

EDUCATION AND THE AMERICANIZATION MOVEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The Americanization movement that swept this country during the second decade of this century was in response to vast social change in America. The movement began to take shape in the minds of employers, and social workers who believed that the flood of immigrants into the country would, unless checked or modified, alter the social and political character of the nation. The goal of Americanization was to maintain a nation in which all residents were loyal citizens, dedicated to democratic ideals, and literate in the English language. The object of concern was the increasingly large number of immigrants who began coming in 1880 from Southwestern and Eastern Europe.

In 1911 the United States Immigration Commission report to Congress reflected the growing concern of social and business leaders. The Commission described the new immigration as

. . . largely a movement of unskilled laboring men who have come, in large part temporarily, from the less progressive and advanced countries of Europe in response to the call for industrial workers in the eastern and middle western states. They have almost entirely avoided agricultural pursuits, and in cities and industrial communities have congregated together in sections apart from native Americans and the older immigrants to such an extent that assimilation has been slow as compared to that of the earlier non-English-speaking races. The new immigration as a class is far less intelligent than the old, approximately one-third of all those over 14 years of age when admitted being

illiterate. Racially they are for the most part essentially unlike the British, German, and other peoples who came during the period prior to 1880, and generally speaking they are actuated in coming by different ideals, for the old immigrants came to be a part of the country, while the new, in a large measure, comes with the intention of profiting, in a pecuniary way, by the superior advantages of the new world and then returning to the old country.¹

Certainly the new immigrants were different from those who came earlier. Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy and the Balkans were comparatively backward in political, social, and economic activities when compared to northern European nations. Roman Catholics from Poland, Greek Orthodox Christians from Hungary and Jews from Russia arrived and native Protestants became increasingly aware of their presence. These peculiar strangers sought out their kind when they arrived, for help in finding a job and the comfort of familiar customs, food, and language. Italian, Polish, Greek and Russian sections of large cities became so autonomous that native Americans sometimes felt like strangers in them. The new immigrants added to the already overburdened housing in the low-rent districts and long-term crowding resulted in slums. Not only were these newcomers very different, but most of them came from non-English-speaking countries and therefore communication between them and Americans was extremely limited.

¹United States Senate Immigration Commission, Abstracts of the Immigration Commission with Conclusions and Recommendations and Views of the Minority I, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), p. 14.

These residents did not move in equal numbers to all the states, but concentrated in already large population centers of the Northeast, North Central, and West. According to the United States Census figures, there were 69,771 non-English-speaking residents in Chicago in 1900; 46,624 were over fourteen years of age and unable to read and write in any language. In 1910 there were 182,519 foreign born of whom 75,580 were illiterate. By 1914 it was estimated that there were over two hundred thousand non-English-speaking residents in Chicago and in 1915 only thirteen percent were enrolled in evening classes in English. Cleveland contained the greatest ratio of non-English-speaking residents to the total foreign-born population of any city in the United States. In 1910 more than four-fifths of the foreign-born population came from non-English speaking countries so that nearly one third of all the men of voting age were aliens. In New York state there were more than 406,000 illiterates in 1915, of whom nearly 80% are foreign-born. In New York City there were 254,000 illiterates, 96% of whom were foreign-born. Pennsylvania had 354,000 illiterates; New Jersey 113,000; Connecticut 53,000, an increase of 11,000 in ten years. In these four states were one-fifth of all the illiterates in the United States. In 1910 the Bureau of Education estimated that there were nearly three million foreign-born whites ten years of age or over who were unable to speak English. The Commissioner

General of Immigration reported that between 1910 and 1919 over four million immigrants arrived from non-English-speaking countries. Twenty-six point five percent of the immigrants fifteen years of age and older who came into the country from 1900 to 1915 were illiterate.²

What many Americans disliked so intensely about the new immigration was not that some were poor, illiterate, radical, or unpatriotic, but that they were changing the United States. Their very presence, regardless of their social or civic qualities, was changing the environment in which most Americans had grown up--or so it seemed to them. As a matter of fact, it was not the immigrant who was changing the nation but the growth of an industrial system which was supplanting a mercantile and agricultural America. It was an industrial revolution that was destroying the countryside, building the slums, enlarging the cities; but it did so by infusing a steady stream of immigrants who differed both in appearance and culture from the long-settled Americans. The problems of an immigrant laborer were easily confused with those issues which were generating conflicts between capital and labor.

²Eighth Annual Report of the Immigrants' Protective League-1917 (Chicago, 1917), p. 12; Herbert Miller, The School and the Immigrant (Cleveland: The Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation, 1916), p. 22; Winthrop Talbot, "Adult Illiteracy," Bureau of Education Bulletin, No. 35 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), p. 15; "Where Will Your City Be after the Census Man Comes Around in 1920?" Americanization, June 1, 1919, p. 16.

Consequently, he suffered loss of prestige in the eyes of all those who were determined to maintain the traditional American patterns. Wherever the immigrant was concerned, native Americans interpreted the economic and social conflicts of industrialism as cultural conflict. Cultural conflict in turn was almost always expressed in terms of Americanization. The new immigrants did not create the sources of the major problems, but it cannot be denied that they did exasperate them. The United States was a young country that had just resolved sectional disunity and was now striving for cultural unity. The American public believed that the new immigrants were devisive in their traditions and religions--a definite threat to American culture. Group unity could best be secured through group likeness, which accounts for the Americanization movement.³ The choice was obvious: conformity or restriction; and since the latter was both against tradition and not yet legal, the former received much support.

Social workers, educators and intellectuals pointed out that the real danger lay not in the fact that the new immigrants were slow to become assimilated, but that American society was making no effort to raise the immigrant

³Nathan Glazer, "The Integration of American Immigrants," Law and Contemporary Problems (Durham: Duke University Press, 1956), p. 258; Stow Persons, "The Americanization of the Immigrant," in Foreign Influences in American Life, ed. David F. Bowers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), pp. 43, 51-52.

to the accepted standard of living. Former peasants who had lived in small rural villages were confused by the complexities of metropolitan life and their adjustments to it were crude and often unsanitary. Social workers maintained that it was not that the immigrants preferred slum living, but that because of financial limitations and ignorance, they had no other choice. Gustave Straubenmuller, associate superintendent of the New York public schools, wrote

It is our duty, not only as a nation, but as individuals, to lend (the immigrant) a helping hand, to give him not only work, but sympathy and encouragement, to help him become one of us. In other words, it is our duty to be active to the best of our ability in the work of making happy and contented American citizens of these seekers for new homes.⁴

Settlement houses sponsored programs which included public sanitation, personal hygiene, civics classes that explained local and Federal government, and English classes. These were the meager tools that a few determined optimists were using to aid the assimilation of these peculiar strangers. Social workers and educators believed that Americanization of all foreign-born residents was essential for the preservation of the republic, and they based their actions on a number of assimilationist ideas.

⁴Gustave Straubenmueller, "The Work of the New York Schools for the Immigrant Class," Journal of Social Science (1906), p. 175.

THEORIES OF AMERICANIZATION

Definitions and theories of assimilation had not been topics of general discussion. It seemed obvious that the new immigrants were very different from Americans and that their differences were the cause of all manner of social, political and economic problems. The public's usual indifference to immigrants disappeared as the news from the war fronts in Europe became more ominous. The clamor for action increased. What to do and how to go about making an American of a European involved much debate.

Some anxious Americans felt that the immigrants needed to be prodded toward cultural conformity. Many of the immigrants had experienced programs to standardize diverse cultures in their homelands. The Russification policy in Poland included the confiscation of estates, the closing of institutions of higher learning, and the secularization of Catholic Church lands. The Warsaw school region was made subordinate to the Russian Ministry of Education in 1839 and by 1850 the Russian language reigned in the secondary schools as well as in the administration. A stringent censorship banned as subversive the works of most of the leading Polish authors. In 1881 programs against Jews occurred in the Ukraine. Pobedonostsev, the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, remarked that the Jewish problem would be solved by the conversion to Orthodoxy of one-third, the emigration of one-third, and the

death of one-third.¹ Such infamous programs could never become models for Americanizers.

The ideals of democracy popularized by politicians at Fourth of July picnics both hampered and aided early Americanization efforts. The essence of democracy was the equal right to self-determination, a toleration of differences and even a reverence for the individual personality. These ideas appeared to allow immigrants to make their own adjustments to American society as they saw fit. However, the democratic concept of majority rule often translated into majority tyranny and a tendency to regard differences from the majority or from the established order as being inferior. It was the latter interpretation of democracy by which business leaders and patriotic groups were able to gain popular support for their goal of erasing the foreignness from the immigrants.

The seeming urgency of the problem and the appeals from patriotic groups to do something caused much action but little thought. One of the earliest theories of assimilation was made popular by Israel Zangwill who described America as

¹Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, A History of Russia (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 368, 437; Isaac B. Berkson, Theories of Americanization (New York: Columbia University Press, 1920), p.

a crucible into which all the characteristics of the immigrants were fused together with those of native Americans to form a totally new, superior citizen. By this theory immigrants would lose their identity but each one would be able to contribute to the new society. The process was to be gradual, taking into consideration the language, customs, and social environment, and building up from these. Old cherished memories and old ideals were not to be forsaken in the anxious endeavor to teach the new.² The melting pot process of assimilation would take a few generations and nativist Americans were not prepared to wait that long. Also, the numbers to assimilate were too great to leave it all to chance.

A few social workers and educators believed that an earlier assimilation could be brought about if cultural pluralism was the standard. They felt that understanding would catalyze the absorption process and make it operate more smoothly. They stressed the value of immigrant traditions and customs to America, and they attempted to make immigrants feel proud of their heritage. The various ethnic groups would remain as social assets in American life and together they would engage in commerce, in political and social life, take advantage of all the opportunities for educational and cultural

²Israel Zangwill, The Melting Pot (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913).

development and fulfill whatever responsibilities citizenship implied. Cultural pluralism would establish accepted political, social and economic values of American life, while contributing the finer elements in the ethnic tradition. Such a practice would change some of the functions of the public school. The traditional method of the public school was to level all cultural differences among its pupils and to send forth a uniform product with the dominant civilization stamped upon them. This would be replaced by the conscious effort to marshal all the cultural contributions of the races and nations represented in the student-body, to bring those before the students in a form easily grasped and to build up in them the attitude of intelligent and sympathetic insight into the life of diverse peoples.³

Cultural pluralism was not satisfactory to many because it permitted immigrants to continue their Old World ways of dressing and talking--obvious deviations that were irritatingly un-American. During the Americanization crusade, the social settlement workers fought a rearguard action against the militant nationalists.

³Merle Curti, Roots of American Loyalty (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), p. 238; Horace M. Kallen, "The Meaning of Americanism," Immigrants in America Review I, (January, 1916), pp. 12-19; Isaac B. Berkson, Theories of Americanization (New York: Columbia University Press, 1920), pp. 102, 106; Julius Drachsler, Democracy and Assimilation (New York: Macmillan, 1920, p. 189.

The only solution the Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic spokesmen could accept was for all immigrants to rid themselves of their old characteristics as quickly as possible and completely accept the language, customs and aspirations of American citizens. The immigrants must mold themselves into the ready-made form and leave no trace of their original identities. President Theodore Roosevelt represented the advocates of compulsory Americanization. "I would have the Government provide that every immigrant be required to learn English, with instruction furnished free. If after five years he has not learned it, let him be returned to the country from which he came."⁴ Americanization challenged the idea that America's ethnic uniqueness and superiority sprang from its heterogeneous population. By denying the right of the immigrant to modify and contribute to the development of Americanism, the Americanization theory violated a notion of democracy that the person involved must be considered as the end. In this view true liberty was served not by the enrichment of possibilities, but by the establishment of uniformity. Between the deeper implications of democracy and the common notion of Americanization there was an almost unbridgeable gulf. The central idea of one negated the central idea of the other. Americanization, striving to create a homogeneous people by a process which

⁴Ibid., p. 194.

could only produce superficial similarities and the illusion of unity, ignored the claims of individuality.⁵

Around 1900 militant nationalists launched enthusiastic crusades through such patriotic societies as the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Society of Colonial Dames, and the Sons of the American Revolution. In 1907, the SAR spent half of its annual income trying to make aliens "good citizens." In their propaganda campaigns, these groups urged a common effort to make immigrants embrace their version of Americanism: use of the English language, reverence for the Constitution and founding fathers, and above all reverence for their version of law and order. With the outbreak of World War I in Europe, the militant nationalists, together with powerful aggregates of businessmen, came to dominate the Americanization movement.⁶

Public-spirited businessmen in New England turned to Americanization largely because they feared for their economic order. Since the 1890's this region had experienced a rapid change in the nationality origins of its population, and more recently, it had witnessed a marked increase in the recruiting

⁵ Carol Aronovici, Americanization (St. Paul: Keller Publishing Company, 1919), p. 9; Berkson, p. 71; Drachsler, p. 211.

⁶ Edward G. Hartman, The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant (New York: reprint AMS Press, 1967), pp. 31-36.

activities of socialists and other radical groups. Reluctant to advocate restricted immigration because of their dependence on foreign-born labor, the businessmen turned instead to a campaign to combat radicalism. The instrument of their efforts was the North American Civic League for Immigrants, founded in 1908, three years after the establishment of the Industrial Workers of the World.⁷

Grace Abbott was bitterly realistic when she remarked,

People who have been stirred by nationalism have said that 'we ought to get the immigrants into our evening schools and teach them American ideals.' These enthusiastic patriots seem quite unconscious of the fact that, because the immigrant is so inadequately protected against fraud and exploitation and because he so frequently suffers from racial discrimination, it is perhaps necessary to get him into a room and to tell him how different our beliefs with regard to social and political equality are from our practices. But until we live these beliefs we cannot honestly represent them to the immigrants as American.⁸

The trouble was that there was no unified thought, no coordinated effort, no general agreement as to just what Americanism was. Those actively engaged in the work often resolved their apprehension through anti-radical and anti-foreign propaganda.⁹

⁷"Reports of Foreign-speaking Organizations," Proceedings of the Socialist Party 1912 (no. pub., no city), pp. 237-242; Ira Kipnis, The American Socialist Movement (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 272-274.

⁸Grace Abbott, "The Education of the Immigrant" in Americanization by Winthrop Talbot (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1917), p. 223.

⁹Edward Hale Bierstadt, Aspects of Americanization (Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Company, 1922), p. 26.

Everyone working toward the assimilation of the immigrants, from visiting nurses to the Sons of the Revolution, agreed on one point. The knowledge of English by the immigrants was of paramount importance. The public school system was considered to be the best dispenser of that knowledge which would transform a Southern European peasant into a productive, law-abiding citizen.

EARLY ASSIMILATION EFFORTS

The attendance of aliens in formal classes in English at a public school was generally neither likely nor possible. Many immigrants managed their social and employment affairs satisfactorily without being literate in English, and those who desired to learn English were hindered by long work hours and distance from school. In 1910 only a few metropolitan centers had public schools classes for immigrants. Private immigrant aid organizations campaigned for the establishment of classes in the public schools and encouraged the immigrants to attend.

The prospects for many non-English-speaking immigrants to learn English were poor. Most of the arriving immigrants were between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, well past the age of compulsory school attendance. Over two and a half million of the non-English-speaking aliens who entered the United States in 1910 were twenty-one years of age or older. The majority of southern and eastern European immigrants were single men or men whose wives and families remained in the native country. These men lived in boarding or rooming groups and because of the absence of family life, had little or no incentive to learn English, to become acquainted with American institutions or to adopt American standards. The absence of family life was undoubtedly the influence which most effectively retarded assimilation. The majority of male immigrants

entered occupations where the knowledge of English was not necessary. They could get a satisfactory job with others of the same national origin and become good workers. Those who lived in cities with a large population of their compatriots who provided the essentials of commerce for themselves were seldom inconvenienced by their lack of English.¹

The boards of education in some cities recognized that a speaking and reading knowledge of English was one of the most effective means of assimilation and they welcomed foreigners to night classes. In 1879 there were 42 evening schools in Manhattan and Brooklyn, attended by 1,377 foreigners who were taught to speak, to read, and to write English in special classes. The Board of Education in Chicago sponsored English classes in the Italian section in 1892; one instructor taught five evenings a week. Detroit noted great interest in the night schools on the part of many immigrants in 1904, and set up special classes for Jews, Italians, and Greeks in 1906. Rochester, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Cincinnati, and Boston were also among the cities which took the lead in immigrant education work during the first decade of the 20th century. In 1904 the Commissioner of Education reported the

¹Grace Abbott, The Immigrant and the Community (New York: The Century Company, 1917), p. 221; Frank V. Thompson, Schooling of the Immigrant (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), p. 30; Immigration Commission Report (1911), p. 33; Henry Pratt Fairchild, Immigrant (New York: Macmillan, 1925), p. 375.

percentage of foreign-born pupils in the evening schools of four cities: Chicago, 61.3%; New York, 30.2%; Philadelphia, 28.4%; and Jersey City, 26.8%. The inclusion in the statistics of students of foreign-born parents would have greatly increased the number of "foreign" students. The foreign-born pupils and those of foreign-born parents represented 83% of the night school students in Chicago.²

Indicative of the growing importance of the education of the immigrant was the passage by New Jersey in 1907, of the first state legislation in support of evening classes in English and civics for the foreign-born. Boards of education were authorized to establish and to maintain evening schools and classes for instruction in the English language and in the form of government and laws of the State of New Jersey and the United States. To insure uniformity of administration and of instruction, provision was made by the State Board of Education to prescribe rules for the proper control and management of the schools, for their inspection, and for teacher certification. Establishment of evening schools was encouraged. According to the law, state aid to local schools was authorized

²Third Annual Report of the City Superintendent of Schools for the Year Ending July 31, 1901 (New York: 1901), p. 51; Forty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education for the Year Ending June 30, 1903 (Chicago, 1904), p. 65; Gustave Straubenmueller, "The Work of the New York Schools for the Immigrant Class," Journal of Social Science (1906), p. 175; L'Italia, (October 29, 1892), Foreign Language Press Survey; Arthur D. Jones, "The Continuation School in the United States," Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 1 (Washington: GPO, 1907), p. 98.

in equal proportion to the amount raised in support of the schools by the local boards. This was the first instance where the necessity for special facilities for foreign-born residents of a state was recognized and endorsed by a state government.³

The problem was not as well defined by others concerned with the immigrant. Settlements had been doing Americanization work long before the term was invented. Social workers who lived and worked in the midst of tenements were sympathetic to the needs of the immigrants and the adjustments of the immigrants to American society were ends in themselves, not means to an end. Other organizations sprang into existence as a direct result of what was known as the immigrant problem. Some were entirely non-partisan and endeavored to meet the immigrant on his own terms, supplying his particular educational needs. An example was the Immigrants' Protective League in Chicago. Private immigrant aid organizations were much more flexible than state or local governmental aid agencies. The staff members often extended themselves in long hours of work to help an immigrant worker collect a pension, get a job, or locate missing relatives. Financial support depended upon contributions, but the organizations had the interests of the immigrants at heart.

³H. H. Wehaton, "Recent Progress in the Education of the Immigrant," Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year Ended June 30, 1911, I, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), p. 427.

The first active Americanization group, the North American Civic League for Immigrants, was formed in 1907 as the result of a conference sponsored by the YMCA of philanthropists, social workers and industrial leaders. The organization of the League based in Boston reflected the fear over the possible termination of American institutions that was current among native American groups during the first decade of the 20th century. The new League's president, D. Chauncey Brewer, summarized the basis for the League:

Those who have made the cause of the League their own, have abundant faith in the American people and in the future of constitutional government as it exists in North America. They also believe that the majority of the immigrants entering the continent or who may become residents here, are well meaning, and may become useful citizens if they receive the attention to which they are not only entitled as a matter of humanity, but which prudence necessitates because of their⁴ relation to our economic and political affairs.

Believing in a campaign of education for the immigrant, the League cooperated with the public school authorities in advertising and sponsoring night programs and lectures for the adult. It did not attempt to teach the immigrants directly; rather, it encouraged the public schools to increase their educational facilities in order to reach a larger number

⁴North American Civic League for Immigrants, Annual Report, 1910-1911 (Boston: no. pub., 1912), p. 9; Chauncey Brewer, "A Patriotic Movement for the Assimilation of Immigrants," Editorial Review, III (August, 1910), p. 800.

of immigrants. Public school authorities were asked to open more classes for foreigners and to keep existing classes open for longer terms. In a plea for more and better opportunities for the education of the immigrant, Mr. Brewer stated,

It is absurdity to claim that immigrants can intelligently perform a voter's duty until they understand something of the language and obligations of citizenship. Therefore nothing is more essential to the welfare of any city or town than the maintenance of night schools in which these people may be instructed. The North American Civic League for Immigrants has no more important function to perform than to push the teaching of⁵ English and Primary Civics to the immigrants.

The activities of the North American Civic League created growing interest in similar work in the New York area and a New York-New Jersey Committee of the North American Civic League for Immigrants was formed in 1909. Their program consisted of assimilation, education, distribution, naturalization, and protection of the aliens. The League cooperated with Polish societies and encouraged 290 men to register at public night school in New York City in 1911. It published a pamphlet entitled "How to Secure First Papers" in five foreign-English combinations and distributed them through night schools, public libraries, and national societies. In Buffalo, New York, the League entered the field of domestic

⁵North American Civic League for Immigrants, Annual Report, 1909-1910 (Boston: no pub., 1911), pp. 20-21.

education in 1911 with home visits and classes in marketing, hygiene, sewing and cooking. A survey revealed that Rochester had no public school in a Polish immigrant section despite its population of nearly 7,000; so in June 1912, the League opened a Polish Institute in small rented quarters to teach adult immigrants English. Special classes for immigrant women were set up, while a branch of the Rochester Public Library was established at the Institute in cooperation with the Polish National Alliance which furnished the books.⁶

These few examples illustrate the variety of service rendered and always with the cooperation of local immigrant groups. After a program had proved successful, the League would then move to make the local board of education or other civic agency responsible for its continuation, thereby releasing the League for other areas of service. The League had taken the first steps toward interesting the nation in a concerted movement on behalf of the education of the immigrant.

The knowledge of English on the part of the foreign workman became an economic asset to the employer. Immigrant workers comprised thirty to forty percent of the work force

⁶Report of the Commission of Immigration of the State of New York, (Albany: State of New York, 1909), p. 36; New York-New Jersey Committee of the North American Civic League for Immigrants, Summary from December 1909 to February 1913 (New York: no pub., 1913), pp. 10-15; Hartmann, p. 49.

in many eastern and northern industrial centers in 1910, making some employers more aware of their presence than the general public. New state compulsory compensation laws made the employer liable for the results of accidents and thus plant safety became important. Under new court decisions the inability of the foreign workman to read signs or to understand instructions made his employment costly. In the same period, industrial engineers began to give attention to the cost of labor overturn and it was apparent that the customary method of hiring and firing workmen was uneconomical. Investigation showed that non-English-speaking employees were unstable, shifting and irresponsible, with the inevitable conclusion that to secure better workmen the proper corrective was to teach English.⁷

An influence that was to determine the future actions of the North American Civic League for Immigrants was recognized when it sponsored a conference of New England industrial leaders on March 19, 1910 in Boston. After a thorough discussion of the immigrant situation, the meeting praised the work which the League had been carrying on in protecting and

⁷William L. Prosser, Handbook of the Law of Torts (St. Paul: West Publishing Company, 1941), pp. 518-520; Frank V. Thompson, "The School as the Instrument for Nationalization Here, and Elsewhere," in Immigration and Americanization, ed. Philip Davis (New York: Ginn and Company, 1920), p. 597; George Payne, "The School and the Immigrant," in Immigration and Americanization, ed. Philip Davis (New York: Ginn and Company, 1920), p. 603.

educating the immigrants, and recommended continued support of the League's programs both as a means of "self-preservation" from the menace of immigrant "radical" action, and because of its economic value to every industrial section in which it operated. A circular containing a powerful appeal for action in support of the League was issued and distributed widely in an attempt to organize the industrial interests solidly behind an active program of Americanization of the immigrant worker. The response, which was considered extremely favorable, no doubt resulted from the economic advantages of employing workmen who could understand and speak English, as well as a psychological reaction to the labor troubles in various industrial communities.⁸

The members of the New York-New Jersey Committee of the North American Civic League believed that their programs were, for the most part, successful. In 1914 they felt the time appropriate to extend their program to the entire nation. They changed the name of their organization to the Committee for Immigrants in America, and converted it into a practical clearing house for information, literature, plans, standards, methods, experts, and aid of all sorts relating to the Americanization of the immigrant. It became eventually a

⁸North American Civic League for Immigrants, Annual Report 1911-1912 (Boston: no pub., 1913), p. 6; North American Civic League for Immigrants, Annual Report 1912-1914 (Boston: no pub., 1914), p. 5.

general consulting headquarters for immigrant and Americanization work throughout the country. In April of 1914 it suggested to Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, that the Bureau of Education undertake to sponsor programs on behalf of the education and Americanization of the immigrant in so far as possible. The response to the Committee's suggestions was very cordial for both Secretary Lane and Commissioner of Education, P. P. Claxton, had gone on record as favoring the new movement to Americanize the immigrant. Because no funds were available for the work, and no expert services were at the command of the Bureau, the Committee for Immigrants in America provided the necessary money as well as a complete staff of investigators and other experienced personnel to allow the Division to function. One of the Committee's staff members, H. H. Wheaton, was in charge of the new Division with the title of Specialist in Immigrant Education.⁹

The Bureau of Education found that few established and well-approved standards for the education of the immigrants existed and that practically all methods of conducting such classes were in the experimental stage. Public agencies and private ones of various kinds were endeavoring, each in its own way, to treat the problem without any definite effort to

⁹Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1914, I, pp. xiv, xxii.

cooperate with other agencies, and with no fixed policies.

Immigrant education was considered at this time as primarily a matter for local attention and jurisdiction. The spectacle of cities working out methods independently and adopting fads in immigrant education without the coordinating influence of even a clearing house of information was so common as hardly to excite comment. State supervision, and especially state aid, had not been seriously considered.¹⁰

While the Bureau of Education was inaugurating its work of stimulating and publicizing immigrant educational activities, the Bureau of Naturalization was authorized to determine whether or not candidates for citizenship were fit for that status. The Bureau considered taking steps to sponsor classes in citizenship as early as 1910, but no action was taken by the Bureau at that time. Stimulated, however, by the action of the public school authorities of Hartford, Connecticut, who had organized such classes through conferences with naturalization officers and Judge James P. Platt of the United States District Court, and by the formation of similar classes in other parts of New England, at Rock Island, Illinois, and elsewhere throughout the nation, the Bureau began to consider the problem seriously in the latter part of 1913.¹¹ The Federal Bureau of Naturalization entered the Americanization movement by joining forces with the public schools in the spring of 1914 to sponsor a

¹⁰H. H. Wheaton, "Education of Immigrants," Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1916, I, p. 339.

¹¹Annual Report of the Commissioner of Naturalization to the Secretary of Labor 1916 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), pp. 34-35.

system of citizenship classes throughout the nation.

The early stages of the movement to Americanize the immigrants were characterized by sympathetic actions from private immigrant aid organizations and by a number of English classes sponsored by local boards of education. Most immigrant aid activities, whether educational or charitable, were not regulated or supervised by local authorities and perhaps because of this, they were able to respond to the needs of the immigrants as resources allowed. Business leaders supported efforts to educate the immigrants because of the economic advantages in employing workers who could speak English. Groups and organizations interested in assimilating the immigrants agreed that the public schools were an important factor in their efforts, and federal bureaus sanctioned the idea. There was no agreement concerning how to assimilate the immigrants except that the public school was the best place for them to learn English and civics.

NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR AMERICANIZATION THROUGH EDUCATION

The American public threw a startled look toward Europe in November of 1914, and then took a long agonizing look at itself. American society was not an amalgamation of all the peoples who had moved to this country, as the melting-pot theory had predicted. Indeed, the mythical pot had barely seemed to warm up, considering the number of non-English-speaking adults who had lived here for years. Suddenly a majority of Americans saw the dangers of unassimilated foreign communities in their society, a problem which social workers and patriotic organizations had long tried to warn them. Hundreds of civic and social groups expressed their willingness to help solve the problem, but few people knew what to do. It seemed that the only remedy was to make the foreigners Americans: to wear American clothes, to read, write, and speak English, and most importantly, to become citizens. With these goals accomplished it was believed that the foreigners would no longer care about their former countries and traditions and that their total loyalty would be to the United States.

The Federal Bureau of Naturalization laid the plans for the beginning of a nation-wide Americanization movement. The Bureau suggested to the mayor of Philadelphia that he hold a reception for the newly naturalized citizens as a means of publicizing its program of citizenship education in its public

schools. The mayor agreed, and plans were made to hold the reception on May 10, 1915. Such a meeting was not exactly new, for as early as July 4, 1910, Rochester, New York, had given a banquet and reception in honor of its newly naturalized citizens attended by public officials and other notables of the city as a token of its recognition of the need for a more intelligent attitude toward the immigrant. But the importance of the Philadelphia reception lay in the definite bid which was being made on a national scale for support of the Bureau's citizenship plans.¹

The recognition of new citizens in Philadelphia, publicized by the Committee for Immigrants in America and the Bureaus of Education and Naturalization, prompted many cities across the nation to plan their own Americanization Day Activities. When the Fourth of July, 1915 arrived, over one hundred and fifty cities observed it as Americanization Day to foster in the hearts of the new citizens and immigrants a spirit of higher patriotism and of loyalty to their adopted land. "Emphasis in almost every city celebration was laid on the fact that while European nations were locked in deadly combat, the sons of these same nations in America through common interests and loyalties could live in peaceful neighborliness."²

¹Annual Report of the Commissioner of Naturalization to the Secretary of Labor 1916, p. 36; Edwin A. Rumball, "Rochester's Civic Banquet," Survey XXIV (July 31, 1910), p. 604.

²"Americanization Day in 150 Communities," Survey XXIV (July 31, 1915), p. 390.

The practical results of the celebrations were rewarding. Some of the specific activities begun as a result of Americanization Day were: the campaign of the Detroit Board of Commerce to increase the registration of the non-English-speaking immigrants in the public evening schools, the authorization of citizenship classes in connection with the elementary evening schools by the Boston School Committee, the installation of systems of teaching English in a number of industries, the cooperation of chambers of commerce in many places with the public schools in support of immigrant classes in English and citizenship, and the formation of permanent Americanization Day Committees in many localities pledged to carry on further plans for the Americanization of the immigrant. Noting the fact that some mayors issued special proclamations for the first time, Miss Frances Kellor wrote:

If Americanization Day did not succeed in reaching the entire country, it did succeed in setting in motion a far-reaching campaign for national solidarity as important in its way as the building of battleships, and the organization of standing armies; a campaign tending alike to peace and defense, and the surest guarantee of both.³

At the close of the Americanization Day campaign, the National Americanization Day Committee decided to change

³Frances Kellor, "By-Products of Americanization Day," Immigrants in America Review, I, No. 3 (September 1915), pp. 16-17; Frances Kellor, "Americanization through Art," Immigrants in America Review I, No. 3 (September 1915), pp. 6-7.

its name to the National Americanization Committee and remain in permanent existence. The Committee began an "English Language First" movement to get immigrants into the night schools where they could learn English and to promote such schools in every immigrant center. An "America First" campaign was also started to facilitate the naturalization of foreigners by establishing civics classes where there were night schools, by making a direct connection between them and the naturalization courts, and by adopting standardized courses of study in all schools that prepared for citizenship.⁴

To carry out its English First campaign, the National Americanization Committee decided upon an experiment. Realizing that the Board of Education of Detroit had become aware of the 75% foreign-born in its population, and that employers had more influence on their workers than anyone, the Committee joined the Detroit Board of Commerce to sponsor an English First movement in the fall of 1915. The Board of Commerce contacted employers of immigrant labor and all agencies working with the immigrant in the city and gained their support to convince non-English-speaking workmen of the advantages of learning English. The employers chose different methods

⁴Hartmann, p. 124.

to bring the night schools to the attention of their men. The results were phenomenal. Registration in the night schools rose 153% over the attendance of the previous year. Moreover, employers, civic groups, church officials, and a score of others, had Americanization brought to their attention in a fashion which the Board felt could not have been accomplished in any other way. The experiment of full-fledged Americanization had been tried and at least on the surface undertaken successfully. The Detroit experiment was to be repeated time and time again.⁵

Advocates of assimilation of the immigrants were able to make the idea popular in 1915 because of the beginning of hostilities in Europe and the co-ordinated support of the Bureaus of Education and Naturalization. In August of 1915 thirty-eight communities pledged their public schools to the support and development of citizenship classes in cooperation with the Bureau of Naturalization. The campaign to Americanize the immigrants began in a spirit of fellowship and good will, certainly a promising commencement.

The Federal Bureau of Naturalization, under the direction of Raymond F. Crist, continued its citizenship drive along the lines laid down in 1914. During the period,

⁵ Esther Everett Lape, "The 'English First' Movement in Detroit," Immigrants in America Review, I, No. 3 (September 1915), pp. 46-50.

September 1915 to July 1916, the Bureau distributed approximately 12,931 copies of its influential pamphlet, "Proceedings of the Naturalization Conference" held at Philadelphia, 15,014 copies of a new pamphlet entitled, "Outline Course in Citizenship," and 3,527 copies of the pamphlet entitled, "Syllabus of the Naturalization Law," all for the use of school teachers in connection with their Americanization work. The Bureau was very careful to point out that it was not attempting to assume the role of educator, but was merely serving as an aid to the public schools in their citizenship programs. The Division of Immigrant Education of the Bureau of Education made itself the national clearing house for all types of information on the Americanization movement. It had done much toward establishing standards and methods in the education of the immigrants, and toward welding into one united force all the agencies dealing educationally with the Americanization movement. Approximately 96,958 circulars, newspapers, newsletters, schedules of standards and syllabi were distributed; 29,400 news releases on the progress of the movement; 57,000 enrollment blanks; 9,265 'America First' posters; 5,719 pamphlets and bulletins.⁶

⁶Annual Report of the Commissioner of Naturalization 1916, pp. 25, 40; Report of the Commissioner of Education 1917, I, p. 63.

Many more local Americanization activities were begun in 1916. A survey of the evening school maintained by the city of Chicago made by the Immigrants' Protective League resulted in the formation of a joint Committee on the Education of the Foreigner composed of delegates from the Chicago Association of Commerce, the Union League Club, the City Club, the various Women's Clubs, and the League itself. The Committee agitated for a bigger and better immigrant education program. In Pittsburgh, a special bureau was opened to deal with all immigrant questions by the Civic Club of Allegheny County. Cincinnati issued a special mimeographed "Course of Study in History and Government for Petitioners for Naturalization in the Citizenship Schools". In Buffalo, citizens formed the civic Education Association in the spring of 1916 which sponsored a vigorous Americanization campaign during the next three years. Syracuse and Rochester also began special education programs for the immigrant. In Cleveland the Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation issued its section of the survey dealing with the school and the immigrant, and criticized the arrangement of the adult immigrant education program. As a result, a more intensive effort was made to interest the immigrant in the evening schools and to make

the classes more attractive.⁷

The Committee on Immigration of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States reported a nation-wide interest in "industrial Americanization". A program would establish the fundamental principles of Americanism for workers in all industries. The minimum requirements were American citizenship and undivided allegiance, a common language, an American standard of living, one American industrial standard, a home stake in America, reasonable stability of population, and industrial justice--the same standard for both employer and employee. To bring this more clearly to the attention of the local chambers, the Committee arranged through the chambers of commerce of fourteen cities a series of Industrial Americanization Conferences at which local conditions were presented, principles of work discussed, and methods of Americanization outlined.⁸ Many cities followed up the suggestions offered, and a number of improvements were reported in various industries as a result.

Evening schools were the most common means of educating the alien adult. Most educators realized that knowledge of

⁷Seventh Annual Report of the Immigrants' Protective League (Chicago, no. pub., 1916), pp. 10-11; "Immigrant Education in Cleveland," Immigrants in America Review, II, No. 2, (July 1916), p. 25; Miller, pp. 85-95.

⁸Hartmann, p. 150.

English was no proof that an alien was assimilated, but it was perhaps the most essential step in that direction, and more importantly, it seemed easy to achieve. Some believed that only if one spoke English could one learn to think in American patterns about democracy. Various private agencies created and maintained English and civics classes, frequently soliciting contributions for their support from the general public. Frequently the educational facilities and instruction were unsuited to the types, needs, and conditions of the immigrants with the result that immigrant men and women attended classes of no practical value either to them or to the country as an Americanizing influence. In several states, particularly California, instances were found where immigrants paid from \$25.00 to \$50.00 for a two weeks' course in English and civil government in order to pass their naturalization examinations. So-called political clubs were formed in many localities by foreign-born citizens who, under the guise of giving civic training, promoted the interests of certain politicians or a particular political party.⁹

Unfortunately red tape and restrictions prevented the immediate and effective use of public evening schools in many locations. By 1915 only three states: New Jersey, California

⁹ Fairchild, Immigration, p. 400; Earl Barnes, "Spoken English as a Factor in Americanization," NEA Preceedings 1918, Vol. 56, pp. 171-173; H. H. Wheaton, "Education of Immigrants," Report of the Commissioner of Education 1916, I, p. 340.

and Massachusetts, specifically mentioned evening schools by name and authorized their establishment. The provisions in many state constitutions deterred the establishment and extension of evening school facilities. The constitutions of nineteen southern and midwestern states authorized expenditures for free schools only for children from six to twenty-one years of age, and these laws discouraged legislatures from separate appropriations for evening school purposes and discouraged local communities from using their own resources. In 1916 all but four states removed or modified the restrictions of appropriations for adult education. The Bureau of Naturalization wrote to the governors of North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and New Mexico, calling their attention to the work of the Bureau and recommending that legislation be enacted so that the Bureau could engage in its programs in those states. The Bureau looked upon their favorable responses as great forward steps toward a uniform movement throughout the United States to provide means of furnishing citizenship training for the foreign-born.¹⁰

Once evening schools were established the problem of attracting and holding the foreign students began. The Detroit Americanization campaign of 1915 that was previously

¹⁰First Annual Report of the Bureau of Immigration, 1917-1918 (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1919), p. 34; H. H. Wheaton, "Education of Immigrants," in Immigration and Americanization ed. Philip Davis (New York: Ginn and Company, 1920), p. 573; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Naturalization 1917, p. 62.

mentioned provided a number of suggestions for the encouragement of the foreign worker to attend night school that became popular throughout the nation. The Board of Education and the Board of Commerce in Detroit printed a leaflet entitled "Do your father and mother speak English? Take this card Home; it will tell them where to go to learn." Inside was a list of night schools. These were given to all children of foreign parentage in schools, playgrounds, libraries and clinics. They were enclosed with pay envelopes and pension checks for four weeks. Foreign newspapers printed lists and directions for the night schools and visiting nurses, social workers, and clergy were asked to spread the information and encourage attendance.¹¹

Employers used several methods to attract students. Some told their workers that men who were going to night school and trying to learn English would be preferred--the first to be promoted, the last to be laid off, the first to be taken back. Several companies made night school attendance for the non-English-speaking a condition of employment. The Northway Company established a factory school and then gave its men a threefold proposition: attend night school, attend the factory school, or be laid off. The Cadillac Company worked out a program to interest the leaders of the men, and let them do

¹¹"The Working Plan of the Detroit Campaign," Immigrant Leaflet No. 2 (San Francisco: Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, 1916), p. 2.

the rest. The Solway Company proposed a 2-cent-an-hour increase for all non-English-speaking men who attended night school. One employer protested that the nature of his work required long shifts and that it would be impossible to meet the evening school hours. After a half-hour conference, the superintendent of the Detroit school agreed to furnish ten public school teachers for the eight hundred men in the plant, in the factory, with half the instruction time taken off the men's regular shift.¹²

Management support for a similar campaign in Cleveland the following year was not as enthusiastic. The Cleveland City Immigration Bureau sent 110 letters to the leading factories of the city where foreigners were employed, requesting the names and addresses of all their workmen who did not speak English. Seven factories responded. The Bureau planned to write personal letters to each of the men listed, but because of the expense involved in writing several foreign languages, printed literature in eight languages was substituted. Frantic efforts to fill night school classes did increase the number of enrollments. Some sensitive aliens noted that the more recent Americanization efforts were less tactful than earlier ones. To many immigrants such tactics

¹²Idem.

were viewed with irritation or, at the best, contempt.¹³

The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce reflected the cosmopolitan atmosphere when it made a survey of the industries in the city in order to determine the number of employees who wished or needed the opportunity to learn English. The following refined appeal was sent to employers:

We are inclosing herewith a list of alien employees in your establishment who have signified a desire to attend night school and fit themselves for citizenship. They should have your encouragement and support, for at this time an expression of personal interest from you may be just the thing needed to convince the doubtful and the wavering . . . One of the chief difficulties is to sustain the interest of the pupil until he has properly completed the course, and they may be largely overcome by delegating someone of sympathy and understanding who will watch the progress of the students and given encouragement and advice where needed.

The same low-pressure approach was used in the individual letters to the non-English-speaking workers telling them that the school board had made special classes for them, that they would be welcome, and that the classes "will cost you nothing and you will learn much that will make you happier to live and work in America."¹⁴

¹³Cleveland City Immigration Bureau, Annual Report for 1916, pp. 1-2; Daniel Chauncey Brewer, "Americanization--Three Queries," Immigration Journal, I, No. 2 (April 1916), p. 24.

¹⁴Outstanding Cooperation in the Americanization of California," in Immigration and Americanization ed. Philip Davis (New York: Ginn and Company, 1920), p. 464.

In 1916 the Bureau of Naturalization began to furnish to state superintendents of public instruction the name of all who had filed their first or second papers. The aliens and their wives were urged to attend any of the public evening school classes that they wished. Interestingly, prior to 1916, publicity for night school had been in English and was thus incomprehensible to foreigners.¹⁵

The hasty attempts to enroll large numbers of non-English-speaking immigrants in evening schools resulted in increased registrations, but declining attendance. The Immigrants' Protective League reported that in 1915 only seven percent of the total enrolled in night classes in Chicago attended more than seventy evenings, while twenty-three percent attended fewer than twenty evenings. Clearly the evening schools were not holding their students. In 1916 a follow-up system was begun by the League to secure the prompt return of those who dropped out. The visiting teacher of the League was a man who spoke Lithuanian, Polish, German, and Russian. Of 192 former students he visited, forty-eight returned to school as well as forty-two others whom the visiting teacher had interested in the classes. School principals reported numerous and varied reasons for the lack

¹⁵Richard K. Campbell, "Methods of Americanization," Immigration Journal I, No. 2 (April 1916), p. 23; "The America First Campaign," Immigration Journal, I, No. 7, (September 1916), p. 92.

of continued attendance. Many workers left because of overtime, change from day to night work, fatigue, change of teachers, and discouragement over the slow progress made. There were other reasons as well. Some left to attend private schools maintained by teachers who spoke their language, others found the classes badly classified and that the pace was either too fast or too slow. Many would have returned after the busy season in their trade was ended, but thought the rest of the class would be ahead of them and preferred to wait a year until a new class was formed; others found four evenings a week more than they could give while others thought it was not enough.¹⁶

Nationally, the most common practice of keeping students was the required deposit of one dollar returnable upon good attendance to the end of the course. Of 429 cities, seventy-seven charged a fee which discouraged attendance more than it regularized it. The best means of maintaining attendance in the evening schools were: (1) satisfactory lighting, heating, ventilation, and seating equipment; (2) a teacher who was friendly, sympathetic, resourceful and efficient; (3) good classification with frequent regrading; (4) work adapted to the ability and needs of students, including the

¹⁶Eighth Annual Report of the Immigrants' Protective League 1917, p. 12; Ninth Annual Report of the Immigrants' Protective League 1918, p. 20; Seventh Annual Report of the Immigrants' Protective League 1916, p. 17.

right kind of textbooks; (5) a feeling on the part of the student that he was making rapid progress; (6) giving advice and help in personal matters, such as finding employment, giving free legal advice in minor affairs, helping to prevent abuse and exploitation of the students; (7) occasional variation in the program including moving pictures, concerts, entertainments, brief talks by local leaders, dancing, and club meetings.¹⁷

Universal recognition that assimilation of the foreign born was necessary came after hostilities began in Europe. The Federal Bureaus of Naturalization and Education were prepared for the sudden interest in assimilation and they encouraged the enrollment of the non-English-speaking in public school evening classes. The efforts of public and private groups to establish and expand public school facilities were often hampered by restrictive state constitutions, economy-minded state legislatures and local school boards. The English First campaign in Detroit in 1915 became the example for other communities by the use of massive publicity and, in some cases, coercion of non-English speaking workers to attend English classes. However, majorities of students

¹⁷Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1916, I, p. 343; John L. Riley, "Administration and Organization of Immigrant Education in the State of New York," University of the State of New York Bulletin No. 765 (September 1, 1922) rpt. Immigration ed. Edith Abbott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 577.

across the nation did not complete the courses because of fatigue, discouragement with their progress, and change from day to night work. The first phase of the Americanization movement began with haste and paternalism toward the immigrants; hundreds of classes were in progress, but the immigrants were still foreign.

EVENING ENGLISH CLASSES

Although everyone agreed that a knowledge of English was helpful to immigrants, the classes and instruction varied in regard to quality and frequency, even to the point of non-existence. The establishment of evening schools was entirely optional on the part of local boards of education in most states, including such principal immigration states as California, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The result was that evening-school facilities were not maintained in a large number of communities where a genuine demand and need existed. In New York, with a foreign-born population of 2,729,272, the largest in the country, a state having 148 urban centers with over 2,500 inhabitants, and 71 urban centers with over 1,000 foreign-born residents, the number of cities maintaining evening schools was forty-one. The reluctance of some school boards to establish English and civics classes caused groups of immigrants to send petitions requesting such classes to their local boards of education and even to the Bureau of Education in Washington.¹

The schedule and length of evening sessions varied with local interest and resources. In forty-three cities of over 100,000 population reporting, the sessions ranged from

¹H. H. Wheaton, "Education of Immigrants," Report of the Commissioner of Education 1916, I, p. 343.

46 to 187, with 83 as the average. Of the 102 cities of 25,000 to 100,000 population reporting, the sessions ranged from 40 to 185 with 79 as the average. Of 113 cities of 10,000 to 25,000 inhabitants reporting, the average number of sessions was 59. The standard number of classes seemed to be three a week on alternate evenings. Of 375 cities reporting in 1916, 175 had classes three evenings per week and 102 had four. The length of a class session was usually well standardized at two hours, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. The sessions usually began in October and ended in March, without regard for the convenience of the adult immigrant. During the periods of normal immigration the largest numbers arrived in the spring and summer, so there was definitely a need for summer classes. The evening public schools received students any time during the session but new classes were not organized nor was the school widely advertised except in the fall.²

Immigrants who overcame obstacles of time and inconvenience to enroll in public school night classes in English were often bewildered by the instruction given. In Cleveland in 1915 investigators discovered husky men busily copying, "I am a yellow bird. I can sing. I can fly. I can sing to you."³ At the time there were better methods of teaching

²Idem; Grace Abbott, The Immigrant and the Community (New York: The Century Company, 1917), p. 240.

³Miller, p. 92.

English.

The earliest coordinated system of text and method that was written especially for the adult immigrants was called the Roberts Method, developed by Dr. Peter Roberts around 1910. His technique was used by the YMCA in its immigrant classes across the country. The method was based on the belief that a language was learned by hearing and speaking it, not through written exercises. He believed that the lessons must concern the immediate needs and activities of the students and be presented in logical subject units. The equipment needed consisted of thirty lessons in leaflet form: ten in the Domestic Series, ten in the Industrial (mine and mill), and ten in the Commercial Series. Sets of cards and charts for reading and conversation plus a set of examinations completed the materials. The teacher acted out the meaning of the lesson, whether "Getting up in the morning" or "Changing the Roving Bobbin" in the Industrial Series. The five steps in teaching a lesson were: oral, exaggerated gestures and verbal repetition; reading, the students' first look at the words; writing, copying a script from the back of the leaflet; review, students read the sentences aloud; and grammar, points of verb changes and pronouns mentioned only if they applied directly to the lesson. The instructions provided for the teacher were so explicit that no thinking adult should have had any difficulty presenting the lessons. Pupils who

mastered the thirty lessons had a vocabulary of more than seven hundred words. Examinations in Preparatory English were given at the YMCA during the first week in April and the second week in June with a certificate given as proof of literacy.⁴

Two papers read at a conference in 1913 reflected Roberts' ideas but more emphasis was placed on written drills than spoken exercises or conversation.⁵ Many evening school teachers did not respect the importance of their work and could not bring themselves to act out the activities of "Preparing Breakfast" or "Cleaning and Loading Coal." Certainly the fact that a huge array of household and industrial artifacts needed to be gathered discouraged many teachers from using Roberts method.

A useful little book, The Immigrant's Guide to the United States, affectionately called the Little Green Book, by John F. Carr, included information about sanitation, citizenship, history, geography and government. It was printed in several foreign languages with English translations. Because of its wealth of practical information it became very popular as a reference source and a supplementary book

⁴Peter Roberts, English for Coming Americans: Teacher's Manual (New York: Association Press, 1918), pp. 5-45.

⁵Robert B. Brodie and Isador Springer, "The Content and Method of Instruction," Education of the Immigrant, U. S. Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 51 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), pp. 47-49.

in the New York evening schools.⁶ Numerous books were written for immigrants in either English or various languages which explained the industrial, economic, political and geographic aspects of the country, but they were informative, not instructional. It was not until later that books written expressly to teach English to adult immigrants were published.

The most important thing the night school could give to the immigrant was a speaking knowledge of English and confidence to use it. In 1917 experts in immigrant education wrote that,

The best way to teach people to speak a language is to give them continuous opportunity to speak, not to read, to SPEAK it, first by chorus work, to give them confidence and then individually. Until this practice is general in our night schools we shall not have classes in English, but classes in reading and writing.⁷

Unfortunately, reading and writing were the fundamentals of most teachers. There was something sure about them. In their most common use, reading and writing required little preparation on the part of the teacher. Too many teachers had confined themselves to books so long that they were timid about any departure in technique. One excellent example was when the principal of a school wrote a series of sentences for

⁶Mary Alice Wilcox, "The Immigrant's Guide to the United States," Journal of Education (December 1913), p. 18.

⁷Methods for Teaching English to Adult Foreigners (Sacramento: State Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, 1917) p. 8.

relevant class work: "Good evening! I live on _____ Street. I come from Italy, etc.)." The teacher had these faithfully read over and over, instead of using them for lively conversation. At the end of the evening, although every man could read the page perfectly, there was no one who could answer the questions, "Where do you live? Where did you come from?" Authorities in immigrant education stressed that talking of any sort--pupils to one another or to the teacher--was the thing which produced results. It made an animated, interested class, gave a chance for self-expression and insured possession of the English language. For the beginning class, every minute that some pupil was not talking was wasted.⁸ The theory was sound but the practice was imperfect.

The requirements of a teacher of adult immigrants were not as strict as for a public school teacher. The most popular qualifications were: (1) general teaching ability, training, and experience; (2) known ability to teach immigrants; (3) experience in teaching immigrants. Knowledge and appreciation of the immigrant and sympathy with him and with his national and racial characteristics had not come to be regarded as important. Ability to speak the foreign language was a requirement in some places, and a receptive personality received consideration in a number of cities, but no standard

⁸Ibid., p. 9.

test or definition of personality prevailed.⁹

It was general practice to employ as night school teachers those who taught in the day school as well. Some educators felt that the methods of instruction used for school age children failed when used with workers over sixteen or with workers who had been out of school for several years and lost the habit of study. In some cities the teaching force was recruited from students and young lawyers and doctors who found the work a convenient way of supplementing their income. In neither case were really professional standards possible. No great improvement in teaching could be hoped for until specially trained teachers were employed to do the evening school work.¹⁰

Most students thought that they could benefit more from the classes if the teachers were of their own national origin. Certainly such employment would have increased attendance, an important consideration. The Lithuanian visitor of the Immigrants' Protective League found that one of the men who had dropped out of evening school because of overtime work had learned a great many English words which he did not understand and was touchingly grateful when she stayed to go

⁹Report of the Commissioner of Education 1916, I, p. 343.

¹⁰Winthrop Talbot, "Adult Illiteracy," Bulletin 1916, No. 35 (Washington: Bureau of Education, 1916), p. 43; Grace Abbott, The Immigrant and the Community, p. 242.

over them with him.¹¹ It was difficult for school boards to find qualified teachers who were also literate in any native language of the new immigrants.

The organization and administration of the evening schools were either inefficient or non-existent. Members of the Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation were dismayed by the conditions they found in that city's night schools. The teaching did not follow any well-thought-out plan and it was not skillfully done. The most impressive characteristic was that every teacher appeared to be entirely free to teach whatever he pleased by any methods that he wished. The lessons assigned and the methods employed in the different rooms were astonishingly varied. There seemed to be no effective supervision, no plan for improving the teachers in service, and no effort to find out which of the many methods used produced the best results. The Commissioner of Education reported that only about one-third of the 150 cities reporting during 1915 employed a director of all evening school work. Only one city, Rochester, New York, reported a director of immigrant education, whose duties were exclusively limited to that particular phase of education. In a few cities the principal supervised the immigrant work in addition to his regular supervision of the day school, and neither benefited

¹¹Ibid., p. 243.

from his divided attention.¹²

In 1916 Los Angeles made an advance toward training teachers for immigrant education. A class was opened at the Los Angeles State Normal School in methods of teaching English to immigrants. The instructor, who understood the immigrant and how to teach him, was appointed Supervisor of Immigrant Education in the night schools. All the principals and teachers involved in night school work met with her and committees were formed to find solutions to common problems and make plans for a unified program throughout the city. Teachers in Rochester, New York received training from the supervisor in frequent meetings and through observations of experienced teachers. Boston conducted a teachers' training course and in Detroit two visiting specialists gave two lectures to about three hundred educators. A similar course was given in Buffalo. Courses in immigrant education were started in the State Teachers' College at Albany and in the summer school of Columbia University. The lack of standards in teacher training for night school was a reflection of the lack of standards in methods of teaching English and civics.¹³

¹²Miller, p. 90; Wheaton, Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year Ended June 30, 1916, p. 345.

¹³Methods of Teaching English to Adult Foreigners, p. 14; H. H. Wheaton, "Education of Immigrants," in Immigration and Americanization, p. 576.

The early attempts to Americanize the immigrants through public education was disorganized. The establishment and frequency of classes depended upon local interest and resources. No English texts were written exclusively for foreign adults and teachers often resorted to children's primers or informational booklets for immigrants. Some educators emphasized the need of the immigrants to speak English rather than read or write it, but the best method for that, the Roberts Methods, was not very popular with public school teachers, probably because they could not maintain their decorum throughout the lessons. The instructors were either grade school teachers or were young professionals seeking an additional income. Adult immigrants preferred teachers of their own national origin so they would not become discouraged as easily, but such teachers were difficult to find. The classes were generally supervised by the day-school principal who could give little help to the teachers. The pre-war evening English classes often had no adequate materials, few professional teachers trained to work with adults and lacked standards in methods of teaching English.

MILITANT AMERICANIZATION

The character of the Americanization movement changed after our entrance into the war. Before educators and Americanizers could agree upon methods or organize procedures to make evening schools effective and attractive to the foreign born, the demands of the public for immigrant education became so incessant that the goal of quality education was abandoned for quantity instruction. After the United States declared war in April, 1917, the average citizen felt that if he could not fight the Germans abroad, he could at least Americanize the immigrants here, and he went to this latter task in much the same spirit he would have applied to the former, had he been given the opportunity. With the realization that large numbers of unassimilated aliens could affect national security, Americanization efforts became more determined. The psychology of Americanization began to solidify; it was something to be done to somebody by someone else, and done hard. Some felt that if an alien would not become an American, he should leave the country. Education was no longer desirable for its own sake, but for the possibility that it would transform a Southern European peasant into a loyal, law-abiding factory worker.¹

¹"The Kindergarten as a Factor in Americanization," NEA Proceedings 1918, p. 167; Edward H. Bierstadt, Aspects of Americanization (Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Co., 1922), pp. 95-6; Daniel Chauncey Brewer, "Americanization--Three Queries," Immigration Journal I, No. 2 (April 1916), p. 24.

The Federal Bureau of Education continued its campaign on behalf of Americanization of the immigrant during the first of the war years. Pamphlets, news letters, syllabi, and posters were circulated widely. Hundreds of letters were answered and all types of advice given on every aspect of the effort. A special Schedule of Standards and Methods in the Education of Immigrants for the benefit of educators was published by the Bureau in February of 1917. As a result of its publication, several hundred superintendents, principals, and teachers became acquainted with a standardized form of procedure and established it in their own communities. Over 1,700 communities were cooperating with the Bureau of Naturalization by June of 1917. Almost 2,000 other communities gave favorable responses to the Bureau's inquiries, but took no steps during the year to organize citizenship classes. Our declaration of war resulted in the first opportunity for many aliens to attend night citizenship classes organized especially for their instruction by the public school authorities.²

The Immigration Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States reported that as of June 15, 1917, eight-eight chambers of commerce were engaged in active programs

²Annual Report of the Commissioner of Naturalization 1917, p. 30; Report of the Commissioner of Education 1917, I, pp. 62-63.

for Americanization. By the end of the year, the number had increased to 104. In practically every instance, regular Americanization Committees were appointed or special subcommittees carried on campaigns to inaugurate classes in English and citizenship, to support the efforts of the local school authorities where classes were already established, and to stimulate interest in the whole problem of the immigrant through publicity campaigns, meetings, and programs in industrial plants.³

During the summer of 1917 the Cleveland Board of Education, the Cleveland Immigration Bureau and a number of civic agencies sponsored a campaign for the education and Americanization of aliens who did not speak English. The Bureau furnished material on the immigrant population in the city, the names of the leading men among the foreigners, and distributed literature from their office and from other sections of town. Despite the limited success of the campaign, the director, John Prucha, was pessimistic when he wrote,

The more we have to do with this problem the more convinced we are that the education and Americanization of the immigrant should not be left to his choice. The more intelligent elements among the immigrants are anxious to learn the English language, but there is a large class of men who never attended school and it is almost impossible to get them in touch with our educational agencies. A law compelling these men under thirty years of age to attend

³Committee on Immigration, Bulletin (New York: Chamber of Commerce of the United States, No. 13 (June 14, 1917) to No. 17 (December 15, 1917)).

night school until they can pass the second or third grade would be the best solution of the problem. Such a law would prove a blessing to the men and also to the state.⁴

While established national and local Americanization agencies increased their activities in 1918, new groups responded to the national emergency. The Council of National Defense contacted all of the state councils in an attempt to organize local resources for the war. The Immigrant Division of the Bureau of Education secured a resolution from the Council of National Defense endorsing the Bureau's program of Americanization. In February, 1918, a letter was sent urging the establishment of Community Councils, organized around the limits of the local school districts. One of the objectives in the program of work concerned Americanization and urged the local councils to aid in "educating the Aliens in English; impressing Aliens with the great ideals of America, American standards, the value of American citizenship and its duties; and assisting aliens desirous of naturalization in making out their papers, etc."⁵ This letter clearly established the importance of Americanization work to the security of the nation: Americanization no longer seemed merely a matter of choice.

⁴John Prucha, Cleveland City Immigration Bureau Annual Report for 1917, p. 1.

⁵Report of the Commissioner of Education 1918, p. 132; W. Gifford, "Community Councils," letter to the Several State Councils of Defense Bulletin No. 83 (Washington, Feb. 2, 1918), p. 4.

Also of significance in arousing the nation to the seriousness of the immigrant situation and to the necessity of greater Americanization efforts was the revelation that 700,000 out of 10,000,000 registrants for the draft, most of whom were immigrants, could not sign their names let alone read or write English. Even those who had earlier been apathetic to the question of immigrant education realized that these figures represented a serious impairment to the nation's military efficiency and productive capacity. Additional facilities for Americanization were speedily provided and the teaching of English to the immigrant as the first step in Americanization engaged the serious attention of school authorities all over the country.⁶

Americanization was given national importance at a conference called by the Secretary of the Interior on April 3, 1918 in Washington, D.C. Governors, representatives of state and community councils of defense, members of chambers of commerce, industrialists, educators and social workers attended. They adopted resolutions that recommended Federal cooperation with states and local agencies to carry on "an extended, intensive, and immediate Americanization program . . . especially for non-English-speaking foreign-born adults." They also recommended that industry do all it could, that

⁶J.H. Van Sickle and John Whyte, "Public Education in the Cities of the United States," Bulletin, No. 88, 1919 (Washington: U. S. Bureau of Education, 1919), pp. 117-120.

Congress provide money for the work and that English be the exclusive language in all elementary schools.⁷

The Bureau of Naturalization sponsored classes in industrial plants, and called a special conference in Chicago to stimulate interest in the program. The city agreed to furnish one thousand teachers for the organization of such work through the director of foreign-classes. Special films were planned at a nominal cost for projection in citizenship classes. The Bureau presented a textbook to each foreigner when he filed his declaration of intention, and effected a still closer union with the public school authorities by presenting certificates of graduation from the federal government through the public school authorities. In many communities, the presentation of the certificates of graduation were presented concurrently with the certificates of naturalization. Apparently jealous of its prerogative (vs the Bureau of Education), the Bureau of Naturalization succeeded in having a law passed specifically recognizing its national undertaking and patriotic endeavor, and authorizing the Bureau to continue its cooperation with the public schools. The act, passed May 9, 1918, also authorized the publication and distribution of a course in naturalization, the expense to be met by fees paid into the Treasury of the United States

⁷Julius Drachsler, Democracy and Assimilation (New York: Macmillan, 1920), pp. 28-29.

by aliens seeking citizenship.⁸

An effort toward partnership with the leaders of the foreign-born was successful on July 4, 1918. On that day representatives of thirty-five foreign-language groups met with President Wilson at Washington's tomb at Mt. Vernon to renew their oath of allegiance and to pledge themselves to the nation.⁹

A more effective attempt to enlist the cooperation of the foreign born was probably begun in March, 1918, when the Foreign Language Information Service was organized by the federal government as a Division of the Committee on Public Information. A steady stream of full and dependable information concerning the registration, draft, and other emergency war measures had to get to the foreign-born so that they might participate in the war effort. Men and women of foreign birth or descent were hired to interpret the needs of the nation and to disseminate the advantages of becoming a citizen to their people. During the war the Foreign Language Information Service furnished over eight hundred foreign-language newspapers with daily releases from various government departments. There was also an American Press Section that distributed articles about immigrant groups.¹⁰

⁸Annual Report of the Commissioner of Naturalization 1918, pp. 43-44.

⁹Bierstadt, p. 20.

¹⁰The Work of the Foreign Language Information Service--A Summary and Survey (New York: 1922), p. 8.

ADVANCES IN METHODS AND MATERIALS

The new wave of interest in Americanization, now of a more determined quality than earlier, prompted immigrant specialists and educators to make the English and civics classes more efficient and effective. The Bureau of Naturalization became a vigorous guide in civics education through its cooperation with local school boards. The Bureau of Education did not have such a standardizing influence in the instruction of English classes.

Many methods of instruction were developed, used, modified and became components of still other techniques. Educators agreed that the traditional methods of teaching Latin and Greek were superfluous and inadequate for immigrant adults. Three methods were popular and had several characteristics in common. They all made English the language of the classroom and made no provision for translations. Rules of grammar were incidental and were brought to the attention of the class only when usage was involved. The Natural or Conversation Methods was mostly oral, the teacher doing most of the talking and the students replying to questions. The Object Method emphasized the importance of nouns and the students were to make a direct association of a name with an object. This method was similar to that used in the Berlitz School. The Theme method was modeled after the Gouin method and made practical by Dr. Peter Roberts. This method

emphasized verbs, explained by the actions of the teacher, and the students were to make an association between spoken words and their content.¹ These methods were used according to the resources of the school boards, the initiatives of the teachers, and the response of the class.

Shortly before the war and gaining general acceptance during and after the conflict, was the Direct Method. This was a combination of all the methods above with some modifications. English remained the language of the classroom but translation was permitted. The explanation of an idiom or an abstract idea was allowed because it was precise and saved time. Translations became more practical in the large classes of the immediate pre-war and war periods because large enrollments permitted the more frequent organization of all-Italian classes or all-Polish classes. Grammar drills were emphasized to form correct pronunciation and usage habits. Teachers were encouraged to learn phonics in order to correct mispronunciations. The vocabulary presented in the Direct Method was expanded beyond the household and commercial terminology to include information about the United States: its history, customs, and institutions. The dramatic method was retained as a technique for introducing a new subject unit.²

¹"Teaching English to Immigrants," (Columbus: Council of National Defense, no date), pp. 2-3.

²Ibid., pp. 4-6.

Toward the third decade, when popular enthusiasm for Americanization began to fade, some educators continued to construct and experiment with new techniques based on theoretical behavior patterns, supported by a maze of early psychological concepts and verbosely explained in educational jargon wholly unintelligible to even the most earnest of teachers.³

Textbooks for non-English-speaking adults were published, replacing the use of children's primers and eliminating the need for teachers and principals to develop and organize the entire course. The books generally had bold print as well as script, and were well illustrated with photographs and drawings. Cultural standards were introduced with practice sentences: "We must wash our hands before eating" and "Coffee, beer, soda water and candy are bad for babies" and "I take off my hat to a lady."⁴

The public, and often educators were slow to appreciate the fact that the teaching of the adult immigrant was highly specialized work, requiring not only special aptitude but special training as well. Because of factory classes, and mothers' classes the teaching of immigrant adults could become a full-time occupation instead of an overtime burden. The teachers had to be trained to know what to teach, how to

³Nina Joy Beglinger, Methods in Adult Elementary Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924).

⁴Frances K. Wetmore, A First Book in English for Non-English-Adults (Chicago: The Chicago Association of Commerce, 1920), pp. 8-14.

teach, and the standards of achievement to expect. Most importantly, they had to appreciate that their biggest task was the making of Americans, to understand what it meant and how it could best be done. The teachers needed to learn many things about this new area of education.

Universities and normal schools were slow to recognize the need and provide for specialized training. Columbia University and Los Angeles State Normal were probably pioneers in presenting complete programs of immigration and Americanization courses. In 1917 only a very few colleges or universities offered courses for training teachers of adult immigrants. In 1918 twelve institutions offered such courses. State departments of education sponsored institutes where intensive short-unit courses were presented. Because very few professional books on immigrant education had been written pamphlets, bulletins, and reports were used extensively. The greatest weakness in teacher training was the general lack of observation and practice facilities. Despite the difficulties almost every university and teachers college offered training in some phase of immigrant education in 1921.⁵

The University of Wisconsin conducted a teacher-training program in Milwaukee in 1918 that was progressive and comprehensive. The course consisted of thirty two-hour sessions

⁵ John J. Mahoney, "Training Teachers for Americanization," Bulletin No. 12 (Washington: Bureau of Education, 1920), p. 78.

which covered a study of the history and racial composition of immigration, the effects of immigration in our country, conditions in the homelands, problems immigrants encountered, their reactions toward America, methods of organization and management of classes for adult foreigners, and the naturalization process. The university planned to prepare and induct into citizenship 482 candidates at Racine as a model program.⁶

John Mahoney, state supervisor of Americanization for Massachusetts, and principal of State Normal School in Lowell, organized a course of study in 1920 for teacher training in normal schools and institutes. It was outlined in detail with hundreds of references to periodicals and professional bulletins and reports. The first section was an examination of the meaning of Americanization, followed by suggestions for coordinating activities and establishing classes for immigrants. The aims, methods, texts and lesson subjects for beginners', intermediate and advanced classes were meticulously detailed in clear prose, and with many references. Immigrant backgrounds and social characteristics were presented, and the last section outlined the growth of the Americanization movement. In addition, twenty-four hours

⁶"Americanization: A Preliminary Bulletin Outlining Americanization Plans of The University of Wisconsin," Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin (Madison: no. pub., 1918), pp. 7-9.

of observation and practices were scheduled.⁷ The special problems of the education of immigrants were now given professional consideration.

By whatever means, the instruction in many classes became more relevant to the needs of the students. In a well-organized classroom a strenuous half hour of learning the pronunciation of new phrases was followed by a writing lesson. A letter was written on the board which incorporated very cleverly a few of the words from the phrases just learned, although the letter differed in subject matter from the reading lesson. It was a simple answer to an advertisement for "help wanted." While the class was writing the letter, the teacher moved about the room quickly enough to prevent serious mistakes, and when the letters had been correctly written, they were copied into notebooks for permanent reference.⁸

Educators were late to develop special techniques and methods to educate adult immigrants. After a few years of use, several methods were combined into the Direct Method. Textbooks were published which taught social and health standards as well as the English names for household objects. The weakest aspect of adult classes were the poorly prepared teachers. By the beginning of the third decade important

⁷ Mahoney, "Training Teachers for Americanization."

⁸ Methods of Teaching English to Adult Foreigners (Sacramento: State Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, 1917), p. 7.

advances were made in training teachers for work with adult immigrants. The mechanics of the first stage of Americanization were established, but some Americanizers realized that most non-English-speaking aliens were still not attending classes. New ways of getting and keeping the interest of immigrants had to be found.

EXPANDED ROLES OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The scope of immigrant education and the role of the public schools expanded to meet the unique needs of the non-English-speaking aliens. The immigrants were separated from native Americans in hundreds of ways, the most obvious being employment and residence. Many immigrants applied for particular jobs, not because they were skilled in the work, but because others of their nationality worked in the same trade or worked in a certain factory. Immigrants generally lived in low-rent housing for economic and social reasons. In two major areas of their existence their contact with native Americans was limited. Some Americanizers felt that true assimilation could occur only if aliens and native Americans associated frequently and informally. It was to this end that the public schools sent their teachers to factories to conduct English classes, opened the school doors to the community at large and even tried to dissolve the isolation of immigrant mothers. Instead of waiting for immigrants to come to the school building, teachers went to them.

English classes in factories were the earliest attempts to bring instruction to non-English-speaking workers. For a majority of laborers, their place of employment was the most convenient location for English instruction. The classes were pioneered by Y.M.C.A. teachers who began their English

classes with the noblest of ambitions--the desire to teach the immigrant basic language skills and how to cope with America. The "Y" worker dedicated to these goals required considerable stubbornness and resourcefulness to prevent the program from being turned exclusively to the benefit of the employer.¹

Probably the first factory class in the country was conducted in 1906 at the plant of the Boston Woven Hose and Rubber Co., in Cambridge, by Harvard students working under the direction of the Cambridge YMCA. During the decade following this first experiment, the idea took hold in other cities, usually under YMCA auspices, though, in some cases industry itself conducted the work. There were classes at the Hartford Machine and Screw Factor in Hartford, Connecticut in 1907, at the foundry of the Westinghouse Air Brake Company in Pittsburgh in 1910, and at the Fall River Cotton Mills in 1912.²

In a 1913 experiment with workers, it was shown that it was possible for any person of ordinary intelligence who had never learned to read or write in any language, and who could speak no English, to acquire a good working knowledge of 600

¹Charles R. Towson, "The Industrial Outreach of the YMCA," Survey XXIX (January 18, 1913), pp. 524-7; Fred H. Rindge, "Industrial Service Movement at the YMCA," Survey XXX (April 19, 1913), pp. 104-109.

²William M. Leiserson, Adjusting Immigrant and Industry (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1924), p. 121.

English words, ease in reading common prose, legible penmanship, and knowledge of simple arithmetic. The time needed was sixty hours, or one hour a day for twelve weeks, five days a week. As a result of the success of the experimental class, the principal of Public School #4 allowed Miss Florence Meys to teach forty immigrant girls in the factory of D. E. Sicker and Company in New York City. The girls were divided into groups of six or seven each, and each group was taught daily for 45 minutes, except Saturdays. Every illiterate girl in the factory received instruction in English, reading, writing, arithmetic, American history, geography, personal hygiene, and practical information about food, fire protection and the evolution of the undergarment. In the records of the firm, these girls gained from twenty to seventy percent in working efficiency when their studies were completed. A similar class for illiterate foreign men was attempted at the General Chemical Work at Bayonne, New Jersey, by Arthur Jones, superintendent of the plant. The students were mostly Polish men, and the results were nearly as successful.³

The Ford English School, conducted by the company itself, attracted widespread notice for several years. The Company had attempted to build its safety program on a multi-language base and even issued a safety bulletin in forty-two languages, but it abandoned the idea as too cumbersome and costly.

³H. H. Whaton, "Adult Illiteracy," Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 35 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1916), pp. 38-47.

Instead, it made English the sole working language, then instituted English classes in May, 1914, with safety, shop discipline, welfare, and the company's benevolence as subjects. When the militant Americanizers launched their language campaign in Detroit in 1915, Ford joined enthusiastically. The first thing the immigrant learned to say was, "I am an American." Pageants dramatizing this conversion had newcomers enter a stage dressed in Old World clothing and leave the stage dressed in American clothing. The teachers were native workers who took a training course of two hours a week for twelve weeks. Over three hundred employees were trained to teach the rudiments of English and civics. By 1917, Ford had about 2,700 immigrants receiving language instruction from 160 volunteer teachers who used the Direct Method. The immigrant student was expected to attend classes for six to eight months before or after his work shift. At the end of his course of seventy-two lessons, a printed diploma qualified him for his first naturalization papers without further examination by federal authorities.⁴

The outbreak of war made the goals of Americanization seem synonymous with national defense. Miss Frances Kellor, a vice-chairman of the Committee for Immigrants in America,

⁴C. C. DeWitt, "Industrial Teachers," Proceedings Americanization Conference, pp. 114-116; Nevens and Hill, Ford: Expansion and Challenge, 1915-1933 (New York, 1957), p. 557; Gerd Korman, Industrialization, Immigrants, and Americanizers (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967), p. 147.

became an influential spokeswoman for Americanization in business and industry. By the time she became assistant to the chairman of the newly organized Immigration Committee of the United States Chamber of Commerce, she could be called a militant nationalist. The new committee quickly attached itself to the growing industrial service movement.

The nation-wide Americanization movement is part of the present-day trend toward humanizing industry. It aims to take what is commonly called welfare work out of paternalism and make it a part of legitimate business organizations or where it really belongs. There are no recognized standards. What we need is to extend scientific methods to the human phase of industrial organizations.⁵

By linking Americanization with "the trend toward humanizing industry," the committee gained the support of industry for its program and at the same time assured its success through the autocratic control that management maintained over its employees, especially those of foreign birth. The coercive methods the Detroit employers used in 1915 to assure attendance of non-English-speaking workers in English classes were applauded by the Committee for Immigrants in America. An additional benefit of Americanization was made obvious to employers--industrial peace. Miss Kellor wrote,

⁵Immigrants in America Review (June, 1916), pp. 110-111.

So long as our industrial communities are made up of large groups of un-Americanized immigrants, without the English language, without understanding American conditions, too ignorant to force them in legitimate ways . . . able to understand only the radical agitators addressing them in their own language--just so long will the industrial history of America be blotted out by Calumny, Ludlows, Lawrences, and Wheatlands. The road to American citizenship, to the English language, and to an understanding of American social and political ideals is the road to industrial peace.⁶

During the war, when the labor force decreased while the demand for products increased, it was imperative that industries operate at peak efficiency without disruptive labor agitation.

After the Americanization movement was announced in 1915 the idea of factory schools became popular and by 1918 nearly every factory was making some effort to either offer instruction to the alien workers or encourage their attendance at the public evening schools. Most of the factory classes were ill-prepared, poorly managed, and enthusiasm for them declined. This was due partly to the unsatisfactory character of the teachers that management was ordinarily able to furnish but also to some suspicion that the instruction itself was colored by the ideals of government and citizenship that the management wished its employees to have. Employers learned that Americanization could not be accomplished with just enthusiasm and a simple manual.

⁶Immigrants in America Review (January, 1916), p. 4.

Only if the teaching in industrial plants was under the direction of the public schools would all parties concerned--the employer, the employee, and the public--be certain that the work was completely disinterested. The job of teaching English to non-English-speaking workers was gladly transferred to local boards of education for professional instruction. Early in 1919 a movement to standardize the classes and improve the instruction began. Several national and state conferences were held, and a consensus of opinion developed that industries must cooperate with public school authorities in conducting factory classes. With this development classes became more stable and a systematic development of English instruction in industrial plants began to take place.⁷

Mr. W. M. Roberts, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Chicago, made several suggestions for teachers concerning factory classes. Courses were patterned after the Roberts method so that the principles and standards of work were universal, but the instruction required adaptability and adjustment. Each industry presented some new problem and there had to be a careful adjustment in the detail of instruction to that particular factory. The management was

⁷William M. Leiserson, Adjusting Immigrant and Industry (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1924), p. 81; W. M. Roberts, "Promotion of Education in Industry," Proceedings Americanization Conference, pp. 148, 122.

responsible for making sure that the material to be taught was essential, fundamental, and within the range of the employee's duties or responsibilities. The lessons had to be adapted to short sessions of fifty minutes to half an hour. That required the preparation of short unit lessons having but a few new words and a very limited range of ideas, but complete in themselves and having real content.⁸

The Massachusetts Board of Education learned in 1918 that forty-six percent of the laborers in the state were foreign born: 13.2 percent of whom spoke no English whatever, 21.9 percent of whom could speak and understand English "slightly," and 65.5 percent who could speak with "more or less facility." Because only a small percentage of the workers attended public evening classes, the Board organized English classes in the factories. The State Board designed the teaching program, wrote the texts, and trained the teachers in the direct and dramatic methods. The local school authorities supervised and evaluated the teaching. The industry provided the place, time, materials and equipment. By the end of 1918 over eight hundred industrial plants in the nation had either undertaken teaching English themselves or were cooperating with public schools, the Y.M.C.A., and other agencies in the establishment of classes

⁸ Ibid., pp. 145-148; Frances K. Wetmore, "Industrial or Factory Classes," Training Teachers for Americanization Bulletin No. 12 (Washington: Bureau of Education, 1920), pp. 45-47.

either in the evening or during the day at the plant. In Chicago there were fifty-seven classes organized in twenty-six plants.⁹

States which had divisions of immigrant education discovered that classes conducted by school authorities at the place of employment were the most effective method of teaching English to adult workers. In 1919 Massachusetts adopted an act designed to provide English instruction for adult wage earners. The law authorized classes in industrial establishments and other convenient places and provided for state aid of fifty percent of the expenses to local educational authorities. The new law overcame the failures of the earlier efforts with evening schools and classes conducted entirely by employers. In the school year 1918-1919, thirty factory classes were conducted by school officials; in 1919-1920 there were 131 such classes; and in 1920-1921 there were 327 classes.¹⁰

By the end of the war nearly ninety-eight percent of the employers of foreign labor were doing Americanization work of one kind or another. Interest declined rapidly after the armistice. The American public was aroused again by

⁹"Foreign Born in Industry," First Annual Report, Bureau of Immigration (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1919), pp. 29, 36; W. M. Roberts, "Promotion of Education . . ." Proceedings Americanization Conference, p. 145; Frank D. Loomis, "Factory Classes," Americanization in Chicago (Chicago: no. pub., 1920), p. 22.

¹⁰Leiserson, pp. 260, 265.

the "Red Scare" and the actions of Attorney-General Palmer who moved to thwart the possibilities of radical action from the immigrant population. No native group was more disturbed at the bombings and deportations than industrialists. The organizational activities of labor unions had subsided during the war due to the increased production and decreased labor force. After the war, their activities resumed, and many corporations attempted to strengthen the industrial loyalties of their immigrant workers by providing better working conditions and educational programs that related to the factory work, as well as continued classes in English. In many places, factory English classes outlasted the Americanization movement.¹¹

Factory classes provided English instruction for alien workers but they did not go far in helping the aliens to understand and become part of American society. According to Mr. Goldberger, an instructor at Columbia University, the question should not be, "What can we do for these people," but rather, "What can we do with them?" Only by living with Americans and establishing a number of social, industrial, economic and political contacts can the foreigner become assimilated. An immigrant community council supervised by school officials and composed of students was an excellent

¹¹Annual Report of the Commissioner of Naturalization 1920, pp. 12, 13; Frank D. Loomis, "The Reds," Americanization in Chicago, pp. 13-19.

opportunity for Americanization.¹² John Mahoney made a plea for community social centers.

All too frequently our foreign people have had to find in the squalid tenement or the unsanitary club-room their only meeting place for social purposes. Here they gather to play on queer instruments, to sing strange songs, to dance through Old-World figures, to discuss vociferously but peacefully the topics of the day. There they gather to live the life they love to live, while America passes them by. Here in isolation, under the spell of the demagogue, anarchy is born. If we are really to Americanize the immigrant, we must take cognizance of the immigrant's social nature. The school should become his meeting place.¹³

Mr. Mahoney suggested that the main hall of a school should be used for social learning activities. Lectures in English could often be disappointing unless given by someone of evening school experience, so lectures in the vernacular might be better in some cases. Slides of geographical or historical character could acquaint the immigrants with the country. Community hygiene and certain phases of community civics could also be taught with slides. The students would be glad to participate in school concerts and to bring their friends. Social dancing was enjoyed by most immigrant groups and it provided an occasion for the relaxed use of English and the establishment of friendly relationships. Native Americans interested in the immigrant should be encouraged to

¹²H. H. Goldberger, "Using the Schoolhouses in Americanization," Proceedings Americanization Conference, p. 80.

¹³John J. Mahoney and Charles M. Herlihy, First Steps in Americanization: A Handbook for Teachers (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1918), pp. 37-38.

attend the evening schools and their social learning activities. The old and new Americans must have experience in seeing the other as an individual person, not as part of a stereotyped group.¹⁴

By 1920 some schools in New York City were more than places for instruction. The most successful example was a school in which the principal had helped to extend the initiative of the pupils without being afraid that they would do too much. The principal made a brief survey of the neighborhood, in order to understand its interests and needs. He called a general meeting, with speakers in foreign languages, and made every effort to get suggestions from the people themselves. An Armenian group asked for help in forming a chorus, and this was given. The school was widely advertised in the neighborhood, especially through the foreign-language newspapers. Immigrants from seventeen countries enrolled, and were formed into as many classes in English and civics. Native Americans were enrolled in six classes in technical and vocational subjects. When these classes had somewhat gotten their bearings they were all asked to elect one delegate to the executive committee of a central students' council. The council held a short meeting one evening a week, particularly to plan the community night program, but also to discuss anything in which the members were interested. An

¹⁴Mahoney, First Steps . . . , pp. 39-43.

orchestra, public speaking classes, debating clubs, and dramatics were developed. A school newspaper was started, partly to help with the English, and became the organ of the whole group to which many were eager to contribute. The community nights, and still more, the students' councils, greatly contributed to the attendance and success of the classes. They had humanized the school. What was still more important, they integrated the evening school with the neighborhood, and brought adult immigrants to share more actively in school and neighborhood affairs. Several principals expressed the conviction that such socialized evening schools were the best foundations for full-fledged school centers.¹⁵

School based community centers did not become popular for several reasons. Restrictions imposed by school authorities discouraged many immigrants from coming to the school building. The doors were usually locked at 10:30 p.m., about the hour that an average meeting of immigrant men got underway. Smoking was not allowed. Generally labor unions and political organizations were not permitted to use the buildings, particularly if they were radical. Worst of all, all meetings had to be conducted in English.¹⁶ A deeper reason was the lack of confidence that some foreign born felt

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 260-262.

¹⁶John Daniels, America Via the Neighborhood (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920) p. 265.

for the organizers of school community centers. John Mahoney, a nationally recognized expert in immigrant education, reflected in his quote the distorted perception and paternalistic attitude toward immigrants that was commonly held by Americanizers. They were not as concerned about the interests of the immigrants as they were about the terrible things that might happen unless some attempt was made to assimilate them. Sensitive persons of foreign birth perceived this motivation and withdrew from the limp hand of friendship extended by the Americanizers.

The last and most important extension of the public schools was the attempt to Americanize immigrant women. Those who were employed in shops and factories were fairly eager to adopt American dress and customs and to learn English. Immigrant women who were homemakers presented an especially difficult problem. They were often timid with strangers and embarrassed outside their neighborhood, and they avoided any of those situations. They kept their foreign dress, their old country customs and were often unable to read and write in their native tongue, much less were they literate in English. The great majority were peasant types who had worked in the fields and who had never lived in a city. It was necessary to teach the use of sinks, how to clean them, and how to flush out the drains. The use and care of toilets, garbage and slop pails needed to be explained.

Immigrant women needed to become efficient in matters of marketing, banking and use the use of community health services.¹⁷

The home life of the married non-English-speaking woman was often peculiarly and tragically isolated. The husband got an imperfect smattering of English from his industrial contacts and the children attending school became more or less proficient in English, but the mother remained ignorant of the language, often throughout her entire life. The father and children managed to converse in English, but the mother was shut out from the common conversation by her inability to speak English and the lack of knowledge of her native language by the children. This created a contempt on the part of the children for the "ignorance" of their mother, and largely destroyed maternal authority. Efforts to Americanize the immigrant mother were intended to preserve the influence of the home as a vital force in the training of children.¹⁸

¹⁷Annie L. Hansen, "The Work of the Domestic Educator," Education of the Immigrant in Bulletin No. 51 (Washington: Bureau of Education, 1913), p. 7; Esther Lape, "Americanizing our New Women Citizens," Life and Labor VIII, No. 5 (May, 1918), pp. 96-98; "Teaching English to Adult Women," Survey (March 15, 1919), p. 873; Harriet P. Dow, "Home Classes for Foreign-born Women," Proceedings Americanization Conference, pp. 128-135.

¹⁸"The Division of Women's Work," First Annual Report of the Bureau of Immigration (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1919), p. 27; "Apprenez L'Anglais," Manuel Des Etates-Unis (Washington: Daughters of the American Revolution, 1923), p. 15; A. E. Jenks, "Discussion of Home Classes for Foreign-born Women," Proceedings Americanization Conference, p. 138.

No attempt was made before 1915 by the public schools to enter this area of work, even though most immigrant mothers did not attend the evening English classes at the public school. The middle-aged woman did not wish to study English in classes with her children of working age or others of their age because she dreaded the implication of that association. Many of the foreign-born mothers also hesitated to go into classes with men because they felt a mental inferiority, and many preferred not to be in classes with students from other national groups. The schools were slow to adopt or device new methods of instruction for persons who could not read or write in their own language and who found learning extremely difficult.¹⁹

The state of California made a major advance toward the education of foreign mothers when it passed the Home Teacher Act on April 10, 1915. It permitted boards of school trustees or city boards of education to employ one "home teacher" for every five hundred or more units of average daily attendance. The home teacher was "to work in the homes of the pupils, instructing children and adults in matters relating to school attendance, sanitation, the English language, in household duties such as purchase and preparation, the use of food and clothing, and in the fundamental principles of the

¹⁹Sophinisba P. Breckinridge, New Homes for Old (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1921), p. 235.

American system of government and the rights and duties of citizenship." Her qualifications were: a regular teacher's certificate under the State Education Law, experience in teaching and in social work, good health, ability to speak the language of the largest group in the district, tact and patience for a delicate task, ingenuity in adapting all circumstances to the main purpose, comprehension of the reasons and objects of the work, and a sympathetic attitude toward the people, which involved a knowledge of the countries and conditions from which they come, and what "American" had meant to them. Her salary was paid from the city or district special school funds.²⁰

The law was enacted largely through the efforts of the State Commission of Immigration and Housing. The Commission explained the purpose of the law: "The home teacher seeks not the special child--though that will often open the door to her and afford her a quick opportunity for friendly help--but the home as such, and especially the mother who makes it."²¹ Unfortunately only a few school boards employed home teachers by 1917. The Los Angeles Normal School was asked to give credit to students who would work under supervision during the summer teaching classes of foreign-born women. Through the cooperation and with the supervision of the Normal, the School

²⁰Ibid., p. 236.

²¹Ibid., p. 237.

Board, the International Institute of the Y.W.C.A., and the commission's Direction of Education, twenty-four classes were conducted for women of various nationalities.²²

Classes for mothers were organized on a neighborhood basis, so they generally contained only one nationality, although there were a few heterogeneous classes. The women met in homes, local churches and other familiar locations, but never in the public schools. The classes were informal and social but well-planned. The first lesson explained the names of common fruits and vegetables and the intricacies of marketing: weights, measures, and money. During sewing lessons the English words for various materials and garments were taught. Instruction in child care included hygiene and care of the home. Although the reason for the work was to spread the use of English, no mention was made of English instruction in some places for many weeks. Soon the demand was expressed, and when the work broke up for the summer there were women so anxious to continue instruction that they offered to pay a teacher for regular lessons.²³

The most striking change was seen in the women who attended regularly. Their improvement in personal appearance and intelligence of countenance was thrilling. One

²²Davis, p. 459.

²³Report on Americaniation of Foreign-born Women (Sacramento: State Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, 1917), pp. 7-10.

class of Mexican women, a timid, sloppy, baby-submerged lot to begin with, took an honorable place on general school programs with songs and recitations in English. The work that summer proved that a young enthusiastic teacher, ready to adapt herself to any circumstance, resourceful, energetic and infinitely sympathetic, was the most effective agent for teaching English to foreign mothers. In 1919 there were twenty home teachers working in eight cities in California.²⁴

More structured classes for immigrant mothers were tried in other sections of the country. In Boston kindergarten mothers were organized into English and civics classes taught by their children's teacher who tried to enhance the existing friendly relationship between teacher and mother. These mothers were in close touch with the school, understood its purposes, and because of the mothers' meetings had confidence in the teacher. Classes were also sponsored by the public schools in Fall River and Lynn.²⁵

In 1918 visitors from the Immigrants' Protective League organized classes in English and domestic science for immigrant mothers. They were held in the daytime during the summer

²⁴Ibid., p. 21; Breckenridge, p. 237.

²⁵"The Division of Women's Work," First Annual Report of the Bureau of Immigration, p. 28; Daniels, pp. 252, 253. "The Kindergarten as a Factor in Americanization," NEA Proceedings 1918, pp. 167-171; "Committee on Civic and Patriotic Education of Non-English-speaking Women," Woman's Municipal League of Boston Annual Reports 1919, Vol. X, No. 6 (May, 1919), pp. 34-36.

at public schools. Several woman's clubs, the Visiting Nurse Association, the State Council of National Defense and the Parent-Teacher Association sponsored them. In 1920 there were twenty classes in the city with an average enrollment of twenty mothers. Most of the classes met once a week.²⁶

Helen Winkler and Elsa Alsberg of the Council of Jewish Women emphasized two techniques that home teachers should use in their classes. The first necessity of the alien woman was to learn to speak English. In order to hold interest, correct pronunciation and idiomatic expressions should not be stressed. A lesson could be more fully mastered if it was written on a sheet of paper which the mother could take home for later study. Pictures, charts, and graphs were especially helpful in fixing an idea. With these suggestions and publicity about the successful methods used in California and Boston, it was un-nerving to read in a teacher's manual published in 1922 that, "A greater number of women may be reached by one teacher and an effort made to break down racial prejudices, when women representing different nationalities come together in a distinctly American institution."²⁷

²⁶Ninth Annual Report of the Immigrants' Protective League 1918, pp. 23-24; "Mothers' Classes," Americanization in Chicago, p. 22.

²⁷Helen Winkler and Elsa Alsberg, "The Home and Neighborhood Teacher," in "Training Teachers for Americanization," Bulletin No. 12 (Washington: Bureau of Education, 1920), pp. 49-58; "Classes for Women," Manual for Teachers (Columbus: Ohio Department of Education, 1922), p. 53.

Successful mothers' classes never met in the public schools.

Textbooks for foreign mothers were very slow in coming; indeed, some home teachers considered them a hindrance. A Primer for Foreign-speaking Women was published in Sacramento in 1918. The lessons were short and concerned family and household matters: "I do not keep potatoes under my bed. I put them in a cool place." and a classic of pragmatic prose,

Flies

Kill the fly!
It is very bad.
It goes to dirty places.
It brings dirty into your house.
It spoils your food.
I will have no flies in my house. I will keep them
out with screens.
Kill the fly!²⁸

The lessons were intended to be followed by an hour of activity, such as mending, sewing, cooking or laundry.

Twenty Lessons in English for Non-English-Speaking Women was published a year later and was a detailed outline of lessons for the home teacher to present. In teaching the names of articles of clothing it suggested using pictures as examples instead of the women's clothing to avoid embarrassing the ladies. Still, greater emphasis was needed in visual instructions with children's report cards, bank slips, and change-of-address cards as well as excursions to public

²⁸Primer for Foreign-speaking Women Part II (Sacramento: Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, 1918), p. 23.

agencies and institutions.²⁹

The education of immigrant women, especially mothers, received late and scattered support from public schools authorities. Social workers recognized the need for special education in that area, but by the time several communities could organize themselves for the work and produce meaningful results the Americanization movement had lost its popular support. Some private agencies continued classes for immigrant women and the small number of women who attended were undoubtedly helped.³⁰ The education of immigrant mothers was in many ways the most important area of Americanization but it received the least attention and the least support from the public schools.

²⁹Twenty Lessons in English for Non-English-speaking Women (Buffalo: University of the State of New York, no date), p. 8; "Subject Matter Most Vital for the Adjustment of the Non-English-speaking Woman," NEA Proceedings 1924, p. 575.

³⁰Alice Sickels, Around the World in St. Paul (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1945), p. 22.

IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

One of the greatest forces for Americanization in immigrant families was growing children. When they were absent, the adults had much less contact with assimilating influences. The minds of children are generally more flexible and quickly accommodate new ideas. The youngsters in the street and in the school experienced more varied activities than their working parents and it was through the children that American standards and ideas first reached the family unit. The children could sit next to native Americans in the public schools, whereas the immigrant father knew few native Americans with whom he could converse. The schools imparted to their students a set of values that were goads in the struggle for success; they supplied an alternative to the family succession to certain occupations.¹ The state laws that demanded compulsory education of the young were of great significance. If the education of adult immigrants was uncertain, the education of his children seemed assured.

John Buchanan provided a neat synthesis of popular opinion when he wrote,

¹Fairchild, Immigration, p. 202; Oscar Handlin, The Dimensions of Liberty (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 142; Immigration Commission Report, 1911, p. 34.

Education will solve every problem of our national life, even that of assimilating our foreign element. Knowledge is light, and evil dies in the light. Ignorance is the mother of anarchy, poverty, and crime. The nation has a right to demand intelligence and virtue of every citizen, and to obtain these by force if necessary. Compulsory education we must have as a safeguard for our institutions.²

The compulsory education of children, especially of immigrant children, was very important. The children of immigrants were forced to take time to learn with materials and methods designed for their various age groups. The back-breaking labor which dulled the minds of their parents was traded for a structured educational atmosphere. The possibilities for the Americanization of the immigrant children were unlimited but were generally not attained.

Compulsory education was first instituted in Massachusetts in 1852 at the insistence of Horace Mann who discovered the practice in Germany. He felt that it was absurd for the state to establish, support and conduct schools and then permit parents to keep their children away to grow up in ignorance. In 1891 children in Illinois eight to fourteen years old were required to spend at least twelve weeks in school. The New York law required fourteen weeks instead of twelve. Factory laws prohibited the employment of children under sixteen unless they could read and write simple sentences in English. Since 1887 Massachusetts required

²John T. Buchanan, "How to Assimilate the Foreign Element in Our Population," Forum XXXII (1902), p. 691.

illiterate minors above the age of compulsory education to attend evening classes and such children could be employed only if weekly reports from the school showed regular attendance.³ These were the barriers thrown up against the inroads of ignorance; they were paper barriers for they were not enforced.

The laws were well intentioned but often ineffectual. Parents coped with industrial competition and low wages by setting their children to work, because every dime mattered. For this reason many children nine and ten years of age announced their age as fourteen without being asked. The Immigrants' Protective League viewed this practice dimly and sent lists of school-age children, compiled by the League at Ellis Island, to cities that had been named as destinations by the arrivals. Beginning in March 1911, the North American Civic League secured and distributed the records of children arriving at Ellis Island and destined for New York State. In December of 1914 the Bureau of Education suggested to the United States Bureau of Immigration that the names of alien children of school age be sent to the proper school authorities in those communities to which such children were destined upon arriving at the ports of entry. The plan was extended

³Frederick Eby, The Development of Modern Education (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952), p. 558; "Compulsory Education, 1891" The Reform Advocate (February 20, 1891), Foreign Language Press Survey; Edith Abbott, Immigration, p. 554.

to all communities at the beginning of the school term of 1915-16.⁴ Often parents had lied about the ages of their children in order to get lower passage rates, and it was these ages that were sent to the school officials in the interior cities. Even though this check doubtless spurred the attendance of some children, the League's letters were often ignored. The administrations of large school systems were generally understaffed, and truant officers often gave only half-hearted effort to retrieve children with complicated names.

Compulsory education only complicated the crowded conditions in the public schools. New York City enrolled 588,615 students in 1902; in 1903 there were 40,408 more, not counting the 89,316 students placed in part-time classes. William Maxwell, superintendent of the New York schools wrote in 1907 that,

At present the average number of pupils to a teacher in the elementary schools is about forty-three Some teachers have charge of fifty or even sixty pupils, and there are cases where we find sixty-five. I have seen the time, in Brooklyn, when there were hundreds of classes with over seventy pupils, and when even one hundred was not uncommon. It is obvious that ⁵ under such conditions work cannot be thorough.

⁴North American Civic League for Immigrants Annual Reports 1909-1913, p. 9; Report of the Commissioner of Education 1916, p. 350.

⁵A. M. Shaw, "True Character of New York Public Schools," World's Work, VII (December, 1903), p. 4205; William H. Maxwell, "Present Needs of the Public Schools," Nation LXXXIV (April 25, 1907), p. 380.

Between 1904 and 1910 school buildings on the Lower East Side were so overtaxed that authorities converted the Camp Huddleston Hospital Ship at the foot of Corlears Hook into a city school where ten thousand children received instruction. Through the various discussions of the crowded conditions and half-day sessions, there was no mention of the special problems of the immigrant children.

Teaching English to non-English-speaking children had never received much attention and it became more difficult as the years passed. Children of Eastern and Southern European parents began arriving en masse in the 1880's and continued with only minor fluctuations in their numbers until the hostilities of the Great War. The situation was critical. Of the ninety-seven thousand foreigners in Cleveland in 1890, less than two-thirds came from non-English speaking countries; in 1910 the proportion increased to more than four-fifths.⁶ Almost one-half and perhaps more of the elementary school children came from homes in which English was not regularly spoken. Diagram 1 shows the enormity of the problem, especially when one notes the higher birth rate of the new immigrants. The complicated difficulties of trying to teach English to those who seldom heard it, the pressure to work in a factory instead of study, plus the general disadvantages compared to their American classmates were obstacles that seem to have

⁶Miller, pp. 12-24.

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
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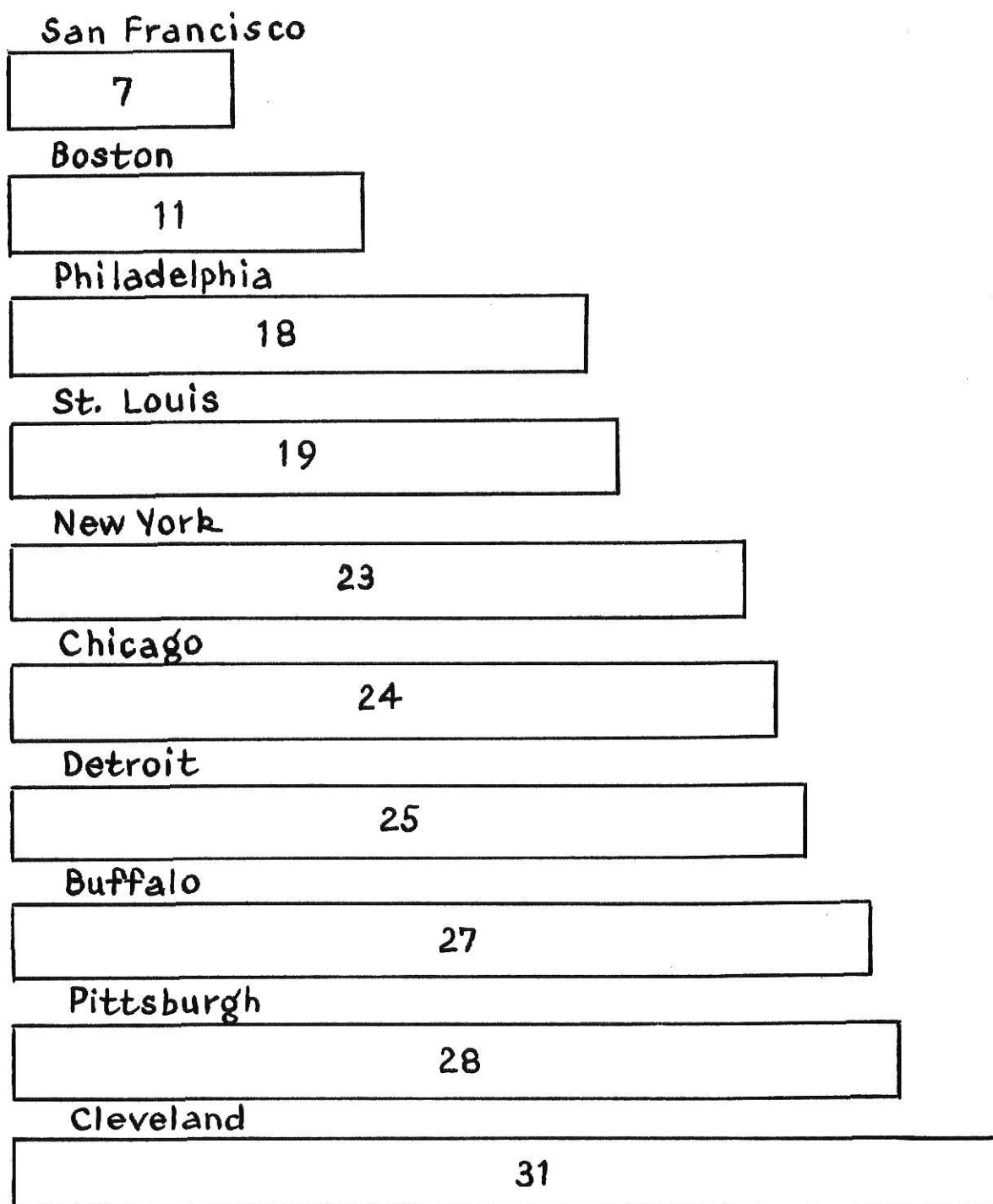


Fig. 1. Per cent of the foreign population unable to speak English in the 10 American cities having the largest foreign population in 1910.

Source: Miller, Herbert, The School and the Immigrant, p. 17.

gone unnoticed by teachers and administrators and were often too great for the immigrant children to handle themselves.

The problems of immigrant children went unnoticed in a nationwide study of the dropout rate that considered grade, age, city, sex, and race. Graphs and four place decimals were frequent, but immigrant children were not mentioned. The closest the author, a professor of educational psychology at Columbia University, came to an analysis was a note that "poverty is one cause, but I am unable to assign any exact measure of its amount of influence. Incapacity for and lack of interest in school studies is another."⁷ Diagram 2 shows there was a very close correlation between immigrant children and the length of their education.

Even as late as 1918, the secretary of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education could say,

So far as the children are concerned, the problem will work out its own answer in the public schools. If the schools are good for the American child and are saturated with the spirit of loyalty, service, and sacrifice for the country, there is every probability that the alien child will absorb this spirit and become a patriotic citizen.⁸

The schools made almost no effort to single out the immigrant child for special attention.

⁷Edward L. Thorndike, "The Elimination of Pupils from School," Bulletin No. 4 (Washington: Bureau of Education, 1907), p. 14.

⁸George J. Becht, "Americanization as a War-time Duty of the Schools," NEA Proceedings 1918, p. 363.

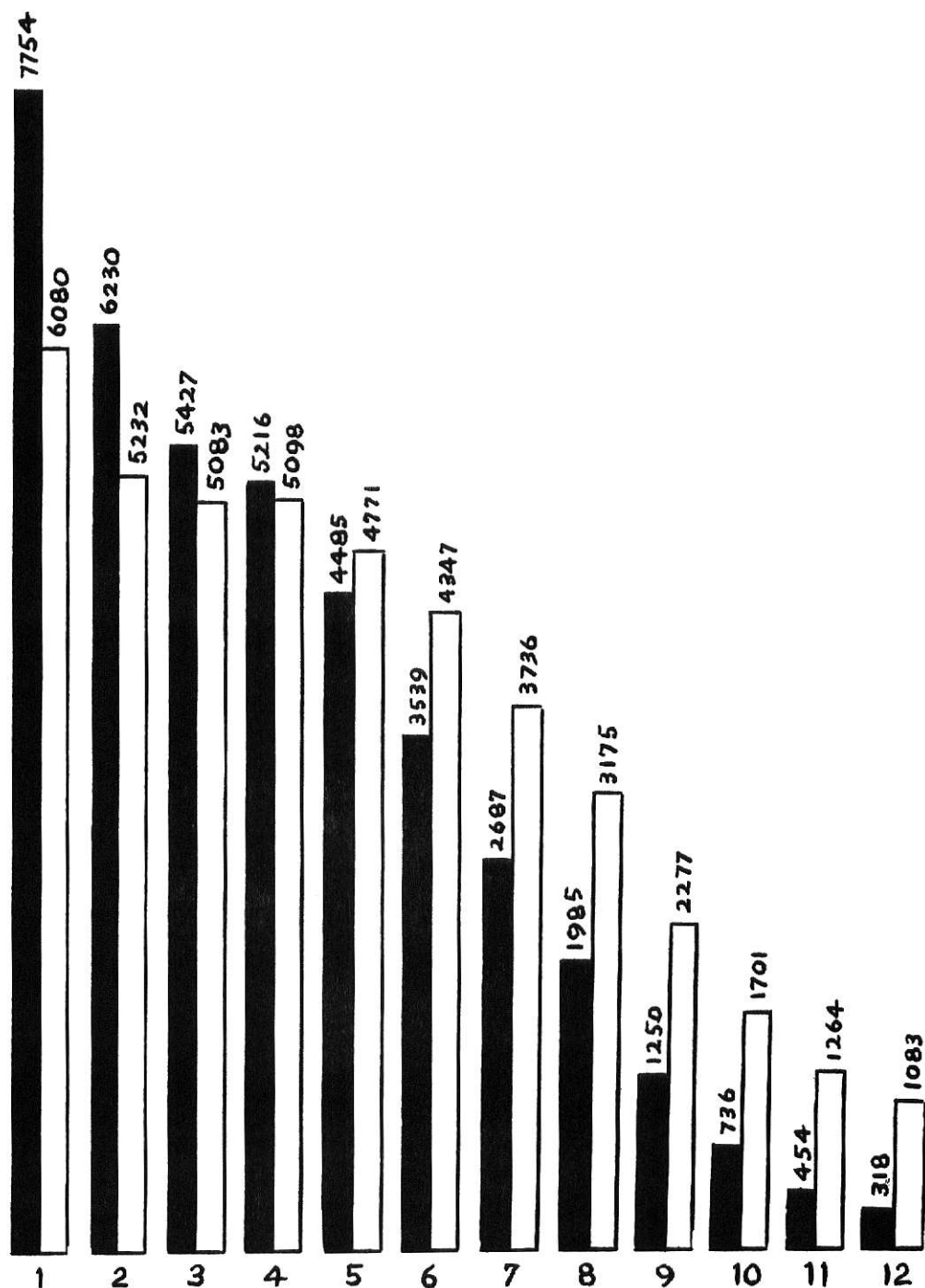


Fig. 2. Number of children in each grade from homes in which a foreign language is spoken, and number from English-speaking homes.

Bars in black represent children from foreign homes; bars in outline children from English-speaking homes.

Source: Miller, Herbert, The School and the Immigrant, p. 27.

One might say that immigrant children did not receive special attention because their teachers were not prepared to deal with their unique problems. Unfortunately, they were only slightly better prepared to help the children of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. A sketch of the profession at the turn of the century is enlightening.

A teacher needed only a tenth-grade education to be eligible for the tests--even into the 20th century. (Indiana in 1907 became the first state to require a high school diploma as a condition for all teaching certificates.) If she passed the written exam, she had a blanket certificate good for any subject at any grade level. Gradually, the idea of special certificates for special teaching assignments caught on, as did the notion that graduation from high school and, later, college would be sounder basis for evaluation than a single test. The typical teacher of 1911, according to the first study made of the characteristics of school teachers, was 24 years old, female, had entered teaching at 19, and had four years of training beyond the elementary school. Her parents were native born, her father was most likely a farmer or tradesman, and she had to earn her own way.⁹

In 1907 William Maxwell, superintendent of New York City schools wrote that teacher appointments had been obtained through political, social or religious influence; but were now determined by competitive examination.¹⁰ Those teachers who had completed the required courses in a normal school were considered to be well prepared. Reality was a shock because

⁹ Myrtle Bonn, "Teachers Then and Now," American Education II (October, 1967), p. 15.

¹⁰ Maxwell, "Present Needs . . . ," p. 25.

there were no courses in the normal schools that dealt with immigrant children until after 1915.

The accepted method of instruction did not consider special problems of American children, much less those of immigrant children. The watch-word was "drill." Exact answer to explicit question, plus loud group recitations were the most popular instruction methods. Adele Shaw remarked that in many schools children were discouraged from expressing any original thought because attention and accuracy were the goals of the teachers. "One room" recalls Adele Shaw, "was darkly illuminated by one window in front of the class that sat crammed on backless benches, their text books under foot. To a raucous 'one-two-three' they ducked, clutched, emerged. They read while they were gazing into space; they knew the book by heart."¹¹ As long as such methods continued in the classroom, the immigrant child was not given the attention and help needed to learn English and compete with American children. In ghetto schools, teachers often practiced the drill methods more enthusiastically as a means of discipline and more importantly, because they were the only methods that they knew.

The predominately white Anglo-Saxon Protestant background and lower middle class status of the majority of public school

¹¹Adele M. Shaw, "The Day's Work of a Public School Teacher," World's Work XXVII (November, 1913), p. 25.

teachers did not lead them to sympathize with the immigrant or his child. The view dominated that under the impact of a flood of imported barbarisms the whole upper strata of society was becoming debauched. Their foreign speech, to which they stubbornly clung, was but a mangled product of fragments from many tongues. To permit them to corrupt English was disloyal and unpatriotic. Most teachers did not realize that the education process was strengthened by a friendly relationship between the teacher and her students. Students respond to concern and the teacher's success is often enhanced by such a bond. Shaw reported that, "in one room, where geography recitation was in lumbering progress, I volunteered the beaming comment, 'These seem like nice boys.' 'I haven't found them so,' answered the teacher sourly, and a sudden animation and general straightening lapsed into stodginess." Continued exasperation characterized many teachers and checked the inquisitiveness of all but the most intelligent students. "In one school in which I spent the better part of two days," wrote Shaw, "I did not once hear any child express a thought in his own words. Attention was perfect. No pupil could escape from any grade without knowing the questions and answers of the grade. The chant in which recitations were delivered was as uniform as everything else."¹² These students

¹²Oscar Handlin, John Dewey's Challenge to Education (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 26; Shaw, "True Character . . . ," p. 4210; Miller, p. 55.

were being taught, but it is doubtful if they were being educated.

Jane Addams said in 1897, that teachers "had little knowledge of or respect for the child and his parents. She quite honestly estimates the child upon an American basis."¹³ Many teachers felt that if they showed sympathy for, or allowed the child to retain any foreign traditions or ideals, he would be less American in his beliefs. Such was not the case, but it was not confirmed until years after the World War.

The failure to understand some of the ideals of the immigrant children combined with standard school procedures provided some surprises for many teachers. When a teacher used a traditional method of discipline on a Jewish boy in New York there were some unexpected results. Michael Gold recalls the incident:

She (the teacher) was shocked by the dirty word I, a six-year-old villain once used. She washed my mouth with yellow lye soap. I submitted. She stood me in the corner for the day to serve as an example of anarchy. Soap eating is nasty. But my parents objected because soap is made of Christian fat, is not kosher. I was being forced into pork-eating, a crime against the Mosaic law. They complained to the Principal.¹⁴

Immigrant children did not receive the special attention and help that they should have had in learning English and

¹³Jane Addams, "Foreign-born Children in the Primary Grades," NEA Proceedings 1897, p. 107.

¹⁴Michael Gold, Jews Without Money (New York: International Publishers, 1945), p. 36.

in making adjustments to American society. The benefits of compulsory education were compromised as the numbers of children to be educated strained the physical and human resources of big city school districts. Teachers who were almost adequately prepared to teach English to American students were bewildered when most of their students spoke only Polish or Italian. Without new methods or textbooks to guide them, the majority of teachers used drills and strict discipline to control their classes. Certainly the teachers were as deserving of sympathy in that impossible situation as were the children. The majority of those misunderstood alien children had no great thirst for education and it is not surprising that most teachers responded in an uncharitable manner.

That the majority of teachers failed to give sympathetic attention to immigrant children does not mean that they ignored them. Superintendent Maxwell outlined the obligations of the school system to the immigrant children as (1) teaching them to care for their health, (2) English, (3) "as good an intellectual education as their limited time will permit," and (4) the rights and duties of an American citizen.¹⁵

If cultural assimilation of the immigrant children was beyond the resources of the average teacher, American health standards were not. The dangers of unboiled milk and

¹⁵William Maxwell, "Education of the Immigrant Child," Bulletin No. 51 (Washington: Bureau of Education, 1913), p. 19.

unscreened windows were explained. Health instruction was given direct application when a school in New York offered free baths and one thousand were taken in a week. In the Allen Street public school the teachers asked the daily question, "What must I do to be healthy?" The class replied in unison:

I must keep my skin clean,
Wear clean clothes,
Breathe pure air,
And live in the sunlight.¹⁶

To many students anything clean and fresh was unknown and they seldom saw anything to even suggest it. Health instructions were not without some benefit for the district superintendent of the New York City schools could boast that, "To the credit of the schools let it be recorded that in that special foreign section of New York, such standards of punctuality and cleanliness as now prevail in the community as a whole have grown out of the habits gained by the children in the schools."¹⁷ Children adopted current American clothing as soon as family resources would allow and the teachers encouraged the cleanliness of both the clothes and the children. It became difficult to tell alien from native children until they began to speak.

¹⁶Shaw, "True Character . . . ," p. 4216; Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 113.

¹⁷Mary Julia Richman, "The Immigrant Child," NEA Proceedings 1905, p. 117.

The most difficult part of Americanization was learning English. The children found the language fairly easy to learn through playing with American friends, but as the immigrant density increased, alien children played mostly with others of the same national origin. The early attempts to teach the immigrant child was meager. Immigrant children entered either beginners' classes or a special ungraded class. This class contained: (1) special discipline cases, (2) truants, (3) defective children--physically, mentally, or morally, and (4) foreign born children who did not speak English. The children were taught only those things which the teacher believed were within the understanding of each individual.¹⁸

Approximately one-third of the non-English-speaking children could read their native language, so in many cases only a lack of English was keeping them from the regular class-work of others of their age. In 1901 the Cleveland school system recognized the necessity of making special provision for teaching English to recently arrived immigrant children when the principal of Harmon School organized the first "steamer class." In 1913 there were fifteen classes with more than four hundred children and in 1915 there were seven hundred enrolled.¹⁹

¹⁸A. R. Dugmore, "New Citizens for the Republic," World's Work V (October, 1902), pp. 3325-6.

¹⁹Miller, pp. 28, 72-3.

In 1905 the New York City schools formed special classes for non-English-speaking children in which five or six months were spent exclusively in teaching them to speak, read, and write English. Most of the time was spent on spoken English, and most of the material was concrete and visual. The course of study was left entirely to the principals and Superintendent Maxwell noted in 1914 that many had not been strong leaders. Instruction and management of the classes were more efficient when the children were grouped with others of their nationality. This was difficult because of the variety of national groups and the complex manner in which they were scattered through the schools. As soon as they were able to understand enough English, they were transferred to the grades where they belonged. Over 1,500 students attended their C or steamer classes in 1905-1906. In 1913-14 approximately 3,500 immigrant children were receiving special instruction in classes. Because these progressive examples were not widely copied, Herbert Miller could write that, "the problem of teaching foreign children to speak English has never been regarded by the public schools as one of their serious problems."²⁰

In 1917 the Board of Education of New York City published Foreign Accent, a syllabus to help teachers correct the speech

²⁰"Education of the Immigrant," Bulletin No. 51, pp. 20-24; Miller, pp. 34, 75; William H. Maxwell, Seventh Annual Report of the City Superintendent of Schools for the Year Ending July 31, 1905 (New York: City of New York, 1905), p. 64.

of their foreign students. The aim was not to train elocutionists, but to get a speech which would be of economic value and which would not mark the speaker among his fellow workers. It is noted that, "the child of foreign parents has, in most instances learned the language incorrectly from his associates and to this jargon, he adds his foreign accent."²¹ The last section explained characteristic racial errors of Germans, Russians, Jews, Greeks, and Latins when they spoke English and ways the teacher could correct them.

When the immigrant child entered a regular classroom he was taught English by the same method that was used with native children. There was no effort made to relate the words the child was learning to anything with which he was familiar. The drills and reading material did not reflect the crowded city environment or speak of anything with which the student could relate. Reality was not a part of class-work, only the Ideal as presented in books.

This is Jack. This is Jack's house. This is Jack's Daddy. Jack goes to school. On the way he meets a cow. On the way he meets a sheep. Jack comes home. Jack falls asleep.

And surely enough, across the top from page to page the brightly colored pictures show it all. Blue-eyed and blond, Jack himself stares out over the nice white collar and the neatly buttoned jacket. Across the green lawn, from the porch of the pretty yellow house a miraculously slim mother waves. By the side of a road that dips through

²¹Foreign Accent (New York: City of New York, 1918), p. 2.

the fields of corn, the animals wait, each in turn to extend its greeting. There it all is, real as life.

Except that it is all a lie. There is no Jack, no house, no brightly smiling "Mummy". In the whole room there is not a boy with such a name, with such an appearance. One can walk streets without end, and there will never be a glimpse of the yellow clapboards, or the close-cropped grass. Who sleeps like Jack alone in the prim room by the window to be awakened by singing birds? Good morning, Mr. Robin. The whole book is false because nothing in it touches on the experience of its readers and no element in their experience creeps into its pages.²²

Material with which a student can associate is more likely to hold his interest and complement the learning process than material that is completely unrelated to anything that he has experienced. The native child in the next seat most likely experienced the same disinterest in the lesson. In 1920 the National Society for the Study of Education produced a series of reading lessons for immigrant children based upon the child's experiences in the home. It covered the familiar activities of setting the table, taking care of the baby, bathing and dressing, sweeping, and washing as well as sports and games. It included sanitation lessons similar to the mothers' primers and many lessons about patriotism.²³

Instruction on the rights and duties of an American citizen very often became impassioned outbursts of blind

²²Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1951), p. 246.

²³Report of the Commissioner of Education 1920, p. 30.

patriotism. Theodore Roosevelt verbalized the goal when he said, "Above all, the immigrant must learn to talk and think and be United States."²⁴ This attitude was reflected by most civics teachers. In their zeal to teach patriotism, teachers often implied disrespect for the history and traditions of the parents of the immigrant students. This caused some students to lose respect for their parents and resulted in delinquency. Civics instruction was hardly mentioned in professional circles before the Americanization movement began and even then, few methods were outlined. The following verse is an example by which patriotism was fostered in elementary school students:

I love the name of Washington,
I love my country, too.
I love the flag, the dear old flag,
The red, the white, the blue.²⁵

It was much easier, and the effect much prettier to teach children the oath of allegiance and how to wave small flags while singing "The Star-Spangled Banner," than to teach them to keep fire escapes free from trash, to respect tenement-house rules, or to separate the ashes from the garbage as required by law in most large cities. Laws would continue to be broken until their nature and purpose were understood by the people and they realized that it was in their own

²⁴Edward N. Saventh, American Historians and European Immigrants (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), p. 115.

²⁵Hutchins Hapgood, The Spirit of the Ghetto (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), p. 28.

interest to obey them.²⁶

In 1915 Herbert Miller published The School and the Immigrant which encouraged a new approach to the education of the immigrant. He wrote:

There is a current belief that the prime qualification of a public school teacher is to know certain school subjects and how to teach them. It must not be forgotten, however, that the human beings she is teaching respond with great readiness to genuine sympathy and understanding and that her real success depends in no small measure on her personal relations with the children. The object of the teacher should be to see her group (of immigrant children) from the inside as it sees itself. In this way not only will sympathetic relations be established, but human values recognized which cannot be comprehended when seen from the outside.²⁷

To facilitate this, eleven pages were devoted to brief statements concerning the national and racial characteristics of the various foreign groups with suggestions for supplementary reading. The sketches dealt sympathetically with historical and religious conflicts. Teachers seemed to fear that if any affection for foreign traditions and ideals was retained, the child was likely to be less American. The fact was noted that Americanization without reference to the student's culture often resulted in social disorganization and this reinforced the importance of teacher understanding. In 1917 the Bureau of Education published a bibliography of textbooks and dictionaries that covered thirty-nine languages.

²⁶Julia Richman, "The Immigrant Child," p. 117.

²⁷Miller, pp. 55, 71.

The frantic efforts to Americanize adult aliens described earlier affected their children. In the face of grumbling and marked decrease of attendance at adult English classes, educators began a critical evaluation of the techniques that had been used. From this the realization grew that the alien could not be taught by the same methods as his American cousin, and that development of new techniques was absolutely necessary.

It was realized that teaching immigrant children was difficult, requiring tact, skill and patience, and therefore only the most experienced or most able teachers should handle the work. Previously, young teachers with no influence were given these classes. One of the new methods was called socializing. It depended upon certain classroom policies that would

. . . let the pupil determine and express his own needs, serve the pupil's immediate needs rather than those more remote, provide a regular channel for the student to talk to the teacher, establish a method by which the pupils can test their own progress, find a substitute for the play situation in which children learn a foreign language so easily, and have activities that will carry over into the life outside the school.²⁸

This theory put into practice would result in students working together to make a doll house and furnishings, for example, while learning the names of all the items, as well as home safety and sanitation.

²⁸Joseph H. Wade, "Teaching English to Foreigners in the Elementary Schools," Educational Review XXVII (April, 1904), p. 356; Ethel Richardson, "Socializing: The Method, Content, and Procedure," NEA Proceedings 1922, p. 920.

The actual practice of new teaching methods in the public schools was very difficult. Most new methods required a supply of household items, a vast array of photographs and drawings as well as art supplies for the students to create additional learning materials. Secondly, many of the new methods required children to move about the room or work in small groups and many teachers feared loss of class control. Perhaps most importantly, such methods were extremely difficult to imagine or to implement in some of the dark, crowded classrooms of the time. Some teachers incorporated parts of various new techniques into their instruction, so it may well be said that some students did benefit from the new ideas. Other educators defended the American system of education all the louder as if their positions were being threatened.

School districts were embarrassed after announcing a program for the Americanization of foreign-born adults, to realize that they did not have a program for the Americanization of alien children. Indeed, provision was lacking for the training in citizenship of the native born. It was thought that if all the subjects in the curriculum could be permeated with the spirit of Americanism there need be no reorganization of the school. The Lawrence Plan, applied to Oliver Elementary School in Lawrence, Massachusetts, was such a program. The forty teachers were to saturate every

course of study with loyalty to American ideals and make patriotic citizens out of the fourteen hundred students. History was taught not only for the facts, but to make the students "believe and understand the worth of being free." Arithmetic, geography, science and music were also vitalized and Americanized. The Lawrence Plan was one of the projects of the National Security League in its effort to "fight Bolshevism and other un-American tendencies by the creation of well-defined National Ideals, and the marshalling of all our people in the determination to achieve them."²⁹ The plan influenced other school districts to make their courses more current.

The war caused many educators to evaluate the school subjects. The National Education Association convention in 1919 heard papers concerning how the methods of teaching English, history, geography, civics, economics, and even physical education should be changed to express new social and political values. Schools began to realize that their duty was to prepare citizens, whether of foreign or native birth. Superintendent Moore of the Leavenworth schools was glad that "we have begun to train men to live for the common

²⁹Thompson, pp. 119-120; John J. Mahoney and H. H. Chamberlin, The Lawrence Plan for Education in Citizenship (New York: National Security League, 1918), p. 5.

good instead of telling them how men used to live."³⁰

By the Twenties citizenship was being taught by developing and solving problems that arose from the common needs of the people. The use of newspapers and magazines increased. Clean neighborhoods and good roads were shown to be as important as obeying city ordinances, for they protected all citizens. In several schools, civics classwork was freely supplemented by discussions of Halloween pranks, smallpox epidemics, the Boston police strike of 1920, local gambling laws and the like. Schools experimented with study halls supervised by students, which evolved into student government, teaching self-control and respect for authority of their own choosing. Experiences to which the student could relate were more meaningful than patriotic pageants.³¹

Americanization meant various things to different educators. Kregier elementary school in Chicago was a center of attention when several Jewish parents charged Miss Mary Tobin, principal, with hitting the children, restraining them from promotion, and ordering them to stay out of school. Miss Tobin replied that, "It is just a question of Americanization. In our school district there are many greenhorns and it is hard for them to understand our rules and regulations. They

³⁰Department of Superintendence, NEA Proceedings 1919, pp. 542-554; William McAndrew, "Americanism at its Source," Literary Digest LXI (May 17, 1919), p. 36.

³¹L. P. Benezet, "How Are We Teaching Citizenship in Our Schools?" NEA Proceedings 1920, p. 64.

heard that America is a land of freedom, so they are under the impression that they may do as they please." It was pointed out that Miss Tobin was Irish, had received her education in a parochial school and that she was hostile to Jews. She denied the claim by saying she was trying to Americanize the students. The parents called a strike and the Free Press called their action a Communist plot.³²

It has been shown that the administrators of the public schools did not recognize the unique problems represented by the masses of immigrant children; that they assumed the traditional methods were adequate although it can be argued that the whole structure needed reorganization, and that when immigrant children were finally recognized as requiring something different in the way of instruction, it was as often detrimental as beneficial. Children are great imitators and their imperfect Americanization must be credited to their strong desire to be accepted by the native American children. Their enthusiastic response to patriotic assemblies and pressures on their parents to conform to American standards of dress and social conduct were taken as sincere and thorough Americanization by the super-patriots. The bright prospect for a compulsory, controlled learning situation for immigrant children in which their complete assimilation would be all

³²Forward (March 23, 1924), Foreign Language Press Survey; Chicago Daily Tribune (March 21), p. 3; (March 22), p. 13.

but assured faded with crowded conditions, unprepared teachers and out-dated and irrelevant methods and materials. After the War, progressive changes were made in many areas, and the immigrant children, fewer then than earlier, were the beneficiaries.

EVALUATION

With the cessation of hostilities in November 1918, the movement to Americanize the immigrant entered its final phase. It was characterized at first by a continuation of the interest in the Americanization of the immigrant on the part of the American public as a carryover of the general war spirit. Throughout most of the Americanization movement, the immigrants responded favorably. Immigrant leaders and organizations volunteered their services and cooperated closely with the various agencies carrying on Americanization activities. Editorials in favor of the goals of the Americanizers and praising the efforts of the Bureaus of Education and Naturalization appeared in many of the foreign-language periodicals and newspapers. The intelligent immigrant seemed only too eager to take advantage of the opportunities offered to learn English and gain knowledge of his newly adopted country.¹

American fear of Bolshevism shattered the spirit of cooperation. The arrests, trials and deportations of agitators, members of the IWW, and suspicious aliens under the direction of Attorney-General Mitchell Palmer stunned foreign-born citizens and aliens alike. By the end of the year 1919, nearly five thousand persons had been arrested by agents of

¹"Foreign Editors Endorse Night School Classes," American Leader IX (January 13, 1916), pp. 10-11.

the Department of Justice, and 2,635 aliens were deported. The raids and arrests were continued well into the spring of 1920, when an additional 2,700 aliens, most of whom were Russian in extraction, were arrested in thirty cities in the United States. Almost over night, the hand of fellowship had changed to the mailed fist of despotism so like the earlier ones in Europe that they longed to return, now that the older tyrannies had fallen.²

As the result of the hysteria engendered by the Bolshevik bogey, a change in the approach to Americanization was taken by many in the movement. The movement became an intolerant crusade. It sought to stamp out the remnants of foreign culture still in existence in America. Various state laws prohibited teaching common branches of study in foreign languages and efforts were made to enact legislation prohibiting the use of the mails to foreign-language publications. These and other high-handed schemes brought forth on behalf of 100% Americanism, all deeply offended the more sensitive immigrants who grew hostile and suspicious toward the activities and aims of the various Americanization groups.³

²Irwin S. Guerncey, "United States," New International Year Book 1919, p. 707; 1920, p. 697; Bierstadt, p. 98.

³Frances Kellor, Immigration and the Future (New York: George H. Doran, 1920), pp. 57-58.

The Bureau of Education sponsored the last conference on Americanization in May, 1919. More than four hundred individuals interested in Americanization from all sections of the country attended, including some of the most experienced workers in the field. The conference revealed the sharp difference in attitude held by officialdom and the broader-minded educators and social workers.

The meetings revealed a conviction on the part of the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Education that Americanization was primarily a new bulwark to maintain the old order inviolate while a majority of the delegates had the sincere desire to broaden⁴ the avenues of opportunity for our foreign-born.

Typical of the difference in attitudes was the speech of Secretary Lane which stressed the danger of "red" agitation among the immigrants, and that of John Ihlder of the Philadelphia Housing Association which held that there would be little progress in Americanization until the tenement environment of the immigrant had been eliminated.⁵ Most of the conference's attention was devoted to the education of the immigrant in a knowledge of the English language rather than in ways of eliminating impossible labor conditions, bad housing and the prevention of fraud.

⁴Felix Morely, "Making Americans," Nation CVIII, p. 878.

⁵John Ihlder, "Improving Housing and Sanitation Conditions of the Foreign Born," Proceedings Americanization Conference, pp. 328-335; John O'Grady, "National Catholic War Council," Ibid., pp. 353-355.

The division within the conference was a reflection of the division that had been in the Americanization movement from the beginning. Social workers and most educators had been sincerely interested in helping immigrants adjust to American society while business and patriotic leaders were more interested in ways to make the immigrants productive and ways to protect the status quo from their influence. There was no central authority which directed the Americanization movement. If a pattern of action seemed apparent it was because business and patriotic leaders across the country responded in similar ways to their local situations. Businessmen wanted to use cheap immigrant laborers who could speak English and who would not join a strike while patriotic leaders feared dishonest elections, corrupt governments and anarchy would occur unless the aliens accepted democratic ideals. Social workers believed that immigrants could cope with American society if they understood the language and the laws. For both groups, the means--education--were the same, but the ends were different.

On May 2, 1918, the Secretary of the Interior accepted a proposition from the National Americanization Committee of New York to continue the support of the Immigrant Division in the Bureau of Education that was begun by the Committee for Immigrants in America in April, 1914. The educational activities of the division were expanded to include the

industrial requirements of the country, the history and resources, our social, civic, economic and political ideals in order to win the full cooperation of the immigrants in the war effort. The National Americanization Committee paid approximately \$100,000 a year for the salaries and travel of thirty-six specialists, assistants and clerks. This funding and the work of the division ended on March 4, 1919. In anticipation, the Smith-Bankhead Americanization Bill (S. 5464, HR. 15402) was presented in January of 1919. It authorized the Secretary of the Interior to undertake the education of those illiterate in the English language and to train teachers and directors for that purpose. Five million dollars was requested for the first year and fourteen and a half million annually until 1926 to help pay the salaries of teachers and directors. States could benefit from the act by authorizing cooperation, appropriating an amount equal to that allotted by the Federal Government and by submitting to the Secretary plans and proposals for using the appropriation. This bill died in the log-jam at the end of the 65th Congress, and its defeat put the Bureau of Education out of the Americanization business. Similar bills were introduced until 1921, but economy-minded Congresses turned them down.⁶

⁶Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1918, pp. 133-134; Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1919, p. 189; Drachsler, Democracy and Assimilation, pp. 262-263.

The demise of the Immigrant Division in the Bureau of Education ended a curious aspect of the Americanization movement. The Committee for Immigrants in America which first suggested and supported the creation of the Division and the National Americanization Committee of New York which continued the financial support until such support was ruled illegal shared executive board members with each other and with the North American Civic League for Immigrants and the Immigration Committee of the United States Chamber of Commerce. The last two organizations were actively engaged in Americanization for industrial peace and productivity. Through their financial support, businessmen used the authority of the Federal Government to sanction policies of private industry. It is interesting that Congress allowed the Immigrant Division to pass out of existence.

The Federal Bureau of Naturalization continued to carry on the work which it had started in 1914, and thus became the sole federal agency actively supporting Americanization. Correspondence was maintained by the Bureau with practically every community of 2,500 population or over having an immigrant population. The Bureau reported that each of these towns had taken some initial step toward the reorganization of its school system by the end of the fiscal year, July 1, 1919, to take up "the national and local responsibility for the Americanization of the foreign-born." While the school year in 1915 opened with only thirty-eight communities

pledging their school systems to spreading the doctrines of Americanism, the school year 1919 closed with 2,240 communities actively supporting the movement and carrying on classes on behalf of the immigrant.⁷

A combination of four factors contributed to eliminate from public interest the problem of the immigrant and the need for his Americanization: the passage of the quota legislation in 1921, the passage of legislation by several state governments insuring facilities for immigrant education, the effects of the depression of 1921 upon the financial backing of private Americanization groups, and finally the return of the American people to a state of "normalcy" after the war fever and hysteria of the immediate post-war period. Hereafter, interest in Americanization was confined for the most part to professional educators, sociologists and social workers. The Americanization drive or movement to educate the immigrant and inculcate him with American ideals and the English language definitely came to an end with the year 1921.⁸

Americanization was to have produced instant assimilation. Assimilation is fundamentally a cultural process which implies the acceptance of the ideas, attitudes, customs, and traditions by the new group; a process that is rarely,

⁷Annual Report of the Commissioner of Naturalization 1919, p. 84.

⁸Hartmann, p. 265.

if every completed, as people assimilate only in part. On different points the person isolates, accommodates, and assimilates himself and these depend on many factors, but mainly on his own nature, his cultural background, and conditions which he experiences in America.⁹

An unsuspected situation had been suddenly revealed and the problem of national unification was attacked wholesale, in order to get the troublesome task over with. But Americans discovered that the problem was more involved than they thought and the national tradition of getting quick results here did not bear out. Some Americanizers ascribed their failure in several ways: to the methods of teaching which were unsuited for adult immigrants, to poor economic conditions which left the foreigner but a shred of leisure time in which to take advantage of the opportunity to learn English and civics. Americanizers sought the remedy mainly in perfecting the mechanics of Americanization, rather than in redefining its principles and its goals.¹⁰

Many of the immigrants who were enticed into evening schools as the result of propaganda undoubtedly became familiar with American ideals and the American way of life, and probably became better Americans thereby. The percent

⁹Duncan, p. 520.

¹⁰Frank V. Thompson, "Schooling of the Immigrant," NEA Proceedings 1921, p. 758; Drachsler, p. 238.

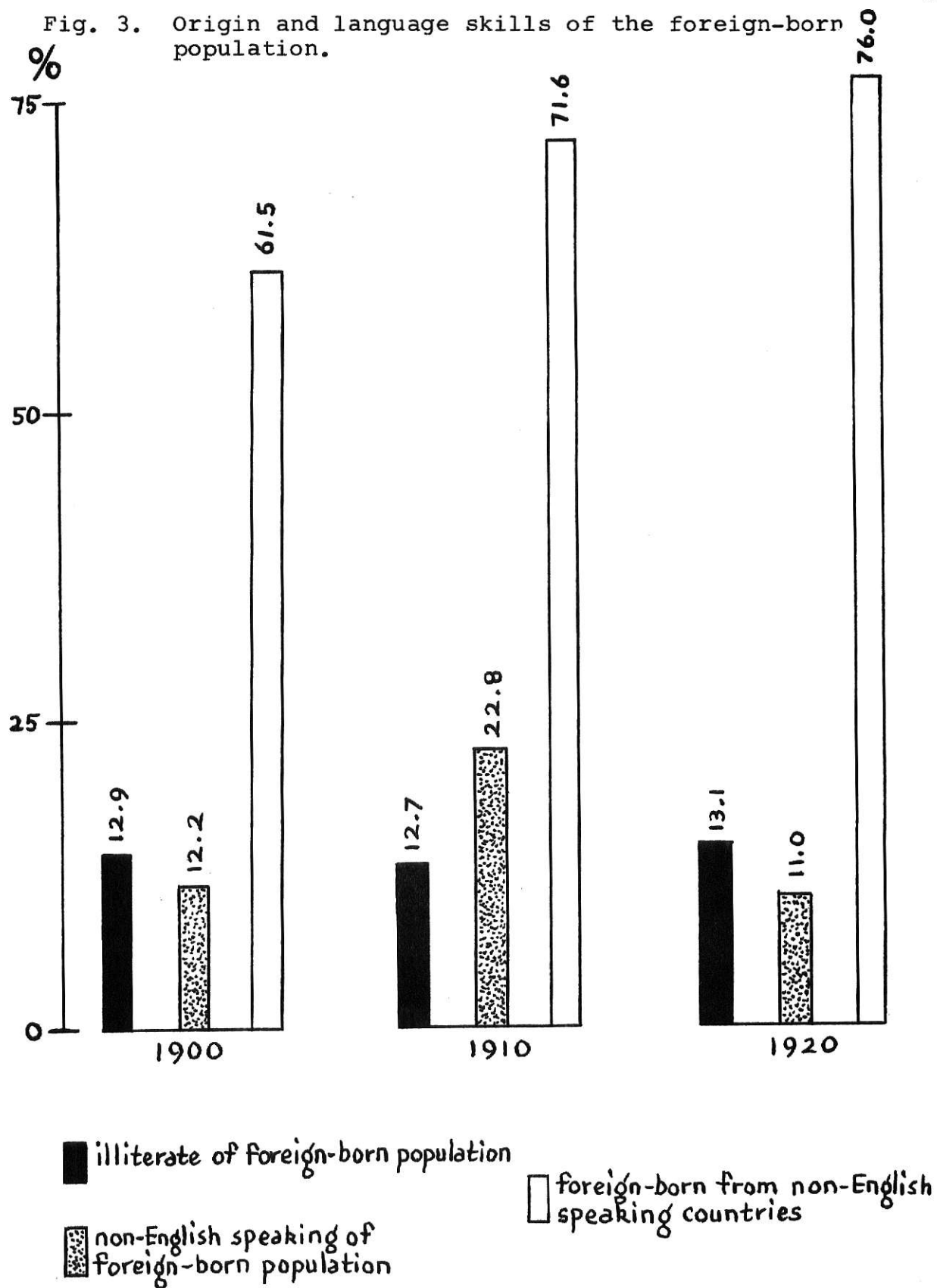
of illiteracy of foreign-born whites ten years of age and older remained fairly constant and increased slightly in the census of 1920. The percentage of foreign-born whites ten years of age and older who were unable to speak English nearly doubled in the census of 1910 from the census of 1900 and then declined to 11%, lower than the 1900 percentage of 12.2%. The decline can be credited partly to the Americanization movement and to the small number of immigrants arriving during the war years, giving time to those already here to learn English through informal social contacts.

The school was not the controlling factor in the ability of the foreign born to speak English. Of the 13,345,000 immigrants who were living in our country in 1910, approximately 3,364,000 had known English upon their arrival, 729,000 were young enough to come under the compulsory school attendance laws of the various states, and approximately three million were considered non-English-speaking in the 1910 census. This means that approximately 6,252,000 immigrants learned to speak English without any formal schooling.¹¹

An evaluation of immigrant education by the Cleveland Americanization Committee of the Mayor's War Board in 1919 was discouraging.

¹¹Thompson, Schooling of the Immigrant, p. 3.

Fig. 3. Origin and language skills of the foreign-born population.



It is a most astonishing fact how little the school has actually helped in teaching English. Nationally, of those who were non-English-speakers who did learn English, less than one-half of one percent learned it in school. Cleveland with 150,000 who speak little or no English has reached, during the present year less than 3,000. Boston has reached, during the past year, a scant 1,200 or 1,500. Other great cities like Detroit, Chicago, and Buffalo have, up to this time, proved themselves no more able to cope with the situation.¹²

The schools did not achieve their goal of one hundred percent literacy in English for several reasons. The immigrants who asked for English classes to be established and who attended them at some personal sacrifice were bored and offended by endless drills on primary words. They wanted to learn to express abstract thoughts, to appreciate subtle jokes and to understand the reasons why Americans behaved the way they did. The textbooks for use in advanced classes contained biographies of famous Americans and political speeches by recent leaders, especially Theodore Roosevelt, instead of literature that would help foreigners understand the new land and the different culture. In 1920 a Russian in New York expressed the dissatisfaction of many.

I speak very bad English. Going to the evening school did not do me very much good. In these schools seven-eighths of all the time is spent in preaching patriotism and also in getting subscriptions for the Liberty Loans. I think this is not right. A school is a place for study only. If a school should be opened in New York where the pupils would have to pay a small tuition, and

¹²Cleveland Americanization Committee of the Mayor's War Board, Americanization in Cleveland, 1919, p. 16.

where English would be taught in a purely scientific method to the foreigners who wish to learn to speak good English, not only colloquial English and slang which the evening schools are teaching now, I am sure that the school would not be big enough for all those who would desire to enter it.¹³

Undoubtedly, many immigrants acquired enough education through special immigrant educational programs to become citizens. But mere acquisition of education and citizenship by an individual did not necessarily mean that he would be a "good American" then anymore than it does today. The percentage of persons naturalized declined from 1900 to 1920. In 1900 fifty-five percent of the foreign-born were naturalized, in 1910 forty-five percent, and in 1920 forty-seven percent were naturalized. The decrease in percentage of persons naturalized can be explained in the scarcity of public lands and the attendant citizenship requirement for ownership, and more rigid requirements for citizenship. On the other hand, the percentage of those having first papers nearly doubled; eight percent of the foreign born had their first papers in 1900, eight and four tenths percent in 1910, and fifteen and eight tenths percent in 1920. The increase could have been caused by the Americanization campaign and the pressure of employers and civic organizations.¹⁴ Actually, the number

¹³Bierstadt, p. 30.

¹⁴Niles Carpenter, Immigrants and Their Children 1920 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1927), pp. 251-255.

of immigrants who became Americanized along the formal lines advocated by the Americanization groups was small, when compared with the great bulk of their fellows who never saw the inside of an American school room or settlement house.

The great majority became Americanized in time through the gradual process of assimilating American customs, attitudes, speech and ideals from their native American neighbors and from their American-born children. Americanizing forces in the homes, the churches, the streets, the playgrounds, the moving pictures, and the jobs were all factors which determined the attitudes of the confirmed alien and the newly naturalized citizen.¹⁵ This analysis is not to say that the Americanization movement had little effect. The passage of state Americanization legislation providing night schools and facilities for the education of the adult immigrant paved the way for later legislation on behalf of other types of adults as well as immigrants. In many cases, the original Americanization acts provided these features. Legislation on behalf of adult education and evening schools might not have been passed so easily had it not been for the crusading zeal of the Americanizers in sponsoring each legislation on behalf of the foreign-born. With precedent taken, the stage was set for better things to come.

¹⁵Daniels, p. 446; Thompson, Schooling of the Immigrant, p. 2.

Native individuals educated under the immigrant education programs in institutions of higher learning reflected more of a sociological approach to the problem of Americanization than that of the super-patriots and since these people were for the most part educators by profession, their influence came in time to bear an ever increasingly important part in the movement. While the un-professional elements in the drive soon tired of their efforts, the professional educators and social workers continued longer after the Americanization drive had ended, to carry on the work of educating the immigrants in the evening schools and in the settlement houses. Americanization classes then became merely one part of the new emphasis in education, adult education.

The effects of the Americanization movement upon the immigrants were diverse. Religious and social leaders in immigrant communities encouraged their followers to take advantage of the new educational opportunities. Some immigrants were suspicious of the motives of the Americanizers and were resentful of the amount of effort that they said was necessary to make foreigners acceptable. Most immigrants were proud of their cultural heritages and they were hurt and bewildered by the idea of casting away the one thing that they had managed to bring with them and which affirmed their identity. The panic of the Red Scare confirmed the suspicions of the doubtful and their anger was expressed later in autobiographies.

Americanization held terrible meaning for immigrant parents. When foreign-born parents could understand neither American customs nor English and their children could not speak the native language of their parents, social disunity occurred. When a child became unruly, obstinate and preferred his English-speaking classmates to his family, he was considered Americanized. Twelve year old Tony who stamped his foot and shouted at his Sicilian father, "I'll take nothing off a damn Dago like you!" was a bitter example.¹⁶ Immigrant communities tolerated the Americanization movement.

Americanization was a frantic attempt to replace the melting pot with a pressure cooker. American public education was slow to recognize that there was a problem in large numbers of unassimilated foreigners. Only after social workers and business leaders shouted the needs and dangers and then turned to the public school as one of the most important sources of a solution, did it respond. Its response was characterized by haste, lack of materials, lack of research and even the lack of an accepted goal. Was the immigrant to be taught how to do his job better, why he should become a citizen, or how to manage his business and personal affairs in an American society? Each area involved an almost mutually exclusive vocabulary and attitude toward

¹⁶ William Carlson Smith, Americans in the Making (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1939), p. 295.

the student. Teachers were handed an impossible job, and although there were some examples of ineptness, they can not be blamed for the failures. The negative aspects of the Americanization movement precluded the success it might have been.

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EDUCATION AND THE AMERICANIZATION MOVEMENT

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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The Americanization movement (1915-1920) was an attempt to accelerate the assimilation of the growing numbers of immigrants. Social workers and educators had a sincere desire to assist immigrants in adjusting to American society. Employers and patriotic organizations became disturbed by the prolonged diversity of the immigrant population and feared for employee stability, productivity, and the political life of the nation. Social leaders formed various groups to help immigrants in social situations, to encourage the public school system to establish special English and civics classes for the immigrants, and to encourage the immigrants to take advantage of them.

The movement gained popular support as the war in Europe progressed and became a nationwide patriotic movement with the entrance of the United States into the conflict. The Federal Bureau of Naturalization was authorized to establish citizenship classes in cooperation with the public schools across the nation. The Bureau of Education sponsored a Division of Immigrant Education which was funded by the Committee for Immigrants in America. The Division provided publicity materials and suggestions for adult English classes in public schools. The movement was not structured on a national level until after our entry into the war in 1918. Americanization then became a matter of national security and the National Council of Defense and the National Security League became concerned with English and civics classes. Even then there was no agreement concerning goals or methods.

The response of the public schools was erratic. Only a few schools in the largest cities had adult English classes prior to 1915. As the Americanization movement gained popular support, demands on the public schools increased. Methods of instruction were diverse and often inefficient. Textbooks for classroom use were not published until 1919 and 1920, leaving the teachers with little but their initiative. The Roberts Method of instruction popularized by the YMCA English classes was modified for use in public schools but was not generally accepted by the teachers.

In some urban centers public school administrators expanded the scope of instruction when poor attendance figures showed the ineffectiveness of the policies. Factory classes, community centers and mother's classes were attempts to reach the immigrants. Many workers could not come to evening classes because of long shifts, fatigue, or distance so public school teachers instructed immigrant workers in the factories. Factory classes were short, hastily structured and sometimes conflicted with the interests of the employer. Some administrators attempted to make the public school a community center for residents of all ages and offering a variety of cultural activities in which the students and their friends and relatives were urged to participate. Such plans were often discarded because of building use regulations. Classes in English for immigrant mothers were important in maintaining a strong family structure but unfortunately, they were not attractive to the women who needed them most.

Americanization of immigrant children was considered a function of the public school system. However, the system often gave no special attention to non-English-speaking children, leaving them to learn English in the street. The principles and values of American society which they were taught were often distorted by misinterpretations. When a child became disobedient, his parents considered him Americanized.

The Americanization movement faded in the return to normalcy after the war. Its only lasting effects were the increased awareness of some educators and social workers to the needs of immigrants and the resentment of many immigrants that they were considered liabilities. The negative aspects of the Americanization movement precluded the success it might have been.