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# Immigration and National Welfare

By FELIX S. COHEN, Ph. D.

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**LEAGUE FOR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY**

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# Immigration and National Welfare

By FELIX S. COHEN, Ph.D.



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LEAGUE FOR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY  
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FOREWORD

Too many of America's national policies have, for many years, been decided on the basis of emotion and prejudice, rather than on that of economic and social well-being. This has been particularly true, as Professor Josiah Royce of Harvard, one of the country's great philosophers and psychologists, brought out many years ago, when the nation has considered its relations with the peoples of other races and other nationalities.

We have often begun the discussion of such problems as immigration, declared Professor Royce, with certain prejudices which have the same basis as other "childish antipathies in our lives," such as "the antipathies of country folk toward strangers."

What is particularly unfortunate, when it comes to our attitude toward aliens, Professor Royce declared, is "that it is generally dressed up with scientific-sounding explanations . . . the antipathy, once by chance aroused, but then named, imitated, insisted upon, becomes to its victims a sort of sacred revelation of truth, sacred merely because it is felt, a revelation merely because it has won a name and a social standing. . . . We all have illusions and hug them. Let us not sanctify them by the name of science."\*

Dr. Felix S. Cohen, in the following pages, has attempted to raise the discussion of our immigration problem to the level of mature reason. The League for Industrial Democracy is happy to include this brilliant and timely study in its series.

In his discussion, Dr. Cohen has dealt with the national welfare in relation to the immigration problem. He has made no attempt to consider many other problems affecting our prosperity. This, in no sense, however, means that he is unmindful of the relation of other constructive measures of social change to the amelioration of unemployment and the raising of living standards, although some of the readers will undoubtedly feel that such measures should have been given more consideration than has been the case, and that the role of immigration in the solution of some of our problems has been overemphasized.

As in the case of other pamphlets published by the League, this study is not designed to express the collective opinion of an organization of free inquiry like the League, but the considered judgment of the author. Surely it is time when we as a nation did the hardest kind of thinking on the problem of our treatment of those desiring to come to our shores, particularly in view of the present brutal persecutions of some of the best stock in Europe by totalitarian governments. It is to be hoped that this pamphlet will help to lay a basis for future constructive thought and action on this burning national problem.

HARRY W. LAIDLER

\*Royce, *Race Questions and Other American Problems*, 1908, pp. 47-53.



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# Immigration and National Welfare



ON December 1, 1938, in the British Parliament, the Home Secretary reported that

“eleven thousand refugees had been settled in this country and, as a result, about fifteen thousand workers have been employed who would not otherwise have been employed.”<sup>1</sup>

A few years ago there would have been nothing surprising in such an announcement. We all knew of industries set up by immigrants that employed many native Americans. We knew that the great expansion of American agriculture, the backbone of such prosperity as we had attained, was, to no small extent, based upon the constantly growing market for farm products that immigration created. If in any town or city of America anyone had suggested that it was a bad thing to have men and women from other parts of the country moving into town and “taking our jobs away”, he would have been laughed to scorn by the town boosters, who always insisted that an increasing population, particularly when it was secured by the coming of adults, meant growing industry, greater opportunity and improved living standards. Why have we come to adopt in our national economy, which we see only dimly, an attitude that we have always rejected in the life of the local community where our vision is likely to be more reliable?

It is time that we reconsidered the current theories about the evil consequences of immigration and came to grips with hard facts. The most important of these is the simple fact that for a century and a half before the immigration restriction laws of 1921 and 1924<sup>2</sup> the United States enjoyed a tremendous growth of population, unparalleled expansion of industry, commerce, and agriculture, and an amaz-

## ERRATA

*(The L.I.D. pamphlet, "Immigration and National Welfare," by Felix S. Cohen, issued in April 1940, contains a number of errors. Some of these are typographical errors; others the result of including in the pamphlet various marginal editorial suggestions which were not adopted by the author.)*

### *Page 6*

The first sentence of the page should read: "If there is a marked divergency in income between the two groups of states, that divergency cannot arise from differences in the gifts of Nature."

### *Page 8*

The second full paragraph should read: "The fact is that the wealth of the states with the highest percentages of foreign-born is not the result of unusual natural resources or favorable climate, but is very largely the result of the labor of countless immigrants who were not allowed or were not encouraged to settle in regions more favored by nature."

The first sentence of the third full paragraph should read: "The attempt to explain away the correlation between prosperity and immigration on the ground that immigrants went to the prosperous states is ineffective, because the immigration preceded the prosperity."

### *Page 12*

The 3rd word in the second line from the bottom of the page should be "could."

### *Page 13*

The sentence, "The actual facts do not support this theory," should appear at the beginning of the 2nd paragraph instead of the beginning of the 3rd paragraph.

### *Page 17*

The 9th word in the 3rd paragraph should read "create" instead of "created."

### *Page 23*

The last figure on the 7th line of this page should be 1046.2.

### *Page 29*

In the third line the word "emerged" should be inserted before the word "from."

### *Page 31*

The fourteenth line from the bottom should read: "the fact that the greatest single champion of progressive."

### *Page 33*

The second word of the 7th line should be "men."

### *Page 35*

The first three lines of the first full paragraph should read: "If our country is today the most prosperous nation of the earth, it is not because the resources of this continent are any greater than those of Europe, Africa or Asia. It is because our people, richer in toler-."

### *Page 38*

In recommended readings, it may be noted that Louis Adamic's pamphlet is a "Public Affairs" pamphlet; that Wittke's book is sub-titled the "Saga of the Immigrant."

### *Page 39*

Under footnote references, footnote 32 refers to Annals, 1939, pp. 194, 196, while footnote 43 should read "32 Arena."

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Dr. Cohen wishes it to be made clear that the pamphlet makes no attempt to deal with the larger aspects of our national welfare, but only with the consequences of immigration.

[OVER]

*The following forceful paragraphs, omitted from the pamphlet for lack of space, should be added at end of the final page:*

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“Liberty and tolerance are not different things, but different aspects of a single reality. The limits of my liberty are the limits of my neighbors’ tolerance. And so the same love of change and movement that guards our liberty also nourishes our tolerance. Migration and immigration have kept our thinking and our society free. Only in those regions of the United States where immigrants have not been welcomed do we find a stratified society based upon ancestry, a peasantry tied to the land, a fundamental opposition to science and progress.

If what is distinctive about our American democracy is a product of the constant impact and interchange of diverse skills and diverse cultures, all contributing to a new civilization made possible by the spirit of tolerance, then the greatest of all dangers to American institutions comes from those who would cut off the living stream that has been the source of our national life. The effect of such a cutting off of immigration as is proposed by various bills now pending in Congress, would be to make the entire country more and more like those regions of our country which have not wanted and which have not had immigration for over a century.

Our national standard of living would be lower, our illiteracy higher, our prejudice against minority races, minority creeds and foreigners generally would be more intense. Our governmental institutions based upon a many-party system might easily come to be superseded by other institutions based upon a one-party system. The tenets of democracy, based upon human freedom, racial equality and religious tolerance, would tend to become slogans without substance .

Against this America of our fears we may set the America of our hopes, based irrevocably upon the foundations of democracy and human brotherhood.”

ing rise in standards of living. In the sixteen years following the practical cessation of immigration, under these laws, there has been no substantial increase in our population,—we have almost two million fewer children in the elementary schools today than we had ten years ago,<sup>3</sup>—and there has been no substantial rise in our living standards.

It will be our purpose in this essay to consider certain current theories about the effects of immigration and to determine how far these theories are supported by the actual facts.

## 2. *Immigration and Standards of Living*

ACCORDING to the prevailing theory, immigrants menace the American standard of living since they bring with them the poverty and low living standards they have known abroad, and become centers of slum settlements and ruinous competitors of American working men. If this theory is sound we should expect to find the lowest standard of living in those states which have the largest proportion of foreign-born inhabitants in their populations, and we should expect to find the American standard of living unimpaired in those states where practically the entire population is native-born.

What are the facts?

Let us take as a starting point the cold facts of annual income in the ten states with the highest percentage of foreign-born and the ten states with the lowest proportion of foreign-born inhabitants.<sup>4</sup>

<i>State</i>	<i>Percentage Foreign-Born</i>	<i>Per Capita Income</i>
New York .....	25.9	\$700
Massachusetts .....	25.1	539
Rhode Island .....	25.0	561
Connecticut .....	23.9	607
New Jersey .....	21.0	517
California .....	18.9	605
New Hampshire .....	17.8	438
Michigan .....	17.6	473
Nevada .....	16.6	545
Illinois .....	16.3	500
Average .....	20.8	\$549



South Carolina .....	0.3	\$224
North Carolina .....	0.3	252
Mississippi .....	0.4	170
Georgia .....	0.5	253
Tennessee .....	0.5	232
Alabama .....	0.6	189
Arkansas .....	0.6	182
Kentucky .....	0.8	240
Virginia .....	1.0	305
Oklahoma .....	1.3	259
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Average .....	0.6	\$231

The fact that the ten states with the highest proportion of foreign-born in their population have more than twice the *per capita* annual income of the ten states with the lowest proportion of foreign-born is not subject to dispute. There may, however, be differences of opinion as to the proper interpretation of these facts.

It may be thought, in the first place, that the contrast in *per capita* income between the two groups of states is the result of superior natural resources in the first group, and that the character of the two populations has nothing to do with the discrepancy of income. In fact, however, the lower group of states probably has greater natural resources, *per capita*, than the former. The low-immigration states, by reason of their low population density, could provide each man, woman, and child with 12 acres of ground, and most of it would be fertile. The high-immigration states could offer each of their inhabitants less than 3 acres, and most of that would be mountainside or desert. Certainly the earth of New England, Michigan, or the Far West is not four times as rich as that of the South. On the contrary, there is no forest resource and no agricultural crop in the ten high-immigration states which cannot be duplicated in the ten states which are practically free of immigrants. As for mineral resources, the prosperity of Nevada may be ascribed to silver, of California to gold, and of Illinois to coal. But what, then, is to be said of Oklahoma, with its vast oil resources, or Kentucky which, in the year 1935, produced \$98,486,000 worth of minerals, as compared with \$96,484,000 for Illinois, \$20,988,000 for Nevada and \$360,179,000 for California?

That divergency cannot arise from differences in the gifts of Nature.

Those who cling to the theory that immigration reduces the standard of living, despite the cold facts of cash income, may explain away the low income of the immigrant-free states by reference to the Negro. The fact of the matter is that the Negro constitutes less than 10% of the population in Kentucky and Oklahoma. Moreover, the Negro in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Wilmington or Detroit does not seem to pull down the standard of income in those cities. Why should he bear the blame for the poverty of the South?

Assuming, however, that the poverty of the South is totally unrelated to immigration and is a result of lack of natural resources, the presence of the Negro, the Civil War, or the Republican party, still the correlation between high immigration and prosperity, between lack of immigration and poverty, prevails in other regions of the United States, where the Negro, the Civil War, and the Republican party cannot be the critical factors.

On the Pacific coast, for instance, California has the highest proportion of foreign-born (18.9%) while Washington comes next with 16.3% and Oregon trails with 11.6%. Of the three states California stands first in the amount of *per capita* income, Washington stands second and Oregon stands third.

Among the Middle Atlantic States, New York stands first in the percentage of foreign-born (25.9%), New Jersey (21.0%) second and Pennsylvania (12.9%) third. The same order prevails with respect to the *per capita* income.

In the West-South Central States, Texas stands at the top in the percentage of foreign-born (6.2%), Louisiana is second (1.8%), Oklahoma third (1.3%) and Arkansas fourth (0.6%). The same order prevails with respect to *per capita* income.

Among the South Atlantic States, Delaware stands first in percentage of foreign-born (7.1%) and in *per capita* income; Maryland stands second in both respects, its percentage of foreign-born inhabitants being 5.9%. Florida, with the third highest percentage of foreign-born (4.8%), stands third in the income scale. West Virginia stands fourth highest in the percentage of foreign-born (3.0%) and income scale. Virginia, with 1% foreign-born, stands fifth in both scales. Georgia, with 0.5%, stands sixth in both scales. North Carolina and South Carolina, with a percentage of foreign-born running

below 0.3%, stand at the foot of the list for this region. An equally exact correlation is found among the East-South Central States.

With very slight discrepancies the same correlation appears in the New England States, the North Central States and the Mountain States. Only the West-North Central area are there any substantial discrepancies in this correlation.

The connection between immigration and prosperity cannot be explained away, therefore, by reference to regional differences, geographical advantages, political discrimination, the presence of the Negro, or the Civil War. The persistence of the correlation over practically the whole United States cannot be accidental. *If the hard facts of cash income mean anything they mean that the popular theory that prosperity occurs only in the absence of immigration is untrue.*

It may still be contended by the economic advocate of immigration restriction that immigrants go to the prosperous states and fail to go to poorer states for purely economic reasons, and that the prosperity of certain states is not based upon the presence of immigrants but is maintained in spite of the presence of large numbers of immigrants. According to this theory we should be able to find a time when New York State, for instance, had a comparatively small number of foreign-born residents and achieved during that period a greater degree of prosperity than it has had in the present decade when 25.9% of its population is foreign-born. According to this argument immigrants must have flocked to New York simply because of the prosperity of New York, to take advantage of employment opportunities which native Americans created. But alas for the theory! History reveals no such golden era of native-born prosperity in the Empire State. There never was an era of prosperity in New York State that was not based upon the labor of immigrants. As far back as 1644 people speaking 18 different languages were living side by side peacefully in the City of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island.<sup>5</sup> A few years later, a New York Governor, suspected of an inclination to persecute Quakers, was cautioned by his Board of Directors in Amsterdam that tolerance

has always been the guide of our Magistrates in this City (Amsterdam) and the consequence has been that people have flocked from every land to this Asylum. Tread, then, in their steps and we doubt not you will be blest.<sup>6</sup>

The Directors were right. New York continued to welcome the oppressed of every nation of Europe and upon this coming together of diverse cultures and diverse skills the state came to attain its unique position in manufacturing, commerce, finance and government.<sup>7</sup>

The fact of the matter is that refugees of Europe's tyrannies came to Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware as far back as the 17th Century, not because these states were the wealthiest—for in those days they were not—but because continental immigrants were not welcome in the states with better climate and better resources like Virginia. No matter how poor the localities to which they came, they repaid their welcome by enriching the towns that gave them hospitality.

Many claim that the wealth of the states with the highest percentages of foreign-born is the result of unusual natural resources or favorable climate. I do not agree with this. Such wealth, I am convinced, is very largely the result of the labor of countless immigrants who were not allowed or were not encouraged to settle in regions more favored by nature.

Nor can the correlation between prosperity and immigration be explained away on the ground that immigrants went to the prosperous states, as ineffective, because the immigration preceded the prosperity. A similar attempt to explain away this correlation between immigration and prosperity may be made on the ground that higher standards of living are the result of manufacturing and commerce, and that immigrants flock to the states which offer industrial and commercial employment opportunities. The facts in the case are clear, but the conclusion that manufacturing and commerce rather than immigration account for such prosperity is based upon a false antithesis. For it was very largely the immigrant who developed the manufacturing and commerce that attracted further immigrants.

The immigrant has generally been the fulcrum of international trade, which has its simple origins in the contacts which individuals have with needs and sources of supply in two different countries. English immigrants to the Old South developed an exceedingly important trade with England. In New England and the Middle Atlantic States, and later on the Pacific Coast, immigrants from a score of different nations developed trade with all the world. The skills and industrial crafts of the old South were those that came with British



and African immigrants, but other parts of the United States welcomed the skills and industries of all Europe.

In Colonial times, while Massachusetts refused to accept immigrants who were not English of the Puritan or Pilgrim faith, and Virginia barred all but faithful members of the Church of England and African slaves,<sup>8</sup> the belt of tolerance that stretched from Rhode Island to Delaware, including the towns of Providence, Hartford, Albany, New York, Trenton, Philadelphia and Wilmington, was welcoming immigrants of many races: French, Swedes, Finns, Germans, Poles, Welsh, Irish and Dutch. It was in this cosmopolitan area that industry and commerce first developed, and it was in these towns, to which company Boston must later be added, that economic independence from England was achieved. In 1776, Philadelphia was the largest city in the United States because the Quakers who settled Pennsylvania had welcomed men of all races and creeds to the City of Brotherly Love.

These historical considerations cannot prove a general theory as to the connection between immigration and prosperity, but they suffice to disprove the theory that prosperity depends upon the absence of immigration, and they lend some support to the alternative theory that throughout the history of this nation, our growth and prosperity has been based upon immigration.

The Census Bureau, in its work *A Century of Population Growth*, concluded that, during the Nineteenth Century, immigration contributed thirty million souls to our population and forty billion dollars to our wealth.<sup>9</sup> It is only natural that the greater part of this wealth should have gone to the states that offered a welcoming hand to the immigrant.<sup>10</sup> The facts of the case can hardly be summed up better than in the words of the great economic realist of the Constitutional Convention, James Madison, who declared:

That part of America which had encouraged them (the foreigners) most, has advanced most rapidly in population, agriculture, and the arts.<sup>11</sup>

### *3. Immigration and the Development of Industry*

FROM the standpoint of economics, it is easy to see that a region populated by people with an identical background may easily become a one-crop or one-industry region, while a region populated by people of differing backgrounds is more likely to develop

the specialization and diversification of occupations upon which a high standard of living must be based. This is clear enough in fields of commerce and industry.

It is utter nonsense to say, as so many school books do, that manufacturing first developed in the North Atlantic states because of superior water power or mineral resources. In both respects the South had a great advantage. Why did manufacturing develop with particular rapidity in Delaware, which, if we arrange the states in order of their water power,<sup>12</sup> stands 48th in the list, in Rhode Island, which stands 47th, in New Jersey, which stands 43d, and in Connecticut, which stands 38th, rather than in Tennessee which stands eighth in the list (2,418,000 KW mean flow as compared with 8,000 KW for Delaware and 21,000 for Rhode Island), or in Alabama, which stands tenth, or Georgia, which stands 15th, or North Carolina, which stands 17th, or South Carolina and Virginia, which stand 19th and 20th respectively?

The major industries of the United States were, in almost every case, developed upon the basis of contributions by immigrant groups. The manufacture of pottery and chinaware was first developed by German immigrants in Pennsylvania, the munitions industry by French immigrants in Delaware. The tanning industry was developed by German immigrants in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Our ready-made clothing industry was established by German, Austrian, Russian and Italian immigrants. The roads and railroads that span our continent were built, in the main, by immigrant labor, first by the Irish and later by the same Italians whose ancestors built the roads that made the Roman Empire possible. Our mining and metal industries have always been immigrant industries: in the early days British and Welsh miners, and later, laborers from Hungary, Poland, and other lands of Eastern Europe, dug our ore and fashioned our steel.<sup>13</sup>

#### *4. Immigrants and Agriculture*

THE contribution of different races to our agriculture is no less striking. Less than half of our agricultural produce, in value, is British or North European. A major part of our present agricultural production, of course, is based upon borrowings from the American Indian. Tobacco, corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, peanuts, pineapples, and many native varieties

of beans, squash, and pumpkins were unknown to the first European immigrants.

These products remained unknown to a few early colonial groups whose racial pride and prejudice prevented them from studying Indian forms of agriculture. But tolerance, where it existed, brought rich returns to those who received from the Indians the seeds and the instruction in methods of cultivation, curing, and processing, upon which some of the most important segments of American agricultural production today are based.<sup>14</sup>

Our first lesson in the cash value of tolerance was repeated with each new wave of immigration. Ever since the Spaniards introduced the cultivation of citrus fruits in Florida and California, every immigrant group has introduced new specialized forms of agricultural production or processing.<sup>15</sup> Intensive market-gardening in California was developed by Orientals, Armenians, and Italians. The cheese industry in Wisconsin was developed by Swiss and German settlers. Olive culture, viniculture, and the cultivation of dates and figs represent, in large part, the labor of immigrants who brought with them the special skills developed through centuries of Mediterranean sunshine.

In view of the popular theory that immigrants are of no significance for agriculture, it is interesting to compare the level of agricultural production in states with the highest foreign-born populations and those with the lowest percentage of foreign-born. Taking the ten states at each end of our list we find these significant figures.<sup>16</sup>

<i>State</i>	<i>Value of Farms Per Acre</i>	<i>Value Annual Production Per Farm</i>
New York .....	\$ 73.19	\$2,502
Massachusetts .....	130.26	3,061
Rhode Island .....	123.52	3,133
Connecticut .....	151.38	3,196
New Jersey .....	169.99	3,773
California .....	112.33	4,841
New Hampshire .....	39.47	1,972
Michigan .....	67.80	1,647

Nevada .....	15.71	6,095
Illinois .....	108.68	2,467
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Average .....	\$ 99.23	\$3,269

<i>State</i>	<i>Value of Farms Per Acre</i>	<i>Value Annual Production Per Farm</i>
South Carolina .....	\$ 36.48	\$ 935
North Carolina .....	46.75	1,040
Mississippi .....	32.79	910
Georgia .....	26.15	1,011
Tennessee .....	41.28	945
Alabama .....	28.62	856
Arkansas .....	34.13	988
Kentucky .....	43.72	1,004
Virginia .....	51.16	1,252
Oklahoma .....	36.78	1,615
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Average .....	\$ 37.79	\$1,056

These figures probably reflect three distinct contributions which the immigrant makes to agriculture. In the first place, the immigrant, as a consumer, provides a market for agricultural produce. In the second place, the immigrant in industry and commerce has developed new uses for agricultural products and improved methods of preservation, processing<sup>37</sup> and marketing. In the third place, the immigrant farmer has introduced methods of intensive cultivation, and conservative use of soil, developed in countries where land is scarce and not to be wasted.

In this connection it is interesting to note the comments of an authoritative historian of American industry:

The Dutch of New York, Swedes of the Delaware River, and Germans and Quakers of Pennsylvania, all were better, more careful farmers than the Pilgrims or Puritans. Indeed, Pennsylvania became the wealthiest, most flourishing agricultural colony of all the original thirteen. It was the colony in which immigrants most easily would acquire citizenship, and land grants were liberal and fair. It attracted an unusual number of intelligent farmers who fled religious or political persecutions in Europe.<sup>38</sup>



### 5. *Immigration and Wage Scales*

ACCORDING to the economic theories of the immigration restrictionists, which are probably shared today by most people who have never studied the facts, the immigrant has always threatened the American standard of living by working for lower wages and longer hours than the native-born American would accept.

There have, of course, been many cases where ignorant foreigners, subject to race prejudice, were cruelly exploited. But there is no evidence that the exploitation was more heartless than that applied to certain native groups, white as well as Negro. It may be true that, within given industries, foreigners from peasant lands were forced to hold the lower, unskilled jobs, while native Americans held more responsible and better positions. It is perhaps also true that certain immigrant groups, such as the Mexicans, have been forced into occupations where even native American workers receive miserable wages and have been practically excluded from other occupations. But it is scarcely fair to ascribe responsibility for these conditions to the immigrant victims. The only fair test of the proposition that immigrants underbid native Americans in similar occupations is provided by those historic cases where native and immigrant have occupied parallel segments of a single industry.

The actual facts do not support this theory. Hours of labor were substantially reduced and wages were increased in the 1830's and 1840's when Irish immigrants entered the Massachusetts textile mills, which had previously employed only native stock.<sup>19</sup> To this day the chief threat to wage scales paid to Irish, Portuguese, Greek, Syrian and Italian millhands in New England has come from the native American stock in such states as North Carolina, Georgia and Alabama.<sup>20</sup> The chief threat to the immigrant wage scales in the New England leather industry has come from native stock in states like Missouri.<sup>21</sup> The comparatively high wage scales won by Russian, Lithuanian, Polish and Austrian workers in the needle trades of New York and other eastern cities, have been so seriously threatened by "run-away" shops in rural immigrant-free areas that the immigrants have felt it necessary, in self-defense, to send organizers into these areas to extend the protection of their unions and raise the low wage standards of the native-American stock to the union level.<sup>22</sup>

For many decades the comparatively high wages won by the cosmopolitan working force (largely Hungarian and Polish) in the unionized mine fields of western Pennsylvania and northern Illinois were menaced by non-union Anglo-Saxon workers in West Virginia, Kentucky, southern Illinois, and Alabama, who were willing to work for sub-standard wages.<sup>23</sup> The same story is repeated in many other industries where the immigrant worker has played an important part.

If there were any validity in the racial theory of economics, we might have to conclude that it is the native-born American worker who has menaced the immigrant standard of wages, rather than the other way around. Certainly there is no factual basis for the theory that immigrants depress wage rates below the "American standard of living." Immigrants, like other human beings, try to get wages as high as the traffic will bear, and, if they have special skills and aptitudes for certain types of work that are distasteful to most native Americans, they are likely to earn better wages because of their greater efficiency in these tasks. If, on the other hand, they are unskilled or forced by social pressure into unskilled labor, they "displace upwards" the more experienced workers, who move into higher positions in the industrial scheme. Whether the immigrant himself gets a higher wage than the native-born worker, or a lower wage, the effect of the immigrant's presence has generally been to raise the level of wages in the community.

#### 6. *Immigration and Unionization*

IN the Nineteenth Century, when the first powerful American labor unions were being organized largely by immigrants from Ireland and Central Europe, respectable native Americans regarded unionization a manifestation of foreignisms and a proof that foreign-born workers were "desperate and wicked."<sup>24</sup> In the Twentieth Century, labor unionism came to be an accepted part of American life, and then the immigrant was blamed for *not* joining unions. The absurdity of this charge will be evident to anybody who studies the history of our labor unions. In most of the pioneer unions, the first to join were the immigrants.<sup>25</sup> Among the earliest successful unions were those of the building trades (largely Irish), the musicians (Germans, at first), the garment workers (German, Russian, Italian), the brewers, bakers, and cigar-makers (all largely German) and the miners (Welsh, Hun-

garian, Polish). Generally the native American entered the union in large numbers only *after* the union had become firmly established.

All this is not to deny that certain immigrant groups, coming from backward countries where trade unionism was undeveloped, presented serious problems to labor organizers, — problems which became more serious when employers played off one racial group against another to disrupt the course of union organization. But, for the most part, these groups learned to organize and stand together, and today employers call upon Negroes and poor whites from the South, rather than upon European immigrants, to play strikebreaker roles. It must also be remembered that many immigrants have come not from peasant lands but from highly industrialized countries where unions had already been established throughout segments of industry still unorganized in this country.

It is fair to conclude, then, that the theory that immigrants hindered the growth of the labor movement is not justified by the facts. On the contrary, the facts are that, for many years, the states with the highest percentage of foreign-born workers have been the leaders in the process of unionization, and those at the bottom of the immigration list the most backward in unionization.<sup>26</sup>

### 7. *The Immigrant as a Consumer*

THE theory that the immigrant is willing to live on an inferior level of subsistence is a theory invented to explain the supposed fact that immigrants regularly underbid native American wage scales. Since the fact is non-existent, a theory which purports to explain the fact is of no special importance. It is interesting, however, to note that far from entertaining a special inclination towards cheap slum housing, the immigrant has actually spent a larger sum, *per capita*, on housing than has the native American. Thus the National Resources Committee reports:

In 1930 it was found that the median monthly rental of urban nonfarm homes was slightly higher for foreign-born white (\$35.13) than for all native white (\$34.11). When the native white classification is further subdivided according to parentage, an even greater difference is seen. The figure for those of native parentage is \$23.26, and for those of foreign or mixed parentage \$37.74.<sup>27</sup>

It is noteworthy that the construction industry and allied trades have suffered a terrific decline, despite large government subsidies,

since the practical cessation of immigration into the United States. Every immigrant family either built a house or moved into a house or apartment formerly occupied by another family, native or immigrant, for whom a new house was built. House-building involved the construction of roads, the paving of streets, the expansion of transportation, communication, water and sewage systems. The cabinet-maker, carpenter, plumber, painter, glazier, bricklayer, stonemason, and architect were all vitally interested in this process of home-building and each of these classes was seriously set back by the cessation of immigration. Quarries, lumber camps and sawmills closed down because of the declining demand for housing materials.

What happened to construction industries happened also to agriculture, when the market for agricultural products in the centers of immigration stopped expanding as fast as agricultural production. Despite the fanciful theory that foreigners eat less food or worse food than native-born Americans, dietary studies have shown that the diet of most immigrant groups is not inferior to the diet of native Americans.<sup>28</sup> The theory of inferior immigrant food habits is simply another example of prejudice masking as economics. The native American worker, accustomed to a diet of beef, pork, eggs, root vegetables and white bread, for years considered the Italian staples of macaroni and green vegetables as a form of unfair competition, but native Americans have been learning very rapidly, during the present century, to eat macaroni and green vegetables themselves and like them. The theory that Chinese live on nothing but rice still persists in the more backward portions of our population, but this theory, too, is disappearing as more and more native Americans come to taste native Chinese dishes.

The fact of the matter is that immigrants, like native Americans, will dwell in unsanitary houses and subsist on inadequate food only when they are so inefficient or so harshly exploited that they cannot afford the housing and the food they would like to have. Inefficiency and exploitability, however, are not racial characteristics.

The immigrant and his family increase demand for all products they consume, and so help to stimulate business. Quite obviously, the immigrant is a producer also, as he should be. The point is that the American worker or businessman is in no sense worse off because of immigration.



## 8. Immigration and Unemployment

THE most popular argument advanced in support of exclusionary immigration legislation today is the argument that immigrants take jobs away from those who are already employed and thus aggravate the problem of unemployment. Like many other economic theories about immigration, this theory finds no support in the facts. The history of employment in the United States shows rather that in periods of heavy immigration, there has been a great increase in the number of available jobs, that in periods of light immigration there has been no increase in the number of jobs, and that a significant *decrease* in the number of jobs has occurred only when emigration exceeded immigration.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, the Census of Manufactures shows that in the period from 1899 to 1909, when approximately 7,700,000 immigrants entered the United States, the number of wage-paying jobs increased by 40.4%. Again, in the following decade, approximately 6,600,000 immigrants entered the country. At the end of the decade, the number of jobs had increased another 35.9%. In the decade from 1919 to 1929, as a result of restrictive legislation, the total net immigration to the United States (subtracting emigration totals) sank to 3,207,037, and the employment totals dropped by about 1.6%. In the years from 1929 to 1935, the immigration totals sank below the emigration totals by 64.905, and the decrease in the total number of jobs reached a new high of approximately 17%.<sup>30</sup>

It may be argued that immigration did not create jobs but that rather the multiplication of jobs attracted immigration. This is a partial truth. It is true that employment opportunities attract immigration, but it is also true that immigration creates employment opportunities. Poverty creates disease; disease creates poverty. Education brings a higher living standard; a higher living standard promotes education. Most social causal connections run both ways. So it is with immigration and employment. It is important to remember, and this the immigration restrictionists generally overlook, that the earliest industrial development in the United States *followed* in the train of high immigration, and that our present unparalleled period of unemployment *followed* the cessation of immigration.

The fact seems to be that our economic system is geared to an

expanding market.<sup>31</sup> Until 1924, the chief source of expanding consumer demand for the products of our industry and agriculture was immigration.<sup>32</sup> When we cut off our immigration, we enjoyed a few more years of prosperity while our exports to foreign countries and our loans and credits abroad reached dizzy heights. But we soon discovered that while the foreign-born within our gates paid for what they consumed, the foreign-born outside the gates (except for "non-Aryan" Finland) did not. As the repudiation of foreign obligations, public and private, became a basic political doctrine in most of the countries we had dealt with, our Panic of 1929 grew into our Depression of 1933, with agriculture and construction leading the downward curves. Despite unprecedented governmental attempts to end that depression, the basic facts of large-scale unemployment and reduced production have continued to this day.

Of course, we have had depressions before in our history, most notably in 1873, 1893, 1907, 1914 and 1921. What is significant is not that we had a depression in 1929, but that we have not been able to climb out of it. In our earlier depressions, after the first shock, increasing markets, largely based on immigration, took up the slack and production figures quickly mounted. In our present period of unemployment, there is no sign anywhere of an expanding consumer market.

There is no certainty that an economic system which worked during a century when we expanded our market by admitting almost 40,000,000 immigrants, can work without that expanding market.

All this is not to say that immigration is the only possible basis of an expanding market. Obviously, a higher birth rate, or a revival of sound foreign trade, or a general increase of real incomes would serve the same end. Unfortunately, none of these developments seems likely in the world today. A renewal of immigration is probably the only immediately practical way in which we can recapture the expanding economy to which our present economic and political institutions are geared.

Apart from the role of the immigrant as a consumer, his role as a creator of new industries must be considered in any analysis of the relation of immigration to unemployment.

We can look back and calculate how many hundreds of thousands of American jobs would not have existed if we had barred from the

country such immigrants as Samuel Slater, who introduced cotton manufacture into New England, John Ericsson, the inventor of the ironclad steamship and the screw propellor, Emile Berliner and Alexander Graham Bell, who, between them, invented the telephone, the microphone, and the disk gramophone, Ottmar Mergenthaler, the immigrant inventor of the linotype machine, David Thomas, "the father of the American iron business," Marc Brunel, who invented the "shield" for tunneling and produced the first cheap machine-made shoes, the immigrant Holland, who built the first submarine, the giants of electrical engineering, Steinmetz, Pupin and Tesla, or the designers of modern aviation, Fokker, Bellanca, Sikorsky, and de Seversky. We can only guess at the new industries that will some day emerge from the scientific discoveries of refugee immigrants like Einstein and the producer of atomic energy, Fermi. We can only guess at the new industries and processes that might have been developed in our great scientific laboratories by immigrants whom we are excluding from our soil.

From the standpoint of economics, an addition to the population through immigration has about the same effect as an increase in the birth rate or a decrease in the death rate. The immigration of a foreigner, like the birth of a child or the saving of a life, adds a producer and consumer to society. Laws restricting immigration have the same economic consequences as pneumonia or birth-control: that is to say, the removal of potential producers and consumers from our society. We do not ordinarily think of the doctor who discovers a cure for pneumonia as an enemy of society because he adds to the number of job seekers in the country. This is because we think of ourselves or those we love as human beings who may be saved from a dreaded disease, and as consumers whose existence is the basic justification of our economic system. Yet, in economic terms, a cure for pneumonia that saves the lives of 100,000 people a year cannot be distinguished from an annual entry of 100,000 immigrants.

Each able-bodied immigrant brings with him a stomach to fill, a body to clothe and shelter, and a brain to invent new industries and processes. Most immigrants bring also the stomachs, bodies and brains of one or more dependents. Whatever obstructs the growth of population prevents the expansion of housing, agriculture and other consumer goods industries. Whatever prevents the expansion

of consumer goods industries tends to make factory-building, machine-production, construction, and road and railroad building, unnecessary. A stable population lacks the most basic economic incentive for the construction of *new* factories, *new* houses, and *new* roads.

Those who argue that every immigrant takes a job away from a native-born American assume that there is a fixed number of jobs and that immigration adds to the number of job-seekers. They conclude that the more immigrants we receive the more unemployment we will have. If this argument were sound, there would be a very simple solution for the unemployment problem. All we would have to do to get rid of unemployment would be to kill or deport our 10,000,000 unemployed. But what would be the economic effect of such a step? Immediately, there would be a catastrophic decline in the market for food, shoes, clothing, housing, electricity, and the other commodities and services which even the unemployed today consume. Presumably, the elimination of 10,000,000 unemployed adults through deportation would get rid of another 15,000,000 dependents. Figure out, now, how many farms, factories, stores, teachers, doctors, trolley cars, and Congressmen are required to satisfy the current needs of the lost twenty-five million; calculate the market crashes, bankruptcies, loss of real estate and investment values, and ordinary shutdowns that would ensue; and you have an idea of what it would do to our economy to eliminate our 10,000,000 unemployed. The calculations of one of the nation's most eminent economists indicate that the actual result of eliminating these unemployed from our economy would be to put more than 10,000,000 bread-winners who are now earning their living out of work.<sup>23</sup>

If we can recognize that deporting unemployed immigrants will not lessen unemployment, only prejudice can keep us from recognizing that admitting immigrants will not necessarily increase unemployment. Those who argue that immigration increases unemployment see, quite correctly, that immigration increases the supply of labor, but fail to see that immigration also increases the demand for labor. From the viewpoint of economics both blades of the scissors, supply and demand, are equally important.

It is a fact that many individuals have looked only at the labor-supply side of immigration, rather than at the consumer-market side. Is there a rational basis for this one-sided view? Economics supplies



no justification, but psychology, perhaps, supplies an explanation. The producer-consumer relation unites; The job-competitor relation divides. If you hate a man, because of his color, manners, mode of dress, or speech, you will think of the unpleasant things he may do, as a job-competitor, and pass lightly over his role as a consumer of the goods you produce. The fact that popular opinion regards the immigrant as a job-competitor rather than as a consumer tells us nothing about the economics of immigration, but does tell us something about the psychology of hate.<sup>54</sup> From this standpoint, we can understand how the incident of an immigrant taking a job formerly held by a tenth-generation American can assume monstrous proportions, while the fact that the tenth-generation American was displaced by another T.G.A., or that the said T.G.A. displaced an immigrant, or that the job of the said T.G.A. was invented by an immigrant or made possible by immigrant consumer-demand, will be overlooked.

The problem of American attitudes towards immigration is thus, in its basic aspects, not a problem of economics, but a problem of social psychology. In order to solve that problem we must learn how to break down the unreasoning fear of immigrants that exists in certain sections of our country—particularly in backward rural sections and among recent immigrants themselves. Freed from the incubus of these fears, Americans will look upon immigrants as consumers, rather than as competitors, and will make as great efforts to revive industry and agriculture by encouraging immigration as we now make to cure unemployment by preventing immigration.

### 9. Past and Present Day Immigration

Many Americans who agree that immigration in past years was a vital factor in our economic development insist that this is no longer the case now that our land is more densely populated. Thus, Representative Otis of Massachusetts declared in Congress:

“When the country was new it might have been good policy to admit all. But it is so no longer.<sup>55</sup>”

This comment of Representative Otis, made in 1797, has been repeated in every decade since with monotonous regularity. In *Niles Register* for 1817 we find a warning:

The immigrants should press into the interior. In the present state of the times, we seem too thick on the maritime frontier already.

Despite this warning immigrants continued to settle in the eastern states as well as in the interior. In 1835, it appears that the doleful predictions made twenty years earlier concerning the disastrous effects of immigration had not materialized. It then appeared that those who thought the country was overcrowded in 1817 had been mistaken, but that now in 1835 the country really was overcrowded. A leading anti-immigration pamphleteer of 1835, praising the immigrants of a generation back, wrote in these terms:

"Then we were few, feeble and scattered. Now we are numerous, strong and concentrated. Then our accessions of immigration were real accessions of strength from the ranks of the learned and the good, from enlightened mechanic and artisan and intelligent husbandman. Now immigration is the accession of weakness, from the ignorant and vicious or the priest ridden slaves of Ireland or Germany, or the outcast tenants of the poorhouses and prisons of Europe."<sup>30</sup>

These doleful comments follow an identical pattern down to the present day. Always it appears that past immigration was helpful in the development of our country but that a continuation of this immigration would be disastrous. Always it appears that prophets of disaster turned out to be mistaken a generation later, which does not, however, prevent their successors from uttering identical prophecies of disaster.

If all the prophets who praised the immigration of earlier years and warned against the disastrous consequences of continued immigration have proved to be wrong in the past, perhaps those who repeat the distinction today are likewise mistaken.

Certainly there is no evidence to indicate that population density in the United States is so high as to threaten our standard of living. Whatever objective evidence we have looks the other way. Our ten high-immigration states are approximately five times as densely populated as our ten low-immigration states. We have seen that the *per capita* income in the high-immigration states is more than double that in the low-immigration states. It is clear that the industrial development and high crop values in the high-immigration states are directly related to the population and density which those states enjoy.

A glance abroad suggests that from the standpoint of physical resources the United States is still far from the limits of population which the resources of the country can support. All the population of the entire United States could be located in Texas and the popu-

lation density of Texas would then be less than two-thirds the present population density of England. Were the entire United States to become as densely populated as England we should stand in the world as a nation of over two billion souls. The population density of the United States, 41.0 *per* square mile, may be compared with the density of 742.8 for England, 698.8 for Belgium, 667.7 for Holland, 196.7 for France, 368.8 for Germany, and 104.2 for the Barbados."

The complaint that our country is overcrowded has no greater economic validity today than the same complaint had in 1797. The complaint is significant only in the light of the old proverb:

Where there is love between husband and wife, a knife's edge is wide enough to lie in comfort; where there is no love, the whole face of the earth is too narrow.

In fact, it may be said with some confidence, that all economic arguments thus far presented against immigration derive their force either from logical fallacies or from racial antipathies, or from both. If these economic arguments were valid, however, we should be forced to a conclusion more drastic than any of our legislators has yet proposed. So far as I know, the only group that has had the consistency and courage to offer an adequate cure for the evils of immigration is a group of Wisconsin Indians who met in the Spring of 1934 and adopted a resolution containing these words:

"Whereas, we believe that, through the White Man's expansion and his quest for gold, he has destroyed our forests, depleted our great western plains of their buffalo, polluted our rivers and streams so that fish cannot live therein, and now is destroying us along with himself.\* \* \*

"Whereas, we are somewhat skeptical of this so-called White Man's civilization, for their God seems to be the Golden Calf as of yore, and hypocrisy, greed and selfishness are cloaked by the innocent word: Business; the aftermath of this Business is a most horrible one: for instance, it has brought upon themselves and us a most frightful economic crisis, from which they seem unable to emerge.

"If this be the results of their civilized rule, then give us back our misquoted Indian savagery \* \* \* along with our country the way it was when Columbus discovered it, and we will gladly tell the White Man to pack up his decadent civilization and get back to where he came from."

We cannot afford to forget that each wave of immigration to these shores since the days of Columbus has been considered a "menace" to the "American way of life." Even the "old immigrants" of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries, about whom modern-day restrictions grow rhapsodic, were attacked, in the days when they were

actually coming to these shores, in terms no milder than those directed at contemporary refugees.

The opinion of genteel New England a century ago was expressed by Edward Everett Hale, in his *Letters on Irish Emigration*, in which he referred to the Celtic Race as "useless in the world except for the guano that is in it." Then, as now, the theory prevailed that contemporary immigrants were the dregs of the earth, while the immigrants of earlier generations were honest and upright people. A careful student of the subject once observed:

" \* \* \* as at one time in our history, only the dead Indian was regarded as a good Indian, so at all times, to the restrictionists, only the immigrant who did not come was regarded as a good immigrant."<sup>88</sup>

It is hard to tell, in the welter of prejudice where we must seek our facts, whether the theory that present-day immigrants are the dregs of the earth is any nearer to the truth than the theory that immigrants of earlier generations were honest and upright people. So far as we can ascertain, the European immigrants of today appear to have a better equipment of technical skill and general education, a higher percentage of inventors and scientists, a keener interest in labor unionism, and a stronger faith in democracy, than any of the past waves of immigration since 1492.<sup>89</sup>

#### 10. *Immigration and Culture*

WHILE economics is a science, and it is possible to test popular theories about the economic effects of immigration by referring to objective facts and figures, the arguments on the cultural effects of immigration are more difficult to test objectively. Yet these arguments, in the long run, probably carry greater weight than the strictly economic arguments. Most native Americans feel that immigrants menace the American way of life. It is true, of course, that the inhabitants of the United States do not live in wigwams, and each wave of immigration has modified American life in some respect. The important question, however, is whether these modifications have been detrimental or beneficial, and our answer to this question must be based upon an accurate picture of what modifications in American life the process of immigration has caused.

Let us, in the first place, dispose of certain obvious popular fallacies. It is commonly supposed, for instance, that foreigners are more



addicted to crime than native-born Americans. The facts are quite the contrary, as the studies of President Hoover's Commission on Law Enforcement showed.

The following conclusions were believed to be warranted from these studies:

1. That in proportion to their respective numbers the foreign born commit considerably fewer crimes than the native born.
2. That the foreign born approach the record of the native white most closely in the commission of crimes involving personal violence.
3. That in crimes for gain (including robbery, in which there is also personal violence or the threat of violence) the native white greatly exceed the foreign born.<sup>40</sup>

A second common fallacy is the notion that immigration increases illiteracy.

There is an element of historic truth in this notion, for prior to the establishment of the literacy test for immigrants in 1917, the immigration from certain countries did show a high degree of illiteracy. But on the whole the contributions of immigrants to education have outweighed this factor. Illiterate immigrants have built thousands of schoolhouses and saved pennies to give their children the educational advantages that they themselves never enjoyed, with the result that the children of immigrants have long shown a lower illiteracy rate than the children of native-born parents.<sup>41</sup> Again, we may set the theory of immigration as a cause of illiteracy against the facts, as revealed by the 1930 Census, which shows the following striking contrast in the illiteracy rates of high-immigration and low-immigration States:

<i>State</i>	<i>Percentage Illiteracy</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Percentage Illiteracy</i>
New York .....	3.7	South Carolina .....	14.9
Massachusetts .....	3.5	North Carolina .....	10.0
Rhode Island .....	4.9	Mississippi .....	13.1
Connecticut .....	4.5	Georgia .....	9.4
New Jersey .....	3.8	Tennessee .....	7.2
California .....	2.6	Alabama .....	12.6
New Hampshire .....	2.7	Arkansas .....	6.8
Michigan .....	2.0	Kentucky .....	6.6
Nevada .....	4.4	Virginia .....	8.7
Illinois .....	2.4	Oklahoma .....	2.8
	—		—
Average .....	3.5	Average .....	9.2

Part of the explanation of these figures seems to lie in the fact that reading and writing are often considered non-essential luxuries in communities where a strong folk-tradition, unbroken by technological change, gives people the answers to their questions. Such communities are possible only when there is no intercourse with alien cultures. In a cosmopolitan society education is considered an absolute necessity, on a level with food and clothing. It is no accident, then, that the ten high-immigration states all spend over \$75 *per year per pupil* for public education (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Michigan and Illinois spending between \$100 and \$125; New York, New Jersey, California and Nevada spending over \$125), while the ten low-immigration states all spend less than \$75 *per year per pupil* (all but Oklahoma spending less than \$50 *per year*).

The theory that immigration increases illiteracy and debases educational levels finds no support in the statistics of higher education in the United States. On the contrary, the great immigration states are the centers of higher education in America. In the latest year for which complete figures are available, 1934, the ten high-immigration states had slightly over nine college students *per 1,000* population, while the ten low-immigration states had less than five *per 1,000* population.<sup>2</sup>

The theory of immigrant stupidity finds no support in the results of the United States Army Intelligence tests. Except for the two states of Virginia and Nevada, *A* and *B* grades in each of the high-immigration states in our list totalled more than 15%, while in each of the low-immigration states in our list the total of *A* and *B* grades, was less than 10%.

It is popularly supposed that the immigrant tends to isolate himself from American life and national problems. If this belief is correct, we should find fewer newspapers and fewer radios in those states which have large foreign-born elements and more in the "truly American" states. The opposite is the case. Each of our ten high-immigration states shows a net paid daily circulation of more than 250 *per 1,000* population, while each of the ten low-immigration states shows a net paid daily circulation of less than 250 *per 1,000*, and all but two of these states (Virginia and Oklahoma) range below 150 *per 1,000*, constituting, together with Louisiana, the belt of fewest newspapers in the entire country.

The figures on radio ownership in the 1930 Census cast further light on the theory that the immigrant isolates himself from American life and culture. Radio ownership in 1930 may be considered not only a channel of American culture but a sign of interest in invention and progress. The 1930 Census figures for radio ownership *per 100 families* in our high-immigration and low-immigration states show a remarkable contrast:

<i>State</i>	<i>Radios per 100 Families</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Radios per 100 Families</i>
New York . . . . .	57.9	South Carolina . . . . .	7.6
Massachusetts . . . . .	57.6	North Carolina . . . . .	11.2
Rhode Island . . . . .	57.1	Mississippi . . . . .	5.4
Connecticut . . . . .	54.7	Georgia . . . . .	9.9
New Jersey . . . . .	63.4	Tennessee . . . . .	14.3
California . . . . .	52.0	Alabama . . . . .	9.5
New Hampshire . . . . .	44.4	Arkansas . . . . .	9.1
Michigan . . . . .	50.6	Kentucky . . . . .	18.3
Nevada . . . . .	30.6	Virginia . . . . .	18.2
Illinois . . . . .	55.6	Oklahoma . . . . .	21.6
Average . . . . .	52.4	Average . . . . .	12.6

It may be said that radio ownership is no test of high cultural attainments. That is quite true. But what are our highest cultural attainments? One need not disparage the great achievements of the English and Scotch-Irish in science, commerce, industry and politics to recognize the defects of the British tradition in fields of music, art, philosophy and the enjoyment of life. It was a blunt Anglo-Saxon Ernest Crosby, who wrote some years ago:

I am in some respects an Anglo-maniac, and I am proud of my English blood and speech . . . Still, I cannot in justice overlook our faults nor be blind to the fact that the good points of other races supply our deficiencies. . . . In the great century of music, none of our blood produced a work of even the third class. We have never had a painter who could rank among the first score or two of great artists. . . . We know little of the joy of living. We take our holidays sadly and laugh with mental reservations. . . .

I admire the Anglo-Saxon, just as I admire his feathered prototype, the English house-sparrow. He is a fine, sturdy, plain, self-satisfied bird, a good fighter, an admirable colonist, fit for all climates, with no sense of art or music, and a little too fond of rehearsing his many virtues in a hoarse chorus. . . . We do not want a bird world composed of nothing but sparrows.<sup>43</sup>

If we Americans are less insular than our British cousins, less fond of moss-covered traditions and ivy-covered ancestries, more resourceful, inventive, adventurous and hospitable, these differences must represent the contributions of many races and cultures that have become part of our American civilization but remain alien to British life.

Ask a dozen people what they consider distinctively American, and you will have the contributions of a dozen races. Cigarettes, popcorn, flapjacks with maple syrup, and toasted corn flakes are Indian. Jazz is basically African. American movies represent the coming together of German, Russian, French and many other recent immigrant strains. Early American glassware is mostly the work of German-speaking settlers in Pennsylvania. The American wage-earner and his wife are the best dressed in the world, thanks to a ready-made clothing industry which was established by German, Russian and Italian immigrants and to the higher income of American workers that was the end result of our American tolerance.

The more important intangibles of American culture all arise out of the coming together of diverse national strains. We see about us the first stirrings of an American music that will embody elements of German, Italian, Russian and African music. We see today the growth of an American painting that has roots in France, Spain, Mexico and Japan, of an American architecture that is part British, part Austrian, part Italian and part Indian. We Americans are learning to play, at last, learning to enjoy ourselves and our country. Immigrant sports, dances, music, melodies, philosophies and ideals are becoming naturalized, meeting and mixing for the first time in history. Out of these new combinations of strains heretofore separated by military frontiers there will emerge a culture that is neither Anglo-Saxon nor Germanic nor Slavic nor Latin, but truly American.

One of the great students of American democracy, Lord Bryce, (like De Tocqueville and Siegfried, a foreigner), suggested that the blending of races in the United States has stimulated intellectual fertility, and that the admixture of Jews, Poles and Italians is likely to "carry the creative power of the country to a higher level of production than it has yet reached."

If American life, in its everyday realities and in its highest aspirations, represents a coming together of many cultures, the same may



be said of every great civilization that history records. Certainly the Athens of Pericles, the Rome of Augustus and the Holland of Grotius and Spinoza were cosmopolitan centers where new cultures from the cross-fertilization of elements that had never before come together. Great Britain achieved world empire by extending to other parts of the world the methods of commonsense, compromise and commerce which had enabled Britons, Welshmen, Scots, Anglo-Saxons, Danes and Normans to achieve a common peaceful life that allowed room for the distinctive features of each culture. The ancient Athenians and Romans, the Hollanders of three centuries ago, and the British of a few decades back were all charged with the sins that foreigners now level at America: most notably, lack of refinement and love of money. These, perhaps, are the superficial things that always appear when a new civilization is in process of fusion.

Today Americanism and American culture will not be found in the isolated mountain areas of the Appalachians, in the remote swamp lands of the Southeastern coast, or in the stranded rural communities of other regions. In such areas one may discover old English ballads and Elizabethan speech purer than one would come upon in England itself; but this is not American.

What is most distinctively American in our way of life — what cannot be duplicated in English country towns or anywhere else in the world — appears most clearly in subways and in the people and businesses and institutions that center about skyscrapers and subways. Subways and skyscrapers are uneconomic in regions where tradition requires separate compartments and separate conveyances for favored races or classes and sets up a hundred barriers to economic efficiency. Where men are willing to meet and mix from many lands, in the common enterprises of human welfare, skyscrapers and subways symbolize the fact that human tolerance has reached beyond the age-old limits of tolerance set by the earth's surface, and has conquered a new dimension.

### *11. Immigration and Americanism*

There is a popular mystical theory that the principles of Americanism are derived from our Anglo-Saxon ancestors who lived in the dark forests of Germany. According to this theory, there is something about dark German forests that produces a love of liberty, although

the even darker forests of Africa are supposed to have a different effect. A sober view of history compels the reflection that the Anglo-Saxons who inhabited the dark forests of Germany were mostly serfs, as are indeed the present inhabitants of those dark forests.

Theories of liberty and democracy had not yet been naturalized in England when the Pilgrims left for Holland and America. Centuries of Plantagenet, Tudor and Stuart despotism had moulded the thinking of Englishmen in 1620. It was decades later that the first defenders of religious liberty and of the freedom of the press, William Penn and John Milton, arose in England, and it was only in the nineteenth century that liberalism and democracy became respectable on British soil.

Even before 1620, however, one nation in Europe was guided by Republican principles and the ideal of tolerance. Through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, little Holland, welcoming Protestant refugees from Catholic lands, Catholic refugees from Protestant lands, and Jewish refugees from both, had become, with the varied skills those refugees brought, the leader of the world's industry and commerce. So, it was from Holland and not from England that our Thirteen Colonies first learned the principles of tolerance and democracy. And the first of these lessons was in the importance of non-sectarian public schools.

Non-sectarian public education was first established on American soil in 1621, in New Amsterdam. At that time only sectarian schools were permitted in Massachusetts. Some decades later the Governor of Virginia gave public thanks to God that there were no schools or printing presses in his colony.

The true character of colonial New York has never been better portrayed than in a speech which an Anglo-Saxon Governor of the State, Horatio Seymour, delivered in 1856:

At a period when rights of conscience were not recognized in Europe, save in the limited territories of Holland, there were clustering around the beautiful harbor of New Amsterdam communities representing different nationalities and creeds, living in peaceful intercourse. The Hollanders and Swedes at Manhattan, the Waldenses upon Staten Island, the Walloons and English upon Long Island, and the Huguenots upon the banks of the Hudson, found here a refuge from religious persecution. . . .

Nine names, prominent in the early history of New York and of the Union, represent the same number of nationalities. Schuyler was of Holland; Herkimer, of German; Jay, of French; Livingston, of Scotch; Clinton, of Irish; Morris,

of Welsh; and Hoffman, of Swedish descent. Hamilton was born in one of the English West Indian Islands and Baron Steuben, who became a citizen of New York after the close of the Revolutionary War, and who was buried in Oneida County, was a Prussian.<sup>44</sup>

While Puritans were banishing Quakers and burning "witches," Governor Seymour pointed out:

The Hollanders not only tolerated, but invited different nationalities and creeds to their new settlement. . . . They rejoiced in the cosmopolitan character of their inhabitants. The rebuke given by the Directors to one of their Governors, who was inclined to persecute the Quakers, is a clear and beautiful illustration of their sentiments. . . .

It needs no argument to show where religious freedom was most respected. The Walloons, the Waldenses, the Huguenots and many from the Eastern colonies, flying from persecution and clustering around the harbor of New York, mark the spot where liberty and toleration were presented in their most attractive aspects. It requires no discussion to prove whence we get our best ideas of constitutional and commercial law and municipal freedom. Not from England, depressed by the tyranny of the Plantagenets, the Tudors and the Stuarts, for long centuries down to the period of the settlement of this country; but from republican Holland.<sup>45</sup>

Governor Seymour, in the published version of his speech, added a footnote explanation of his reference to refugees from New England persecution who came to New York:

As early immigrants from New England were induced to come here by the superiority of our laws, they were active supporters of intelligent and liberal legislation.

Had Governor Seymour spoken today he might have remarked on the fact that one of the most outstanding champions of progressive Federal legislation during a decade in fields of housing, banking, the abolition of lynching, the maintenance of labor's rights, and the safeguarding of public health, has been a lone German immigrant who was educated by the most cosmopolitan city in America, in the most cosmopolitan college in the world.

It is no accident that the Liberty Bell was cast in Philadelphia, and George Washington was inaugurated in New York. These were the two most cosmopolitan of American cities. Just as the ideas of economic equality, freedom of worship and freedom of speech had developed in Holland where refugees from all Europe found asylum, and in Switzerland where Frenchmen, Germans and Italians worked out a way of living together in peace that came to be known as democracy, so it was that the American contribution to the demo-

cratic ideal first developed in our more cosmopolitan cities. In these cities the great democratic achievements of the past three centuries, a free press, non-sectarian public schools, universal suffrage, the abolition of slavery, the civil service, the emancipation of woman, the protection of labor, and the system of social insurance, found their first hardy companions. In almost every case the regions of the country most free of aliens have held out longest against these innovations and the political representative of these regions have led the rear-guard action against the advancing forces of democracy.

Liberty is always the child of tolerance. Tolerance develops as a way of life when people realize that strange faces, strange accents and strange ideas do not necessarily portend disaster.

The American way of life is not a product of dark forests nor of any other special sort of scenery, nor yet of any particular blood stream. If political creeds were inherited, our Anglo-Saxon stock would still be royalist. What is distinctive about our ways of living in the United States all emerges from the historic fact that our land has been settled by immigrants of many races and many creeds. Out of this diversity of race, tradition, culture and religion grew the need for some political formula that would permit different people to live together in peace. The formulae of human equality, separation of Church and State, universal public education, manhood suffrage and the abolition of ancestral titles, infused with the spirit of tolerance, gave us our American democracy.

The assumption of human equality was necessary and natural in a frontier community where men were on their own and ancestries were irrelevant to the problems of the season. The separation of Church and State was the only formula by which men of many religions could share a common government. Where a society in motion could not know from what group its future leaders would be drawn, the offer of public education had to be made to *all* children, whatever their race. Where no single racial group constituted a majority of society, political power fell to those groups that were able to join hands across racial chasms and thus to break apart all racial barriers to universal suffrage. Ancestral titles and feudalism never had a chance to develop in a society whose members did not know each other's ancestors.

If you are interested in a man's past life and ancestry, the shib-



boleth that all men are equal will seem absurd. But if you are interested in the infinite potentialities of human beings and don't know their past lives or ancestors, the formula of human equality is at least a good practical working assumption. And this spirit, which we have called the frontier spirit, was found on the sidewalks of New York as well as in the mining camps of California. The virtues and the vices of man strong enough, good enough, or bad enough to leave families, friends, jobs, and farms in the quest for a new and better life were to be found among those who immigrated to New England from Europe as well as among those who immigrated to Oregon from New England. These virtues and vices of the immigrant endowed the American spirit with its distinctive character.

Today, these formulae, this spirit of tolerance, and this ideal of democracy are not the possession of any single racial group in our population. It was an eminent Anglo-Saxon, Percy Stickney Grant, some years back, who said:

"After all, what are these American ideals that we boast so much about? Shall we say public schools, the ballot, freedom? \*\*\* The conservators and believers in American ideals seem to be our immigrants. To the Russian Jew, Abraham Lincoln is a God. If American ideals are such as pay honor to the intellectual and to the spiritual or foster human brotherhood or love culture and promote liberty, then they are safe with our new citizens who are eager for these things."<sup>46</sup>

Contrary to popular impression, it was not a homogenous Anglo-Saxon population that rose in 1776 to cast off British rule. Eminent historians, Ripley, Channing and Farrand, tell us that the percentage of non-English speaking inhabitants in the Colonies, in 1776, was much higher than is the case today, and that less than half of the inhabitants of the Thirteen Colonies at that time were of Anglo-Saxon stock.<sup>47</sup> America's first great teacher of constitutional laws, James Wilson, himself a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, "cited Pennsylvania as proof of the advantages of encouraging immigration. It was perhaps the youngest (except Georgia) settled on the Atlantic, yet it was at least among the foremost in population and prosperity. He remarked that almost all the general officers of the Pennsylvania line of the late army were foreigners, and no complaint has ever been made against their fidelity or merit. Three of her deputies (Robert Morris, Mr. Fitzsimmons, and himself) were not natives."<sup>48</sup>

It is easy to hold to theories of tolerance in years of peace, but the

true test of such theories comes in moments of crisis. Such a moment faced the Colonists in the summer of 1776. The Brown shirts of that era, trained in German discipline, were invading the land with the avowed intention of completing the job which the Red Coats had begun. The combined British and Hessian forces were proving too strong for the gallant resistance of General Washington's little army. On August 14th, 1776, the Continental Congress, having just completed the printing of the Declaration of Independence, and not knowing how long the printed copies could be kept out of the hands of invading troops, turned to consider the problem of the Hessian invaders. The resolution that was adopted was courageous, yet without malice. It bore the stamp of tolerance believed in as a source of strength.

"Whereas it has been the wise policy of these states to extend the protection of their laws to all those who should settle among them, of whatever nation or religion they might be, and to admit them to a participation of the benefits of civil and religious freedom; and whereas the benevolence of this practice, as well as its salutary effects, have rendered it worthy of being continued in future times \*\*\*

*Resolved*, Therefore, that these states will receive all such foreigners who shall leave the arms of his Britannic majesty in America, and shall choose to become members of any of these states; that they shall be protected in the free exercise of their respective religions, and be invested with the rights, privileges and immunities of natives, as established by the laws of these states;\*\*\*

*Resolved*, That the foregoing resolution be committed to the committee which brought in the report, and that they be directed to have it translated into German.\*\*\*<sup>240</sup>

Thousands of Hessians accepted this invitation and became loyal citizens of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The promise of land and freedom apparently made a greater impression upon the Hessians than the Colonial artillery.

Four score and seven years passed and again the Nation's fate rested on the tide of battle. In moments when racial and national hatred is most easily inflamed, the Union found its greatest strength in the welcome it extended to the Negro in the South and to the immigrant from Europe and the Orient. The platform of the Republican Party which Abraham Lincoln helped to write in 1864 declared:

*Resolved*, That foreign immigration, which in the past has added so much to the wealth, development of resources and increase of power to the nation,

the asylum of the oppressed of all nations, should be fostered and encouraged by a liberal and just policy."

If our country is today the most prosperous nation of the earth, it is, in no small measure—and we are not ignoring the importance of our large natural resources—because our people, richer in tolerance than any other people of the world, have been able to welcome men, women and children of all races, and have been able to live together in peace over an area as large as twenty-five European nations.<sup>50</sup> Living together in peace, the people of each region and each state have contributed to the prosperity rather than to the destruction of every other region and state. Each racial stock and each national group has contributed something of value to our economic life.

If our country is today the most open-minded and the most scientific of the great nations, that, too, is largely a product of our tradition of tolerance. The tremendous advance of the United States in technology has been in a very real sense a consequence of the freedom we have allowed to individual initiative and of our national tolerance towards ideas and enterprises that would have been suppressed as revolutionary, dangerous, or just plumb crazy in a less tolerant society. In our America, millions of human beings have been free to develop along many diverse lines. Many groups and many individuals have been free to make distinctive contributions to our civilization and our society.

There is, perhaps, something intangible about Americanism that is not caught by an enumeration of distinctively American institutions. Call it, perhaps, the love of freedom, or, if you are unsympathetic, a nervous love of motion. Perhaps the two are not so different in the long run. We Americans have always been fascinated by covered wagons, railroads, automobiles, trailers and airplanes. If an American doesn't like his neighbor or his landlord, he doesn't have to torture him or kill him. All he has to do is to move away, and this Americans have always known how to do. Compared with the settled populations of the Old World, with its peasant classes tied to the land, and its landlords tied to ancestral mansions, we Americans are practically nomadic.

In the long run, the democratic rights of citizens are safe only when the rights of foreigners are protected. History shows that every

weapon of persecution prepared and used against those of an alien race has been finally turned to destroy the liberty of all who sanctioned such weapons.

It is no accident that the greatest spokesmen of American democracy have always insisted upon the right of asylum as an essential part of the American dream. The Declaration of Independence, in listing the "repeated injuries and usurpations" of the British sovereign, declared:

"He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands."

In this declaration was echoed the principle enunciated in section 41 of Magna Charta guaranteeing to all foreign merchants free entry into the country, so long as they are not "of a country at war against us."<sup>51</sup>

It was George Washington who, in his Thanksgiving Day Proclamation of 1795, called upon his fellow citizens, in noting the blessing of peace and freedom which they themselves enjoyed:

"\*\*\* humbly and fervently to beseech the kind Author of these blessings . . . to render this country more and more a safe and propitious asylum for the unfortunate of other countries."<sup>52</sup>

This sentiment Thomas Jefferson echoed a few years later:

"Shall we refuse to the unhappy fugitives from distress that hospitality which the savages of the wilderness extended to our fathers arriving in this land? Shall oppressed humanity find no asylum on this globe?"<sup>53</sup>

Again and again the leaders of our national life and the major political parties<sup>54</sup> have pledged loyalty to these ideals, which our generation has betrayed. And of this betrayal Alfred E. Smith declared:

"I have always suspected \*\*\* that some of the more drastic provisions of our laws and some of the national quotas which were established, were fixed on the basis of fantastic Aryan theories rather than American principles."<sup>55</sup>

Civilization is a living thing, born like other living things through a crossing of strains. At each period in the world's history, the crown of civilization has been held by that nation which represented the greatest tolerance of prior cultures.

It was the proud boast of Pericles, when Athens was becoming the commercial and cultural capital of the world:



"We throw open our city to the world and never pass decrees to exclude foreigners."<sup>56</sup>

The Valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates and of the Nile, the Greek seaports, Rome, Byzantium, Renaissance Italy, Holland, England, all these in the moments of their greatness were cosmopolitan, endeavoring to assimilate what was best in all prior cultures. Hatred of the alien is always the mark of a declining civilization, that has lost its capacity to grow and is no longer able to assimilate what is of value in other cultures.

Our American civilization has had, from time to time, its moments of haunting fear and lost nerve. In every generation the prophets of disaster have proclaimed that immigrants with foreign ways would destroy our American way of life. But today we enjoy citizenship in the most powerful and most prosperous nation of the world because these prophets of disaster, in 1797 and since, did not succeed in building a Chinese Wall around our country to exclude "foreign devils" and strange ideas. We have grown greater and more prosperous as a people by reason of each wave of immigration in the past, and those who now seek our shores carry gifts as great as any that earlier pilgrims brought. If we are true to the American spirit of tolerance, we shall profit from those gifts, from the new industries, new consumer demands, new inventions, new contributions to the amenities of life, that these modern pilgrims bear. If America is destined in the decades or centuries ahead to create a culture and a civilization greater than any the earth has yet seen, it will be because each of the races of the earth is free here in America, as nowhere else, to make its highest contribution to the New World of the Future.

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\*Acknowledgement is made to the editors of the *National Guild Quarterly* for permission to reprint material which first appeared in the October, 1939, issue of that publication, under the title, "The Social and Economic Consequences of Exclusionary Immigration Laws."

1. See Norman Angell and Dorothy Frances Buxton, *You and the Refugee*, 1939, p. 148.
2. For an analysis of past and proposed immigration laws, see F. S. Cohen, "The Social and Economic Consequences of Exclusionary Immigration Laws," (1939) *National Lawyers Guild Quarterly*, pp. 171-72.
3. 1930 elementary school enrollment—21,278,593; 1940 (estimate)—19,550,000. U. S. Office of Education figures.
4. Figures on foreign born population are from the 1930 Census. Figures on *per capita* income are those of the National Industrial Conference Board, calculated in 1935.
5. Ripley, *The European Population of the United States*. Report of Smithsonian Institution. 1909 p. 590.
6. Seymour, *Lecture on the Topography and History of New York*. 1856 p. 22.
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8. "Massachusetts discouraged the coming of all who did not agree with her policy of ecclesiastical domination. (Winthrop, *Life and Letters of Governor Winthrop*, 182.) Virginia, whose founders were avowed Episcopalians, wanted no Non-Conformists, and took active measures to enforce this policy. (Hening's *Statutes*, i, 155.)" E. E. Proper, "Colonial Immigration Laws" (*Columbia Studies in History, Economics and Public Laws*, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1900), p. 17. And see p. 62 *et seq.*
9. P. 85. See also Angell and Buxton, *You and the Refugee*, 1939. pp. 171-72.
10. "Probably the greatest economic argument against slavery was that it caused immigrants to shun the Southern States. Thorold Rogers declared in 1888 that European immigration was worth £100,000,000 a year to the United States, and that slavery had deprived the ante-bellum South of its share of this

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12. Data compiled by U. S. Geological Survey. See *World Almanac*, 1938, p. 336.
13. Compare the history of industrial development in England. Angell and Buxton, *You and the Refugee*, pp. 175-76.
14. Wissler, "The Contribution of the Indian," in Brown & Roucek, *Our Racial and National Minorities*, 1937, p. 727.
15. Coulter, "The Influence of Immigration on Agricultural Development" 1909, 33 *Annals*, 373.
16. From the 1930 Census.
17. For example, granulated sugar, starch, beer, and various forms of cereals and pickles were first developed in this country by German immigrants. See 2 Faust, *The German Element in the U. S.* 1927, pp. 6576.
18. Keir, *Manufacturing Industries in America*. 1928, 9.
19. Hourwich, *Immigration and Labor*, 1912, pp. 313-82.
20. *Ibid*, at 381-383, 493. In 1912 Hourwich wrote: "The discontinuance of fresh supplies of immigrant labor for the cotton mills of New England would give a new impetus to the development of the cotton industry in the South, where there is an abundant supply of child labor." (p. 483.)
21. *Ibid*, p. 493.
22. *Ibid*, p. 21.
23. *Ibid*, p. 447.
24. *Seventh Annual Report, N. J. Bureau of Vital Statistics of Labor and Industries*, 1884, pp. 290, cited in Hourwich, *op. cit.*, note 22, at 331.
25. "Hence it was the unions with exclusive or large German membership that pioneered in the great eight-hour demand and strikes of the Eighties." Saposs, *The Immigrant in the Labor Movement*, 1937, 3, *Modern Quarterly*, pp. 119, 121.
26. Hourwich, *op. cit.*, *supra* note 22, c. 15.
27. *The Problems of a Changing Population*, National Resources Committee, p 228.
28. Hourwich, *op. cit.*, *supra* note 22, at pp. 256, 273.
29. On the effect of immigration upon employment, Carr-Saunders, probably the world's greatest expert on population problems, concludes: "The general effect of increase of population has been favorable, especially when it has been by way of immigration." 71 *Service* (No. 28), p. 306.
30. See *U. S. Census of Manufacturers*, 1935, pp. 18-19; *U. S. Statistical Abstract*, 1938, p. 97.
31. See Angell and Buxton, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
32. See Bernhard Ostrolenk, "The Economics of an Imprisoned World—A Brief for the Removal of Immigration Restrictions," 1939, *Annals*, 1939, pp. 194, 1936.
33. Compare the *Report of the Committee on Empire Migration*, on the effects of emigration from Great Britain: "It by no means follows that because there are large numbers of unemployed in Great Britain, the emigration of anyone from Great Britain will serve to diminish the numbers of the unemployed. . . . The result may be to aggravate rather than to relieve the unemployment problem." Angell and Buxton, *You and the Refugee*, pp. 161-62.
34. The great American philosopher and psychologist, Josiah Royce, wrote in *Race Questions and other American Problems*, 1908, pp. 47-53: "Our so-called race-problems are merely the problems caused by our antipathies."

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45. *Ibid*, pp. 21-22.
46. "American Ideals and Race Mixture," (1912) 195, *North American Review*, pp. 513, 522.
47. Prof. William Z. Ripley, in his essay on "The European Population of the United States" contained in the *Smithsonian Institution Report* for 1909, writes: "For the entire Thirteen Colonies at the time of the Revolution, we have it on good authority that one-fifth of the population could not speak English, and that one-half at least was not Anglo-Saxon by descent." (p. 585).
48. See *Documentary History of the Constitution*, Vol. 3, p. 509.
49. 5 *Journal Continental Congress*, (1904 ed.) pp. 653-55.
50. "If the settlers of America had followed the European pattern, this country would now be a caldron of independent nations, some rich, some poor, but none possessed of the rounded supply of natural resources necessary for a balanced economy. Each would be piling up tariff barriers against the others, aiming to guard what it had or take by force what it lacked." "America: Rich in Union," *Life*, June 5, 1939, p. 51.
51. *The Magna Charta* (tr. by Barrington) 2nd ed., 1900, p. 239.
52. Adamic, *op. cit.*, 4.
53. *Ibid*.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 46.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
56. *Thucydides*, ii, 39.



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