which they felt they had a right to expect, they have become unhappy, uneasy, and restless.

In their restlessness these new immigrants blame America for their poor success and think they should reform America, change the silken rules of a society built on freedom and democracy. They often try to teach Americans how to improve their manners or their behavior. They do not understand that they must start from scratch and forget about their social positions in the old world.30

This adjustment to a lower standard of living is very hard on these people who had wealth and position at home.

Refugee children have adjusted themselves to life in this country with relative ease and speed as compared with the older generation. At first they were nervous, anxious about their parents, and undernourished, but this was soon overcome. They mix easily with American children and have been accepted by them. Many schools report that the work of refugee children has been above average.\footnote{31}

During the war the refugee communities proved themselves overwhelmingly loyal and aided in the war effort in every way. The Selective Service Training and Selective Act made aliens as fully liable to service as citizens. Eligible refugees, aliens, and citizens alike, therefore, entered the armed forces to the same extent as native Americans.

Many rendered special services because of their intimate knowledge of the language, culture, psychology, economy, and geography of the enemy countries. Those who remained at home contributed generously to the various war activities on the home front. Nine-tenths of them bought war bonds, and one-third made blood donations.\footnote{32}

A large percent of those eligible by age have become citizens, and many of the remaining number are in the process of doing so. Unaccompanied children as well as adult refugees

\footnote{31}{Davie, Refugees in America, p. 106.}
\footnote{32}{Ibid., p. 141.}
are rapidly becoming Americanized. The main reason for this is their superior education and culture, together with their intense desire to become American citizens.

More than anything else a Displaced Person wants to "belong again." Most Americans take belonging for granted, but a Displaced Person knows what it means to be an outsider. Now he has an insatiable hunger to make friends and be accepted into normal life again.

To many Displaced Persons "belonging" means adjusting themselves not only to a new country, a new culture, and a new way of life, but also to a new class of society since many professional men, such as doctors, lawyers, and statesmen, are barred from their old professions. The language also is difficult, but the Displaced Persons, especially the younger ones, are conquering these obstacles without much delay.

The refugees tend to live in American neighborhoods, they join organizations with predominantly American membership, when possible, and often intermarry with native Americans. Therefore, they assimilate readily.

It would seem, then, that the Displaced Persons are not detrimental to our national life. For they know what freedom means, having been deprived of it. The victims of totalitarianism made good defenders of democracy.

Economically and socially immigration affects every phase of life in the United States. It adds to the labor supply;
it helps to determine the wage level, the unemployment, and the labor problems. The immigrant's attitudes are reflected in the number of criminals and the places of vice; he augments the social problems by contributing to the pauperism, the insanity, and the community's health problems; he influences the culture through the use of the press, the schools, and the churches. The people of the United States, therefore, cannot fail to take cognizance of immigration, since it has been one of the greatest factors in the advancement of its civilization and culture.
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