10c

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PAMPHLET No. 115

WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT IMMIGRATION?

BY MAURICE R. DAVIE



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT IMMIGRATION?

By MAURICE R. DAVIE

COMPLAINING about the arrival of new immigrants is an old American custom. Some redskin doubtless set the precedent soon after the first boatload of European colonists stepped on shore. He probably declared that his ancestral hunting grounds were being ruined and that the country would soon go to the dogs unless the flood of white immigrants was stopped.

At every later stage in the making of America the same cry has been raised. And curiously enough the people who echoed it, after the Indians were silenced, were themselves immigrants of earlier years or the descendants of immigrants. In the continuous process of settlement, the earlier arrivals have never ceased to look with mixed feelings on the later arrivals.

This pamphlet is based on a manuscript originally prepared for the Historical Service Board and approved by that body for distribution to the U. S. Army. It has been revised and brought up to date for the Public Affairs Committee. The author, Maurice R. Davie, Chairman of the Department of Sociology, Yale University, is the author of *A Constructive Immigration Policy* and *World Immigration,* among other books. He is also Director of the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe.

Copyright, 1946, by the Public Affairs Committee, Incorporated
—A nonprofit, educational organization—

Digitized by Google

Some of them have protested that the newcomers were crowding in and taking away their bread, undermining their standard of living, threatening their form of government, or marrying their daughters. Others have argued that newcomers added to the national wealth and strength, brought in new blood and ideas, supplied brain and muscle needed to build up the country.

Immigrants All

Whatever one's view on the matter, there is no denying that immigration is the life history of this nation. Few indeed are the Americans who cannot trace their ancestry—and often proudly—to one or more countries of the Old World. No less proud and honorable is the American tradition of offering in the New World a haven for oppressed peoples.

Perhaps you have sailed into New York Harbor or are looking forward to the day when you will sail into it. Then you may understand a little how the fathers and grandfathers of many Americans felt when they first saw the Statue of Liberty. The "Old Lady" has stood there since 1886, symbolizing a welcome to the land of the free. At her feet are engraved verses that express America's most generous sentiments toward the immigrant.

> *Give me your tired, your poor,*
> *Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,*
> *The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,*
> *Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:*
> *I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

Some Americans today think the invitation in this inscription is too generous; some have always thought so. Others have glorified it as a mark of our greatness as a nation. In no period of American history has public opinon been undivided about immigration.

The Argument Today

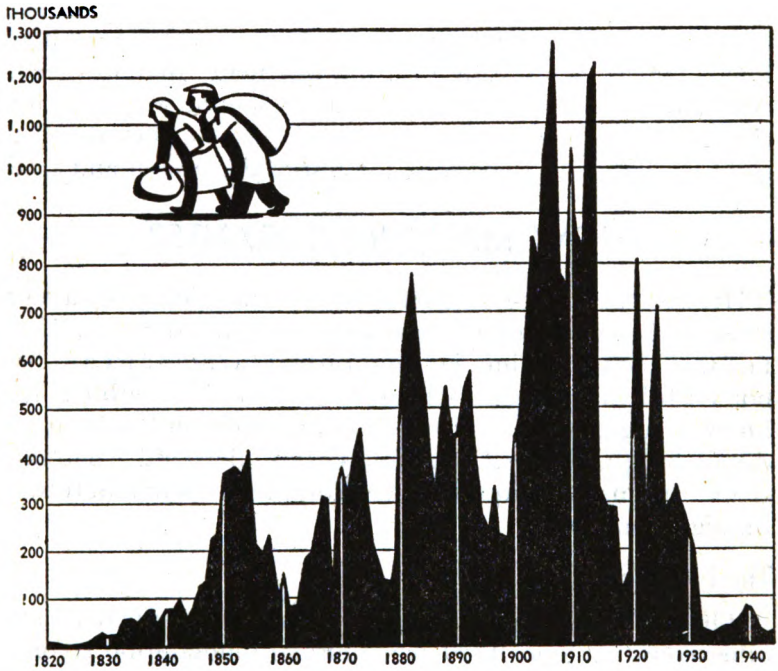
In times of peace and prosperity those in favor of more immigration have usually had the better of the argument. With plenty of work to do and not enough hands to do it, immigrant labor has been one of the solutions traditional in Amer-

Digitized by Google

ica. But in critical times, especially in times of war or depression, the opposition becomes more vigorous and more vocal.

The end of the war raises the old questions about immigration in new and more pressing ways: Will there be work for

TRENDS OF IMMIGRATION



GRAPHIC ASSOCIATES FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, INC.

all? Will immigration increase after the war? Will America open a "golden door" to everyone? Will all the people of the war-devastated countries want to come to America? Can they? What would happen if they could and did?

Restrictions After World War I

Questions like these came up after World War I and led to a widespread demand for the reduction of immigration. Before that it had been almost unrestricted. But now we have

Digitized by Google

a quota system that limits the number of immigrants who may come each year. That doesn't mean that new and pressing problems will not exist, or that new proposals will not be made to solve them by further limiting immigration.

Many Americans seem to feel that the United States can no longer absorb many hundreds of thousands of immigrants every year without suffering marked social, political, and economic dislocations. Yet opinions differ widely on just how far restriction of immigration should go.

Should we close the door tighter? How much and for how long? Or are we already shutting out many that we need? And should we open the door wider? Should we make any change in the present immigration laws? Are they doing a good job and have they stood the test of depression and war?

HOW MANY IMMIGRANTS?

THE average citizen still retains a mental picture of a vast stream of immigrants pouring into the United States. The fact that the tide of immigration turned twenty years ago has not yet fully impressed itself upon the American public. We know in a general sort of way that immigration has been reduced by quota laws. But unless we understand what this change means we cannot very well consider present and future immigration policy.

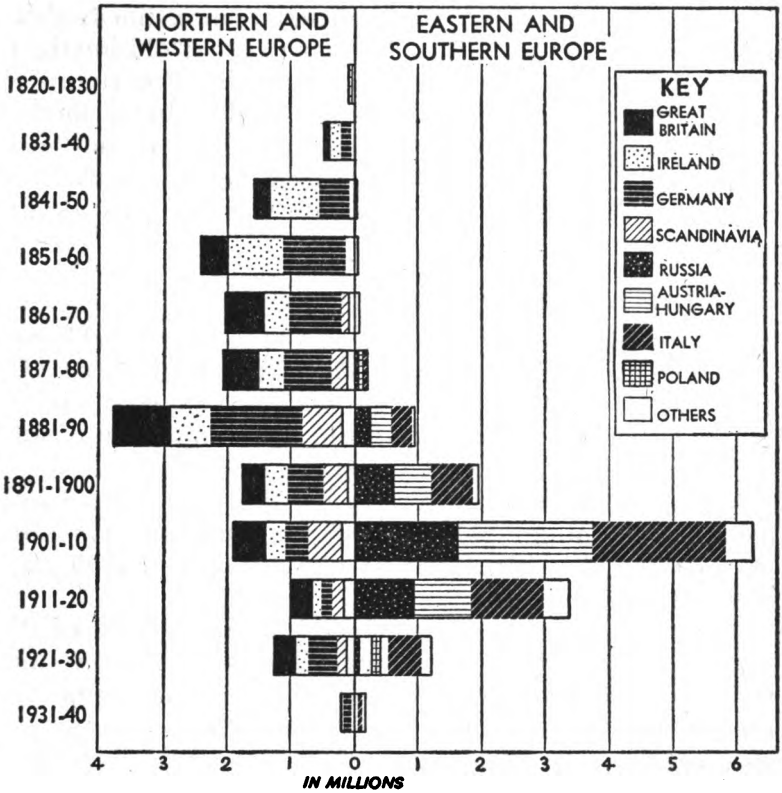
The Figures

The United States has admitted more immigrants than any other country. Since 1820, when official immigration records began, over 38 million persons have come to this country. From 1776 to 1820, it has been estimated, about 250,000 arrived. Thus, the total movement to the United States has been nearly 39 million, of whom probably 30 million remained. No other country has equaled this record numerically although some have done better proportionately.

By way of comparison with other countries which have received many immigrants from overseas, Canada has admitted a total of seven to eight million immigrants, Argentina over six million, Brazil 4½ million, Australia three million, and New Zealand two million.

Digitized by Google

IMMIGRATION FROM EUROPE TO THE U.S.



GRAPHIC ASSOCIATES FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, INC.

Where Did They Come From?

Of the nearly 39 million immigrants to the United States, about 85 per cent came from Europe; 11 per cent from Canada, Mexico, and other American countries; 2 per cent from Asia; and 1 per cent from Africa, Australia, and other parts of the world.

Since 1820 most of our immigrants have come from Germany, Italy, Ireland, Great Britain, former Austria-Hungary, Russia, Canada, and Sweden. The countries are listed according to the relative numbers they have sent and are only those from which we have admitted more than a million each.

Digitized by Google

Before 1895 most of our immigrants came from countries of Northern and Western Europe—Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, the Scandinavian countries, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. This is known as the "old immigration." Since then, the largest portion has come from countries of Southern and Eastern Europe, notably Italy, former Austria-Hungary, and Russia. This is known as the "new immigration." The distinction between the old and the new European immigration was taken into account in setting up our quota system.

Is America a Nation of "Foreigners"?

Nearly 35 million of our total of 132 million inhabitants are of recent immigrant origin. To be specific, the census of 1940 lists 11½ million people in the United States as foreign born and over 23 million as born in this country but of foreign or mixed parentage. That sounds like a lot.

Actually the number of foreign born in the United States has been declining rapidly. They constituted 13.2 per cent of our total population in 1920, 11.6 per cent in 1930, and only 8.8 per cent in 1940.

There are two chief reasons for this decrease. First of all, many immigrants have gone back home in recent years and few new ones have come. Only 68,693 more immigrants arrived than left during the decade 1931-40; this contrasts with an excess of 3,588,817 incomers during the 1911-20 period.

Secondly, members of the foreign-born group are old and their death rate is therefore very high. Their average age is 50 as compared with 29 for the general population. If the present conditions continue, the foreign born will fall to about six million in 1960 and to barely two million in 1980, and eventually will decline almost to the vanishing point.

Are There Many Aliens?

The number of aliens or noncitizens has declined even more rapidly than the foreign-born population. This is because increasing numbers of aliens have become naturalized —reaching an all-time peak in 1944. In recent years the number of aliens naturalized has greatly exceeded the number of aliens admitted to the country.

Digitized by Google

According to the 1940 census, there were about 4,300,000 aliens in the United States, or 3.3 per cent of the population. This compares with 7 per cent in 1920 and 5 per cent in 1930. It is estimated that by 1944 the number of aliens had dropped to 2.7 per cent of the total population.

OUR IMMIGRATION LAWS

WHAT is our immigration law? How did it develop? How is it administered? How well will it meet conditions of the postwar period? All these questions are important if we want some perspective on future immigration problems.

How Do We Limit Immigration?

Before 1882, immigration was largely free and unregulated. Then came a series of laws designed to keep out individuals and groups regarded as undesirable. A law adopted in 1882 to exclude the Chinese was later expanded to bar all immigration from the Orient. Then, in 1943, the ban against the Chinese was lifted and they were placed on the same basis as Europeans.

Other laws deal with the *quality,* rather than the quantity, of the newcomers. Every immigrant must meet certain physical, mental, moral, and economic requirements in order to be eligible for admission. If an alien is found to be undesirable after admission, he may be deported.

Later laws approached the question by putting limits on the *quantity* of immigration. Numerical limitation was adopted in the early 1920's because of the widespread feeling that too many immigrants had come and had come too fast to be absorbed. In the ten years just before the first World War approximately a million immigrants were admitted to the United States each year, with serious social, economic, and political effects.

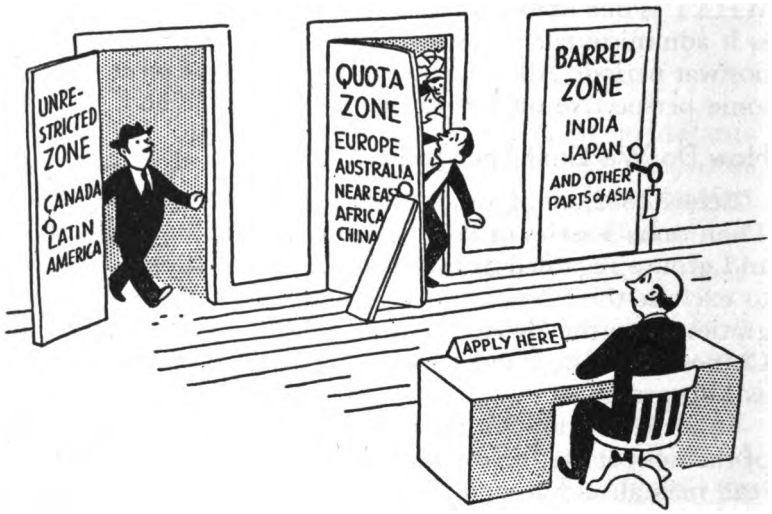
What Are the Three Zones?

For purposes of carrying out our present immigration policies, the world is divided into three zones which may be termed the *unrestricted area,* the *barred zone,* and the *quota countries.*

Digitized by Google

The *unrestricted area* includes all the independent nations in North, South, and Central America, and the West Indies. Eligible native-born citizens from all these countries in the Western Hemisphere may enter without limitation on their number.

The *barred zone* includes Asia and the Pacific islands not owned by the United States. No immigrants are allowed from



this area, with the exception, since 1943, of the Chinese. "Nonimmigrants," such as government officials, visitors, and seamen, may enter for *temporary* stay. The basis of this exclusion is the provision that aliens not eligible for citizenship may not be admitted permanently to the United States. According to our law, only white persons, American Indians, Chinese, and aliens of African nativity or descent are regularly eligible to citizenship through naturalization.

The *quota countries* include all the other sections of the world—mainly Europe, the Near East, Africa, China, Australia, and New Zealand. Only Europe, among these regions, is an important source of immigration. Each country in this zone has a fixed annual quota which represents the top limit on the number of immigrants who may enter from that country each year.

Digitized by Google

What Are the "Quota" Laws?

The first law to provide a quota system was the temporary Quota Act of 1921. It limited the number of any nationality that could be admitted to the United States in any year to 3 per cent of the number of foreign-born persons of such nationality living in the United States in 1910. Under our immigration laws, nationality is determined by country of birth or origin. The total annual quota for all countries was 357,803.

Since there were more people in the United States in 1910 who had come from Northern and Western European countries than from Southern and Eastern Europe, the law favored the "old" immigrant countries. This was done deliberately, since it was felt that the "new" immigration was less adaptable than the "old."

The National Origins Plan

The first quota law was replaced by the permanent Immigration Act of 1924, embodying what is known as the *national-origins* plan of immigration restriction. This is the law, with later modifications, under which we are now operating. Until 1929 it limited the annual quota of any nationality to 2 per cent of the number of foreign-born individuals of such nationality resident in the United States according to the census of 1890. The total quota under this plan was 164,667. Beginning in 1929 the act provided that the national quotas thereafter should be calculated on the basis of a total of 150,000 a year. This number is apportioned among the countries to which the act applies according to their relative contribution to the American population of 1920.

To determine the quota for any given nationality it is necessary to find out what proportion that nationality contributed, by birth or descent, to the total American population of 1920—a most difficult statistical problem—and then to apply this percentage to 150,000. If, for example, 10 per cent of the American people in 1920 were Irish by birth or descent, then 10 per cent of 150,000, or 15,000, would be the annual quota for Eire.

Digitized by Google

Since the minimum quota for any country is set at 100, the total quota amounts to a little more than 150,000, that is, 153,774. This was increased to 153,879 in 1943 by the inclusion of the Chinese, who have a quota of 105. The quotas allotted to the main countries are given in the table which appears below.

QUOTAS ALLOTTED UNDER THE IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1924

Southern and Eastern Europe

Nationality or country of birth	*Annual quota*
Poland	6,524
Italy	5,802
Czechoslovakia	2,874
Russia	2,712
Austria	1,413
Hungary	869
Yugoslavia	845
Finland	569
Portugal	440
Lithuania	386
Rumania	377
Greece	307
Spain	252
Latvia	236
Estonia	116
Other countries	500
Total	24,222

Northern and Western Europe

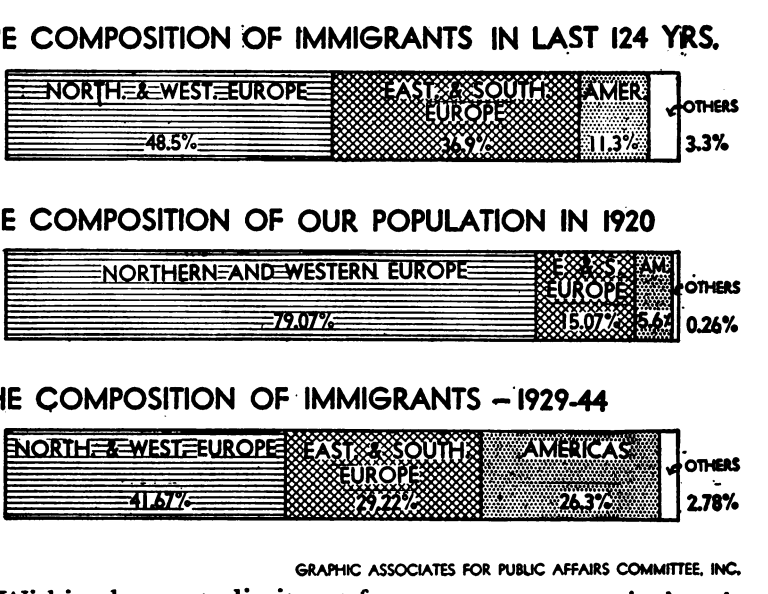
Nationality or country of birth	*Annual quota*
Great Britain and Northern Ireland	65,721
Germany	25,957
Eire	17,853
Sweden	3,314
Netherlands	3,153
France	3,086
Norway	2,377
Switzerland	1,707
Belgium	1,304
Denmark	1,181
Other countries	400
Total	126,053
Other quota regions	3,604
All countries	153,879

The law sought to keep the make-up of the population roughly the same in race and national origin. It appears on the surface to treat all nationalities fairly. Actually it restricts immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe even more than did the act of 1921. The total quota allotted this region is only about 24,000, while Northern and Western Europe gets about 126,000. Yet for two or three decades before these quota laws were passed the great majority of the immigrants had been coming from Southern and Eastern Europe.

Digitized by Google

What Are the Exempt and the Preferred Classes?

Certain immigrants are exempt from the quota limitations. Such nonquota immigrants include wives and minor children of citizens of the United States, husbands of citizens who married before July 1, 1932, ministers and professors, their wives and children, students, and citizens of other American countries to which the act does not apply.



GRAPHIC ASSOCIATES FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, INC.

Within the quota limits set for any country certain immigrants are given preference. Half of each quota is set aside for parents of United States citizens, husbands of citizens by marriage after July 1, 1932, or for farmers and their families. In using up any remaining portion of the reserved half of the quota and in filling the other half, the wives and children of immigrants already in this country get next preference. After that, whatever part of the quota remains unfilled is open to anyone.

Immigration Visas

All immigrants—whether from quota or nonquota countries—must have an immigration visa issued by a United States consul before they can be admitted to the United

Digitized by Google

States. Getting this visa is a complicated procedure which requires many documents regarding the identity, character, and financial standing of the applicant.

The various quotas are controlled through limiting the number of quota-immigrant visas issued in any month or year. In other words, the quotas are counted or controlled in American consulates abroad. There are advantages to this method, especially during a period of emergency, as will be shown later.

PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER RESTRICTION

THOSE who advocate a freer immigration policy rarely if ever propose to open the door wide and let down all the bars, and few of the opponents of immigration want to slam the door absolutely and permanently. The argument is largely over the degree of restriction that ought to be applied.

Various bills have been introduced in Congress to reduce or completely suspend immigration for a certain number of years in the postwar period. Some call for a 50 per cent cut in the quotas for perhaps five or ten years. Others would stop immigration completely for a specific period—commonly five years—from the end of the war.

Other bills would stop all immigration when there are a million or more unemployed in the United States. This plan has attracted considerable support because it sounds so reasonable. But even in normal times there is considerable unemployment in the United States. Job changing, seasonal fluctuations, and technological improvements account for so much unemployment that, according to the United States Department of Commerce figures, 6 per cent of the civilian labor force was unemployed even in the boom year of 1929. At the peak of the labor shortage in 1944, close to a million people were looking for work. Hence any measures to stop immigration while our unemployment is a million or more would stop all immigration.

All the various proposals for limiting immigration have been publicly supported by a number of organizations in the country, notably by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion.

Digitized by Google

The chief argument advanced for such regulation is that it will protect the war veteran and the American workingman generally from immigrant competition for jobs. Against this it should be pointed out that the total yearly quota is so small that its effect on the economic and social life of the United States is bound to be insignificant.

Does Immigration Increase Unemployment?

Many people are convinced that immigration increases unemployment. Yet nearly everyone would admit that immigrants who bring capital and business experience with them and who become employers of labor are exceptions to this rule. Many of the refugee immigrants have been of this type. Most people would also regard as exceptions immigrants who possess special skills or abilities that America may need or immigrants who are willing to take jobs for which enough native applicants cannot be found. These classes of immigrants do not "take jobs away from Americans." On the contrary, they meet a definite economic need and often increase job opportunities.

Moreover, a large number of immigrants are not wage earners and hence are not competitors. Among these are people too old to work, women who remain housewives, and young children—though the latter, of course, may become wage earners later. The proportion of immigrants in these categories has been increasing since the quota system was adopted.

There is disagreement about the effect on employment when wage-earning immigrants come in. Those who believe that there are only a certain number of jobs available at any time say that if immigrants are admitted they will compete for those jobs and throw Americans out of work. This will especially be so, it is held, if there are just enough jobs for native workers or if there are too few jobs. If there are more jobs than workers, then the effect may be, not displacement, but a lowering of wages or a prevention of wage increases.

Other people insist that the theory that immigrants take jobs away from Americans is disproved by the whole history of the United States. We have always had immigration; yet wages have been comparatively high and working conditions

Digitized by Google

good. In fact, the expansion of American industry has been largely due to immigrant labor, and immigration has been an economic asset to this country. In particular, we have profited by the skill and experience of the immigrants without having had to bear the cost of rearing, educating, and training them, since most of them have come as mature individuals and full-fledged workers. Also, it is maintained, since immigrants are consumers as well as producers, they help to give employment to others.

Immigration During a Depression

Those who think that immigration helps employment admit that in times of depression or extensive unemployment immigration in any volume would not be desirable. But they point out that immigration is to a large extent self-regulating. During a period of prosperity, immigration is high, but during a depression it is relatively low. The graph on page 3 shows that the crests of the waves of immigration have coincided with prosperous times, while the troughs have coincided with hard times and periods of war.

Economists who have studied the matter report that this is true but that it takes a little time for immigration to decrease after a depression sets in. Some immigrants have already made preparations to migrate and may even be on their way to this country. For a short time after the crisis has begun large numbers of immigrants may continue to arrive.

The Quota Law During the Depression of the 1930's

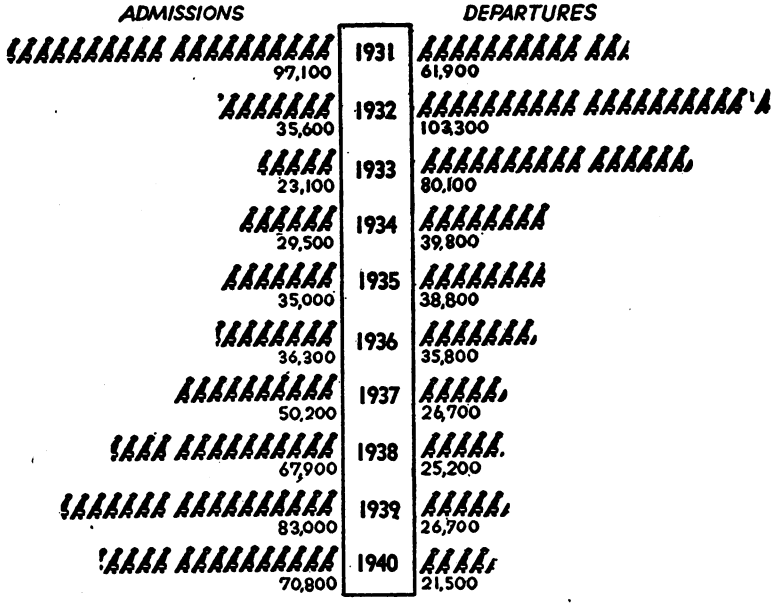
Those in favor of keeping the law as it stands maintain that the present quota system gives a method of direct control. It has, they contend, adequately met the test of the depression of the 1930's. What are the facts? Immigration in the period 1931-40 was the lowest it had been in any decade in a hundred years. The number of immigrants admitted in the period 1931-40 was even less than the number admitted in the 1830's. This reduction was accomplished primarily by administrative regulation under the quota law.

It will be recalled that no immigrant can be admitted without an immigration visa issued by an American consul abroad. By presidential order of September, 1930, the consular offi-

Digitized by Google

cers were instructed to apply rigidly the clause in our general immigration law excluding persons likely to become public charges. They were ordered not to issue a visa to an applicant unless he had sufficient means to maintain himself indefinitely without employment or else had satisfactory assurances of

ADMISSIONS AND DEPARTURES OF IMMIGRANTS



support from relatives or others which would make it unlikely that he would become a burden on the community.

The number of immigrants, which had reached a total of over four million in the decade 1921-30, was thus reduced to 528,431 in 1931-40. Departures during 1931-40 were unusually high, namely, 459,738, leaving a net immigration during this period of only 68,693. In the four years of deep depression, 1932-35, there was a *net loss* in immigration due to an excess of departures over arrivals. This was the first time on record that such a loss occurred. During the entire period of

Digitized by Google

the depression only about 20 per cent of the total permissible quota was used. (See chart on page 25.)

During 1941-45, when the demand for labor greatly increased, the number of immigrants admitted was only 170,952, because of war conditions. Departures totaled 42,696, resulting in a net increase of 128,256. Because of the drop in immigration and the shortage of wartime labor, it was necessary to import, on temporary visas, from Mexico, Canada, and the West Indies, some 350,000 "nonimmigrant" laborers for employment on farms and railroads and as woodsmen. Since the end of the war these workers have been returned to their homelands.

The Quota Law During the War

Those who are opposed to a further restriction of immigration claim that our present immigration system not only met the test of the depression but also met the test of war. When the United States entered the war a new visa procedure was introduced to prevent the entry of aliens whose admission might endanger public safety. The control of visas was centralized in the Department of State. All applications for admission were carefully reviewed by committees composed of representatives of five government agencies: the Department of State, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Military Intelligence, and Naval Intelligence. These agencies exercised great caution in their work. Because of this control and because of war conditions only about 7 per cent of the total quota was used from July, 1941, to July, 1945.

The United States was better prepared to handle the alien problem in the past war than in World War I. The Immigration and Naturalization Service had obtained information about all aliens through the Alien Registration Act of 1940. The FBI had collected a great amount of information concerning possible subversive elements and had compiled a list of aliens from Axis countries who might prove dangerous to the national security. On the night of December 7, 1941, the most dangerous persons in this group were taken into custody; in the following weeks a number of others were apprehended. Each arrest was made on the basis of information about the

Digitized by Google

particular alien taken into custody. No dragnet techniques or indiscriminate large-scale raids were used against European enemy aliens. Fortunately, we avoided repetition of the hysteria of 1917 and 1918, which culminated in the "deportation delirium of 1920."

Enemy Aliens

Of the five million aliens registered in 1940, approximately one million were, by the fact of war, classified as "enemy aliens" and hence were limited in their personal freedom. Only a very small proportion of them, numbering under ten thousand, proved to be hostile or disloyal to this country. About five thousand others who had been arrested were paroled. The great majority of enemy aliens were more properly called "friendly aliens of enemy nationality." Included among them were the Italians, who were later exempted as a group.

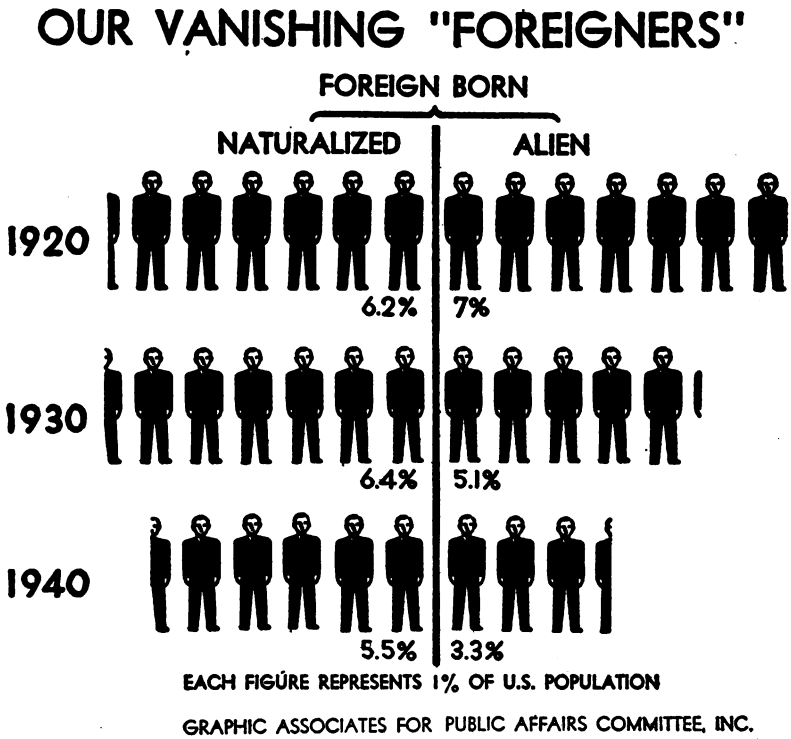
In 1942 provision was made for exempting from surveillance all persons certified as loyal to the United States after investigation by the Department of Justice. They were then permitted to apply for naturalization. Little investigation was needed for aliens with children serving in the armed forces of the United States, housewives whose husbands were citizens, aliens over 65 years of age, and aliens who came here to escape persecution. Many of the enemy aliens, especially the refugee group, rendered special services to the war effort through their intimate knowledge of Axis countries and through their technical and scientific skills. Many in the armed services made outstanding contributions as interpreters, as experts in psychological warfare, and as volunteers for special assignments.

Loyalty of the "New Americans"

The foreign born and the native born of foreign parentage have demonstrated not only their undivided loyalty to the United States but their readiness to defend it with their lives. Here and there some individuals of foreign stock, like some natives of old-American stock, were found to sympathize with fascist regimes abroad. The number of such individuals, however, was very small. Among the Japanese, nearly all of the

Digitized by Google

Nisei (those born here) and a large majority of the *Issei* (Japanese-born immigrants) have remained loyal to the United States; thousands of *Nisei* rendered valiant service in our armed forces.



Our enemies expected that a nation made up of people from many nations would be disunited. They attempted to incite racial dissension but failed. Instead of becoming divided we grew more unified. Service men in particular have learned that loyalty, courage, and sacrifice have nothing to do with race, nationality, or creed. As one remarked, "Military service forces men to come out of their shells and learn to understand people they never knew before."

Regarding the role of "New Americans" in the war, Earl G. Harrison, then Commissioner of Immigration, stated:

Digitized by Google

> I think we are even a little more conscious than we were before Pearl Harbor of the "global composition" of our population. The nature of the war has helped bring home that fact. We are fighting Italy and Germany, yet everyone knows that our armed forces are filled with boys of German and Italian extraction who are just as eager for our victory as the rest. We hear that our soldiers are stationed in various parts of the world and when we look around in our own neighborhoods, we realize that some of our neighbors originally came from those parts of the world. We read the lists of dead and wounded, and we know from the names that the parents of those boys came from scattered parts of the world.

Since aliens as well as citizens of military age were included under the Selective Training and Service Act, many aliens have served in our armed forces. For many reasons, psychological as well as practical, it was important that members of our armed forces be citizens. Especially was this so in the case of enemy aliens and aliens born in enemy-occupied or enemy-dominated countries: their lack of American citizenship might have meant death if they were captured. Congress acknowledged this in the Second War Powers Act in 1942 by simplifying the naturalization requirements for members of the armed forces. By the beginning of 1945, more than 100,000 noncitizens in our armed forces had been naturalized, some 10,000 of them overseas, even in actual combat areas. This was the first time in American history that citizenship was granted outside the boundaries of the United States.

Immigrants and Criminals

Many people believe that a large proportion of our criminals are foreign born. Investigations, however, have disclosed that the foreign born are less likely than the native born to be criminals. But the children of immigrants have a higher delinquency rate than the children of native-born parents. This is probably due to the fact that so many of the immigrants' children are reared in city slums. City slums breed high rates in every country. This is just as true of the slums in London, Paris, Berlin, or Rome as in the large cities of America.

Digitized by Google

The Cry of "America for Americans"

Despite the declining number of foreign born and aliens and despite their demonstrated loyalty, a certain amount of anti-immigrant and anti-alien sentiment persists in the United States. American politics have never been entirely free from what historians call "native Americanism"—the antagonism of native Americans toward the foreign born. Such sentiments are usually stronger in times of emergency. They are evidence of a latent mistrust of foreigners which from time to time is intensified by organized propaganda.

In general, prejudice against foreign nationalities is directed chiefly against groups which have recently arrived. Throughout our history prejudice against recently arrived immigrants has shifted from Germans to Irish to Scandinavians to South Europeans. The despised alien of yesterday becomes the 100-per-cent American of today and joins the native born in scorning the freshly arrived immigrants. This attitude has been well expressed in the following quotation from Mr. Dooley's essay on immigration:

> As a pilgrim father that missed th' first boats, I must raise me Claryon voice again' th' invasion iv this fair land be th' paupers an' anrychists iv effete Europe. Ye bet I must—because I'm here first.

Those who are of Irish, German, Scandinavian, or other old-American descent are apt to forget that their own grandparents who came hopefully to America often encountered opposition and that the same arguments were raised against their coming as have been leveled at more recent arrivals.

At several periods in our history, organized political movements voicing opposition to immigrants have arisen. Outstanding examples are the Native American movement which began about 1835, the Know-Nothing movement which began early in the 1850's, the American Protective Association movement in the late 1880's and early 1890's, and the Ku Klux Klan movement of the 1920's. A similar nationalist or "America-for-Americans" movement appears to have been developing since the late 1930's. It is represented by such organizations as the American Nationalist Party, the America

Digitized by Google

First Party, the resurgent Ku Klux Klan, and various other groups, all more or less on the "lunatic fringe."

Although the various movements, past and present, have been concerned with political questions of the time, all have shown hatred of certain religious and racial groups, especially of Jews, Catholics, and Negroes. During the past decade Germany and the Axis vassal states have subjected America to a barrage of propaganda aimed at stirring up race hatred and poisoning public opinion against the refugees, especially the Jews. The effect of this progaganda persists even though the Axis has been defeated. The present nationalist movement has obviously absorbed the Nazi pattern and given it an American coloring.

Groups Working for Fair Play

Many Americans have recognized the threat that the "America for Americans" movement presents to the unity and welfare of the nation. Attempts have been made to counteract the movement by such organizations as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, numerous church bodies, and the C.I.O. National Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination. Various programs of intercultural education have been initiated by these and other organizations. The federal government, by executive decree, and a few states by legislation have set up fair employment practice agencies designed to eliminate discrimination in employment on account of race, nationality, or creed. The American Federation of International Institutes has issued a "Message to America," in which it affirms:

> We are a nation of immigrants and the descendants of immigrants welded into a great democracy by our common faith in freedom and social justice. Let us then join in reaffirming what we know to be the truth—that a passionate devotion to this land possesses the millions of our people born under other skies. The native born are heirs to the cherished liberties our own immigrant forefathers achieved through common struggle; but these are "Americans by choice."
>
> Foreign-born citizens from every land in Europe fought in our War of Independence; helped save the Union; died in de-

Digitized by Google

fense of democracy in the World War. We must not permit the solidarity of our citizenry to be undermined by the corrosive acids of baseless fears and mass suspicions.

PROPOSALS FOR RELAXING THE QUOTA LAWS

ALTHOUGH opinion in America appears to favor limiting the number of immigrants, there is a widespread feeling against any "closed door" policy. Immigration has been one of the most powerful factors in developing and enriching American society, one source of our national greatness. It has introduced new life, new blood, new ideas. The list of notable immigrants throughout our history is endless: Alexander Hamilton, Andrew Carnegie, Samuel Gompers, Alexander Graham Bell, Carl Schurz, Joseph Pulitzer, William S. Knudsen, Michael Pupin, Albert Einstein, Arturo Toscanini, Thomas Mann. Everyone can no doubt add to the list from his own field of interest. Theodore Roosevelt once stated:

> In every generation since this government was founded, men of foreign birth have stood in the very foremost rank of good citizenship, and that not merely in one but in every field of American activity. . . . Good Americanism is a matter of heart, of conscience, of lofty aspirations, of sound common sense, but not of birthplace or of creed.

At the same time, there appears to be no organized sentiment in favor of letting the bars down and returning to the era of unrestricted immigration. The demand for a more liberal immigration policy takes form in proposals to relax, not remove, our restrictive legislation.

Bills have been introduced in Congress to permit aliens who have served honorably in the armed forces of the United States in any war to enter as nonquota immigrants. This proposal is obviously intended as a reward for service. Proposals have also been made to liberalize the law with respect to refugees or to extend the quota system to include certain Asiatics now excluded. Arguments advanced for making the quota system more flexible and for modifying its discrimi-

Digitized by Google

natory features rest primarily on humanitarian grounds, on the tradition of America as a haven for the oppressed, and on the need of international cooperation and good will.

Fair Play for Asiatics

As a result of the growing belief that racial discrimination has no place in a free world, there has been pressure to change those sections of our immigration and naturalization laws which bar certain people because of race. An important step in that direction was taken on December 17, 1943, when the Chinese Exclusion Acts were repealed and the Chinese were given a quota and made eligible for citizenship.

In the debate held on this bill the chief arguments in favor were: Repeal of the acts would strengthen Chinese morale. It would defeat Japanese propaganda. The original reason for exclusion—the importation of cheap labor—had disappeared. It was an act of international justice. It was a denial of the false doctrine of racism. It would remove the insult implied in exclusion. It was desirable to allow permanently admitted residents to become citizens. China was an important potential market.

The arguments in opposition followed in general these lines: We should not open up the question of immigration "until the boys come home." This legislation would break down our basic immigration laws. The subject of immigration should not be treated piecemeal. If we placed the Chinese on a quota we should have to place all Asiatics on a quota, especially the Filipinos who have a temporary quota of fifty per year under the Philippine Independence Act of 1934—a special arrangement that ends when the islands become free.

Since 1943 bills have been introduced to extend the same benefits of admission under a quota and naturalization to Filipinos, Koreans, and natives of India. On October 10, 1945, the House of Representatives passed a bill which authorizes the admission to the United States of "persons of races indigenous to India" and makes them eligible for naturalization. This bill follows the pattern set by the Chinese Act of 1943. Logically, if these bills eventually become law, the same provisions should be extended to all Asiatics, including the Japanese. According to the quota system, each

Digitized by Google

Asiatic country would be entitled only to the minimum of 100 a year. This is a small price to pay for a tremendous return in international good will. The removal of this racial discrimination in our laws, which has been bitterly resented throughout Asia and has thrown doubt on our sincerity, would help greatly in creating a stable world order.

Refugees from Nazi Tyranny

The ruthless campaign in Germany and in German-occupied countries against the Jews and other minorities led to proposals to aid the victims of Nazism who managed to escape death or the concentration camps. In March, 1943, Congress unanimously adopted a resolution condemning "as unworthy of any nation or regime which pretends to be civilized" the brutal treatment of millions of helpless men, women, and children. It declared that those guilty of such criminal acts shall be punished.

Resolutions were also introduced to establish free ports or temporary havens for refugees within the United States, and in 1944, by executive order, about 1,000 refugees who had fled from their homelands to southern Italy were brought to the United States and placed in an emergency shelter at Fort Ontario, near Oswego, New York. They were brought here outside of the regular immigration procedure, just as prisoners of war were brought here, with the understanding that after the war they would be returned to their homelands when this should become feasible. Most of them now have no homes to return to and would like to stay in America and become citizens. Many have close relatives here, including persons who have served in our armed forces. If they were to leave the country they would be eligible to apply for admittance as permanent residents, and there are sufficient unused quotas to take care of them. In view of these facts, the President ordered on December 22, 1945, that their immigration status be adjusted so that those who wish to remain here may do so.

Some Restrictions Eased

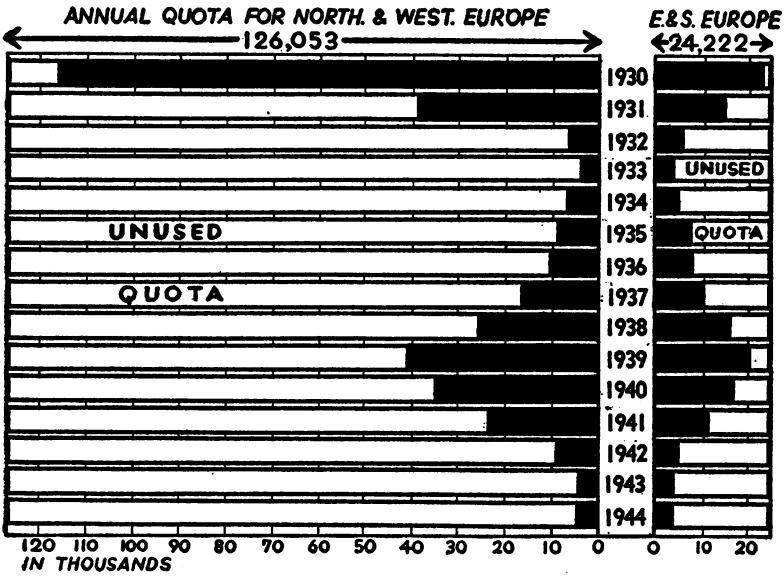
All other refugees who arrived here came as immigrants under the quota restrictions or as visitors on temporary visas. By executive order the visitors' visas granted to refugees were

Digitized by Google

renewed to permit them to stay until conditions make their departure possible.

No new laws or regulations were adopted to increase the number of refugees admitted, though several were proposed.

MUCH OF IMMIGRATION QUOTA IS UNUSED



GRAPHIC ASSOCIATES FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, INC.

Special administrative measures, however, eased the admission, within the quota, of some refugee children unaccompanied by their parents. This was done by authorizing the use of a corporate affidavit in place of the usual personal affidavit. Under this arrangement approved child-caring agencies guaranteed that the children would not become public charges and that they would be placed in suitable foster homes and carefully supervised. About a thousand children have been admitted under this plan since 1934. In addition, several thousand British children seeking to escape the dangers of war were admitted outside the usual quota restrictions on visitors' visas. The great majority of these evacuees have already returned home.

Digitized by Google

The total number of refugees admitted to the United States from 1933, when Hitler rose to power, to 1945, when Germany collapsed, was fewer than 300,000, including persons of all faiths and nationalities.

Making the Quota Law More Flexible

Throughout the history of immigration to the United States, this country has frequently offered refuge to Europeans fleeing from persecution and tyranny. Some groups of American citizens feel that in keeping with our traditions our quota laws should be made more flexible so as to meet situations of an urgent nature. The quota system, they say, is adjustable to conditions in America but not to conditions in Europe. The desire to emigrate to the United States varies with conditions in Europe from time to time and from country to country. In some years only a small percentage of a quota is filled; in other years the demand is larger than the quota. Yet, according to the law, any annual quota not used is lost forever. In no year may the immigration exceed the quota.

Suggestions have been made to meet this problem. One is to permit the unused quota of any year to be carried over to later years. Another proposal is to permit a mortgaging of the quota for several years in advance in order to allow an immediate increase in the number of immigrants during a crisis period, such as political oppression, religious persecution, or natural catastrophe. Neither of these proposals would alter the over-all number of quota immigrants admitted. That is, the quota would remain the same, and the total immigration would not exceed the annual totals now allowed.

Occupation and Skill Possible Factors

Quotas might be based not only on the country of origin but also on the occupation and skill of the immigrant. The immigrant whose special skill or occupation is in demand here would be admitted even though the quota for his country was already filled, provided that there was still a vacancy in the total quota for all countries. Aside from the fact that such a person would readily find employment and fill an economic need of this country, it is pointed out that the quotas for some

Digitized by Google

countries have frequently been unfilled. The effect of this proposal might likewise be to increase the number of immigrants actually admitted while keeping the total within the limit now allowed.

Another result of these proposals would be to modify the national-origins basis of our present quota system. The design of the law was to keep a certain balance between the arrivals from the various countries and sections of Europe. This very design has been criticized by some people as being a kind of "racial" discrimination. As a matter of fact, the law has been only partly successful in this respect. The countries of Northern and Western Europe have frequently not used up their quotas, while the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe have frequently used all their quotas and demanded more. For example, the quota law leaves the door open, practically speaking, for those who do not want to emigrate, such as Englishmen, and allows just a narrow crack for those who are most anxious to leave Europe, particularly Italians and Poles. From July 1, 1929, to June 30, 1944, only about half the anticipated proportion of immigrants from Northern and Western Europe and nearly twice the proportion from Southern and Eastern Europe came to the United States, indicating that immigration cannot be forced into a chosen pattern.

Other Proposals

Americans who believe that Northern and Western Europeans make more desirable immigrants than do Southern and Eastern Europeans prefer to keep the law as it is. But those who believe such discrimination to be unwarranted, unfair, and a threat to international good will propose various changes. Some suggest that the quotas of any countries be redistributed to other countries if they are not used in a particular year. Others propose that the national-origins plan be abolished and that a different basis of apportionment be found. No practical suggestions for accomplishing this have yet been offered, however, and it is obvious that there must be *some* plan of apportioning the total quota among the various countries.

Another proposal advanced by those in favor of a more liberal immigration policy is to grant more preferences under

Digitized by Google

the quota. At present, preference is given to the parents of citizens, the wives and minor children of alien residents, and to farmers. Preference might also be granted to persons under a given age or in certain occupations, or in cases where exclusion would result in special hardship.

Still more liberal is the proposal to extend the nonquota classes. At present, certain relatives and professional groups may enter without reference to quota limitations. As the need arises, nonquota status might be extended to other groups. Such a policy would present difficulties, but it might be operated for the benefit of both the immigrant and the country.

Quotas for Everyone

Some sentiment exists for further restricting immigration by applying the quota system to natives of countries of the New World. It is illogical, some people insist, practically to close the front door to Europe and leave the side doors to Canada, Mexico, and South America open. While immigration from Europe has been restricted, that from nonquota countries has increased. As may be seen in the chart on page 11, 5.6 per cent of our population originated in Western Hemisphere countries, yet 26.3 per cent of all immigrants admitted from 1929 to 1944 came from these countries. Among those opposed to placing these countries under quota restriction are the advocates of the good neighbor policy and certain employers of labor, especially in agriculture.

One thing is certain. The quota system should be thoroughly examined, its basic principles determined, and the law applied to all peoples without discrimination. Moreover, our immigration laws need to be codified, just as our citizenship laws were in the Nationality Act of 1940.

Problems Created by the War

Peacetime conditions may lead to a revision of our present immigration policy. The war in Europe uprooted millions of people and scattered them far and wide. These displaced people include prisoners of war, forced laborers, war fugitives, and expelled or deported persons. Many have been and most of them will be returned home. Many others, however, cannot or do not want to return because of changes in state boun-

Digitized by Google

daries, in type of government, in political allegiance, or because of fear of political, racial, or religious persecution. Many have been rendered stateless, and others would be unable to enjoy the protection of the government. The greater number of persons primarily affected by this situation are Germans, Poles, Yugoslavs, and citizens of the former Baltic states now a part of the Soviet Union. Such people will either have to remain where they are or find a new home.

Peace Plans and Immigration

Immigration has also assumed new significance in connection with plans for establishing an enduring peace. Economic prosperity throughout the world is essential if we are to have a stable world order. The Atlantic Charter guarantees the enjoyment by all countries of "access on equal terms to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity." Does this mean merely a free movement of goods without tariff restrictions or price discriminations or does it mean a free movement of people as well? The two are not unrelated. In rehabilitating war-torn areas we shall have to move hundreds of thousands of families and provide them with material aid in the form of food, tools, equipment, and credits. The unequal distribution of the people of the earth, as measured by the opportunities of getting a living, will continue to create a pressure for migration and to raise the question of whether nations with large unexploited areas are justified in excluding less fortunate peoples. These and other broad problems of immigration can be solved only through international cooperation. In dealing with them the United States, which has emerged as the most powerful nation, must take a leading part.

THE NEED OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION

THIS problem of postwar migration is more than a domestic question; it is international. Its solution will contribute to the establishment of a stable world order and a continuing peace. It can be solved only by international cooperation.

Steps have been taken to establish an international authority to deal with postwar migration problems. The United

Digitized by Google

Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was created in 1943 to give aid and relief to the victims of war and to help in the problem of reconstruction. The task of postwar repatriation abroad has been entrusted to it. Military authorities and the national governments acting separately or in cooperation with UNRRA are also helping in repatriation. Proposals have been made for turning over responsibility for long-range migration policy to the United Nations Organization, but no definite plan has yet been worked out.

Meanwhile, the only international agency specially concerned with the problem of persons who cannot be repatriated is the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. This committee was formed as a result of the conference called on the initiative of the United States Government at Evian, France, in 1938 to aid the victims of Nazi persecution. In 1943 it was revised and its scope widened to include "all persons, wherever they may be, who, as a result of events in Europe, have had to leave, or may have to leave, their countries of residence because of the danger to their lives or liberties on account of their race, religion, or political beliefs." Its job is to rescue, preserve, maintain, and transport such persons, so far as this may be necessary and practicable. Thirty-six governments are members of the committee.

The Challenge

Either this body or the UNO will have the task of finding new homes and new citizenship for those unfortunate people who, for one reason or another, are unable to return to their former homelands. A decision will have to be reached on such questions as: Where shall people be settled? Shall the resettlement be a mass movement to relatively uninhabited areas or by immigration of individuals and family units to developed countries? What is to be the role of Palestine both as a country of immigration and as a national home for the Jewish people? What is the outlook for immigration into Western countries? What are the opportunities in underpopulated countries like Canada and Australia and those of Central and South America, and what will their attitude be?

After the first World War the general trend in immigration countries was in the direction of increasingly restrictive im-

Digitized by Google

migration policies. Especially was this the case in the United States, which was the first country to adopt a quota system and is still one of the very few countries in the Western Hemisphere to have a quota law. Will there be a similar trend now that World War II is over? Can the United States justly urge other nations of the world to accept refugees unless it accepts a share of the burden itself? It would be strange, indeed, especially at this time when the lives and liberties of millions throughout the world are endangered, if we, with our proud tradition as a refuge for the oppressed, should refuse to bear our share of a great human problem by closing our gates.

That the United States will remain true to its traditions despite the sentiment in some quarters to prohibit or severely reduce further immigration is promised by the action taken by President Truman on December 22, 1945, in ordering that displaced persons and refugees in Europe be admitted to this country up to the limit permitted by our immigration laws. It is expected that the majority of these immigrants will be orphaned children. Said the President: "I consider that common decency and the fundamental comradeship of all human beings require us to do what lies within our power to see that our established immigration quotas are used in order to reduce human suffering. I am taking the necessary steps to see that this is done as quickly as possible." He added: "I feel that it is essential that we do this ourselves to show our good faith in requesting other nations to open their doors for this purpose."

Digitized by Google

FOR FURTHER READING

Adamic, Louis. *A Nation of Nations.* New York, Harper and Brothers. 1945. $3.50

————. *From Many Lands.* New York, Harper and Brothers. 1940. $3.50

Anderson, Elin L. *We Americans.* Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press. 1937. $3

Brown, Francis J., and Roucek, Joseph S., Editors. *One America.* New York, Prentice-Hall. 1945. $5

Cohen, Felix S. *Immigration and National Welfare.* New York, League for Industrial Democracy. 1940. 15¢

Common Ground. A quarterly journal published by Common Council for American Unity, 20 West 40th Street, New York 18, New York

Davie, Maurice R. *The Refugees Are Now Americans.* Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 111. 1945. 10¢

————. *World Immigration.* New York, Macmillan Company. 1936. $3.75

Hansen, Marcus L. *The Immigrant in American History.* Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press. 1940. $2.50

McWilliams, Carey. *What About Our Japanese-Americans?* Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 91. 1944. 10¢

Monthly Review. Published by the Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, D. C.

Smith, William C. *Americans in the Making.* New York, D. Appleton-Century. 1939. $3.75

What We're Fighting For. Statements by United States Servicemen about Americans of Japanese descent. Washington, Department of the Interior, War Relocation Authority. Free on request

Wittke, Carl. *We Who Built America.* New York, Prentice-Hall. 1939. $5.35

Young, Donald. *American Minority Peoples.* New York, Harper and Brothers. 1932. $3.75

Digitized by Google

THE publication of ***Public Affairs Pamphlets***—now in their tenth million—is one of the activities of the Public Affairs Committee, whose purpose as expressed in its Constitution is "to make available in summary and inexpensive form the results of research on economic and social problems to aid in the understanding and development of American policy. The sole purpose of the Committee is educational. It has no economic or social program of its own to promote." The members serve in a personal capacity and not as representatives of their respective organizations. Publication of a pamphlet does not necessarily imply the Committee's approval of the statements or views contained in it.

THE COMMITTEE

Ordway Tead, Chairman
Harry D. Gideonse, Vice Chairman
S. M. Keeny, Secretary
Erling M. Hunt, Acting Secretary
Beulah Amidon, Treasurer
Eleanor C. Anderson
Earl Brown
Raymond Leslie Buell
Robert E. Cushman
J. Frederic Dewhurst
William Trufant Foster
Luther Gulick
F. Ernest Johnson
Harry W. Laidler
Robert P. Lane
Francis P. Miller
Frieda S. Miller
Frederick C. Mills
Walter R. Sharp
Donald Slesinger
George Soule
Mark Starr
William H. Wells
Donald R. Young

Maxwell S. Stewart, Editor of the Pamphlet Series
Mabel C. Mount, Assistant Editor
Violet Edwards, Director of Education and Promotion
Gladys Gunnerson, Business Manager

All rights reserved. No part of this pamphlet may be reproduced without permission, except short passages of no more than 500 words in length which may be quoted by a reviewer or commentator, with full credit to the Committee. For permission to use longer excerpts, write to the Public Affairs Committee, Incorporated, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.

First Edition, March, 1946

Printed in the United States of America

145

Postage Will Be Paid by Addressee

No Postage Stamp Necessary If Mailed in the United States

BUSINESS REPLY CARD

FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 27756, SEC. 510 P.L.&R. NEW YORK, N. Y.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, INC.

30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA

NEW YORK 20, N. Y.

Digitized by Google

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PAMPHLETS

1. INCOME AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS
5. CREDIT FOR CONSUMERS
6. THE SOUTH'S PLACE IN THE NATION
18. HOW WE SPEND OUR MONEY
23. INDUSTRIAL PRICE POLICIES
25. MACHINES AND TOMORROW'S WORLD
26. HOW GOOD ARE OUR COLLEGES?
27. WHO CAN AFFORD HEALTH?
32. COOPERATIVES IN THE U.S.
33. THIS PROBLEM OF FOOD
34. WHAT MAKES CRIME?
39. LOAN SHARKS AND THEIR VICTIMS
43. SAFEGUARDING OUR CIVIL LIBERTIES
44. 59¢ OF YOUR $1—
47. AMERICA'S CHILDREN
51. READ YOUR LABELS
53. WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE GOOD IN COLLEGE
56. WHAT THE NEW CENSUS MEANS
61. INSTALMENT SELLING—PROS AND CONS
62. HOW TO BUY LIFE INSURANCE
65. PROSTITUTION AND THE WAR
66. HOMES TO LIVE IN
67. GOVERNMENT UNDER PRESSURE
69. VITAMINS FOR HEALTH
70. WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR CONSTITUTION?
73. AFTER THE WAR?
76. WORKERS AND BOSSES ARE HUMAN
78. THE AIRPLANE AND TOMORROW'S WORLD
79. THE BEVERIDGE PLAN
80. FREEDOM FROM WANT: A WORLD GOAL
83. WAR, BABIES, AND THE FUTURE
84. JOBS AND SECURITY FOR TOMORROW
85. THE RACES OF MANKIND
86. WHEN I GET OUT? WILL I FIND A JOB?
87. WHY RACE RIOTS?
89. HAVE WE FOOD ENOUGH FOR ALL?
90. THE AMERICAN WAY
91. WHAT ABOUT OUR JAPANESE-AMERICANS?
92. FACTS AND TIPS FOR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN
93. FREEDOM OF THE AIR
94. RECONVERSION—THE JOB AHEAD
95. THE NEGRO IN AMERICA
96. HOUSES FOR TOMORROW
97. SOCIAL WORK AND THE JONESES
98. EPILEPSY—THE GHOST IS OUT OF THE CLOSET
99. WHAT FOREIGN TRADE MEANS TO YOU
100. SMALL FARM AND BIG FARM
101. THE STORY OF BLUE CROSS
102. VETERAN'S GUIDE
103. CARTELS OR FREE ENTERPRISE?
104. HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICANS
105. THERE CAN BE JOBS FOR ALL!
106. STRAIGHT TALK FOR DISABLED VETERANS
107. RACE RIOTS AREN'T NECESSARY
108. YOUTH AND YOUR COMMUNITY
109. GYPS AND SWINDLES
110. WILL NEGROES GET JOBS NOW?
111. THE REFUGEES ARE NOW AMERICANS
112. WE CAN HAVE BETTER SCHOOLS
113. BUILDING YOUR MARRIAGE
114. WINGS OVER AMERICA
115. WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT IMMIGRATION?

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, Inc.

30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.

Please enter my subscription for the next 12 Public Affairs Pamphlets for $1. (If you send payment with this card, we will send you 14 issues—2 extra pamphlets free.)

Please send me the following pamphlets at 10¢ each:.....

.....

.....

Name.....

Organization.....

Street.....

City and State.....

Digitized by Google