MAKING MODERN CITIZENS:

POLITICAL CULTURE IN CHICAGO, 1890-1930

By

Cheryl Anne Hudson

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

History

December, 2011

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Professor Gary Gerstle

Professor David L. Carlton

Professor Helmut Walser Smith

Professor James A. Epstein

Professor W. James Booth

A Long Story

For Lowl

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the course of researching and writing this dissertation, I have accumulated innumerable debts to many generous people who shared their ideas and suggestions, their friendship, and sometimes tangible forms of support such as places to stay and hot meals. My chief intellectual support has come from my two advisors – first, Don H. Doyle, who allowed me the freedom to develop a dreamily ambitious research agenda, helped me to turn it into a manageable proposition and offered much helpful guidance as I executed the plan. After Don moved to take up a new position at the University of South Carolina, he continued his guidance from afar but gave his blessing for my "adoption" by my second advisor, Gary Gerstle. The dissertation is written better and argued more tightly because of Gary's valuable assistance. Gary engaged with my arguments and ideas and pushed me – hard – to defend them, clarify them and improve upon them. I am deeply grateful for his input.

The other members of my dissertation committee showed great patience and offered many helpful suggestions for improving the dissertation. I am grateful to historians David Carlton, Jim Epstein and Helmut Smith and to political philosopher James Booth for access to their wisdom and knowledge and for their many intelligent questions. In Nashville, fellow graduate students and friends, particularly Ed Harcourt, Sue Marasco and Elizabeth Sponheim, provided collegiate support, lively conversation, good company, shelter from storms and the occasional game of pool during the time I was so far away from my family. Department administrators Jane Anderson, Brenda Hummel and Vicki Swinehart deserve my eternal thanks.

I have been lucky to receive substantial institutional support and funding, without which this dissertation would never have been completed. The History Department at Vanderbilt provided a full fellowship as well as supplementary research grants and, in the latter stages of my writing, funding that enabled me to present my research findings at conferences in both the

United States and at home in the United Kingdom. I am particularly grateful for the Leon Helguera Dissertation Fellowship that allowed me a full year to get to grips with my topic in the early stages and for a summer research grant from the College of Arts & Sciences.

By my very good luck, the month I moved to Oxford, England as an ABD student in May 2001, the University of Oxford opened the Rothermere American Institute. The RAI, a centre of excellence for research and teaching in American history, politics and literature, proved to be a wonderful environment in which to pursue my research. Americanist scholars at Oxford and those who became colleagues within the RAI community – particularly Andrea Beighton, Paul Giles, Laura Lauer, and Alan Ryan – made me feel more than welcome and allowed me working flexibility so that I might visit the archives in Chicago for extended periods. The University of Oxford supported research trips to Chicago with two Astor Travel Awards.

Jane Rawson and her incredibly resourceful team of librarians in the RAI's Vere Harmsworth Library acted far beyond the call of duty in their personal kindness and professional support of my research. I would like to thank too the helpful librarians I worked with in Chicago and Springfield, Illinois, especially the archivist at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential library who drove me to a supermarket on the outskirts of town so that I could buy some fresh fruit and vegetables for my six-month-old baby son who accompanied me on my research trip. I am grateful too for the financial support provided by the Illinois State Historical Society. The extraordinary generosity of Professors Richard Sennett and Saskia Sassen, who allowed me the use of their Hyde Park apartment for several weeks, enabled me to mine the archives of the University of Chicago; my thanks to them both.

My thanks go to my parents who helped me in more ways that I can tell. Notably, my mother overcame her fear of long haul flights to keep me company in Nashville one Thanksgiving holiday. In Oxford, my father built an office in my garden so that I could write the

dissertation in relative peace and quiet, away from the kids. Indeed, this dissertation is very much my third baby; my other two – Frank and Orlando – being born during its gestation and they must think that "mummy" and her "dissertation" are a natural and eternal combination. My husband, Alan, knows well this is not the case and I thank him for helping me bridge the divide on so many occasions; his love and support got me to the finish line. Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to Lowl, who never made it there with me but who always took a great interest. To her I say, the long story continues.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The city which has made its reputation by killing hogs has awakened to the fact that manufacturing good and sturdy citizenship is even more important.
Graham Taylor, 1907[1]

Chicago is destined to become the center of the modern world . . . if the city can receive a sufficient supply of trained and enlightened citizens.
Walter D. Moody, 1913[2]

Citizenship, according to Judith Shklar, is the most central notion in politics, the most variable in history, and the most contested in theory.[3] Investigating the contours of American citizenship in a particular time and place, as I set out to do in this study, presents a veritable minefield, fraught with methodological, theoretical, historical and political tripwires. Approaching tentatively, I lay an emphasis on understanding the meaning of American citizenship as citizens themselves understood it. Did American citizens living in Chicago between 1890 and 1930 perceive themselves as members of a unified nation, sharing common interests? In what ways did their perceptions about the meaning of American citizenship change in the urban-industrial context of this Progressive-era city? If American citizenship meant something different in 1930 than it did in 1890, what factors and processes contributed to the making of the changes? These questions frame my examination of the ways in which Chicagoans – black and white, native and immigrant – thought about, acted upon and negotiated their cultural and political identities in a period of dramatic and far-reaching social, political and cultural upheaval.

Meaning is created at all social levels. This study of the making of citizenship looks at the

[1] Graham R. Tayor, "How They Played at Chicago," *Charities and the Commons* 18 (August 3, 1907): 473-4.
[2] Walter D. Moody, *Wacker's Manual of the Plan of Chicago: Especially Prepared for Study in the Schools of Chicago* (Chicago: Chicago Plan Commission, 1913).
[3] Judith Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

construction of national identity from both the "top down" perspective of urban intellectuals, reformers and policy makers and the "bottom up" perspective of ordinary Chicagoans. It documents what cultural and political elites believed about the relation of the mass of citizens to the nation and how they sought to influence that relationship. It examines the shifts in the perceptions about and aspirations to citizenship of two groups of new arrivals in the city of Chicago – African American migrants from the South and immigrants from Europe – and how they attempted to integrate themselves into the city and the nation. It also traces the connections between new ideas about national belonging and the novel public institutions developing in the city at the time. In order to understand the full implications of the changes to the meaning of modern citizenship, it assesses the ways in which the state at both local and federal levels structured and directed the forms that racial, ethnic and national identities took. This study allows a close inspection of the interaction between individuals and groups from a variety of social backgrounds and between ideas and institutions involved in the process of citizen-making at neighborhood, city, and national levels.

Americans, Made in Chicago

I have chosen to locate my study in Chicago for several reasons. The city was dynamic and expanding between 1890-1930 in terms of population size, economic might and political significance within the nation. Population levels passed the two million mark in 1910 as the industrial sector mushroomed and the city jumped from fifth to second place in the national urban rankings between 1870 and 1910. Thickly connected by many economic, transportation and political links to other parts of the country, Chicago was also home to expanding commercial enterprises, companies like Marshall Field and Sears & Roebuck, which were later to dominate

the national market. Chicago not only felt national trends keenly but frequently anticipated and led them.

Chicago also contained model institutions of progressive public culture. The urban environment at the turn of the twentieth century provided a new experience for and demanded a new self-understanding of many of its inhabitants. This study asks whether the new political culture of urban modernity shaped historical events and actions rather than simply providing a backdrop for them. John Street usefully suggests that an examination of the ways in which political cultures are *institutionalized* helps to shift the terms of analysis away from the descriptive existence of the culture and toward the ways in which it is produced and consumed.[4] This process of institutionalization is central to my analysis of political culture in the city of Chicago. By focusing on a number of novel institutional forms, including the settlement house, progressive classroom, city commission and national university, this study examines the ways in which modern institutions expressed new ideas about citizenship and explores how they took those ideas to the publics they served.

Indeed, Chicago was at the center of a storm of intellectual and political activity in the progressive mode – settlement houses, civic associations, and the University of Chicago spawned a mountain of social scientific surveys, pamphlets, tracts and other publications attempting to understand and shape modern urban living. Chicago's thinkers helped to develop many of the defining ideas of twentieth century political culture. Many of them were migrants to the city themselves and when they arrived, they joined a rich intellectual community within which they could refine and develop one another's ideas. This study encompasses contributions from John Dewey, Jane Addams, Ida B. Wells Barnett, Charles Johnson and Robert Park; they were only a

[4] John Street, "Political Culture – From Civic Culture to Mass Culture," *British Journal of Political Science* 24. 1 (January, 1994): 95-113.

few of those who were engaged in the search for clarity about the impact of the city on citizenship. The ideas generated by these thinkers were crucial to the reformulation of citizenship but not definitive. It was in the interaction between ideas, institutions and the public that the new citizenship was forged. The innovative and modernizing character of city governance bore witness to this interactive dynamic when Chicago hosted the first citywide planning commission in 1909 and the path breaking Mayor's Commission on Race Relations in 1919. The city's newspapers, which provide a rich source of material for this study, were important players in the discussion and they catered to a diverse array of ethnic, religious, and racial groups and political opinions. If modern American citizenship was forged in the progressive city, Chicago was in the vanguard of its creation.

Indeed, the rationale for locating a study of political culture in an urban space, rather than focusing on discourse nationally, is that modern citizenship was, I suggest, forged in the city. Historically, citizens lived in cities; the original meaning of the word citizen being "an inhabitant of a city." Departing from the traditions set and observed by the Greek *polis*, the Italian city-state, and the Swiss republic, American citizenship in its first century was connected not with the notion of a tight-knit community but rather with a vision of the vast, open frontier, the yeoman farmer, and most importantly, with independence. In 1920, however, the US census recorded for the first time a majority of Americans living in urban centers. Social organization had become more complex, city life was the experience of many more Americans, and the frontier no longer offered a safety valve as protection against social problems. As America became more urban and industrial, it also lost some of its exceptional status. In the modern, interdependent, and internationally-connected U.S. city, the independence and self-sufficiency of the rugged pioneer-citizen had somehow to be rethought and reformed.

Any definition of citizenship is complicated by its contested nature and the changes in its meaning over time. American citizens, whether they gained that status by birth or naturalization, share common rights, duties, privileges and obligations.[5] At the founding of the nation, the framers offered little guidance about the nature of citizenship although there was arguably an expectation – though not a requirement – that those eligible for citizenship would be active participants in the civic life of the nation. They held that all citizens possessed the 'natural' attribute of equal status and the freedom to pursue their own happiness. Speaking inclusively, ("We the People"), the nation's founders also made a number of early exclusions. Until the twentieth century, women were eligible for American citizenship but they did not have access to all of its rights and privileges and when they married their legal status was determined by that of their husbands. A 1790 law prevented non-white immigrants from naturalizing as citizens. Slaves were not citizens; indeed, to the founders they were the antithesis of citizenship, lacking the necessary independence of means and judgment. African Americans gained access to full citizenship with the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment but waited another century before they enjoyed the full complement of civil rights associated with citizenship.

From the beginning, American citizenship was defined by the individual citizen's formal relations with the state; subsequently, both parties to the contract have variously renegotiated the terms. The Civil War represented a massive renegotiation on both sides. Indeed, the consequence, if not the original intention, of the war was a political reawakening concerning the importance of equality of status among citizens. In the aftermath, the nation and its political leadership searched for ways in which to bring the reality of American lives, black and white, into line with the promise of universal justice and a color-blind Constitution. My concern here is with the failure of

[5] The only distinction between birthright citizens and naturalized citizens is that the latter may not stand for election to the two top executive offices of state (president and vice president) – this exclusion has given rise to controversy

that attempt, or rather, with the abandonment of its central premises. Through the debates that took place in progressive-era Chicago, citizenship lost much of its progressive content as it acquired its modern, 'Progressive' form.

A city on the frontier of modernity, Chicago offers an excellent example of citizenship undergoing transformation. That transformation involved the replacement of the citizen as an under-socialized self-directed individual of classical liberalism with the over-socialized other-directed cultural group member of sociological thought. An ideal place to witness the change, Chicago was a destination point for immigrants traveling from Europe, and for African Americans traveling from the South. It was a railroad hub, and a manufacturing, commercial, and cultural center. As diverse social groups mingled, immigrants arrived in their thousands, an industrial working class formed, and women became politically conscious and socially active, political and cultural elites felt pressure to redefine what it meant to be an American citizen. The dynamic relationship between social trends, elite reactions, and popular pressure and counter-reactions are as clear, if not clearer, in Chicago as in any other US city. A city with such a dynamic and lively political culture produced the newest, most modern understandings of the relationship between the city, the state, and the individual.

Cities and Citizens, Interpreted

Although there are relatively few studies of citizenship in concrete settings and within a narrow time period, historians have been attentive to the nature and meaning of citizenship since the work of Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson fashioned nations, nationalism and national

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on a number of occasions. Other federal and state offices have residency requirements.

identity as 'invented' and 'imagined.'[6] Two important OAH presidential addresses marked a high level of interest in the concepts of American identity and the changing meaning of citizenship at the end of the twentieth century. In 1992, Joyce Appleby raised a number of contentious issues when she asked historians to move beyond exceptionalism and embrace the historic diversity of the American citizenry.[7] Appleby stressed that both history as the occurrence of events and history as recorded memory had overturned the three themes of American national exceptionalism, namely: the autonomous individual in nature; the clean slate with its implicit rejection of the past; and the notion of universal human traits. She congratulated historians for recognizing that Americans had a past, genetically inherited and culturally coded – as opposed to an ideology or ideal – and that it mattered.[8] With deliciously ironic frontier references, Appleby concluded by hailing a new freedom, the freedom from the ideal of *E Pluribus Unum* and issued a call to "set out to discover the historic diversity of our past."[9] Her address represented something of a professional landmark in the field.

Five years on, Linda Kerber's OAH presidential address to a meeting organized around the theme of citizenship proposed using a "braided history of citizenship" to weave together the different experiences of citizens according to their gender, race, ethnicity and class into a shared regard for the rights and obligations of citizenship.[10] In her assessment, the meaning of citizenship has become destabilized in a globalizing world and the American commitment to

[6] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1991).
[7] Joyce Appleby, "Recovering America's Historic Diversity: Beyond Exceptionalism." *Journal of American History* 79 (1992): 419-431.
[8] The Lockean declaration that "In the beginning, all the world was America," beautifully sums up the universalist promise and political optimism of the clean slate ideal. Appleby demurs, arguing that not only did the clean slate promote a rejection of the past but that it "perpetuates the fantasy that we can uncouple ourselves from a genetic inheritance or from our society's cultural coding." Ibid., 427. Far from being a 'fantasy,' I believe the uncoupling is a necessity.
[9] Ibid., 431.
[10] Linda Kerber, "The Meanings of Citizenship." *The Journal of American History* 84.3 (December, 1997): 833-854.

democratic rights might provide a useful anchor in both the experience of the present and the study of the past. By suggesting a method for pulling all the threads of national history together under the rubric of the promises of the Declaration of Independence, Kerber sought to do justice to the nation's historic diversity while soothing the anxieties stirred by multiculturalism.

The discussions about group and national identity that Appleby and Kerber addressed have many parallels with the debates about American citizenship that took place in Progressive Chicago a century or so previously. In both Appleby's address and Jane Addams's accounts of settlement work, tensions between individual autonomy and social determinism were finely balanced but generally resolved to the detriment of the former. Kerber's focus on the rights and freedoms of American citizens echoes those voiced by John Dewey, who accommodated cultural pluralism but would not altogether sacrifice a unified Americanism. In drawing the parallels, I do not suggest that there has been continuity in ideas about citizenship across American history or in the debates surrounding it. I do, however, suggest that the specific dilemmas that Americans continue to face today involving the integrity and meaning of democratic citizenship, particularly the relationship between its universal ideals and particular cultural group identities, first arose around a century ago. My research in Chicago indicates that Progressive-era Americans transformed the nature of American citizenship as they reckoned with modern forces of both an external, globalizing and internal, pluralistic character. The fault lines they uncovered and many of the solutions they proposed are still with us today.

This dissertation challenges the notion first put forward by Progressives, and currently supported by neo-Progressive thinkers, that "cities make citizens" and suggests instead that, in

fact, citizens also make cities.[11] Moreover, citizens were – and are – capable of contesting the meaning of citizenship. The ideas, arguments and actions of ordinary Chicagoans helped shape the nature of democratic citizenship even when they had no formal political voice (such as with newly-arrived immigrants) or when their actions represented more of a withdrawal than an assertion (such as those of African Americans after the 1919 riot). Despite top-down impositions of order and control, citizens sought ways to make and remake their own urban environment. Chicago's citizens engaged in political dialogue to thrash out the meaning of their citizenship but once Progressives succeeded in moving citizenship onto a different ground, the space for debate narrowed. Political elites, reformers and intellectuals responded to citizens' demands for agency by reformulating their own role as facilitators who could 'empower' citizens and by exercising their own influence and control in less direct, more consensual, forms of governance.

My research engages with the historiography of modern citizenship at a number of different points. There is thematic overlap between all of the chapters but Chapter One, "Citizen-Making in Chicago," most directly addresses the overarching questions of individual autonomy, agency and democratic participation. How the ethnic diversity produced by mass immigration was reconciled with the need for social order and national unity is dealt with in Chapter Two, which looks at Chicagoans' responses to the First World War. Chapters Three and Four address a prominent theme in current historiographical discussions, the way in which racial politics shape and determine the nature of citizenship. The final chapter, an investigation of the 1924 Immigration Act, underlines how ideas developed in Chicago were reflected in federal legislation that determined who – that is, which groups – had access to American citizenship.

[11] Thomas Bender, "Intellectuals, Cities and Citizenship in the United States: the 1890s and the 1990s" in *Cities and Citizenship*, James Holston, ed., (Duke University Press, 1999)

The first chapter of the dissertation engages the intellectual response offered by influential progressives Jane Addams and John Dewey to the dramatic social changes occurring in the city. It explores the way in which their direct empirical relationship with the social realities of the industrial city led them to question conventional political arrangements and citizenship ideals. Most famous for her work with the immigrant groups living in the vicinity of the settlement Hull House, Addams was also an important social thinker. She became "the first sociologist of social work" because she attempted to bring about alterations in the institutional structures of social welfare provision that would reflect changes in both the social and cultural dynamics of the city and in shifting notions of citizenship.[12] Her philosophical and practical goal was to bring together as a national community all those who were rent apart by regional, class, and ethnic divisions. Soon after his arrival in Chicago and largely through their discussions about the reasons for and solutions to the class conflict that gave rise to the Pullman strike, Dewey joined Addams in this aim. A professor of philosophy and director of an experimental elementary school at the University of Chicago in the 1890s, Dewey wrote extensively on the new shape that modernity gave to democratic life and community configuration in America. Both thinkers wrestled with the difficulties of expanding the promise of democratic citizenship to the urban masses without this appearing to be an external imposition. Together with other Chicago reformers, Addams and Dewey rejected what they saw as outdated Enlightenment idealism and cultivated instead a new and more relevant social citizenship grounded in group attachments and memberships over the independence of the individual.

A large part of Progressive reformers' motivation was a wish to prevent or reverse declining levels of democratic participation and civic engagement among the mass of ordinary

[12] Louis Menand describes Addams this way in *The Metaphysical Club*, 312.

citizens. From the 1890s on, formal measures of democratic citizenship, such as voter turnout, did suggest such a decline. In response, Progressives sought to expand the definition of political engagement to encompass cultural activity and identifications, ostensibly to broaden the appeal and accessibility of democratic citizenship but arguably only succeeding in hollowing out its meaning. A century on, a similar unease about an apparently disengaged citizenry exists among American intellectuals. Influential texts such as Robert Bellah's *Habits of the Heart*, Mary Ann Glendon's *Rights Talk* and Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* locate a template for citizenship in Alexis de Tocqueville's observations about antebellum American democracy.[13] Sympathetic communitarian historians emphasize the Tocquevillean notion that active associational living and strong community bonds stimulated patriotism and regulated a healthy democracy. Some historians suggest that a growing imbalance between the collective and the individual sides of democratic life, which began with the emergence of modern liberalism, is to blame for the democratic deficit.[14] Even historians who deny any rich tradition of community or collectivity in American life lambast the rampant individualism of twentieth-century America and the liberal political creed that bolsters it.[15]

On the other hand, liberal historians who value individualism as a central tenet of American democratic citizenship dismiss the jeremiads coming from the communitarians. Michael Schudson warns against looking to the past for a "golden age" of democracy and citizenship. Alexander Keyssar demonstrates democracy's recent triumph at the end of a

[13] Robert Bellah, et al. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996 2nd ed.); Mary Ann Glendon, *Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse* (New York: The Free Press, 1991); and Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).
[14] See, for example, Sean Wilentz, "Against Exceptionalism: Class Consciousness and the American Labor Movement, 1790-1920" *International Labor and Working Class History*, 26 (Fall 1984): 1-24; Robert Wiebe, *Self Rule: A Cultural History of Democracy in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[15] For the most vitriolic attacks on liberal individualism see Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Norton, 1979) and *The Revolt of the Elites and the*

protracted struggle for the right to vote. Theda Skocpol suggests that calls for civic renewal simply represent ways to justify the dismantling of the welfare state. These scholars want to "bring the state back in" to historical understandings of citizenship. They reverse the communitarian's charge that an over-active state drained American communities of their civic purpose and argue instead that an active citizenry and an active state complemented one another.[16] Despite their denials of a past golden age, liberal historians tend to feel nostalgic about the activist welfare state and look to its resurgence to renew civic bonds. They have as much in common with Progressives as communitarians do. It is not uncommon for historians to look to the past for answers to contemporary questions. The Progressive era, more than most, serves as a mirror of concerns that historians bring to it; this is because we continue to live within the rough boundaries of political culture established at that time.[17]

Dewey, Addams and other Progressives developed a new understanding of citizenship that built upon time-honored political traditions but reinterpreted and transformed them. Historiographical discussion about American citizenship has involved the teasing out of its constitutive ideologies; historians define the core components as liberalism, republicanism and Protestantism – Rogers Smith adds 'ascriptive Americanism' – in various combinations and degrees.[18] Studies that focus on the impact of modernity describe a dramatic shift in the late

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Betrayal of Democracy (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996); and John Patrick Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest and the Foundations of Liberalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

[16] Michael Schudson *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Alexander Keyssar *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Peter Evans et al. *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina, eds. *Civic Engagement in American Democracy* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999).

[17] For a historiographical discussion that notes the contemporary trend toward a positive reevaluation of Progressivism see Robert D. Johnston, "Re-democratizing the Progressive Era: The Politics of Progressive Era Political Historiography" *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era,* 1 (Jan., 2002): 68-92.

[18] The classic historical interpretation of the United States as a liberal nation is Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1955); the 'republican synthesis,' associated with Bernard Bailyn's *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967) and J.G.A. Pocock's, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*

nineteenth century from the dominance of producer republicanism to that of corporate liberalism in the early twentieth.[19] In some such readings, progressive-era liberals threw out many of the features of classical liberalism and set out the parameters of modern liberalism, offering administrative solutions to social problems and curtailing the freedom of the market with regulatory oversight. My own work builds on some of the insights generated by these studies of political ideology and state-building at the turn of the twentieth century. My research suggests that while the interpretive power of both liberalism and republicanism can usefully be employed – as Dewey and Addams both did – to understand American political culture, these political philosophies were joined in the Progressive era by a new sociological and cultural understanding of citizenship. The new focus emerged from a concern to enhance and expand democracy but ultimately resulted in the elevation of cultural group memberships and the establishment of formal relationships between the state and its citizens that privileged cultural identity over political status. Consequently, progressive thinkers came to depend upon the state to produce and constitute modern citizens rather than act as the servant of citizens' political will.

Chapter 2, "War! Ethnic Identity and Americanization," traces the shifts in political outlook of European immigrants to Chicago over the course of the First World War. Many immigrants arrived in Chicago with a strong attachment to the Enlightenment ideals that they associated with American citizenship and which had provoked their own escape from serfdom,

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(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), represented a major challenge to the Hartzian approach. James T. Kloppenberg, *The Virtues of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) draws on both these theses and includes the emphasis on Protestantism in Sacvan Berkovitch's writings to configure a 'polyglot' American political tradition. Rogers M. Smith adds an ethno-cultural dimension when he argues that 'ascriptive Americanism' constitutes a pervasive aspect of citizenship throughout US history. See his, "Beyond Toqueville, Myrdal and Hertz: the Multiple Traditions in America" *American Political Science Review* 87 (1993): 549-566 and *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Versions of Citizenship in US History* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1997).

[19] Nancy Cohen, *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (Oxford University Press, 1986); Shelton Stromquist, *Reinventing "The People": The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origin of Modern Liberalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

pogroms, and other forms of economic, political and religious oppression. These immigrants saw their own cultural background as largely irrelevant to their newly acquired political status and understood their desire for the rights and protections of American citizenship as a complement to the free exercise of their cultural and religious practices. However, their wartime experiences began to challenge the ability of immigrant groups to separate their ethnic identities from their status as Americans. Although they worked hard to demonstrate their patriotism through support for the war both in active military service and on the home front, they began to confront a definition of Americanism that demanded cultural observance alongside political affiliation. As official Americanizers joined forces with ethnic leaders to prescribe appropriate levels and forms of patriotism, American citizenship adopted a cultural character that undermined its continued co-existence with ethnic practices. Immigrants' own defense of 'hyphenism' as a valid version of Americanism ultimately capitulated to the politicization of cultural identity that Americanizers had begun. Ethnic identity therefore became a feature of American citizenship and political culture into the twenties, eroding further the classical liberal ideal of individual autonomy that Addams and Dewey had attacked.

In historiographical discussions dealing with cultural identity in the urban environment, some scholars indicate that, alongside the organizational "search for order" at the turn of the century, there existed an enthusiastic embrace of disorder.[20] In the frenzied nightlife of New York, the chaotic response to conflict in Chicago, and the parades and protestations of San Franciscans, historians have uncovered a spontaneous and liberated side to modern city living. Carl Smith suggests that at the end of the nineteenth century, "disorder . . . was integrated into the idea of the normal . . . the city in disorder was the city at its most modern." A number of

[20] Robert Wiebe's, *The Search for Order, 1870-1920* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967) remains influential although a great deal of more recent historical work both challenges and supplements it.

historical case studies demonstrate that ethnic, racial, and class groups resisted conformity and were able to negotiate the chaotic maze of city life thanks to their strong and autonomous sub-cultures.[21]

Cultural histories of the city celebrate disordered diversity but this approach is largely inadequate for dealing with the relationship of cultural group identification to the process of citizen-making. The 'cultural identity' approach tends to take ethnic and racial identities as given, permanent and essential or worse, it projects current obsessions with politicized identities into the distant past. It is my contention that, at the turn of the century, group identities were not culturally given, but politically constructed – both within and against Americanism. Recognition of group identities certainly did not represent a grassroots claim or demand because European immigrants, as I demonstrate in chapter two, had little use for them on arrival in Chicago, preferring to celebrate their newly-found individual freedoms than their ingrained cultural roots.

In the post-war period, the cultural conflicts that ethnic groups experienced with intolerant Americanizers continued apace across the nation but in Chicago, a more tangible and physical form of conflict arose to separate out African Americans from other city dwellers. Chapter 3, "Riot! African American Citizenship in Chicago," outlines the transformation of Chicago's African American community organization and political outlook before and after the 1919 race riot. The chapter assesses black migrants' attitudes about their own citizenship as they arrived in the city from the South and as they participated in the Great War. It considers what impact the multiple crises of migration, war, and riot had on the nature of African-American citizenship.

[21] Carl Smith *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb and the Model Town of Pullman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) p.8; Karen Sawislak, *Smoldering City: Chicagoans and the Great Fire, 1871-1874 (*Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Philip J. Ethington, *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Lewis Erenberg, *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930* (Westport, CN., Greenwood Press, 1981). For an overview of the cultural historiography of the city, see Timothy J.

Looking into the post-riot years of the 1920s, the chapter traces a withdrawal among black Chicagoans from demands for individual citizenship rights and the defensive acceptance of racial group identity as a component of African American citizenship.

A burgeoning literature on the multilayered connections between race and citizenship indicates the complex power that racial ideologies have exercised over the shaping of American citizenship. Within this literature, sharply opposed interpretations exist. One view is essentially liberal, presenting American citizenship as delivering a progressively greater racial and cultural inclusiveness throughout the nation's history, presumably culminating in a contemporary 'post racial' nation under Obama's presidency.[22] The alternative reading sees only resilient and enduring barriers erected against the attainment of full and equal citizenship of racial minorities and 'others' despite the promise of inclusion held out by liberal citizenship.[23] Recently, the latter interpretation has dominated the field although important works by Rogers Smith, Eric Foner and Gary Gerstle have bridged the divide, allowing for the possibility that both inclusionary and

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Gilfoyle, "White Cities, Linguistic Turns, and Disneylands: The New Paradigms of Urban History" *Reviews in American History* 26 (1998): 175-204.

[22] While few scholars would wholeheartedly subscribe to Gunnar Myrdal's thesis any longer, liberal assimilationist arguments are evident in Lawrence Fuchs, *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity and the Civil Culture* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1990); Philip Gleason, "American Identity and Americanization" in Stephen Thernstrom, ed. *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, Mass., Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1980); Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (New York: Norton, 1992); and David Hollinger, Postethnic *America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

[23] The recent literature on race as a persistent and deeply embedded feature of American citizenship is large and growing. Important works include Desmond King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Mark Weiner, *Americans Without Law: The Racial Boundaries of Citizenship* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Melissa Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship: Race and the Census in Modern Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Evelynn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Carol A. Horton, *Race and the Making of American Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Desmond King and Rogers M. Smith, *Still a House Divided: Rae and Politics in Obama's America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). For a normative statement about this understanding of citizenship, see Iris Marion Young, "Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship" *Ethics* 99 (1989): 250-74

exclusionary aspects of citizenship existed, with one or other strain dominant at different historical moments.[24]

My own work fits into the discussion through a further development of these arguments for understanding the relationship of race to citizenship with a greater degree of historical specificity. Looking at one city over a narrowly defined time period carries some limitations for examining national change but it does allow a concrete and empirical examination of shifts in racial identities and ideologies and how they related to national identity.

The riot and its aftermath highlight too the importance of political constructions of meaning; the experience of the riot may not have had such a dramatic impact on the political outlook of the city's African American leadership and community if it had not been for the official response of the city to the riot. Chapter 4, "Citizenship by Racial Division: The Chicago Commission on Race Relations, 1919-1922" addresses that response. The calls for reform in the wake of the riot came to centre on the perceived need for greater order and oversight in the relations between the black and white residents of the city. Demand for the interracial Chicago Commission on Race Relations emanated from both progressive reformers and official political channels but many among Chicago's African American population resisted the undemocratic and segregationist implications of such a deliberating body. The chapter assesses the notions of race that animated the commission's membership and the intellectual sustenance provided by its primary researcher, Charles S. Johnson and his mentor, Robert E. Park. The final report, *The Negro in Chicago*, gave official sanction to racial marking and embedded racial categories in the newly emerging conceptions of citizenship in the modern city. The work and operation of the CCRR highlights the undemocratic consequences of the 'consensual' and expert-led democracy

[24] Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999); Rogers M.

that Dewey and Addams had, perhaps inadvertently, endorsed. Indeed, the commission aspired to operate in much the same mode as a board of industrial arbitration; an objective arbiter of justice between two conflicting groups with opposed interests.

The melting pot ideal – like the integrationist ideal – lost much of its varnish in the twenties, following the experience of the war. The final chapter, 'Robert Park's America: Immigration and Citizenship in the 1920s,' examines the social thought about immigration generated in the sociology department at the University of Chicago and argues that it had an important impact upon national-level legislation. The chapter challenges long-accepted historical accounts of the intellectual sustenance and political motivation behind the passage of the 1924 Johnson-Reed Immigration Act. The Act, a massive victory for restrictionists, established a selective system based on national origins that defined who could and who could not become an American citizen for a large portion of the twentieth century, finally only being overturned in 1965. The chapter highlights the strands of progressivism and cultural pluralism that combined to inform Robert Park's sociology of race relations and suggests that these had as great an influence on the acceptance of immigration control as eugenicist thought did. While eugenicist scientists may have roamed the corridors of power in Washington and given evidence to congressional committees, it was ultimately social scientists who reformulated American citizenship as a restricted status determined by national origin.

Democracy v. Consensus

My research reveals that not only did the balance swing away from civic inclusion toward racial exclusion in the period, for both African Americans and immigrants, but importantly, the

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Smith, *Civic Ideals* (1997).

character of that racial exclusiveness changed. Ostensibly donning a more democratic garb, citizenship in fact adopted an essentialized cultural mode. The combination of 'consensual' democratic rule – which ultimately meant the agreement of group representatives rather than the outcome of political debate among individual citizens – and the official embrace of tenets of cultural pluralism led to both the residential segregation of African Americans and the passage of the most restrictive and comprehensively race-based immigration law the nation ever contemplated. If discrimination against racial groups has historically circumscribed the nature of liberal citizenship, it did so with greater force and more democratic legitimacy from around 1920.

As I argue in the following chapters, progressive reformers in Chicago focused a great deal of their efforts upon the expansion of democratic terms and the promotion of democratic participation among ordinary citizens. They worried that citizenship had grown outmoded and irrelevant to the urban masses and they sought to make it a more appealing, and a more practically useful, prospect. This agenda – of making citizenship relevant and necessary to the lives of citizens – is by definition a modern one since only with modernity did inclusion in the polity become an expectation of, for, and by the mass of the population. Democratic rule depends, of course, upon public legitimacy and this has been a concern for political elites and intellectuals at least since the late nineteenth century, if not before.[25] In Chicago, elite responses to what was perceived as the needs and requirements of the citizenry – whether this was cognizance of inherited cultural traditions or a determination to bend social policy toward order or, indeed, to expand state provision – were not necessarily accurate interpretations of the popular will. Indeed, my research suggests that while ordinary citizens and immigrants retained a strong attachment to traditional American ideals in the early years of the twentieth century, the urban

leadership had begun to lose faith in the power of those ideals, particularly the democratic ideal and that of the national 'melting pot.'

The American nation was built on political ideals and over the course of the nineteenth century American citizens sought to bring their own realities into a closer approximation of those ideals – of freedom, democracy and material success. Indeed, in his early works John Dewey had argued the case for the American citizen as the embodiment of democracy: an ideal made real. As the twentieth century dawned, however, the realities of social inequality and of racial and ethnic difference began to seem too acute, too insurmountable and certainly too visible to maintain any faith in the old ideals. So, instead of seeking to achieve what now seemed impossible for all, democratic thinkers like Dewey began to cast off the ideals and embrace the realities of modern living. America was no longer a city on a hill or a vast, open frontier full of potential but rather the lived experience of Americans at school, work and play. Pragmatism was the American response to modernity; it was the surrender of idealism in deference to the real and the experiential. It had no idealistic vision for the future, it provided a practical means for negotiating the complexities of the modern city but it proposed no ends, no faith to live by. Without political ideals and principles, democratic citizenship became a different proposition.

Perversely, the state expanded as political ideals declined. The emergence of an enlarged role for the state and of state solutions to social problems both shaped and reflected changing notions of citizenship. The shift from civil to political to social citizenship that T.H. Marshall describes as the British state's response to an incompatibility between equality and capitalism does not apply perfectly in the American context but it does capture something about

[25] Richard Hofstadter's classic work *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962) indicates the incompatibility of egalitarian ideals and intellectual thought in American political culture and therefore the need for elites to convey the "common touch" in establishing their credibility and legitimacy.

progressivism that recent transnational histories have confirmed.[26] Social citizenship added to the national narrative an inclusiveness that denied the salience of class division and reinforced community consensus.[27] Yet the dampening of class conflict and concomitant political contestation left democratic citizenship without much grassroots vitality or vigor. In Chicago, social thinkers and reformers saw that this gap might be filled by cultural group attachments. Historians Mary Ryan and Philip Ethington point to the reification of social identity in the latter part of the nineteenth century but their studies stop short of exploring the process. Both see the Civil War as a turning point, a time when state power began to be consolidated and citizenship status became more dependent on group membership.[28] My research addresses how the process of state enlargement and the politicization of cultural identities further unfolded in the modern city and explores the impact each development had on the construction of American citizenship.

A history of citizenship necessarily encompasses both conflict and consensus and I have tried to capture the working out of each. My own sense is that Chicago's reform leadership may have felt rather too much anxiety about conflict and too strong a need for consensus to engineer a truly robust national citizenship. Given the sources of conflict they experienced, directly or through family memories – the bloody carnage of Civil War, the rise of industrial unrest and class conflict at Haymarket and Pullman, the onslaught of World War and the 1919 race riot – their aversion was perhaps understandable. Yet, if they had trusted their fellow citizens to a greater degree and not felt so anxious about their propensity for striking and rioting on the one hand, nor yet so concerned about their apathy and disengagement on the other, they may have

[26] See T.H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," in T. H. Marshall and Tom Bottomore, eds. Citizenship and Social Class (London: Pluto Press, 1992): 1-51. Transnational studies include Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory* and Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Harvard University Press, 2000).
[27] Or as Marshall phrased it, "Equalization is not so much between classes as between individuals within a population which is now treated for this purpose as though it were one class." 33. For an insightful treatment of progressivism and class, see Stromquist, *Reinventing "The People."*

achieved a more meaningful democracy. Ultimately, they abandoned many of the enlightened tenets of the American creed in favor of a pragmatic adjustment to modernity. Thankfully, the mass of the American people held firm a little longer.

[28] Mary P. Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Philip J. Ethington, *The Public City* (1994).

CHAPTER 2

CITIZEN-MAKING IN CHICAGO

Chicago was the first expression of American thought as a unity; one must start there.
Henry Adams, 1907

Citizens are not born, but made. An individual might acquire formal citizenship status according to the place of their birth but this is not a necessary let alone a sufficient condition of their identity as citizen. In many nation states during the modern era, but in the United States especially, individuals embraced citizenship as a political choice despite having been born on foreign soil. Even for those born within the national borders of the United States (borders that were themselves continually shifting), the nature and meaning of citizenship was not determined at birth. The key question in the making of citizenship, and the one that this chapter grapples with, is that of agency: who does the "making," to what purpose and what end?

While nations were clearly the most important sites for the working out of the dynamics of national belonging, the emergence of great industrial cities had an important bearing on the reformulation of citizenship in the modern era. The city of Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century was not merely a backdrop for the working out of social actions and political identities; it helped to produce and channel them.[29] Not only did the city's location in time and place influence the nature of the citizenship it produced, but Chicago's citizens, reformers, and intellectuals actively harnessed the physical city itself as a means of redefining the meaning of national identity and citizenship.

This chapter explores the ways in which prominent Chicagoans John Dewey and Jane

[29] For a discussion about the renewed recognition of the importance of urban locations, see James Connolly, "Bringing the City Back In: Space and Place in the Urban History of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 1 (July 2002): 258-78.

Addams responded to the development of urban modernity by recasting citizenship in the city. Addams and Dewey did not simply respond to an abstract condition called "modernity" in their attempts to produce modern citizens. Instead they, more so perhaps than many other social thinkers, responded to the city in its concrete reality. They came to understand the nature of modern citizenship as a direct consequence of the novel forms of experience offered up by cities like Chicago in the late nineteenth century. Thus, while they grappled intellectually with the general problems presented by the social division of labor and of growing class conflict, they responded directly, in both thought and action, to the advent of local crises of industrial relations, particularly the Pullman Strike of 1894.

Indeed, Pullman – the man, the town and the strike – acted as a foil against which Addams and Dewey worked out their understanding about what modern citizenship should look like. Rather self-consciously, George Pullman presented his own entrepreneurial energy, engineering know-how and achievement of industrial might as symbolic of nineteenth-century Americanism. But those Progressives who came to shape the new urban citizenship and ultimately build the modern welfare state restyled his approach as outdated and 'Un-American.' Pullman, the liberal, individual, self-made man from a booming frontiers town became the power-hungry industrial tyrant of the corporate age. This chapter examines the Pullman case to demonstrate how and why a unique social experiment came to serve as a general lesson about the meaning of national values and national identity. Within a shifting social context and through the development of alternative political priorities, Chicago's intellectuals and political elites refashioned modern citizenship and the character of Americanism, thereby casting more traditional versions of national ideals and values – notably Pullman's – as Un-American.

Like many other Progressive thinkers and reformers of the time, Addams and Dewey's responses to the congested, conflict-ridden city were full of ambiguities and contradictions.

Despite their enthusiasm for democratic citizenship, their orientation toward the mass public often disclosed their own sense of impotence in the face of the fast-moving social change that accompanied dramatic urban growth and expansion. And, given their frustrations about political power and social control, the solutions they developed, as Paul Boyer and others have documented, were sometimes tinged with elitist condescension and anti-democratic implications, denying and removing the agency of ordinary citizens.[30]

Historiographical trends over the last twenty-five years have rehabilitated Progressive reformers as crusading champions of justice and defenders of democracy battling against a political culture dominated by traditionalism, elitism and chauvinism.[31] Scholarship now generally avoids the cynicism of an earlier generation of historians who dismissed the intellectual claims and political speech of Progressives as just so much rhetoric masking the underlying class interests, cultural snobbery and psychological inadequacies of reformers. Responding to what they view as the continued deficiencies of American democracy, scholars have reinterpreted

[30] There is an immense critical literature on Progressivism beginning with Richard Hofstadter's *Age of Reform* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955). Among the more sophisticated studies of the anti-democratic character of urban Progressive reform are Paul Boyer *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) and Shelton Stromquist*, Reinventing "The People": The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origin of Modern Liberalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

[31] The sympathetic treatment of progressive reformers, which implicitly insisted on attention being paid to their ideas as independent and important entities, began with James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) and continued with Kevin Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public: The Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy During the Progressive Era* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998). Many recent studies provide a generally positive appraisal of progressive reformers with caveats, either recognition of the limits of their success or an argument for unintended consequences. See particularly Michael McGerr *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Leon Fink, *Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) and James J. Connolly, *An Elusive Unity: Urban Democracy and Machine Politics in Industrializing America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010). For a historiographical discussion that argues for the radically democratic nature of progressivism see Robert D. Johnston, "Re-democratizing the Progressive Era: The Politics of Progressive Era Political Historiography." *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era,* 1 (Jan., 2002): 68-92.

progressivism in a rather more sympathetic light and framed progressive reform as a missed opportunity for establishing a tradition of robust civic engagement.[32]

There is no doubt, as recent scholarship suggests, that Progressives cared deeply and sincerely about the continued popular resonance of democratic citizenship. Reformers' ideas and arguments must certainly be taken seriously and on their own merit. Such an approach does not, however, preclude a critical interpretation of the meanings underpinning Progressive social thought nor of assessing reformers in the light of the consequences of that thought. The well-worn dichotomy between Progressivism as a movement of social justice and one of social control is resolved somewhat when we examine the meanings of the terms in context. For liberal reformers, social control in a non-traditional urban setting became not so much about the application of negative sanctions or the power to interdict or censor, but consisted primarily in furnishing urban citizens with "motives to action" and creating desired behaviors through the enabling techniques of communication, education and therapeutic practice.[33] Progressives believed it was time to move beyond the notion of a citizen as an autonomous individual and rational subject and instead to take cognizance of the power of the social environment to mold and produce behaviors and actions. They hoped to turn this discovery to advantage in producing citizens, not by exhortation and example as nineteenth-century moral reformers had done, but by discreet environmental engineering. The ideas of reformers must be interpreted within this political context and judged by the institutional changes they wrought in their attempts to remodel American citizenship.

[32] Voter participation plunged during the Progressive Era: between 1876-1900, turnout averaged 80.8 per cent; in the seven elections after 1900, average turnout stood at 60.5 per cent and have never regained former levels.
[33] Mark Elchardus, "Self-control as Social-control: The Emergence of Symbolic Society" *Poetics* 37 (2009): 146-61 examines the shifts in the nature of social control in detraditionalizing societies. I contend that the processes which Elchardus describes began during the Progressive era in the United States.

As traditional community nodes – family, church, neighborhood – lost some of their authority in the modern city, Progressives like Addams and Dewey searched for alternative ways to connect the free floating citizenry to one another and to political and intellectual leaders. An ambiguity in the Progressive orientation toward "the people" is apparent in reformers' indecisiveness about how to characterize the popular will: was it too strong and interest-based so that it must be neutralized or defused *or* was it entirely weak, if not absent, and easily led astray by cheap commercial amusements and corrupt politicians? This chapter will consider the meaning of this and other contradictions in the pragmatist philosophy of Dewey and the social thought of Addams in order to get a clearer understanding of the nature of the citizen they hoped to will into existence. Pragmatism was an essentially liberal and democratic philosophy but it contained a tension, as Nancy Cohen notes, "between public mastery via the pragmatic method and the mastery of the public by the pragmatist elite."[34] This tension is apparent in the work and writings of both Dewey and Addams. My examination of Dewey's philosophical outlook will focus on his treatment of the individual citizen. As older understandings of individualism became incompatible with the urban environment, Dewey developed a new concept of individual character that was to be shaped through public education. Addams focused her attention on the wider lens of community relationships within the neighborhood. Her commitment to social harmony drove her to redefine citizenship as necessarily interest- and conflict-free and this led her toward an acceptance of pragmatic pluralism as part of an enriched American culture.

Both Dewey and Addams sought to retain what was best in the democratic traditions of American citizenship. They each responded to the central problem of the age, which they and their contemporaries defined as the social division of labor, with a strong wish to recreate a

[34] Nancy Cohen, *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002): 241.

popular participatory democracy that would overcome the gulf between social groups.[35] Within the modern urban environment, by definition a collective experience based upon a tangle of mutual dependencies among citizens, human connections paradoxically seemed shallower and weaker than in the past. The widening gap between the "classes and the masses" weighed heavily on reformers' minds but so too did the growing division between the generations. Both Dewey and Addams focused much of their effort on reforming citizenship through the children and young adults of the republic. After all, the young represented the future and as John Higham has noted, the twentieth century was to put a special premium on youth as a phase of life characterized by "a maximum of spontaneity, freedom and vital energy," qualities seen to be lacking perhaps from the urban, industrial order.[36] In their different ways, Dewey and Addams each sought to recreate a wholeness of being and a unity of purpose in their drive to heal divisions between classes, generations, and ethnic groups and to reconstruct a notion of the common good. They did so by providing a new and more fitting content for the forms of citizenship available to the city dweller.

Chicago's America: Pullman, the World's Fair and Progressivism

Chicago rapidly emerged as a dynamic industrial city in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1830, a reporter had described the fewer than one hundred people who lived in Chicago as "a miserable race of men, scarcely equal to the Indians from whom they are descended." Few settlers yet saw much promise in the swampy fur-trading post and portage on

[35] Jean B. Quandt , *From the Small Town to the Great Community: The Social Thought of Progressive Intellectuals* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970) addresses the concern with the social division of labor; James Morone, *The Democratic Wish: Popular Participation and the Limits of American Government* (Yale University Press, rev. ed. 1998) engages the progressive's desire for (and failure to achieve) a meaningful participatory democracy.

the southwestern edge of Lake Michigan. After the 1832 Black Hawk War had cleared Illinois of hostile Indians, however, and a number of improvements had been made to increase the navigability of the Chicago River, population levels rocketed. Within a generation, 30,000 settlers had made Chicago their home and by the end of the nineteenth century there were almost two million Chicagoans.[37]

While capital and finance in the city remained dependent on New York markets for some decades, the city's industry and commerce rested on the processing and marketing of produce from western lands. The lumber, grain, and meatpacking industries exploited to great effect the natural resources of the rural hinterlands for eastern and international markets and Chicago also supplied western farmers with agricultural equipment and other capital and commercial goods.[38] In the first half-century of the city's growth, Chicago's top businessmen were overwhelmingly first-generation capitalists, self-made men who had left New England or the Mid-Atlantic States to make their fortune in the West. Over the course of the century, a consistent seventy per cent of the city's millionaires, most of them migrants, created their own wealth in the city.[39] By the 1890s, however, capital accumulation had become more stable, wealth tending to remain in the same hands for longer periods of time. With higher levels of kinship and intermarriage among

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[36] John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s" in *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) discusses the cult of youth and vitality among Progressives.

[37] Robert G. Spinney, *City of Big Shoulders: a History of Chicago* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000): 23.

[38] William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1992) provides a superb explanation of the emergence and frenzied development of the city of Chicago and of the city's relationship with the rural economy.

[39] Frederic Cople Jaher*, The Urban Establishment: Upper Strata in Boston, New York, Charleston, Chicago and Los Angeles* (University of Illinois Press, 1982): 456, 496. Jaher documents the creation of the modern urban elite and finds that while 69.2 per cent of Chicago made their own fortunes in the antebellum period, this figure actually rises slightly to 70.6 per cent for 1892. While 83.2 per cent of these millionaires migrated to Chicago from the East before the Civil War, only 60 per cent of them had followed the same route in 1892, 6 per cent being born locally, 17.2 per cent coming from abroad, and 16.7 per cent arriving from elsewhere in the U.S.

wealthy families, the Chicago elite had become more established and cohesive by the nineties although it retained a higher degree of openness and fluidity than urban elites in the East.[40]

The furious physical expansion of the city, the dynamism of the economy and the creation of vast individual fortunes was accompanied by the growth of a class of organized industrial workers. Just as individual capitalists were combining to protect their own interests on a nationwide scale, so individual workers began to recognize their own shared interests with fellow workers across city, state and regional lines. In 1877, Chicago's railroad workers played an important role in the first industrial dispute to take place on the national stage; the city's streets had run with blood as strikers and sympathizers clashed with police, vigilante citizen patrols and federal troops. The eighteen deaths, hundreds of injuries and millions of dollars of property damage that resulted left a deep impression about the destructiveness of class warfare on Chicagoans.

Industrialist George Pullman took the lessons of 1877 to heart. In 1880, he purchased 4,000 acres of land near Lake Calumet, south of Chicago, on which to build factory plant and a model town to house workers and their families. He hoped that, in providing good housing and a pleasant environment for his workforce, the Pullman Palace Car Company could avoid the industrial strife that had befallen other ventures in the city. The conflict and bloodshed during, and the political fallout following, the Haymarket affair in Chicago in 1886, can only have persuaded Pullman (and others) of the correctness of his strategy. With the city as the central hub of an expanding railroad network, and the meat-packing and steel industries developing rapidly,

[40] Ibid., 497.

labor conflict in Chicago continued to be sharp; between 1887 and 1894, the city hosted 528 strikes by 283, 000 workers.[41]

Fitting the profile of many other Chicago-based magnates of the period, George Pullman came from a relatively humble, small-town background. Born in 1831, to a large family of modest income in Brocton, New York, Pullman received little formal education but showed a flair for design and engineering that he put to good use when he moved to Chicago in 1855. At that time, the city was in the process of raising its buildings eight feet to allow for better drainage and Pullman personally oversaw the elevation of several structures and buildings. Having made the beginnings of a fortune, augmented by a successful mining stint in Colorado, Pullman applied himself to the improvement of the railroad sleeping car.[42] His belief in the commercial value of beauty and comfort brought his designs magnificent success. Across the national rail network, of which Chicago formed a central hub, Pullman standardized luxury in his "travelling hotel" idea. His promotional literature scoffed at the notion that Americans were interested only in practicality and utility and instead hailed quality in design and aesthetics as an essential part of the distinctively American faith in progress and cognizance of individuality.[43] To underline the patriotism of his new design, as well as assure his commercial success, Pullman publicized the use of one of his carriages to convey President Lincoln's body from Washington to his final Springfield, Illinois resting place in 1865.[44]

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[41] Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: America's Global Cities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999): 119.
[42] Almont Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike: The Story of a Great Experiment and of a Great Labor Upheaval* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942) 19-20; Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb and the Model Town of Pullman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[43] *Author unknown,* "The Story of Pullman" (Chicago: Blakely & Rogers, 1893) downloaded December 2010 from http://www.archive.org/stream/storyofpullman00worl#page/n0/mode/2up. The likely author is Pullman's town manager, Duane Doty.
[44] However, historians have questioned whether the wide carriage of Pullman's "Pioneer" could really have fit along the Springfield line with its small stations and narrow bridges. See David Ray Papke, *The Pullman Case: the Clash of Labor and Capital in Industrial America* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1999): 5.

Pullman represented in his life and his work the reality of the self-made man, the rugged individual of the frontier and the independent entrepreneur of classical liberalism. His political outlook reflected his personal experience but he nevertheless lived at a time of great social and cultural transformation. While retaining a liberal political outlook – he was an active and prominent member of the Republican Party – Pullman accommodated his business principles and approach to the exigencies of the age. In building the town of Pullman, he hoped to set an example in applying corporate management techniques not only to the working but also the living conditions of his workers. Recognizing that, in an age of combination and monopoly, the political economy of *laissez faire* had been fatally compromised, Pullman sought an approach that might avoid the combative consequences of modern labor relations. His promotional literature proclaimed proudly that the town of Pullman was a daring social experiment designed to solve the problem of labor-capital conflict "upon lines of mutual recognition."[45]

Most contemporary reports on the town of Pullman were positive; many saw the experiment as a viable solution to the labor problem.[46] Designed by architect Solon S. Beman and landscaped by Nathan Barrett, Pullman boasted a range of residences, all provided with gas, water, indoor plumbing, sewerage and regular garbage disposal. In stark contrast to the slums of Chicago, the town's streets were paved and well lit and residents also had use of a schoolhouse, a firehouse, a railroad station, stables, a hotel (housing the only licensed bar), parks, playing fields, the Arcade (with bank, theatre and library), Market Hall and a greenstone Church. Just as he had technically engineered the elevation of Chicago's buildings from the swamp, so Pullman aimed to elevate the culture and consciousness of the working class by exposing them to a wholesome living environment. As historian Carl Smith notes, the model town offered a way out of the

[45] Ibid, 35; Smith, *Urban Disorder*, 189.
[46] Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder*, 180-200.

disorder caused by modern city living and was therefore viewed by many observers as a worthy template for the future, even if the reality of its operation required major modifications in the concept of American citizenship.[47]

Richard T. Ely's 1885 account of the town of Pullman set the positive benefits of a healthful, hygienic environment on the morals and manners of workers against the denial of autonomy that went along with it. Ultimately, Ely concluded that despite the uplifting effect of clean streets, attractive housing and good jobs, Pullman was too strictly controlled and tightly regulated by one man to be judged a total success. Comparing Pullman's exercise of power to that of Bismarck in Germany or Czar Alexander II of Russia, Ely questioned whether Pullman cultivated the character attributes necessary for the creation of good American citizens; "the conclusion is unavoidable that the idea of Pullman is un-American. . . It is not the American ideal. It is benevolent, well-wishing feudalism, which desires the happiness of the people but in such way as shall please the authorities."[48] Ely's assessment that Pullman might please the authorities was not guess work: a year before, the soon-to-be Commissioner of Labor Carroll D. Wright had studied conditions in Pullman and found that while workers could be said to be living in a "gilded cage," they were indeed lucky to be doing so and should be glad for its advantages.[49] Before the strike, most assessments of Pullman were wholly positive while criticism was rare and, at worst – like Ely's – muted.

Pullman saw his experiment as fully in keeping with the traditions of American citizenship. As a grand symbol of the national progress and prosperity the town symbolized, he

[47] Ibid., 4.
[48] Richard T. Ely "Pullman: A Social Study" *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (February, 1885): 465.
[49] Wright study cited in Smith, *Urban Disorder*, 191; Congress established a Bureau of Labor with Wright at its head in 1884 and in 1886, Cleveland asked Congress to "engraft" onto the Bureau of Labor a commission to prevent major strikes. After the Pullman strike, U.S. Commissioner of Labor Carroll D. Wright headed a group which made a report of the dispute. One recommendation provided the basis for the Erdman Act of 1898, under which the Commissioner of Labor and the Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission tried to mediate railroad strikes.

purchased the Corliss steam engine that had served as the centerpiece of the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 and used it to power his workshops.[50] An iconic machine, it had dazzled all those who came to witness it. William Dean Howells marveled at it upon first viewing, "wherever else the national bird is mute in one's breast, here he cannot fail to utter his pride and content . . . it is still in these things of iron and steel that the national genius most freely speaks," while poet Walt Whitman was reduced to awed silence in its presence.[51] Pullman encased the engine behind glass in full public view as a celebration of his factory's contribution to the industrial and manufacturing prowess of the United States. He showcased the engine as a part of the triumphant march of American civilization and as a mark of the enterprising national spirit. The engine's symbolism lay not only in national inventiveness but also in the advances in international trade and industry that it heralded. Through his prominent display of the Corliss engine, as well as in the radical experiment of his company town, Pullman announced that his company would not only embody American values but would aid the United States in the glorious endeavor of providing a progressive example for the rest of the world. For Pullman, the town of Pullman operated as a "city upon a hill" for the industrial age.

To similar effect and purpose, Pullman took a leading role in bringing the Columbian Exposition to Chicago in 1893. Chicago's claim as the best site to host the World's Fair existed chiefly in the city's impressive transformation from frontier town to urban giant and in its location in the American heartland. After helping Chicago win the national bid for the fair, Pullman marked the occasion with a patriotic gesture during the fair itself, organizing an extravagant ceremony to unveil his gift to the city of a statue commemorating the 1812 Fort

[50] The New England Wireless and Steam Engine website carries a photograph of the engine *in situ* at Pullman, see http://www.newsm.org/steam-engines/corliss-centenial.html, downloaded December 2010.
[51] William Dean Howells, "A Sennight of the Centennial" *Atlantic Monthly* 38 (July 1876): 103.

Dearborn massacre.[52] A combination of civic mindedness and homage to American frontiersmen, the ceremony also served to publicize Pullman's own contributions to the city and the nation. During the course of the fair, Pullman advertised his product, company and model town by distributing free promotional brochures, arranging sight-seeing excursions to Pullman as well as exhibiting his trains and rolling stock in the fair. He made every effort to portray his industrial effort as within the compass of national traditions and as an advertisement for American values.[53]

Yet, despite Pullman's many attempts to equate his work with Americanism, national values and traditions had become highly contested during the decade of the 1890s and the spectacular celebration of American achievement that was the World's Fair clarified little. As Henry Adams noted, while "Chicago asked in 1893 for the first time the question whether the American people knew where they were driving," it offered few answers for itself.[54] However, it was clear that old certainties were no longer relevant since the fair was nothing, according to Adams, if not "a step in evolution to startle Darwin."[55] Its spectacular exhibits and displays underlined just how rapid both social and technological change had been.

As American intellectuals cast around for the meaning of the modern urban order, historian Frederick Jackson Turner offered an imaginative repositioning of the national trajectory when he delivered his presidential address to the American Historical Association at the Chicago fair. Redefining American progress as an outcome of an evolutionary process that had repeatedly occurred on the border between civilization and wilderness, Turner reformulated the American character as the consequence of interactions between pioneering individuals and their environment. For Turner, the frontier stripped settlers of their "garments of civilization" and

[52] Smith, *Urban Disorder*, 181-4
[53] *The Story of Pullman*; Troy Rondinone, "Guarding the Switch: Cultivating Nationalism during the Pullman Strike" *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 8:1 (January 2009): 92.
[54] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 287.
[55] Ibid, 285.

provided "the line of most rapid and effective Americanization," creating an individualistic, practical and democratic people bound together by their exceptional national experience. Yet, as all historians of America are aware, Turner not only celebrated the continual renewal of the American spirit on the frontier line but, in 1893, declared the frontier closed. Ending his speech on a note fitting the occasion of the World's Fair in a metropolis that had recently been a frontier outpost, he asked his audience to acknowledge that "now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history."[56] No matter what the American future might be, it would not be a repetition of the past.

As it turned out, Pullman's "city upon a hill" soon became as irrelevant as a template for the future as Turner's frontier. The Pullman experiment, previously hailed as a possible solution to class conflict, urban disorder and moral decay, lost its luster when Pullman workers struck against the company in 1894. The strike, a protest at the maintenance of high rents in Pullman despite deep wage cuts, soon became national in scope when Pullman workers appealed to the newly-formed American Railway Union (ARU) for support. Against the cautionary advice of leader Eugene V. Debs, the fledgling ARU voted to test its strength against the omnipotent General Manager's Association (GMA) with a boycott of any train pulling a Pullman car.[57] The GMA, a tightly-organized association of all railroads terminating in Chicago, responded by developing a strategy to frame the dispute as a choice between support for the anarchic and disorderly strikers or loyalty to the federal government, rather than as a battle between railroad

[56] Frederick Jackson Turner "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (July, 1893) Downloaded from: http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/ , December 2010.
[57] The GMA was founded in 1886 and by 1892 had become a powerful force. In 1894, it comprised twenty-four lines covering 41,000 miles of railroad, 818 million dollars in stock and an aggregate of 221,000 workers. See Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike*, 114; Shelton Stromquist, *Reinventing "The People,"* 25-6.

workers and their employers.[58] A violent confrontation between strikers and the police on the Fourth of July led to a colossal fire breaking out among the buildings of the World's Fair in Jackson Park, destroying seven of the magnificent buildings of the White City. The very next day, President Cleveland, invoking the 1890 Sherman Act, ordered federal troops to Chicago to break the strike.[59] The utopian national vision of the future projected by the World's Fair was literally and figuratively reduced to ashes as the social relations of the city and the political might of the national state asserted themselves.

The GMA's deflective strategy proved partially successful but neither their account of the strike, nor their version of Americanism, went uncontested. For sure, the powerful forces of combined capital, the federal government, and certain sections of the press lined up behind Pullman to smash the strike and denounce the strikers as unpatriotic and un-American. Yet the ARU and its sympathizers had put forward their own powerfully patriotic counter-narrative throughout the course of the strike and in its aftermath, in an attempt to garner support and set the nation on an alternative path. Indeed, as Troy Rondinone has argued, the battle for national identity played an important role in the public debate surrounding the Pullman strike.[60] However, while powerful forces (particularly the press) consistently worked to delegitimize the strikers and their cause, in fact the greatest casualty of the strike was the Pullman "idea" itself, support for which collapsed amid the turbulence and disorder of the conflict.[61]

Although visitors to Chicago's Columbian Exposition had toured the town of Pullman and heralded its industrious and philanthropic character only one year before, in the wake of the

[58] That is, the strikers were portrayed as enemies of the federal government, which represented the "people," rather than of the railroads who represented private interests.
[59] Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike*, 142, 207; Spinney, *City of Big Shoulders*, 113.
[60] Rondinone, "Guarding the Switch," 4.
[61] Ibid. Rondinone suggests that Pullman had been massively unpopular before the strike but the evidence does not support such an interpretation. Indeed, Rondinone himself cites Carl Smith's note that contemporary observers in the

strike, contemporary commentators re-interpreted Pullman's experiment in national renewal as a tragic failure. Some earlier misgivings about the undemocratic nature of a privately-owned and run community surfaced with far greater force when it became clear that it had failed to provide a solution to the labor problem. Leading the attack on Pullman were Progressives such as Methodist minister Rev. William Carwardine and Chicago reformer Jane Addams, who challenged the terms of the debate with their criticism of Pullman's refusal to allow arbitration to resolve the strike.

Progressive thinkers understood the "labor problem" not simply as one of low pay and poor conditions, nor simply as the conflict that resulted from power inequalities between worker and employer, but primarily as the renting apart of interests that were in fact essentially mutually dependent. While Pullman himself had promised to reconcile labor-capital relations along lines of "mutual recognition," the strike underlined for progressives the fact that Pullman's idea went both too far and not far enough. In other words, although Pullman sought to overcome class conflict by providing his workers with an improved environment to nullify the formulation of any self-interested demands, critics charged that he failed to consider either his workers' need for self-directed agency or the need to suppress his own self-interest for the sake of the general good.

The lessons that Chicago reformers took from Pullman were double-edged: while they assuredly shared some of the assumptions that drove Pullman's own social experiment, they also moved beyond them, demonstrating that in a dynamic, complex and modern city like Chicago, the relationship between the environment and the individual citizen was more complicated than Pullman had supposed. They argued that while Pullman may have been well-intentioned, he clung to too many of the assumptions of the past, retaining too much faith in individualism and in

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1880s claimed even more for the Pullman idea than Pullman did himself. See Smith, *Urban Disorder*, 184; Rondinone, "Guarding the Switch," 92 fn.26.

the natural justice of the market and failing to observe the necessity of democratic participation for the building of American character and community. Underlining the struggle for national definition that engaged them and many of their contemporaries, Progressive thinkers loudly and insistently denounced the "un-American" nature of Pullman's operations.

In the wake of the 1894 strike and boycott, criticisms leveled at Pullman became far more widespread and strident. Critics tended to play to the themes originally laid out by Progressive economist Ely in 1885, denouncing the undemocratic and paternalistic nature of Pullman's operations and taking pains to demonstrate how out of keeping with American national values and traditions the Pullman idea was. For instance, in his own testimonial pamphlet about the experience of the strike the Methodist minister Rev. Carwardine condemned Pullman as uncaring, immoral and "un-American" for his poor treatment of workers during the strike and for his absolutist control over the economic and political life of the town. Driven by the demands of his corporation, Pullman designed his town to be efficient and beautiful, perhaps, but paid no regard to the independence of his workers and did not really care about their material welfare. Leading up to the strike, Carwardine argued, Pullman denied his workers a voice, allowing his officials to practice favoritism, tyranny and unfairness on the job. Then, following the dictates of a brutal business regime at a time of financial hardship, he cut wages and left rents high. But the really unforgivable sin, in Carwardine's account, was that Pullman refused to arbitrate.[62] For Carwardine, neither the hard-headed accounting of the Pullman Company nor the disruptive democracy of the union represented true Americanism. Staking out his own position, Carwardine argued, "I did not endorse the strike, and never have. I did not endorse the boycott. . . But I stood

[62] William H. Carwardine, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Pub Co., 1994).

for justice."[63] It was a demand for justice spoken on behalf of the Pullman workers yet which denied them their own voice.

Carwardine formulated his argument from a position of patriotism and he defended the patriotism of the workers which the Pullman management sought to tarnish during the strike. When union men and their supporters donned small white flags on their lapels to signify their peaceful backing of the strike action, managers and other members of the elite in both Pullman and Chicago began to wear miniature Stars and Stripes flags in their buttonholes. Carwardine asks "Does this mean that they who wore the flag indicate thereby that the striking employees are un-American endorsers of lawlessness and anarchy?"[64] On the contrary, he argued, Pullman workingmen were steadfastly loyal Americans and active members of a host of patriotic societies. Many of them had demonstrated their Americanism by fighting in the Civil War. Indeed, thirty-seven Pullman soldiers wore their Grand Army of the Republic button alongside their white flags. Carwardine himself wore both the white and American flags to symbolize "American labor protected by the stars and stripes in its demand for justice from the inhumanity of grasping corporations."[65]

In a plea for national unity that would overcome division by party or interest, Carwardine argued that instead of tearing one another apart, representatives from capital and labor must come together to agree to terms of reconciliation. His own suggestion was for state and federal arbitration courts to make firm and binding rulings just as in courts of international arbitration. Where there remained a refusal to arbitrate, as at Pullman, the federal government must seize the plant and run it in the interests of the whole people. Carwardine depicted his interpretation of the situation as a reclaiming of the intentions of the founding fathers, concluding that if the United

[63] Ibid., 118.
[64] Ibid., 45.

States was to continue giving "object lessons in government to the world", the nation must demonstrate that it bows to no special interest but justice. Finally, he appealed to workingmen to put aside partisanship and to "Love your country. There is no better in this world. Love and uphold our constitution, and ever protect the flag for which our fathers, *my father*, died." Perhaps, with this patriotic declaration, Carwardine hoped to draw attention to the fact that George Pullman had paid for a substitute during the war.[66]

Carwardine's passionate appeal to patriotism challenged the notion of Americanism as strident self-interested individualism and began to re-establish the terms of national identity along lines of social justice – albeit measured and determined by intellectuals, reformers and the state. It was a version of citizenship cherished and cultivated by Jane Addams, who used her own experience of the Pullman strike to both identify and develop it. Rejecting Pullman's paternalism yet not fully embracing all the implications of popular democracy, Addams and other Chicago reformers instead set about creating a new conception of democratic citizenship, freed from political contestation.

Addams laid out her own understanding of the Pullman strike, and the lessons she drew from it, in a speech she gave to reform organizations in Chicago, Boston and New York in its immediate aftermath. Not published until over a decade later, "A Modern Lear" represented an explicit critique not only of George Pullman and his corporation but of the old order of private benevolence as the solution to social inequality.[67] Just as Shakespeare's King Lear fell into error by seeking personal affirmation from his daughters for his indulgence of them, Pullman brought about his own tragic downfall when he demanded gratitude and obedience from his workers in return for providing them with the "perfect surroundings" of his model town. Both men, in

[65] Ibid., 45.
[66] Ibid., 122-25.

Addams's interpretation, "failed to catch the great moral lessons which their times offered them." That lesson, which Addams expanded upon, was contained in both Cordelia's "larger conception of duty" and in the Pullman workers' desire for justice beyond Pullman's clean streets, thrift, temperance and decency. "The social passion of the age is directed toward the emancipation of the wage-worker," Addams advised, and the demands associated with this passion would never be satisfied by the exercise of the "almost feudal virtue" of personal gratitude.

While Pullman's mistake was to expect his generosity to command both glory and gratitude, the workers' lack of generosity with respect to their employer's motivation and intention was also at fault, in Addams's reading. The newly aroused working classes, in their single-minded demand for full and equal participation in the "spiritual, intellectual and material inheritance of the human race," sought a noble end but echoed Cordelia's selfishness in dismissing established relationships and the past too quickly and easily. Addams warned that by failing to recognize the valid claim of the employer, labor unions were not only risking violent conflict and political repression but even more worryingly, the possibility of losing sight of social justice "for the sake of fleshpots," as Cordelia's elder sisters had done.

Ultimately, Addams concluded, the people of Chicago must embrace the ethical lesson that "conciliation and control" represented the only civilized and justifiable response to industrial strife. For Addams, as for Carwardine, the way forward demanded calm compromise and level-headed arbitration. Indeed, Addams attempted to bring her insights to bear on the resolution of the Pullman strike directly. As a member of the newly-formed Chicago Civic Federation's industrial committee and Board of Conciliation, Addams worked to bring both sides to the negotiating table. While the ARU agreed to engage in arbitration talks, Pullman consistently

[67] Jane Addams, "A Modern Lear" *Survey* 29. 5 (November 2, 1912): 131-37.

insisted that there was "nothing to arbitrate," apparently still clinging to the traditional notion of "right of contract," that is, that his workers were free to leave his employ if they did not like the conditions there. Certainly the high rates of personnel turnover at Pullman indicated that workers were not averse to exercising this freedom.[68]

The Chicago Civic Foundation was originally established in 1893 during a meeting of the "best elements of the community" called by British journalist and passionate reform advocate, William T. Stead. Having come to Chicago to attend the World's Fair, Stead turned his attention to the social conditions in the city proper after the bright spectacle on the Midway came to an end. During the depths of the 1893 depression winter, Stead used Addams's Hull House as a base from which to explore and vicariously experience the vice, corruption and poverty of Chicago's Levee district. He published his findings in the sensational account *If Christ Came to Chicago*, a moral indictment of the city and its leading citizens, including Pullman.[69] Stead shared some of Addams and Carwardine's concerns about the extent of Pullman's power but he was more explicit than they were that Pullman, far from being too paternalistic, was actually not paternalistic *enough*. Or at least, that his paternalism was exercised for too narrow a goal. It was a view shared, if not so bluntly stated, by other Progressive critics of Pullman. Although Stead began with the charge that "the autocrat of all the Russias could not more absolutely disbelieve in

[68]Addams's role as would-be arbitrator is outlined in Victoria Brown, "Advocate for Democracy: Jane Addams and the Pullman Strike" in Richard Schneirov et al. (eds.) *The Pullman Strike and the Crisis of the 1890s: Essays on Labor and Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999) 130-58; see also Stromquist, "*Reinventing 'The People*'" 25-29; David Ray Papke discusses Pullman's understanding of contract law and the free-willed citizen's relation to it, see Papke *The Pullman Case*, 15.

[69] William T. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago: A Plea for the Union of All Who Love in the Service of All Who Suffer* (Chicago: Laird & Lee Publishers, 1894); Jane Addams recounts Stead's charges against Chicago, the work he carried out at Hull House and his attempt to galvanize the reform community in Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998): 108-9. Stead's charge that Pullman failed to give back to the Chicago community continued to influence historical accounts for some time. In 1942, Almont Lindsey repeated Stead's charge that Pullman held aloof from civic activity, despite the fact that Pullman was treasurer of the Relief and Aid Society, president of YMCA, Vice President of the Law and Order League, backer of the Haymarket verdict, founding member of the Commercial Club, and one of the business leaders most responsible for winning Chicago's

government by the people, for the people, through the people, than George Pullman," he ended by comparing Pullman unfavorably with the Duke of Westminster, who properly observed the principle of noblesse oblige, worked hard for the general good and in Stead's final judgment "at least is in no danger of degenerating into a mere money-rake."[70] If paternalism was to be employed, it must serve the social good, not the profit margin.

It was in part this call to work for social justice as an outcome, to forego the callous materialism of Addams's "flesh-pots" and Stead's "money-rakes," that spurred Chicago's reform establishment to action and gave birth to the Chicago Civic Federation. Membership ranged from Federation president Lyman J. Gage, also president of the First National Bank, and Bertha Honore Palmer, chair of the Board of Lady Managers of the World's Fair, to radical University of Chicago economist Edward Bemis, as well as an array of merchants, educators, bankers, ministers and labor officials. Stead urged these Chicagoans to take a stand in the face of conflicts of naked self-interest, be it Pullman's or the union members,' and use their organization to forge a moral connection between the estranged parts of the urban whole.

Despite their apparently sincere desire to cultivate a genuinely democratic community in the social laboratory of Chicago, progressive reformers held a view of working people that often mirrored Pullman's own. In his original critique, Richard Ely had condemned Pullman for concentrating power in his own hands, putting no trust in the people, and pursuing efficiency and profitability at the expense of the American tradition of personal autonomy.[71] He complained that Pullman's refusal to allow individual home ownership, only renting, in his town subverted Americanism. Yet the importance of home ownership for Ely was that it would develop good

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right to host the World's Fair in 1893, as well as donating the statue commemorating the Fort Dearborn massacre to the city that year. See Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike*, 31; Smith, *Urban Disorder*, 179.

[70] Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago*, 92-3.

[71] Ely, "Pullman: A Social Study," 464.

habits of thrift and economy among workers, act as a safeguard against violent social discontent and allow an acceptable outlet for the expression of individuality. In other words, Ely's approach to social control seemed to give citizens more autonomy but was ultimately designed to mold their character in a particular way (designated "American") as homeowners, rather than defer to their own autonomous moral choices.

Throughout Jane Addams's own critique of Pullman there runs a similar tension between her argument that workers deserve greater autonomy (and, in any case, demand it) with her apparently un-ironic portrayal of them as Pullman's ungrateful "children." Pullman had designed his attractive, orderly and dry town to "improve [the worker's] character as citizens and the quality of their work," and Addams agreed that "uplift" was a desirable goal for social reform. Yet Addams laid more store in gaining the consent of the citizenry than Pullman did. She thought that democratic sanction might have the unfortunate result of slowing social progress but such progress would ultimately be more legitimate for the cross-class community of interest it engendered.[72] The individualistic, heroic striving of Pullman's efforts and achievements might, Addams argued, take him to the mountain summit but he would be alone, "a solitary mountain climber beyond the sight of the valley multitude." Far better than "teaching contemporaries to climb mountains" was to "persuade the villagers to move up a few feet higher." Individual rights and freedoms could not exist independently within the context of a modern urban social order but must be harnessed to the social good. For Addams, the Pullman experience undermined any remaining notion of the validity of political self-interest or individual autonomy. The essential lesson of Pullman was that the exercise of modern citizenship must rest on a foundation of group

[72] Pullman Vice President Thomas Wickes quoted in Smith, *Urban Disorder*, 194; Addams, "A Modern Lear."

loyalties and activities; the expression of American national identity through individual character – rugged or otherwise – was no longer apposite.[73]

Despite their strong denunciations of Pullman's undemocratic and paternalistic regime, reformers in Chicago adapted many of his social innovations to the demands of the big city. They understood that the rise of the industrial city had transformed the social order and created a need for a new ethical consensus. While social control could no longer be effectively executed through direct and coercive moral repression, as in a village or small town, the problems of social disaggregation thrown up by an increasingly sharp division of labor and ongoing class conflict remained to be solved. Pullman had experimented in positive environmentalism but ultimately, his model town had not proven effective. Indeed, it lost credibility not because it represented an attempt to shape and determine individual citizen's behavior through manipulation of the environment – reformers viewed this as the most benign and positive aspect of the experiment – but because it was pursued by a private individual in his own interest, rather than for the broader social good.

Progressive commentary about the Pullman strike and boycott turned a working class defense of living standards and autonomy into a struggle for national self-definition. For Progressives, the strike and boycott represented an opportunity to recast American national identity to reflect modern conditions. With his model town, George Pullman had begun the process of modifying the relationship between the individual and the environment to suit the industrial age, a process that was intellectually fine-tuned and given greater reform impetus by Frederick Jackson Turner. Turner rooted the search for a different understanding of American character in the nation's past; innovatively, he laid far greater emphasis on the transformative

[73] Addams, "A Modern Lear."

impact of the environment on the individual than on the individual's transformative effect on the environment. Turner's Progressive history reformulated national progress as a gradualist, evolutionary process (on the frontier) rather than as either an inherited Anglo-Saxon tradition *or* a sharp revolutionary break from European traditions and he embedded this gradualist approach into the shaping of the national character. In confronting the dilemma of Pullman, Addams similarly put the brakes on social progress by making it a matter of community adjustment to modern conditions rather than of individual innovation and achievement.

Although the union lost in 1894, the Pullman strike was far from an unqualified victory for the railroads and even less so for Pullman and his "idea." In the wake of the strike, what Richard Schneirov calls "new liberalism" broke from the nineteenth-century assumption of a "beneficent proprietary individualism regulated by a self-adjusting competitive market" and came to form the basis of a new political culture.[74] In Chicago, progressives combined elements of liberalism with calls for greater civic engagement to create a new urban politics based on the conciliation of clashing private interests by expert public commissions. Despite the fact that Addams's efforts for the Chicago Civic Federation had failed to bring arbitration to the Pullman dispute, the subsequent US Strike Commission's report on the strike, based on extensive interviews during the summer of 1894, vindicated the Federation's efforts to arbitrate. The following year, the Federation sponsored legislation for a state Board of Conciliation and Arbitration, empowered to mediate labor disputes.[75] Far from being a victory for political democracy, as Victoria Brown has argued, this development snatched the exercise of democracy out of the hands of the very people who reformers hoped to empower. Workers, they insisted,

[74] Richard Schneirov, "Labor and the New Liberalism in the Wake of the Pullman Strike" in Richard Schneirov et al. (eds.) *The Pullman Strike and the Crisis of the 1890s: Essays on Labor and Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999): 206.
[75] Victoria Brown, "Advocate for Democracy," 136.

must have a voice just so long as they did not raise it too loudly and agreed to respect the calm guidance of those with less at stake.

Using the persuasive power of expertise and science, progressive reformers sought to shape the nature of modern citizenship in Chicago by manipulating the urban environment to elicit desired behaviors among citizens. In some respects, they continued the behaviorist project Pullman had begun. As we shall see through a brief examination of their actions in Chicago, however, philosopher John Dewey and social reformer Jane Addams developed positive environmentalism in the city in far more ambitious and creative directions than Pullman dared. Importantly, they used the lessons of his failure to make their own reforms more successful. In doing so, they set the mold for democratic citizenship into the new century.

John Dewey's Education for Citizenship

When John Dewey arrived in Chicago in 1894 to head the new university's philosophy department, he confronted for the first time in his life the social relations of urban modernity head on. Growing up in a small-town community in New England and cloistered within academia for much of his adult life, Dewey had long craved the broader and more direct exposure to modern conditions that was available in the big city. Upon his arrival during the height of the Pullman strike, this idealist neo-Hegelian philosopher felt his nerves "thrilled" by a conversation with a union organizer and wrote his wife, "I felt as if I had better resign my job teaching and follow him around until I got into life. One lost all sense of the right or wrong of things in admiration of his absolute, almost fanatic, sincerity and earnestness, and in admiration of the magnificent combination that was going on."[76] Perhaps to satiate this yearning for the authentic lived

[76] Dewey quoted in Robert B. Westbrook, "Schools for Industrial Democrats: The Social Origins of John Dewey's Philosophy of Education" *American Journal of Education* 100. 4 (August 1992): 408.

experience of urban dwellers, Jane Addams took Dewey on a tour of the city's red light district. Dewey concluded that "Chicago is a place to make you appreciate at every turn the absolute opportunity that chaos affords . . . it is sheer Matter with no Standards at all." To Dewey, the city also offered the possibility of renewal and rebirth under the direction of enlightened scientific expertise; it was not only "hell turned loose" but also a laboratory that supplied its own "material for a new creation."[77]

The vitality and diversity of Chicago life made a deep impression on Dewey and irrevocably altered his philosophical outlook. He developed a new understanding of democratic citizenship and, over the course of the 1890s, worked out the most relevant institutional form for the production of modern citizens. Indeed, as Dewey's biographers have pointed out, the decade he spent in Chicago were the most intellectually productive years of his life. This was the time in which he moved beyond derivative thought and developed his own pragmatist philosophy, a blend of social thought that was distinctively, peculiarly American. Rejecting his former Congregationalism on arrival in the city, Dewey also gradually abandoned metaphysical Absolutism in favor of an interactive naturalism that he combined with an optimistic faith in the powers of both experimental science and participatory democracy.[78] Chicago taught Dewey that neither God nor Hegel were particularly useful in understanding modernity nor in overcoming the problems it presented.

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[77] Dewey to Alice Dewey, quoted in Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (London: HarperCollins, 2001): 318; see also Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991): 84.

[78] Alan Ryan marks Dewey's decade in Chicago as the "high tide" of his thought, the period when both his philosophical and psychological work flowered, see his *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism (*New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995) 118-9; Robert Westbrook notes in his *John Dewey and American Democracy* that Dewey first found his feet in Chicago, while Benson et al. suggest that "Dewey primarily became Dewey in Chicago" and that he lived off the intellectual capital thereafter, see Lee Benson, Ira Harkavy & John Puckett, *Dewey's Dream: Universities and Democracies in an Age of Education Reform* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007): 12. Although Andrew Feffer's *The Chicago Pragmatists and American Progressivism* (London : Cornell University Press, 1993) places more emphasis on the continuities in Dewey's thought, he concedes that the city of Chicago "dressed it up for the twentieth century," 159.

Even before Dewey came to Chicago, he had begun to formulate a modern conception of democratic citizenship but the experience of the city stamped his abstract reasoning with the demands of social necessity. In "The Ethics of Democracy" Dewey attacked the idea that American citizens represented a mass of isolated atoms, their "sovereignty chopped up into mince meat" and distributed evenly among them. Rather, he argued, each American citizen was a social being who had concentrated within himself the intelligence and will of the entire social organism. Thus, "the ordinary American expression of the sovereignty of every elector is not a mere exaggerated burst of individualistic feeling, fostered through crude Fourth of July patriotism, but is the logical outcome of the organic theory of society." In other words, Dewey argued that democracy did not simply replace rule by merit with that of mere numbers but rather that democratic citizenship sprang as a positive consequence from the evolutionary development of American political culture.

Optimistic that modern social organisms had evolved the ability to resolve their own problems, he particularly sought to highlight the exceptional character of American democracy and demonstrate its superiority to European versions. For Dewey, sovereignty in French, German and English political theory expressed the stunted development of democracy in those societies. Thus, French political theory made sovereignty a natural or pre-political attribute of the people, German theory gave sovereignty physiological features so that each contributing part was not truly independent and English theory located sovereignty in the head as a representative of the whole body. Only the American theory endowed every citizen with sovereignty, each individual personifying through a "unity of will" the expansive spirit of democracy. That is, the ethics of

democracy were not imposed from without but emanated from within every individual as society evolved. Each American citizen *was* the American nation encapsulated.[79]

Nevertheless, and as Dewey recognized, theoretical claims did not make it so. Democracy was "an ideal of the future" and, he suggested, could only truly be realized when it was extended to the industrial as well as the civil and political realms. As the democratic spirit entered the industrial arena in American life – as it was compelled to do given the ethical nature of productive work – the American personality would absorb its contribution to "the formation of a higher and more complete unity among men."[80] Thus, Dewey's initial response to the Pullman strike, especially the involvement of the American Railway Union, was of great sympathy for the workers mixed with excitement that the national labor movement might bring about the perfection of the American personality through the expansion of democracy into the workplace. Even after the violent smashing of the strike, Dewey saw cause for optimism in the collectivism of the action and the way in which the strike had revealed the growing interconnectedness of the national economy.[81] The unity of purpose and community of interest between workers and capitalists were apparent to Dewey, if not to the parties involved in the conflict, particularly as he took on board the lesson from Jane Addams that it was up to progressive thinkers to encourage a more balanced view and to adopt a mode of compromise and conciliation rather than to promote any further antagonism.

Jane Addams's interpretation of the Pullman strike profoundly influenced Dewey's. He called her "Modern Lear" essay, "one of the greatest things I ever read both as to its form and its

[79] John Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy" (1888) *Early Works*, Vol. 1, in Jo Ann Boyston, ed., *The Collected Works of John Dewey, 1882-1953* Electronic Edition. (Charlottesville, VA: InteLex Corporation, 2003): 232, 235-6 hereafter *EW*.; Ryan, *John Dewey*, 105.
[80] Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy," *EW* 248-9.
[81] Menand, *Metaphysical Club*, 297-9.

ethical philosophy."[82] After a particularly lively conversation with Addams about the strike, Dewey reflected that, "I can see that I have always been interpreting the dialectic wrong end up – the unity as the reconciliation of opposites, instead of the opposites as the unity in its growth, and thus translated the physical tension into a moral thing."[83] In other words, social divisions were merely temporary alignments within a common whole and therefore neither side could lay claim to right. It was a turning point for Dewey and he took the lessons he learned from both Pullman and Addams about the need for the mediation and harmonization of social conflict into the development of his pragmatic philosophy and democratic ethics. Removed from any moral framework, the operation of democracy took on a naturalistic hue requiring little decisive action or judgment from citizens, only perhaps the touch of expert mediators to smooth its path.

For Dewey, the individual citizen existed as an expression of the social organism; the closer the resemblance between the two, the more democratic the society. In Chicago, however, where the social division of labor was advanced and starkly apparent, it was impossible to ignore the fact that economic specialization represented both an increase in functional interdependence *and* a loosening of cultural connections. Or as historian Jean Quandt puts it, the division of labor was at once socially integrative and disintegrative of family, neighborhood and local community.[84] Dewey believed that in order to facilitate the progressive expansion of the democratic spirit, new moral and cultural bonds had to be forged (or recreated). He concluded that the most effective way to do this would be through the education of children: the social organism could be molded and perfected as it grew from immaturity.

[82] John Dewey to Jane Addams, June 19, 1896 in Jane Addams Memorial Collection, University Library, University of Illinois at Chicago.
[83] Quoted in Ibid., 313 and Feffer, *The Chicago Pragmatists*, 113.
[84] Quandt, *From Small Town to Great Community*, 126.

In his excellent biography, Robert Westbrook claims that Dewey turned to educational reform after shrinking from the more radical task of demanding workplace democracy in the aftermath of the Pullman strike, particularly following the dismissal of outspoken University of Chicago colleague Edward Bemis.[85] Louis Menand ascribes Dewey's interest in education to a set of influences including the death of his young son Morris, the practical reformism of Jane Addams, the social laboratory that Chicago offered, and the development of the "New Psychology," the applicability of which gave philosophy a professional justification.[86] All of these external factors might have played a role in pointing Dewey in the direction of educational reform but they would never have done so if educational reform had not been so entirely consistent with his developing political philosophy. Indeed, so good was the fit that he reported to his wife that "I sometimes think I will drop philosophy directly, & teach it via *pedagogy*."[87] A focus on education served Dewey's reform aspirations well and followed from his calculations about the influential power of the environment on the shaping of individual character, the nature of truly democratic citizenship and the need for a new form of American citizenship in the industrial city.

The University of Chicago's Elementary Laboratory School opened its doors in January 1896. The University itself had only begun operations two years previously, its educational mission combining the Baptist missionary ideal with the goal of promoting scientific enquiry. Progressive university president William Rainey Harper sought to reconcile religious and scientific values within a great national University that would foster democratic citizenship: "I wish to show that the University is the prophet of democracy, as well as its priest and

[85] Westbrook states even more clearly in a later essay that "Only in his philosophy of education – and the curriculum of his elementary school – did he give evidence of a continuing dedication to workplace democracy." See his *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 92 and "Schools for Industrial Democrats," 411.
[86] Menand, *Metaphysical Club*, 316-320.
[87] John Dewey to Alice Dewey, November 1894; quoted in Ibid., 319.

philosopher; that in other words, the university is the Messiah of the democracy, its to-be-expected deliverer."[88] Although Dewey's philosophy of education differed from Rainey's, the two shared a Progressive faith in the power of education to enhance the nature and quality of citizenship. Harper appointed Dewey to head the Department of Pedagogy as well as the Philosophy Department and in 1901 appointed him head of the newly created Education Department.

In setting out the educational philosophy that would guide the Laboratory School, Dewey stated unequivocally "I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform." Ascribing to the evolutionary model of the formation of the American character so clearly laid out by Progressive historian Frederick Jackson Turner, Dewey sought to construct an environment within the school that would mold children into good citizens. Indeed, some aspects of the curriculum were designed to recreate the mental and physical challenges of Turner's frontier in order to build a collective spirit within the classroom as well as to maintain a unity between the head and the hand within the individual student. Yet Dewey's positive environmentalism differed from earlier attempts to reform society by manipulating environmental influences (including that of Pullman) in that it was open-ended and experimental. Given the contingencies of modern life and the uncertainties of the future, Dewey thought it impossible to prepare children except by putting them in control of their facilities. By stressing the need to allow the child to develop and mature naturally within an environment conducive to good citizenship, Dewey underlined the dynamic interrelationship between individual action and the social imperative;

[88] William Rainey Harper, "Education and Democracy" (1899) in The *Trend in Higher Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905) downloaded March 2011 from http://www.archive.org/stream/trendinhigheredu00harpuoft#page/12/mode/2up. Harper's book gives a powerful indication of the high hopes invested in education for the improvement of society.

> the formation of a certain character [i]s the only genuine basis of right living . . . this right character is not to be formed by merely individual precept, example, or exhortation, but rather by the influence of a certain form of institutional or community life upon the individual, and that the social organism through the school, as its organ, may determine ethical results.

In other words, and as he worked out philosophically elsewhere, Dewey insisted upon organic unity in all facets of the production of citizens through education. He refuted the notion that individuals came first and then formed society.[89] Rather, he claimed there was no individual without society. Pedagogically, this meant that knowledge could not be taught and then applied; children could only really learn in the process of application and doing. Politically, it meant that despite his claims for empowerment of the citizen, Dewey did not actually believe that citizens could – or indeed should – make autonomous moral decisions. It was his focus on the socialization of the individual that forced Dewey back into the idea of education as indoctrination, which he originally hoped to avoid.[90]

Dewey's central concern and educational priority was in creating the conditions both within and without the individual child that encouraged active participation in the learning process and thereby in the American community of the past, present and future. Just as Addams's response to Pullman had elevated group unity and coherence over and above individual attainment, so Dewey's approach to education emphasized making children into competent citizens who could function in the modern world at the expense of, as Alan Ryan points out,

[89] In what might be his most suggestive philosophical work, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," Dewey challenges empiricists over the concept of stimulation and response, which he argues are so intrinsically intertwined within human action that they cannot be separated. A child who reaches for a candle flame but withdraws when her fingers are burned represents a unified human experience within which the parts are not prior to the whole. For instance, she does not see and then touch as two distinct movements, she only sees-in-order-to-touch. Dewey argues that the organic unity of the act must be grasped before constitutive elements can be assessed. Menand refers to this Deweyian notion as "biologized Hegel." See Menand, *Metaphysical Club*, 328-9; John Dewey, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," (1896) *EW*, Volume 5, 99.

[90] Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997) explores the conservative implications of Dewey's 'progressive' pedagogy, 144, 158-9.

"encouraging the cleverest to scale the highest intellectual peaks."[91] Dewey's reformulated individualism was not something that could be exercised ethically apart from the crowd. Rather, his teaching sought to develop it as an aspect of, and in constant interaction with, the social environment. The classroom was a training ground for democratic citizenship but Dewey did not think citizens should be trained by rote or exhortation. He believed that facilitation and empowerment were far more effective mechanisms for change: the key was to harbor the growth of the child within the correct educational environment. The problem with his approach was that despite, or rather precisely because of, his democratic claims, he removed any meaningful individual autonomy from the equation. If individual citizens did not exist without society, it is hard to see how they could operate outside of being the product of the expert educator's 'scientific' plan. Pullman's philanthropy had led him to tamper with the *external* environment of his workers in a bid to uplift and improve them as well as promote social harmony. Dewey's pedagogy was in some ways more insidious since it aimed to rearrange the *internal* furniture of future citizens in the same cause.[92]

Crucially for Dewey, modern citizenship meant more than political membership of a nation state. Moreover, democracy was not, could not, and should not be a passive experience. Drawing a direct line from the classroom to citizenship, Dewey noted that "preparation for citizenship" might traditionally have meant being equipped to vote intelligently and to understand the Constitution and the machinery of government but this would no longer do. In an age in which the category of citizenship had outgrown traditional definitions to reach all areas of community life and to blur the dividing line between state and society, Dewey insisted that the

[91] Ryan, *John Dewey*, 148.
[92] John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed" (Jan, 1897) in *EW*, Volume 5, 93-4; Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) outlines the influence of Darwinian evolutionism on Progressive social science, including Dewey's functional psychology, 154-60.

school "as a social centre," just like Addams's settlement, must reflect that expanded conception in training its citizens. Citizenship, he argued, had itself evolved historically and in an urban, industrial age had come to encompass "all the relationships of all sorts that are involved in membership in a community." In other words, citizenship was no longer simply a political status but a broadly social one; as an identity it derived its character from the community as well as from the state. Therefore, Dewey argued, schools as cultural institutions must reflect the shift. "Change the image of what constitutes citizenship and you change the image of what is the purpose of the school," he observed.[93]

Positioning the school as a way of life, where culture is created and adapted rather than passively imbibed, recommended Dewey to progressive educators and liberal historians well into the twentieth century and beyond.[94] The iconoclastic and democratic spirit of his educational philosophy stood in opposition to the specialized, narrow and elitist content of traditional schooling, "dominated by the mediaeval conception of knowledge." With the expansion of education from the elite to the general population, Dewey welcomed the fact that "Knowledge is no longer an immobile solid. It has been liquefied."[95]

Dewey not only positioned himself against conservative traditionalists but also sought to stymie the over-eager rush into the future by socialists and radicals. There was a cautious aspect to his urging that the school adopt a community orientation. Asserting that "many of the old agencies for moralizing mankind, and of keeping them living decent, respectable and orderly lives, are losing in efficiency – particularly those agencies which rested for their force upon custom, tradition and unquestioning acceptance," he betrayed a sense of regret but also offered a

[93] John Dewey, "The School as Social Centre." (1902) in *The Middle Works of John Dewey*, Volume 2, 82-84.
[94] For a striking example, see Oscar Handlin, *John Dewey's Challenge to Education* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1959).
[95] John Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929): 23.

practical solution. Dewey offered schools not as direct instruments of social control but as cultural agencies that might "repair the loss" and resurrect effective social discipline and control organically, from within the community.[96] He was not altogether sorry for the loss of authority of the patriarch, the family, or the Church but he did regret the loosening of social cohesion, cultural bonds and community life that their demise entailed. His insights into the operation of democracy and his experimental approach to pedagogical reform contained within them a more conservative and romantic nostalgia for order, security and especially cultural unity.

Dewey optimistically – perhaps unrealistically – looked to the curriculum to overcome the social problems of the age. The two related problems of workplace alienation and cultural dislocation had to be resolved if the category of citizenship was to regain its authority and relevance in the modern era. Habits of social communication and democratic participation, taught as a way of life in the classroom and instilled into the citizen, seemed to Dewey to be the best solutions for political disengagement in modern life. Responding to the broadening of the meaning of citizenship in this way meant that the declining legitimacy of the political system, warped by corruption and intrigue at all levels, was less of a barrier to the making of a coherent, unified and authentic citizenry. Moreover, if external methods of social control were no longer effective (Dewey said "while we shut a man up in a penitentiary, we cannot make him penitent."), then it was necessary to appeal to the individual's "own participatory disposition" to turn him into a useful member of society.[97] This participatory agency was the ingredient missing from George Pullman's earlier and much criticized conception of citizenship. Dewey's promotion

[96] Ross, *Origins of American Social Science*, 146; Dewey, "The School as a Social Centre," *MW*, 86.
[97] Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America,*164.

of social engagement through experimental pedagogy was designed, ironically, to engineer the autonomy of the individual citizen.[98]

Just as Dewey struggled to overcome philosophical dualisms through the working out of his pragmatist thought so he attempted to reconcile social divisions through the exercise of his experimental pedagogy. First, education promised to close the social and psychological rifts caused by the division of labor and prevent the damage done by the repetitive, meaningless work of the factory operative. Dewey engaged children's hands and brains within a progressive curriculum design, setting tasks that were neither simply manual nor intellectual but involved a process of thinking, doing and reflecting on results. Future generations of citizens would benefit from "the growth that comes from the continual interplay of ideas and their embodiment in action," as progressive pedagogy reconstructed industrial society. Christopher Lasch describes Dewey's pedagogy as "the antithesis of Taylorism," since "it aimed to foster awareness of the productive process as a whole, and of social processes as well, by showing how each operation contributed to the final result." Dewey believed that awareness of the organic nature of human social production would give meaning to workers' positions and create within them a sense of proprietorship and pride in their contribution to the whole productive process. Thus, a child engaged in both the means and the ends of learning would develop into a worker with a stake and an interest not only in his wage but in the product he produced. In reconciling the head and the hand, Dewey sought to restore dignity to workers as well as highlighting, perhaps strengthening, the community of interest between capital and labor. For Dewey, a more imaginative relationship

[98] This seems to have been a characteristic of many Progressive thinkers and reformers who made participatory democracy a priority; in James Morone's words, they "pushed democracy back on the people, then seemingly snatched it safely away to the expert." See his *The Democratic Wish*, 118. The problem, of course, with engineering autonomy is that you are only truly capable of engineering your own, not that of others.

with work rather than a structural reorganization of the workplace was the route to liberation for the citizen-worker.[99]

Second, Dewey attempted to use pedagogy to mend cultural connections that had been severed or severely compromised in the whirl of modernity. The school, he argued, should replace those traditional cultural institutions that had proven unable to cope with the pace of change during industrialization, urbanization and the concomitant revolutions in transportation and communication. Pointing out that Chicagoans spoke more than forty languages and that "Cheap and rapid long-distance transportation has made America a meeting-place for all the peoples and tongues of the world," Dewey argued that the power of education lay not only in its assimilative powers but in its ability to put the brakes on deracination and de-nationalization. Immigrants and the children of immigrants "lose the positive and conservative value of their own native traditions, their own native music, art and literature" which Dewey suggested "have more substance and worth than the superficial putting on of the newly adopted habits" and the school might bring culture back into touch with the community's experience. Driven not simply by a respect for the cultures of immigrants but by the hope that the authenticity and wholeness of inherited customs might counteract the soul-destroying effects of mass modern culture, Dewey's approach emphasized the control, discipline and authority the community could exercise through the school. Ultimately, unity would triumph. The school-as-community represented a unified

[99] The denial of conflicting interests between capital and labor was undoubtedly a major problem, if not the essential problem, with Dewey's approach. Dewey, *The School and Society*, 92; Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991): 347. A number of historians have commented on Dewey's futile attempt to reconcile the social division of labor through educational efforts. Most agree that by focusing on educational reform he failed to tackle the real source of the problem. See Quandt, *From Small Town to Great Community*, 98-99, 101; Feffer in *The Chicago Pragmatists* sees Dewey as among a group of progressive thinkers subscribing to a conservative version of producer republicanism, 100-103; Westbrook, "Schools for Industrial Democracy," 412-15.

"way of life" and the educational process must produce a unity of knowledge both within the individual and between the individual and society. [100]

Cultivating a sense of belonging – to the classroom, the factory, the community, the city and/or the nation – was a central concern for Dewey as he sought an educational means to overcome the psychological fragmentation he observed in the modern city. Through his pedagogical writings and his classroom-laboratory experimental example, Dewey attempted to create a form of education more fitted to urban, industrial conditions. He approached the problems of social inequality that he witnessed in Chicago as problems of culture, not of politics or economics.[101] Through the application of scientific experimentation and expertise, he meant to uncover the most efficient and effective way to overcome the culture of self-interested individualism and build a new culture of democratic citizenship. Of course, the "Dewey School" could not offset the fragmenting effect of the division of labor or recreate lost cultural bonds within the community on its own and neither did Dewey design it to bear such a weight. Rather, it was an experiment in both developmental psychology and democratic participation that underlined the importance of environmental influences in shaping individual citizens. As such, it provided an example of a relevant institutional context through which the relationship between the self and society might be readjusted in the making of modern citizens.

Jane Addams's Democratic Spirit and the State of Play

Jane Addams shared much of Dewey's reform agenda. In developing her approach to the renewal of democratic citizenship in Chicago, she too responded in a practical way to the exigencies of

[100] Dewey, "The School as a Social Centre" *MW*, 85; in his "My Pedagogic Creed" Dewey argued that the authority of the teacher in the classroom must be replaced by the authority of the community. The teacher should not impose ideas or habits on the child but act as a member of the community "to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him properly responding to those influences," *EW*, 89.

modern city life, particularly the increasing differentiation and specialization of function in the workplace and the social estrangement these processes engendered. And she responded in a specific way to her experience of the Pullman strike; her philosophical reaction against Pullman's denial of his workers' agency was more marked even than Dewey's. As her "Modern Lear" essay indicated, she faulted Pullman for being stuck in the past, wedded to a form of philanthropy that demanded gratitude and subservience from its passive recipients. For Addams, philanthropy had been overtaken by the democratic spirit. In her multifaceted attempt to remake citizenship in Chicago and across America, Addams demanded respect for the evolutionary currents of progress that could be observed in modern science and technology and beseeched her fellow reformers to "apply this evolutionary principle to human affairs" just as Dewey was applying it to the education of children.[102] In her own application of the lessons she learnt at Pullman to citizen-making in Chicago, Addams was clear that she acted not as Lady Bountiful but as a facilitator of both science and democracy. Through the development of social ethics, she would assist the poor and vulnerable, whether native or immigrant, to rise above their meager circumstances and participate as full and conscious citizens in modern American life. In contrast to Pullman, she argued, she would enable rather than deny agency and democracy.

As with progressive reformers generally, historians have been interested in whether Addams's work at Hull House struck the right balance between social control and social justice and whether she approached her working-class neighbors with elitist condescension or with a warmth and generosity of spirit.[103] While some scholars have emphasized her attempts to remake

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[101] Jonathan M. Hansen, *The Lost Promise of Patriotism: Debating American Identity, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003): 71.
[102] Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2006) 24.
[103] Historians have been intensely interested in Addams's personal motivations for social action. Following Richard Hofstadter's characterization of reformers like Addams as driven by "status anxiety" and Christopher Lasch's critique of her radical rejection of the aesthetic standards of her own social class, Addams's first scholarly biographer Allen F. Davis suggested she was motivated by two seemingly contradictory American ideals of sacrificial service

Chicago's poor immigrants in her own middle-class, Protestant American image, in recent years historians, philosophers and feminists have reclaimed her as the leading democrat of her age.[104] As Alan Ryan points out, Addams's attempts to forge an elusive common culture sometimes makes her feel like a contemporary but this can also obstruct an honest assessment of the meaning of her social thought and how it informed and illuminated her actions in context.[105]

Addams set out not only to modify and update the meaning of the American creed in response to industrialism and urban life, but also to reconcile the discrepancies between the everyday experiences of workers and immigrants and the meaning of Americanism as she understood it. In doing so, Addams helped to alter profoundly the meaning of individualism, liberty and especially, democracy in American political culture. The democratic spirit was, for Addams, the most dynamic force in the modern city but she saw both individualism and abstract freedom as more problematic and ultimately not very useful, at least in their traditional sense. Indeed, all three components of the creed required updating, in Addams's view. She pleaded for and set out to administer an injection of greater sociality into the concepts of individualism, freedom and democracy that underpinned Americanism.

Like Dewey, Addams rejected the ethical egoism of classical liberalism. Although she assumed ethical progress across generations, she also insisted that the current generation meet

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and personal glory. See Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*; Lasch, *The New Radicalism*; Allen F. Davis, *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). Two recent biographies cover Addams's life only up until the 1890s since their central concern is revealing the cause of and inspiration for Addams's reforming zeal. They hope to find clues in her early life. See Victoria Bissell Brown, *The Education of Jane Addams* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) and Louise W. Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[104] Among the best works subscribing to the argument that Addams acted to control the poor and 'uplift' the ignorant are Boyer *Urban Masses and Moral Order* and Quandt, *From Small Town to Great Community*. Addams's resurrection in the esteem of historians has been prompted by Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Mary Jo Deegan, *Jane Addams and the men of the Chicago school, 1892-1918* (New Brunswick, N.J. ; Oxford : Transaction Books, 1988) as well as Bissell Brown's *Education of Jane Addams* and Knight 's *Citizen*.

[105] Alan Ryan, "Founding Mother" Review of Louise Knight's Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for American Democracy *New York Review of Books* (May 11, 2006).

their obligation to keep step with evolutionary social change, since "to attain individual morality in an age demanding social morality, to pride one's self on the results of personal effort when the time demands social adjustment, is utterly to fail to apprehend the situation."[106] Her most commonly referred to example of both the benefits and costs of individualism was Pullman; while she admired his strength and willingness to take risks, his refusal to arbitrate the strike showed that despite socializing an entire town, he had not socialized his conscience. While Pullman clung to a negative notion of virtue (meaning an absence of vice, cleanliness, decency, thrift and temperance), the workers had developed the positive and virtuous watchwords of brotherhood, sacrifice, mutual support and subordination of the individual to the class. Addams believed that America was "passing from an age of individualism to one of association" and if employers, intellectuals, and reformers did not seize the initiative and "free ourselves from the individualistic point of view," they would be left behind by the common man.[107]

Addams rarely discussed freedom in an abstract sense, preferring to adopt a pragmatic and situational approach. In the context of employment, she approved of the freedom and relative autonomy of the factory girl over the dependence and subservience of the domestic maid or cook. Industrial labor may have had a number of drawbacks and negative side effects but its benefits included the independence and personal dignity of workers who were free to make their own moral choices and to return to their own homes and families at the end of the working day.[108] In the context of Hull House activities, Addams approved of the Working People's Social Science Club and the freedom of speech it engendered. Its popularity and appeal among Chicago men from many walks of life made the club a "cosmopolitan opportunity" for open, wide-ranging and

[106] Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 5
[107] Ibid., 46-7.
[108] Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 38. Addams seems, however, just as exercised by the inefficiency of domestic service as by the restrictions on the liberties of domestic servants.

often heated discussion. Freedom of debate, Addams suggested, acted as a necessary safety valve in a city "full of social theorists." She warned that "bottled up, there is a danger of explosion; constantly uncorked, open to the deodorizing and freeing process of the air, all danger is averted."[109] Defending Addams against the charge that she harbored radicals at Hull House, resident and philanthropist Louise de Koven Bowen underlined the pragmatism of Addams's approach, "Miss Addams felt that if the people who belonged to these organizations were allowed to talk freely, they would not be apt to do anything more" and Bowen noted that in this respect, Hull House merely followed the precedent set by the English authorities at Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park.[110] Despite Addams's indignation at Pullman's denial of his worker's autonomy, her own view of individual freedom was restrictive, functioning not as a vehicle for autonomous political action and expression but rather as an instrument of social control.

Addams's view of democracy was similarly situated within social context and its meaning dictated by social necessity. However, she laid a much greater emphasis on the positive aspects of democratic participation and swept aside all and any objections since, she suggested, "the cure for the ills of Democracy is more Democracy."[111] For Addams, the over-arching purpose of Hull House itself was to expand the meaning, extend the reach and "add the social function to democracy." For too long, Addams argued, Americans have been in thrall to a limited and partial conception of democracy that fetishized the vote. Although America's eighteenth-century founding fathers "believed that political equality alone would secure all good to all men," this has proven not to be the case. Indeed, she dismissed it as "the platitudes of our crudest youth." Pointing to the social ostracism experienced by enfranchised African Americans and newly-

[109] Jane Addams, "The Objective Value of a Social Settlement" *Philanthropy and Social Progress* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1893): 53-4.
[110] Louise de Koven Bowen, *Growing Up with a City* [1926] (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002): 118. Bowen underestimates the influence of the more positive understanding of freedom of speech that animated and, to an extent, still animates Speakers Corner.

arrived immigrants as well as to the growing estrangement between social classes, Addams insisted on the need to extend democratic citizenship beyond politics, into social affairs.[112]

Addams advocated social democracy for its numerous benefits, including bridging the generation gap between immigrants and their Americanized children, overcoming the class divide, educating immigrants about their civic duties, giving workers a greater consciousness of their value, creating "cultivated" citizens, preserving immigrants' cultures and histories, and putting the individual "in connection and co-operation with the whole," as well as the more material assistance traditionally provided by philanthropy. Such a broad conception of democracy aimed generally at expanding the sphere of participation by healing social divisions. Addams viewed financial benefits for the poor and needy as a mere side effect of a grander project rather than as the essential task for settlement workers and reformers.[113] Adding the "social" component to democracy would, she hoped, result not in more charitable handouts but in a feeling among the people that they held an increased stake in the governance of the city.

Social democracy was, Addams believed, the essential antidote to all the social dislocations caused by modern urban living. Reformer and reformed, intellectual and worker, parents and children, employers and employee, citizen and immigrant could all be brought together through the work of the democratic spirit. Hull House, "pragmatism's first institution," set an example to America.[114] Addams laid the task before the new generation of educated and

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[111] Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 8.
[112] Jane Addams, "Comment on 'How Would You Uplift the Masses?' Ladies Night, Forty-Second Meeting of the Sunset Club, Chicago, February 4, 1892," *Sunset Club Yearbook* 1891-92 (Chicago, 1892): 118-9 and "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," *Philanthropy and Social Progress* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1893): 1-3 and "Immigration: A Field Neglected by the Scholar" *Commons* 10 (January 1905): 11.
[113] Indeed, Addams announced that she was "always sorry to have Hull House regarded as philanthropy," since recognizing and stimulating the aspirations of working people and putting the means of attaining them at their disposal was not charitable work but simply the exercising of "the duties of good citizenship," Addams, "The Objective Value of a Social Settlement," 57.
[114] Hansen, *Lost Promise of Patriotism*, 77.

progressive-minded Americans, who, she conjectured, would provide the cultural leadership of the movement to bring about a new unity of purpose among all Americans:

> If you have heard a thousand voices singing in the Hallelujah Chorus in Handel's "Messiah," you have found that the leading voices could still be distinguished, but that the differences of training and cultivation between them and the voices of the chorus were lost in the unity of purpose and the fact that they revere all human voices lifted by a high motive.[115]

Overcoming social fragmentation and extending democracy beyond the political realm were key themes of Addams's reform position but the question that arose out of the Pullman experience was the matter of agency. If a private employer should not indulge his workers in social experiments of positive environmentalism, who – if anyone - should? Addams's writing and work makes it quite clear: as with the Hallelujah Choir, the "leading voices" such as the residents at Hull House would show the way but, ultimately, the state must take over. Just as with the Civic Federation's attempt at arbitration during the Pullman strike, not the people themselves, or any special interest, but an objective social body representing the general public interest must enlarge the nature and bounds of democracy. That is not to say, however, that Addams consciously and deliberately looked to the state as an instrument of social control; rather, she was optimistic that good citizens, well made, would not require any such measures of control. The state's responsibility was, she believed, in the making of citizens themselves.

In her many speeches and publications, Addams addressed shifts in the meanings of individualism, freedom and democracy that were, she felt, properly taking place in the lived experience of the city for many ordinary Americans. Responding to Addams's own favorite work *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (1909), William James enthused that her insights came from the fact that she "simply inhabits reality, and everything she says necessarily expresses its

[115] Addams, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," 22.

nature." He concluded, "S*he can't help writing the truth*."[116] Her pragmatic approach to the nature of American citizenship recommended her to the leading American intellectuals of her time. Yet Addams's Americanism was informed by contemporary intellectual currents as well as by the experience of the city streets and included elements of civic humanism, evolutionary social science, the Social Gospel, and therapeutic notions of the self.[117] Like Dewey, she sought an antidote to what she perceived as outworn national ideals by engaging and applying methods of positive environmentalism to citizen-making. Yet, while Dewey concentrated on making citizens through the simulation of a working environment in the classroom, Addams sought to relieve the monotonous and drab lives of Chicagoans outside of the workplace, largely through enlarging and diversifying their cultural exposure. Although she did sometimes utilize Arnoldian concepts of cultural uplift, she concentrated her efforts on democratizing culture and making cultural engagement accessible and relevant to ordinary citizens. In particular, for the spontaneity and cooperation it encouraged, she emphasized the necessity and importance of *play* for good citizenship.

Constantly searching for institutional means through which to effect the necessary changes to democratic citizenship, in the mid 1890s Addams hit upon the playground movement. Hull House opened Chicago's first public playground in May 1894 to a large crowd of cheering children.[118] Within a decade, Chicago's City Playground Commission had taken over the Hull House playground and the city had spent five million dollars on ten more new playgrounds. In

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[116] William James quoted in Elshtain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy,* fn 19, 283; Davis, *American Heroine*, 155-6.

[117] Although James Kloppenberg's *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (Oxford University Press, 1986) does not discuss Addams specifically, Kloppenberg does explores the strands of thought that went into the formation of the social democratic outlook of which she – and Dewey, whom he does discuss – were a part; Lasch, *The New Radicalism*.

[118] "Children Raise Cheers for Maypole" *The Chicago Daily Tribune* (May 6, 1894), 2. Addams oversaw slum clearance of the block that the playground was built on, evicting tenants and demolishing their substandard homes. See her own description of this process in Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, 190-91.

1907, the Playground Association of America (PAA) held its first annual conference, or "Play Congress," in Chicago attended by city officials, park directors, playground supervisors, principals and reformers from cities across the nation. The conference concluded with a play festival in Ogden Park, attended by 4,000 participants and spectators with a large program of games, marches, music, gymnastics and athletic events – even delegates were encouraged to join in and catch the "play spirit." Swedish, Bohemian and other immigrant dancers provided the high point when they performed their national dances beneath the unifying American flag. Addams addressed the crowd to underline the importance of public provision of recreational facilities in the modern city if public morality and good citizenship were to follow.[119]

Play produced fit, healthy and morally robust citizens and prevented juvenile delinquency, according to play leaders. Lee Hammer of the National Playground Association insisted that, "The playground of today is the republic of tomorrow. If you want twenty years hence a nation of strong, efficient men and women, a nation in which there shall be justice and square dealing, work it out today with the boys and girls on the playground."[120] Addams supported the movement for urban parks and playgrounds for many reasons, which she laid out in her *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* and which demonstrated her innovative understanding of democratic citizenship in American political culture.[121] In the book, Addams chastises modern city authorities for failing in their responsibility to provide an outlet for the "play impulse"

[119] Linnea M. Anderson, "The Playground of Today is the Republic Of Tomorrow": Social Reform and Organized Recreation in the USA, 1890-1930s" *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education* (2006) downloaded from www.infed.org/playwork/organized_recreation_and_playwork_1890-1930s.htm; Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order*, 242-3; Roberta J. Park, "'Boys Clubs are Better than Policeman's Clubs': endeavors by Philanthropists, Social Reformers and Others to prevent juvenile crime, the late 1800s to 1917" *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 24.6 (2007): 749-775; Jane Addams, "Public Recreation and Social Morality," *Charities and the Commons* 18 (August 3, 1907): 492-94. For a somewhat overstated treatment of the playground movement as social reform see Dominic Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

[120] Hammer quoted in Anderson, "The Playground of Today is the Republic Of Tomorrow," 6.

among urban youth. While ancient Greek and Roman cities had promoted play as part of patriotic and religious life and mediaeval cities had held tournaments, pageants and street festivals, "[o]nly in the modern city have men concluded that it is no longer necessary for the municipality to provide for the insatiable desire for play."[122] Sadly, Addams goes on, the conditions of the modern city tended to corrupt and misdirect youth's natural cravings for excitement, romance, sex, and adventure. Although her approach has often been misread as anti-urbanism, she did not reject the city *per se* but did believe that in the modern city, citizens – particularly the young – desperately needed a constructive outlet for their energies. To ensure that they grew into good citizens, positive and uplifting entertainments must be made available to them since, she claimed, "Recreation alone can stifle vice."[123]

She was not alone in this view; Dewey too had argued that "recreation is the most overlooked and neglected of all ethical forces." And Louise de Koven Bowen had noted that "Recreation is the antitoxin of delinquency."[124] For these progressive thinkers, urban parks and playgrounds could perform many of the functions of institutions like churches and schools, even families, which had lost some of their authority in the modern city. While beautiful parks put urban dwellers back into contact with nature, playgrounds and other organized leisure activities were actually more useful and desirable than ornamental parks since they put citizens back into contact with one another and with their mutual cultural traditions. The usefulness of playgrounds

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[121] J.A. Lindstrom offers the penetrating insight that "the struggle over recreation and recreational facilities was not only a cultural fight or a 'social opportunity' but also a political one." See her "'Almost Worse than the Restrictive Measures': Chicago Reformers and the Nickelodeons." *Cinema Journal* 39.1 (1999): 90.
[122] Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (London: Dodo Press, 2005): 1.
[123] Ibid., 8.
[124] Dewey, "The School as a Social Center," *MW*, 91; Louise de Koven Bowen quoted in Kathleen McCarthy, "Nickel Vice and Virtue: Movie Censorship in Chicago, 1907-1915" *Journal of Popular Film* 5.1 (1976): 38.

lay in the 'social education' of children and in their ability to transform the poor and foreign-born from a civic liability into a civic asset.[125]

Reformers viewed healthy and wholesome games and activities as an excellent means of education for citizenship, particularly necessary given the dangers that lurked in the dirty, unpaved streets of the industrial city. Addams believed that playgrounds would counteract the negative moral impact of undesirable home and working environments on poor and immigrant youths and, perhaps more importantly, would offer an alternative to "the vicious excitements and trivial amusements" of the city.[126] The dangers posed by urban commercial amusements, according to Addams, were psychological and cultural as well as moral. Influenced by evolutionary psychologist G. Stanley Hall's 1904 publication *Adolescence,* she sought to protect and preserve the 'spirit of youth' from the damaging effect of, in particular, nickelodeons and dance halls and harness it instead for the social good.[127]

Addams's attack on commercialized recreation was, she believed, essential to the winning of the character of the nation's future citizens. She marshaled many arguments against the influence of cheap movie theaters, including the risks they carried of producing neurotic and hallucinatory mental illnesses, nervous excitement, and deteriorating eyesight in their young customers. While she sympathized with young people who attended nickelodeons for cheap thrills and as an escape from the deadening effect of their working lives, she found their reliance on the "flimsy and poor" morality of the shows quite tragic. Yet, while she was contemptuous of their clear lack of taste and incredulous that the city authorities "allows thousands of its youth to fill their impressionable minds with these absurdities which certainly will become the foundation of their working moral codes and the data from which they will judge the proprieties of life," she

[125] Linnea Anderson, "The Playground of Today is the Republic Of Tomorrow." 8, 4.
[126] Jane Addams, "Public Recreation and Social Morality," 492.

supported neither age restrictions nor censorship in nickelodeons.[128] Similarly, although Addams fretted about commercial dance halls preying on young people's loneliness by offering the salve of frivolity, nervous stimulation and inebriation, she did not propose an outright ban nor even, despite her fond recall of the practice, the reintroduction of the village-hall chaperone, since she recognized as stupid and dangerous attempts to put the "fine old wine of the traditional country life into the new bottle of the modern town."[129]

Rather than advocating censorship and repression to reckon with the allure of vice and criminality among city youth, Addams instead urged the recognition that "the realization of what ought to be, involved not the destruction of what was, but merely its perfecting along its own lines."[130] To this effect, Addams established a five-cent theater at Hull House for a two-week run in June 1907 in order to engage her neighbors in an activity which they enjoyed and to demonstrate that films could be both entertaining and educational. Under the supervision of the Juvenile Protective Association's Dr Gertrude Howe Britton, the Hull House theater showed classic and well-known stories, such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as well as travelogues and educational films. The experiment was an exercise in setting an example – to neighbors and citizens, to movie houses and to the municipal government. Addams hoped to show that the theater, "overlooked as a vehicle of civic righteousness," should not be censored but could be perfected "along its own lines." She argued that soon enough, schools and churches would use films as among their most valuable means of communication with their audiences.[131]

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[127] John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s," 175.
[128] Addams, *Spirit of Youth*, chapter four; See also McCarthy, "Nickel Vice and Virtue," and J.A. Lindstrom, "'Almost Worse than the Restrictive Measures.'
[129] Addams, *Spirit of Youth*, 5; Addams, "Public Recreation and Social Morality," 494
[130] Addams, *Spirit of Youth*, 8.
[131] Lindstrom, "Almost Worse than the Restrictive Measures" 93-99; McCarthy, "Nickel Vice and Virtue," 43. Lindstrom and McCarthy strongly disagree on the success of the Hull House theatre. While McCarthy argues that a projected three-month run was cut short (to only two weeks) due to poor attendance figures, Lindstrom claims that

Ultimately, Chicago did pass a movie censorship ordinance – the nation's first – in November 1907 since reformers and legislators felt that public tastes could not be trusted and that citizens needed protection from the toxicity of modern life. Addams admirably demurred, but argued that in fact the failure of the city to take responsibility for public recreation was "almost worse than the restrictive measures" which "dam up the sweet fountain of youth."[132] Through the provision of public recreational activities such as playgrounds, Addams hoped that Chicago city government could emulate the approach taken by the Greeks, who saw virtue "not as a hard conformity to a law felt as alien to the natural character, but as a free expression of the inner life."[133] Rather than imposing legal restrictions or pressing for conformity to a puritanical ethic, Addams argued that young people will be "made safe only through their own self control."[134] The development of that self control was therefore the key to the making of good citizenship.

At Hull House, Addams developed a range of therapeutic technologies for the making of citizens in a number of educational, social, civic and humanitarian ways. In all of her endeavors, she sought to engage her poor and immigrant neighbors and draw them into a web of relationships that represented her understanding of social democracy. So, an art class at Hull House served not only an exercise in Arnoldian "uplift" but it was also, like Ruskin and Morris's Arts and Crafts Movement, an antidote to the dehumanizing effects of industrial culture as well as, in a uniquely American way, a pragmatic rapprochement with the cultural ethnicities of the neighborhood.[135] Her Labor Museum set out to provide "social education" to Hull House's neighbors. Like Dewey, Addams thought education should not be bookish and irrelevant to daily

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attendance levels were good and that Hull House residents judged the experiment a great success. It is unclear in Lindstrom's account, however, why Hull House never ran a theatre again.

[132] Addams, *Spirit of Youth*, 2.

[133] Ibid., 8.

[134] Ibid., 17.

[135] Derek Vaillant *Sounds of Reform: Progressivism and Music in Chicago, 1873-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003): 99.

living but should work as a cultural adjustment of the individual, [re]connecting them with their community, culture and history. The museum did so by exhibiting the art and craft of household production, placing immigrants and their children into a cultural community which stretched back across the generations. Building a bridge between the Old World experience and the American also, in Addams's view, gave immigrant parents a renewed basis for authority over their wayward Americanized children.[136]

For Addams, culture was therapy for citizenship; it healed the individual bent low by the industrial environment and it bonded individuals so damaged to each other and to previous generations. Addams's celebration, even romanticization, of the many ethnic cultures of the Hull House neighborhood and the wider city of Chicago emerged less out of a sense of their own intrinsic value than through her concern and fear about what America had or might become. She noted that foreign colonies in the city "afforded an enormous reserve" of ways and means to celebrate both their own fatherland and American events and holidays

> From the gay celebration of the Scandinavians when war was averted . . . to the equally gay celebration of the centenary of Garibaldi's birth; from the Chinese dragon cleverly trailing its way through the streets, to the Greek banners flung out in honor of immortal heroes, there is an infinite variety of suggestions and possibilities for public recreation and for the corporate expression of stirring emotions.[137]

The colorful, conscious and cultured celebrations of ethnic groups pointed the way toward the uses that municipal art might be put, to relieve the materialism and commercialism of the American city and to "lift the mind of the worker from the harshness and loneliness of his task and, by connecting him with what went before, free him from a sense of isolation and hardship."[138] Addams roused American cities to action, insisting that only they could free the inner American citizen from within each isolated individual. Addams's pluralism was real but it

[136] Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, 157-59.
[137] Addams, *Spirit of Youth*, 40.

was motivated by a desire for authentic experience and a rather conservative belief that a sense of belonging - whether to neighborhood, ethnic group, city, or nation - would relieve the worst symptoms of the modern malaise.

Addams's work and example at Hull House inspired the city authorities to fund public recreation, particularly parks and playgrounds. In the period immediately after the 1907 PAA conference, Chicago and other US cities sunk millions of dollars into the creation of parks and playgrounds, a large proportion going into Chicago's South Park system.[139] Chicago's director of playgrounds described the development as "better calculated to raise the standard of good citizenship than any other single agency in the hands of public servants."[140] In May 1911, Addams addressed the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit and expressed satisfaction with the movement toward greater governmental responsibility for public recreations, "The city with its schools, its libraries, its health department, its playgrounds, is taking over and absorbing itself into the manifold activities which were formerly under philanthropic management."[141] The mission of making citizens was ongoing, a process of production, but it had been set in the right groove and could be trusted to the representatives of the people.

Conclusion

Shortly after George Pullman's death in 1897 a court ruled that the company must divest itself of the town management since it over-reached its function as a private enterprise. Addams reported that "The parks, flowers, and fountains of this far-famed industrial centre were dismantled, with

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[138] Ibid.
[139] Park, "Boys Clubs are better than Policeman's Clubs," notes that approximately 12 per cent of the fifty million dollars invested by US municipalities in parks and playgrounds between 1898 and 1908 was expended in the six months immediately following the 1907 Chicago Play Congress, 764.
[140] Director of Parks and Playgrounds quoted in Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order*, 250.
[141] Jane Addams quoted in Park, "Boys Clubs are better than Policeman's Clubs," 760.

scarcely a protest from the inhabitants themselves."[142] For Addams, this indifference was symptomatic of the fact that the citizens of Pullman had no say in or control over the building or running of the town. She was certain that public parks and playgrounds could only be safe in the hands of the public itself; the city authorities must not do good "to" the people but with and in consultation with them.

Objections to Pullman's denial of agency to his workers were just and admirable – even if they were only voiced in the aftermath of the strike and the obvious failure of his social experiment. Yet, reformers like Addams and Dewey did not have a robust faith in the agency and ability of ordinary citizens themselves when they acted in their own economic or political interests rather than that of the general good. Haunted on the one hand by the loneliness of the atomized individual and on the other by the emptiness of mass society and culture, reformers responded to the Pullman experiment as both an attempt at modernization that did not go far enough and as a relic of the past. In effect, Addams and Dewey engineered the therapeutic techniques that they hoped might help substitute the private paternalism of Pullman with public paternalism exercised by experts and the state acting for the public good. Progressives believed that a broadly social or cultural, rather than a political, form of citizenship would provide the most practical cure for the centrifugal tendencies of the 'social question,' the vast and growing division between "the classes and the masses." They looked – just as the GMA had done – not to the people but to the state as the representative of the people for the legitimizing power to act. A deep irony lay behind their desire to make all citizens whatever their background "masters of their own economic and social careers," by insisting that the state intercede positively on citizens' behalf. Using the class conflict of Pullman as a reference point and foil, they set out to assert and

[142] Addams, "Democracy and Social Ethics," 50.

define their own cultural authority and to update American citizenship according to their understanding of the requirements of their age. What they tended to overlook, and what the following chapters will show, is that citizens make cities just as much as cities make citizens.

CHAPTER 3

WAR! ETHNIC IDENTITY AND AMERICANIZATION

To be an American is not indicative of one's race or religion.
It simply means to have a living faith in American ideals and principles.
Illinois Staats Zeitung, February 3, 1914

It's true. I didn't come over on the Mayflower – but I came over as soon as I could.
Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak, 1931

During the course of the First World War, patriots and nation-builders seemed to face a formidable task in molding the teeming cosmopolitan mass into loyal American citizens. Luckily for them, they had willing and eager human materials with which to work. When an immigrant Bohemian tenement dweller turned away a pair of Americanizing lady reformers seeking to recruit her and her family to full citizenship, she reassured them that she was not trying to delay her entrance into American life. "We're perfectly willing to be Americanized," she promised them, "But there's nobody home but me. The boys volunteered, my man's working on munitions, and all the rest are out selling Liberty Bonds. I don't want you to get mad but *can't* you come back next week."[143] The story may or may not be apocryphal but since it circulated during the war, it provides an amusing insight into contemporary perceptions of immigrant contributions to the national effort. Many immigrants were, and were seen to be, several steps ahead of the professional Americanizers.

As this chapter will demonstrate, European immigrants who settled in Chicago made and remade their national identifications and affiliations during the turbulent war years. The war certainly placed contradictory pressures on Chicago's immigrant population, so that while their assimilation into American urban life proceeded apace, they also faced new obstacles to full

[143] The story is reported by John Higham in his *Strangers in the Land*: *Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988): 246.

acceptance as citizens. Most importantly for the future nature of modern American citizenship, the terms and meaning of their inclusion into the citizenry underwent a major transformation as the war disrupted and reorganized former cultural and political arrangements and understandings.

A number of processes were at work in Chicago during the war years. On the one hand, immigrant groups embraced the national cause as their own. They worked hard to demonstrate their identification with the U.S. war effort and with the democratic principles that the United States was, or claimed to be, fighting for. They sought to show that whatever their national origin, they could be good Americans. On the other hand, the standard by which American citizenship was judged shifted during the war with demands of a different – not just greater – order being placed on those who would be Americans. Americanizers began to emphasize cultural evidence of loyalty, rejecting the hyphenated versions of Americanism that had previously been less controversial and underlining the cultural character of the American identity they sought to protect and preserve. Before the war, ethnic cultures were not generally regarded as a threat because they existed in the private sphere, separate from political activity. During the war, the line blurred as most forms of radical political activity were attacked and discredited as part of an alien, imported and 'unAmerican' culture. As political ideologies came to be seen as determined by cultural predilections, cultural identities became increasingly essentialized and politicized.

If American national identity was a political creation, so too were the ethnic identities that became subsumed beneath its rubric. This chapter suggests that whatever the prewar inclinations toward US citizenship of immigrants themselves, during wartime, political elites and community leaders encouraged the adoption of an 'ethnic strategy' for embracing Americanism. Since American citizenship itself had come to be seen as a cultural as much as a legal or political status, the forms through which immigrants were now required to engage with it multiplied and

reached further into their daily lives. The demand that all citizens embrace 100 percent Americanism in service of the nation contradicted an engagement with the war effort through specific ethnic groups and their leaders, editors, preachers, aldermen, and associations. Both strident Americanization and pluralist ethnicization were, however, direct consequences of the politicization of cultural identity. They were both also reactions to a loss of faith in the founding political ideals of the nation: the former turning Americanism essentialist, brittle and intolerant; the latter rejecting universal ideals altogether and creating a pragmatic pluralism from the cultural parts. When Woodrow Wilson declared in 1915 that, "America does not consist of groups. A man who thinks of himself as belonging to a particular national group in America has not yet become American, and the man who goes among you to trade upon your nationality is no worthy son to live under the Stars and Stripes," he lined himself up with the first position but recognized the growing influence of the second. In fact, the process of becoming an American increasingly involved recognizing the political import of prior cultural group attachments – or even inventing them.

The shifts and transformations within Chicago's political culture during the war years highlighted the fact that the nature of Americanization depended in large part on who was doing the Americanizing. Americanization meant different things to different individuals and social groups and its meaning shifted over time. It could – and did – represent both a progressive, liberating and democratic enactment of Enlightenment ideals as well as a repressive, coercive and an intolerant imposition of cultural conformity. Historically, both had featured as aspects of nation-building.[144] Ironically, the newcomers to Chicago in the early twentieth century proved the most faithful to established American political traditions, insisting on the continued relevance of

[144] Gary Gerstle, "Liberty, Coercion and the Making of Americans," *The Journal of American History,* 84.2 (September, 1997): 524-558.

the principles of freedom, equality and individual opportunity to modern Americanism. Many European immigrants who settled in Chicago became American citizens before, during and after the war. This chapter is not a study of the process of their assimilation but instead aims to show the nature of their desire to be citizens and how their motivations were transformed through the experience of the war.

"Chicago is not in America, America is in Chicago"

At the turn of the twentieth century, Chicago was not an American city; at least, not if the national origin of its residents is the measure. From 1890 until the 1920s, foreigners and their children made up around three quarters of the city's population. At the end of the First World War, Chicago claimed the distinction of being the third most "foreign" city in the nation.[145] Of course, this cosmopolitan heterogeneity in fact made Chicago a quintessentially American city. Characterized by massive and rapid in-migration from rural areas and small towns both in the United States and across Europe, Chicago packed Irish, Polish and Italian peasants into urban neighborhoods beside African American sharecroppers, Jewish tailors, native-born farmhands, and Greek peddlers and restaurateurs. Arriving in Chicago in the first decades of the twentieth century, these migrants joined a heaving, jostling, and diverse mass of peoples in the industrial heartland of the nation. Perceived by many immigrants as more American than its East Coast rivals, Chicago was said to offer a cleaner and truer break with the immigrants' homelands and their European pasts since they were "plunged right into the midst of the whirlpool of American life."[146] Within that mid-western whirlpool, immigrants from dozens of nations became

[145] John Allswang, *A House for All Peoples: Ethnic Politics in Chicago, 1890-1936* (University Press of Kentucky, 1971); City of Chicago Department of Development and Planning *The People of Chicago: Who We Are and Who We Have Been* (Chicago, 1976).

[146] Illinois Staats Zeitung, "The United Associations" May 29, 1918. All of the foreign language newspapers I refer to in this chapter are part of the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey (FLPS) which contains the translated

neighbors, friends, rivals, co-workers, and lovers. As they sought to make it fit their own dreams of what America was and should be, these migrants enlarged and transformed Chicago as well as themselves.

Although there was some ethnic concentration within Chicago's web of neighborhoods, immigrant communities were rarely exclusive to one national group. For example, while the "Back of the Yards" district was around 90 per cent Catholic and predominately working-class in the immediate pre-war years, its residents included Poles, Lithuanians, Bohemians, Slovaks, Irish, Germans, Russians, Ukrainians, Italians, and in the post-war period, Mexicans.[147] In the Italian-dominated West Side neighborhood, Calabrians and Sicilians who identified more with their region or village than their home nation in any case, rubbed shoulders with Jews, Bohemians, Greeks, Germans, Irish, and later, Mexicans.[148] Socio-economic status certainly dictated where Chicagoans lived but as we shall see in the following chapter, only African Americans lived in a racial "ghetto" in Chicago. Moreover, all of the inner-city neighborhoods where immigrants gathered were extremely fluid and dynamic, characterized by continual

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newspapers of 22 foreign language groups from Chicago, 1861-1938. I recognize the difficulties of representativeness and selection but have made every attempt to use the source in ways that minimize them. The newspapers were translated as part of a WPA works project in the 1930 and early 1940s and the translators were often members of the foreign language group so might have had an interest in selecting articles that presented their ethnic group in a good light. I do not claim that editorial positions reflected those of the broader community and in fact try to show in my analysis how they do not. On the other hand, the wording of text can often suggest the author's knowledge of the receptiveness or otherwise of his argument to his audience. Although I consulted the file cards and microfilm versions of the FLPS in Chicago, a digital guide with access is now available online, here: http://uiuc.libguides.com/cflps.

[147] See the essays in. Melvin G. Holli & Peter d'A. Jones, eds. *Ethnic Chicago: a Multicultural Portrait* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1995), particularly those by Michael F. Funchion on the Irish, Edward R. Kantowicz on Poles, and Dominic A. Pacyga on neighborhoods; see also Thomas Jablonsky, *Pride in the Jungle: Community and Everyday Life in Back of the Yards Chicago* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

[148] Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago* (Oxford University Press, 2003); Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

motion, migration and population shifts. The ethnic make-up of a neighborhood might change its composition several times in a generation.[149]

The usefulness of applying "ethnic" categorizations to immigrant lives in Chicago in the pre-war period, at least, is limited. For most European immigrants in the city, factors other than ethnicity (especially occupation, class, sex and religion but also foreignness per se) determined neighborhood residence, group membership and community living. Ethnicity prescribed very little about their lives as American citizens. Moreover, few Americans – native or foreign-born – understood immigration in cultural or ethnic terms before the First World War. As Eli Lederhendler points out, historian's over-reliance on the *category* "ethnicity" obscures the more widespread contemporary usage of race and/or national origin to delineate, describe and define aliens and foreign-born citizens (see, for example, President Wilson's use of terms, above).[150] To rely on ethnic categories to understand the pre-war period distorts the historical picture and obscures shifts in the content and meaning of citizenship following the experience of the war.

My argument that cultural identities took on a greater political significance and a more essentialist character through a process that developed during the war, unfolding in the postwar period and into the 1920s, requires some clarifications. American contemporaries did not use the term "ethnicity" but referred to immigrants by categories of 'race' or nationality, or simply as foreigners. In fact, ethnicity was not commonly deployed as a term to describe cultural descent groups until the interwar period. Then, as now, official designations often conflicted with popular usage. For example, the U.S. census recorded nationality according to membership of existing

[149] Dominic A. Pacyga, "Chicago's Ethnic Neighborhoods: The Myth of Stability and the Reality of Change" in *Ethnic Chicago*, edited by Holli and Jones, 604-617. A 1915 survey found that between one third and one half of residents in the area around Chicago Commons settlement house moved house that year – see Thomas Lee Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto: Immigrants, Blacks, and Reformers in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Belmont, Ca: Wadsworth, 1991): 291.

[150] Eli Lederhendler, "The New Filiopietism, or Toward a New History of Jewish Immigration to America." *American Jewish History* 93. 1 (March 1, 2007): 1-20.

geo-political units rather than by the national aspirations of any given group. Poles, for example, might be assigned to the German, Russian or Austrian category. The subsequent process by which foreign immigrants to the United States became members of ethnic groups has long been a contentious issue. A central concern of the debate is the nature of ethnic identity – is it more properly understood as primordial and essentialist or socially constructed and freely chosen? This chapter engages with the discussion historically by unraveling the process through which immigrants, freely choosing to become American citizens, came to understand that their ethnic heritage was a necessary accessory to the performance of their American citizenship. As 'culture' began to replace the terms 'race' or 'nationality' to describe difference, it also adopted an essentialist character. So ethnicity no longer inhered in identifiable behaviors (flags, anthems, the applicable vernacular) but in an individual's essential identity. No longer a matter of what one did, cultural heritage defined 'what' or 'who' one was. Thus, the supposedly essentialist character of ethnic identity began to contradict aspirations to an equally essentialized American nationality.[151]

Of course, this process was only just beginning during the early part of the twentieth century (and I examine its legislative manifestation in the twenties more closely in chapter five). Nevertheless, during the war some Americans began to see Americanism as a national identity that prescribed certain cultural behaviors – such as speaking English and supporting the war effort – rather than being defined either by a freely chosen political status or even simply by whatever it was that American citizens did *per se*. A growing resistance to the notion that foreign immigrants could ever become Americans was also developing; a hyphenated identity

[151] Or, as Walter Benn Michaels explains it, "Although the move from racial identity to cultural identity appears to replace essentialist criteria of identity (who we are) with performative criteria (what we do), the commitment to pluralism requires in fact that the question of who we are continues to be understood as prior to questions about what we do." *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002): 14-15; Werner

represented a lie and a threat because an immigrant could not be both essentially one thing and essentially another. Yet, the essentialist understanding of culture also led logically to the conclusion that if you were a Jew, an Italian or a Pole then perhaps the best way to engage you in an American project of nation-building was through your cultural identity as a Jew, Italian or Pole (what you were) rather than through your political identity as an American citizen (what you chose to be).

To be sure, the growing claim and import of ethnic allegiance was not altogether the result of immigrant's wishes, desires or actions. In fact, it contradicted the direction that many immigrant Chicagoans were hoping to move in. While many of them responded to the outbreak of war in 1914 as European nationals and took positions in line with the interests of their various home nations, over the course of the war, they did embrace the military effort as American patriots acting in the interest of the United States. The experience of the war years, particularly following U.S. entry into the conflict in April 1917, highlighted the ready patriotism of the city's immigrants and their wish to embrace American national traditions, ideals, and values. In return, they expected acceptance into the national community of their adopted homeland. More than that, they hoped to share in the rights and obligations of citizenship as they understood them.

Immigration historian Oscar Handlin characterized the Americanization process as one of forced conformity involving the alienation of "uprooted" immigrant groups from their social networks and cultural identities. His brutal and tragic portrait of ethnic assimilation tells the tale of social disorganization, cultural loss and personal suffering – Handlin's immigrants were largely victims of an array of difficult circumstances beyond their own control.[152] The scholars

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Sollors (ed.) *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) and Lederhendler, "The New Filiopietism" engage critically with the process of ethnicity construction.

[152] Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston: Little Brown, 1973). Much of Handlin's conceptual framework is drawn from W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Chicago and Boston, 1918-1920).

who came to dominate immigrant historiography in the generation after Handlin challenged many aspects of his portrait, presenting urban immigrants as cultural survivors rather than victims, hardy urban pioneers who resisted the pressure to conform, and resilient adventurers who – despite adversity and challenge – were able to retain their own cultural and national identities and reproduce their own ethnic institutions in the new alien urban environment.[153] Despite their differences, Handlin and his critics shared a fairly negative and critical take on the society and culture of the host nation; their portrayal of American politics and society is dominated by notions of standardized consumerism, soulless modernity and conformist patriotic fervor to which urban immigrants either fell prey or successfully resisted.[154]

More recent studies examine urban immigration as an aspect of the histories of ethnicity, labor and whiteness, refreshing the field and blowing it wide open by posing questions about, and taking seriously, the motivations and choices of the immigrants themselves.[155] Yet this scholarship still rarely addresses the reasons why immigrants wished to embrace the United States and become American citizens; they were surely not driven by the desire to become white

[153] An entire generation of social historians, too many to list here, took this view but the article that heralded the approach was Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of The Uprooted*" Journal of American History* 51, 3 (Dec., 1963): 404-417. The position was synthesized by John Bodnar in his *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

[154] Handlin believed that the new social historians such as Vecoli, and especially Herbert Gutman, had gone too far in their criticism of American culture. Handlin's America had been a lonely and demoralizing place but it was still worth being uprooted for. See Gary Gerstle's perceptive discussion of these historiographical issues in his "Liberty, Coercion and the Making of Americans," 536-9. Also useful is Russell A. Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History" *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 437-471.

[155] For studies of ethnicity see Wernerr Sollors (ed.) *Beyond Ethnicity* and "Americans All!: "Of Plymouth Rock and Jamestown and Ellis Island"; or, Ethnic Literature and Some Redefinitions of "America"", downloaded from http://www.nyupress.org/americansall/americansall.html?$string; Lawrence Fuchs, *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity and the Civil Culture* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1990); for labor studies that embrace issues of migration and immigration, see James R. Barrett, "Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930" *Journal of American History* 79. 3 (December, 1992): 996-1020; Cohen, *Making a New Deal;* Gary Gerstle, *Working Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Cambridge, 1989). Whiteness studies include Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); James R. Barrett and David Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality and the "New Immigrant" Working Class" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16, 3 (Spring, 1997): 3-45. An interesting variation on this approach is

or ethnic or industrially disciplined? Historians may be too interested in overturning celebratory or overly consensual versions of the Americanization story to successfully untangle the complexities of immigrants' relationship to the nation, including their positive embrace of it. Rewriting the history of urban immigration is not the aim here but I do want to indicate that Chicago's immigrants in the First World War sought to construct their own American identity from a positive vision of what that meant and that they viewed their own national origin and cultural background as little obstacle to the process. Within the immigrant outlook, group identities were surely present but these existed alongside an acceptance, even a strong belief in, the liberal universalistic claims of the American nation.

European immigrants and their children in early twentieth-century Chicago located and sought to demonstrate their own allegiance to the American nation during the First World War. Although historians have detailed the official and semi-official repressive wartime and postwar Americanization campaigns in abundance, we know very little about how urban immigrants responded, or indeed how they felt about becoming American citizens under the pressure of such "reform" measures.[156] The battle was not simply one between "Americanizing elites and the tradition-minded masses" as many social historians have posited.[157] In fact, in some instances the opposite was the case with elites romanticizing the ethnic cultures of immigrants or seeking to

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Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

[156] Studies of the wartime and postwar Americanization crusades include chapters 8 and 9 of John Higham's *Strangers in the Land*: *Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (Dekalb, IL.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974); and Stephen Meyer, "Adapting the Immigrant to the Line: Americanization in the Ford Factory, 1914-21" *Journal of Social History* 14 (1980) 67-82, among others. Encouragingly, historians have begun to explore other dimensions of immigrants' wartime and postwar experiences – see Christopher Sterba, *Good Americans: Italians and Jewish Immigrants in the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Elizabeth McKillen, "Ethnicity, Class, and Wilsonian Internationalism Reconsidered: The Mexican-American and Irish-American Left and US Foreign Relations, 1914-22" *Diplomatic History*, 25 (Fall 2001): 553-87 and Lynn Dumenil, "The Tribal Twenties: 'Assimilated' Catholics' Response to anti-Catholicism in the 1920s" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11 (Fall, 1991): 21-50.

[157] Gerstle, "Liberty, Coercion and the Making of Americans," 538.

employ them as a defensive stabilizing force against the whirl of urban modernity. I suggest too that there was much about the modern culture and political traditions of the United States that immigrants aspired to and which inspired them directly; their decision to embrace American citizenship was not simply the result of bullying or of a desperate need to conform but of a positive allegiance that they hoped to develop and deepen as American citizens, or citizens-in-waiting, over the course of the war years.

The process of nation-building and community-creation during the war was certainly not one that can be understood exclusively in terms of harmony, consensus, or cohesion. National allegiance was a particularly difficult and troubled question in war time. In a city where such a large proportion of the population was composed of individuals with attachments to foreign nations, many of them directly involved in the global conflagration, conflicts about the nature of citizenship, the contours of the national imaginary, and the rules of inclusion and exclusion were always likely to erupt. From the onset of war in the European theater, Chicago's immigrants fought a myriad of battles on the home front.

This chapter looks more closely at some of the central conflicts they engaged in. First, during the neutrality period, immigrants – particularly those from Germany – took on nativists over their right to belong and the authority and authenticity of their claim to American citizenship. Second, Chicago's immigrant groups fought bitterly among themselves, ostensibly over the role of their home nations in the war, but arguably over their own groups' role and position in the urban community of their new nation. Third, ethnic groups fought internal battles to define the nature of their own communities. As the masses came to accept some of the ethnic nationalism that religious, political, community and union leaders cultivated and encouraged over the course of the war, these newly-formed ethnic identities became incorporated into immigrants' understanding of themselves as Americans. And finally, immigrant Chicagoans engaged in

arguments over the nature and meaning of the character of American citizenship itself in – and against – the strident Americanization campaign of the late and post-war years.

Claiming American Citizenship

At the start of the European war in 1914, the largest ethnic group in Chicago, Germans, and the second largest, Austrians, together comprised 43 per cent of the white 'foreign stock' population in the city. A further 12 per cent were of Irish birth or parentage, meaning that well over half of Chicago's immigrants had ties to the Central Powers or reason to oppose a military alliance with Britain.[158] Republican mayoral candidate William Thompson put a coalition from these groups together with support from the African American community to win the city election in 1915 on an anti-war platform. Yet, even during the neutrality period, when immigrant groups *were* more likely to line up with the interests of their home nations than they were after the US entered the war, immigrants' political loyalties were not as uncomplicated as these bare facts suggest. In the Chicago of 1915, neither of the mayoral candidates supported US involvement in the European conflagration. Thompson's opponent Robert Sweitzer, a Democrat with an Irish mother and German father, sought to appeal to the German vote by defending the war policy of the Central Powers and championing the superiority of German K*ultur*. Yet, despite the ethno-cultural appeal of Sweitzer's name and the heavy endorsement of his platform by

[158] These figures are derived from the federal census and include first and second generation immigrants – or immigrants and their children – under the rubric 'foreign stock.' The number of 'non-white' immigrants in Chicago before the war was marginal, with the largest group by far being the 1,778 Chinese Chicagoans. The census also counted 233 Japanese, 108 Indians and 4 'Other'. See the Chicago Daily News *Almanac and Year Book* (1920): 918-19.

Chicago's German-language newspaper *Abendpost*, Thompson took a majority of the German vote in 1915.[159]

To complicate matters further, official figures for German and Austrian voters subsumed a number of Slavic groups, such as Czechs and Hungarians, whose home nations were member-states of the conglomerate Austro-Hungarian Empire or Poles who might have been listed as either German or Austrian. These Eastern Europeans might have resented their official designations and may have skewed the results somewhat, especially as Thompson shrewdly redistributed Sweitzer's pro-German campaign flyers in Polish and Bohemian neighborhoods. On the other hand, however, "new" immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were still largely unregistered to vote in the city in 1915. Sweitzer did manage to hang on to a majority of the Polish vote but he barely squeezed a 2,000 majority from a neighborhood containing 67,000 people since so few Poles were as yet eligible voters. The creation of ethnic urban voting blocks had to await the full flowering of political mobilization along ethnic lines as well as the power of new-voter registrations in the postwar period.[160] An analysis of the 1915 election results suggests the complicated nature of the relationship between ethnic identity and voting choice; before the war, a Chicagoan's ethnic identity was not a reliable guide to their public political position at the city polls.

During the neutrality period then, European immigrants in Chicago, including Germans, did not present their position on the war as simply a result of an affiliation to their home countries or as arising naturally from their ethnic identity. Rather, they went out of their way to demonstrate that the positions they took were as much (if not more) a result of their ties to

[159] Douglas Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson, Chicago, and the Politics of Image* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998): 29; "The Mayoral Election" *Abendpost* February 20, 1915; "Sweitzer's German Ancestry" *Sonntagpost* March 28, 1915.
[160] Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson*, 29; See also Kristi Anderson, *The Creation of a Democratic Majority, 1928-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

America as to Europe. During the neutrality period, the German language press clearly took pleasure in the British being given a "good trimming" by the German army but suggested that this was a good thing because Britain was as much the enemy of America as of Germany.[161] Just days after the European war had broken out, Peter Ellert, president of the German-Irish Bund of Chicago, laid a wreath at a city monument to commemorate those killed during the 1812 Fort Dearborn massacre, or as he put it "the victims of British perfidy and betrayal." Ellert beseeched Americans not to give succor or sympathy to the English who had acted so abysmally toward the US nation in its infancy.[162] Drawing on American conflicts with Britain in the revolutionary war, the war of 1812 and during the U.S. Civil War, the American Independence Union, a deliberately-named German-American organization, pointed out that;

> Since the Declaration of Independence on July 4 1776, the efforts of our best American elements to get rid of the British yoke and of British influence can be traced like a red thread through the history of our nation.[163]

Before it was clear whether the US would enter the war or if it did, whose side it would take, arguments in the German-language press went so far as to suggest that the hyphenism that so concerned the American people had flourished among immigrants largely as a protest against the "Anglicization" of America. They argued that German Americans did not wish to enslave the United States to the mother country as Britain had consistently tried to do and that the only way that a strong and true Americanism could flourish in the future was a German victory in Europe.[164]

Such arguments may have been self-serving for German sympathizers but it is interesting and noteworthy that they were framed patriotically before the United States entered the war. They

[161] Abendpost, "The Double Standard" February 4, 1915.
[162] Sonntagpost, "Fairness for Germans" August 16, 1914.
[163] Abendpost, "American Independence Union" February 27, 1915.
[164] Sonntagpost, "We Hyphenated Americans" Editorial, August 30, 1914.

were in part a response to the accusations of disloyalty against Germans that filled the city's foremost English language newspaper, *The Chicago Tribune,* and were often posed as direct rebuttals to articles and editorials carried in that and other city newspapers. Responding to the charge that German-Americans supported neutrality more for Germany's sake than America's, for instance, a German language paper insisted that in holding fast to President Wilson's proclamation of neutrality, German-Americans were alone in defending sacred American traditions against foreign entanglements laid down first by George Washington.[165]

In August 1914, just days after the conflagration began, Chicago's Germans put their patriotic feelings into action and took to the city streets to make their voices heard. As the war raged in Europe, over four thousand Chicagoans attended a mass meeting to protest the high levels of prejudice directed at Germans in the English-language press. At the meeting, German-American reservists in the US Army paraded, toasts were made to the German Emperor and to President Wilson, and at the end of the evening, a contingent of protesters marched to the offices of the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Evening Post* and the *Chicago Journal* to hiss and boo the proprietors.[166]

While German-Americans in Chicago were not the only immigrant group professing their patriotism during the neutrality period, they were the loudest and most insistent, no doubt in part because they bore the brunt of the city's crusade against hyphenism and were most often accused of disloyalty. But loss of public sympathy was not simply a matter of degree for German immigrants; it also represented a change in kind for a group who had previously been among the most favored of the nation's newcomers. In 1916, a German-American writer, Walter Woehlke,

[165] Illinois Staats Zeitung, "The Tribune and the German American" May 3, 1916; Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 123.
[166] Abendpost, "Enthusiasm Soars to Staggering Heights" August 6, 1914.

articulated the confusion and consternation that other immigrants who desired access to citizenship felt:

> Three years ago I believed I was a full-fledged American, as indistinguishably merged in the stream of American life as one drop of clear water merges with the other. I should have known better . . . the immigrant will always remain a citizen of the second class.[167]

Like Woehlke, Chicago's German immigrants were dismayed at the shift in public perceptions of them. In 1914, the *Chicago Tribune* had editorialized against the new immigration from southern and eastern Europe by contrasting the motivations of these migrants with earlier arrivals from Germany, Britain, and Scandinavia, who "were not only willing but eager to be melted." According to the *Tribune*, while desirable Germans had come to in search of freedom and democracy, Bohemians, Poles and Lithuanians came only in search of bread, while their hearts and souls remained at home.[168] Later that same year, the Tribune reversed its appraisal. Eugene Niederegger, president of Chicago's Senefelder Liederkranz, a German musical club, lamented that "now the American press gives to the Slavs the place which rightfully belongs to the Germans."[169] Not surprisingly, Chicago's German-American cultural leaders campaigned to defend their pre-war reputation and standing.

The attacks on all vestiges of German culture in the city during the war are well documented: city patriots coated Friedrich von Schiller's statue in yellow paint; authorities were forced to remove the Goethe monument for safe storage after several attempts to desecrate it; schools stopped teaching the German language and rewrote textbooks to remove positive references to German statesmen and national leaders; the Chicago Athletic club fired its German employees; the city council renamed streets like Berlin, Hamburg, and Rhine; and sauerkraut

[167] Walter Woelke, "The Confessions of a Hyphenate" *Century Magazine* XCIII (1916): 929-934.
[168] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "Sentimental Nationalism," May 31, 1914, A4.
[169] *Abendpost*, "Mass Demonstration by Local Germans" July 31, 1914.

became "liberty cabbage".[170] Meanwhile, numerous German American immigrants divested themselves of the symbols and identifying characteristics of their German cultural identity: they changed their names from Fielchenfeld to Field and Griescheimer to Gresham; the Kaiser Fredrich Mutual Aid Society became the George Washington Benevolent Society and the Germania Club was renamed the Lincoln Club. Frederick Stock, the conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra which Chicago's German community had established in 1889, stepped down in order to complete his naturalization for American citizenship.[171]

Although the shedding of German cultural symbols may have been prompted by nativist assaults, they also actually continued pre-war trends toward assimilation by merging German cultural attributes with American ones. For many immigrants from Germany, the upholding of German cultural forms, such as the many *Vereins* (social clubs) established in Chicago, served a community function rather than an ideological or political purpose.[172] Over the course of the war, however, superpatriots began to reinterpret such cultural forms as reflections of political affiliations and loyalties. The separation of cultural and political identities came to have less meaning within Chicago's political culture, despite immigrants' many attempts and increased clarity in articulating it. The *Vereins*, formerly innocuous cultural forms and largely irrelevant to the nature or quality of citizenship, were invested with greater political significance by both Americanizers and pluralists.[173]

At the start of the war, Chicago's German language press began to understand that the debate about citizenship was shifting to the cultural sphere. Editors had always trumpeted the achievements of the German *Kultur* but they began to emphasize what it was about the German

[170] Melvin G. Holli, "German American Ethnic and Cultural Identity from 1890 Onward," in *Ethnic Chicago* edited by Melvin G. Holli & Peter d'A. Jones, 104-6.
[171] Ibid.; Chicago Daily Tribune, "Union to Drop Aliens as Blow at Symphony" (August 15, 1918): 13.
[172] Luebke *Bonds of Loyalty*, 51.

ethnic contribution to America – and Chicago specifically – that enhanced the national character. Noting that the progressive intelligence of German Americans led them to push westward to cultivate productive lands and to establish dynamic, mid-western cities, and pointing out that twenty-eight per cent of German Americans owned land (compared to twenty one per cent of natives), they argued that Germans embraced the American pioneer spirit making them the foremost and best American citizens.[174] One writer suggested that while Eastern cities might be Anglicized, the American character was not fully formed across the continent and that German Americans in Chicago and throughout the Mississippi Valley would be instrumental in shaping it. By supporting progressive programs such as highway construction and forest preservation, German immigrants had and would continue to enrich and improve the American national character.[175]

Yet, as John Higham notes in his classic study of nativism, while immigrants in the early twentieth century did defend themselves with arguments about the cultural "gifts" bestowed by immigrants on America, "on the whole, they praised America rather than the immigrant. They were the keepers of the hallowed doctrines of cosmopolitan Americanism."[176] While German Americans were proud of their cultural heritage and believed that it equipped them well for American citizenship, they engaged in the debate about national identity and loyalty in wartime by stressing their adherence to American political ideals over and above their cultural contribution to American society. For example, in the public debate about prohibition – usually cast as an ethnocultural clash – the German language press beseeched voters not to appear to be motivated politically by a cultural fondness for beer. Instead, the paper reasoned that American

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[173] Russell A. Kazal sees similar trends of prewar assimilation among Germans in Philadelphia, see his *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004)
[174] Illinois Staats Zeitung, "The Great Significance of the Germans in Chicago" September 6, 1915.
[175] Abendpost, "For Our Chicago" October 31, 1914; Abendpost, "The German Way and the American Way" April 1, 1915.

political freedoms and not ingrained cultural values should inform German voters, "we take sides regarding prohibition because of our belief that prohibition is unconstitutional, and is an attack upon the rights of *all*, guaranteed by the Constitution."[177] Editors and activists framed an opposition to prohibition as essential to German Americans not because of their ethnic heritage but because of their American citizenship. After the United States entered the war, public arguments about German American identity continued to be posed in this way, underlining the political rather than cultural nature of the claim which immigrants – even those from hostile nations – made to being or becoming Americans. Yet at the same time, another note also began to be sounded, one that took less notice of the difference between cultural heritage and political choices.

The blurring of the line between culture and politics was not generally in the interest of German Americans as the United States moved closer to war. Yet, during the neutrality period some of the more outspoken elements of the German American press and community leadership joined strident Americanizers in blurring the line albeit from opposite directions. While superpatriots pointed to German cultural manifestations as evidence of disloyalty, chauvinistic ethnic editors and spokesmen offered proof of the superior contributions of German *Kultur* to the American nation. Perhaps some of the motivation for German Chicagoans' embrace of a politicized ethnicity followed on from their shock and disgruntlement at being dislodged from their former position as welcome, even cherished, newcomers who retained only private and kinship links to the old country. Still, they largely remained committed to the version of American citizenship they embraced before the war had appeared on the horizon, one that privileged political rights and obligations and left them free to either practice or abandon their

[176] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land,* 124.
[177] Illinois Staats Zeitung "An Appeal to the German Americans" January 8, 1914.

cultural heritage. Certainly, their anti-British rhetoric was not a reflection of their alienation from American political ideals but just the opposite.[178] As the United States entered the war, German Americans in Chicago somewhat defensively puffed out their chests and fought hard to retain the authentic claim to American citizenship they had previously held with little opposition.

Proving Group Loyalty during War

The second form of wartime conflict I want to highlight here – that between and among Chicago's immigrant groups – also represented an attempt by newcomers to assert their right to American citizenship. The conflict, largely couched in political and patriotic terms, was not primarily played out between ethnic groups and nativist Americanizers but among the various ethnic groups themselves as they struggled to prove that their own group offered the best material for citizenship. Over the course of the war years, inter-ethnic conflict and competition did appear to increase. Indeed, historian Lizabeth Cohen claims that during World War I, ethnic identities among working-class Chicagoans intensified as "homeland nationalism seized people," especially those people seeking national liberation, such as Poles, Lithuanians and Czechs and Slovaks.[179] Some evidence from Chicago seems to support this interpretation. So, for instance, attacks on the city's Goethe monument and the demand to change the school curriculum and to eradicate German street names emanated in large part from the Polish and Czech sections of the city. In July 1917, the Chicago Board of Education considered a petition from the Polish National Alliance and from a Czech newspaper editor to change the name of the Bismarck School on the basis that Bismarck had "caused much suffering and persecution to a good number of Chicago

[178] Luebke, 51; Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock,* 151-2.
[179] Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 29.

taxpayers" and was the reason many European immigrants had originally fled their home nations.[180]

Yet, while such conflicts may appear to have represented an escalation of inter-ethnic cultural clashes and an increase in tensions between different immigrant groups driven by attachments to their respective home nations, on closer inspection they reveal something else. In fact, nationality groups in Chicago jostled for position not simply to promote their own group's interests but also to establish the strength of the immigrants' real attachment to the American nation. So, when the Polish National Alliance sought to remove Bismarck's name from a Chicago public school, it did not suggest a Polish name in its place nor even an American one, but alternative German names of men who had made a contribution to the United States and were more "in harmony with American ideals and activities" than Bismarck. Two such proposals were Franz Sigel, a German immigrant who had served as a Major General in the Union army during the Civil War and Baron von Steuben, a former Prussian military officer who had made a major contribution to training the American Revolutionary Army.[181] Cultural symbols that were in keeping with the national spirit were not perceived as a threat by other ethnic groups, even if they derived from the enemy nation.

While inter-ethnic conflict and competition in Chicago during the war certainly reflected differences originating in Europe, they also reflected a common desire to demonstrate American credentials. To be sure, a number of European immigrants from both sides of the conflict returned to Europe to enlist and serve their home nation during the neutrality period. Once the US entered the war in April 1917, however, those immigrants who remained in Chicago concentrated their attentions on practical military and financial support for their adopted nation. They set out to

[180] Illinois Staats Zeitung, "Hatred Endangers the Goethe Monument" April 16, 1918; Narod Polski, "Away with Bismark" July 25, 1917.

stake their claim to citizenship rights by highlighting how readily and how well they met their citizenship obligations in wartime.[182]

Examples abound, not simply of immigrant loyalty to the US in wartime but of the loud and boisterous clash of immigrant groups over just who was the most loyal. Many individual servicemen Americanized their names when they enlisted in order to prove their patriotism. However, leaders of all nationality groups called upon men to register using their original ethnic names in order to demonstrate the active patriotism of their national group. Even before the European war had begun, Chicago Jews hailed 22-year-old Samuel Meisenberg as a "foreign patriot" after he became the first American to die in the Battle of Vera Cruz during a skirmish with Mexico in April, 1914. Chicago's Poles were not to be outdone. While Jewish veterans of the Spanish-American war pulled together a volunteer regiment to send to Mexico in the wake of Meisenberg's sacrifice, the Polish press asked that the city's Poles march to Mexico to remind the American people "that Polish emigration gave this country not only common laborers but also the bravest defenders of the starry banner."[183]

Such patriotic competition continued and escalated during the Great War. Polish, Lithuanian and Ukrainian Chicagoans alike insisted that their loyal military service to the United States proved their worth as American citizens yet they clashed over the best means of doing so. Both the Lithuanians and the Ukrainians denounced the Poles as traitors for their strategy of forming Polish Legions to fight separately from the US Army. They resented Polish attempts to recruit Lithuanian and Ukrainian men to fight as Poles in these Legions, suggesting that Poles meant to represent falsely the size of the Polish population in order to gain political influence in

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[181] Narod Polski, "Away with Bismark" July 25, 1917.
[182] For example, see Abendpost, "The Rush Continues" August 4, 1914 and L'Italia, "Patriotic Italians" September 12, 1915.
[183] Daily Jewish Courier, "Jewish Blood for American Honor" April 23, 1914 and "The Organization of a Jewish Regiment" April 26, 1914; Dziennik Zwiakowy, "A Call to the Polish Soldiery" April 21, 1914.

Chicago. Instead, one Lithuanian writer insisted, patriotic Lithuanians preferred to fight in Uncle Sam's army and embraced the honor of marching under the starry flag. For their part, Chicago Poles defended the Polish Legions as a strong component of the Allied force and noted that President Wilson himself supported their efforts as Poles and as Americans. Polish American soldiers, they argued, fought for the American ideal of freedom that would carry both domestic and international benefits.[184]

Polish commentators claimed the military cause as equally Polish and American. When the first Polish volunteers set forth from the Polish Women's Alliance Building in downtown Chicago, a departing soldier held aloft both Polish and American flags. As each subsequent group of Polish volunteers left the city, church services heralded their mission, parades in the Loop marked each occasion, and throngs of onlookers cheered and waved them off with both national flags.[185] When the first American hero from South Chicago fell in France, Polonia claimed him as one of their own.[186] So too did the Catholic Church, whose faithful were composed of many nationalities. The church leadership pointed out that the young man was a boy from a Catholic family, had been educated at St Adalbert's and had volunteered for armed service even before the United States had introduced the draft. Archbishop Mundelein pointedly remarked that "his heroic death is a conspicuous proof of the loyalty and patriotism of the children of those of our people who have come from other lands and who form such a large and desirable element of our

[184] Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Judge F. Scully's Opinion on the Registration of Poles" October 13, 1916; Lietuva, "Keep Your Distance From Them" May 31, 1918; Naujienos, "Expanding His Nation" June 3, 1914; Dziennik Zwiakowy, "What Do the Ukrainians Want?" August 3, 1918.
[185] Dziennik Zwiakowy, "First Volunteers to Polish Army Leave for Training Camp" October 10, 1917 and "City Bids Farewell to Polish Volunteers" October 23, 1917.
[186] Polonia, "The First American Hero from South Chicago to Fall in France is a South Chicago Pole" XII, 25 (June 20, 1918).

citizenship of this city."[187] Similarly, ethnic newspapers printed the names of boys from their national group who had made the ultimate sacrifice on the field of battle.

Immigrant groups clamored to demonstrate their own group's superior patriotic credentials through military service – and the boasts were not empty. In response to an official charge that Jews sought exemption from military service to a greater degree than other groups, an article in the Jewish press explained that any Jewish hesitation was due to the experience of the brutal and degraded system of the Russian army; yet,

> When the Jew becomes Americanized . . . he understands that the Constitution of the United States gives all citizens of the country equal rights, and that this country affords every inhabitant equal opportunity. Then he is the first to volunteer, and on the field of battle he is the renowned hero.[188]

In fact, Jews were over-represented in the US army, composing around five per cent of the armed forces but only three per cent of the American population. All immigrant groups liked to point out that home-grown Americans deserted the armed forces at a much higher rate than foreigners.[189] Those foreign-born soldiers who achieved distinction in training or on the battle field, like 22 –year old Italian Mike Scarlata of Chicago, became much heralded symbols of the ethnic group's commitment to American goals.[190]

Just as the retention of ethnic names by soldiers highlighted the contribution that immigrants made to the nation's military effort, Chicagoans registered their ethnic identities when they purchased Liberty Bonds and war-saving stamps as a way of proving their group's patriotism. The five Liberty Loan drives launched by the federal government during the war officially enlisted the support of ethnic group leaders, pastors, priests, and the presidents of ethnic

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[187] Mundelein quoted in Shanabruch, *Chicago's Catholics: The Evolution of an American Identity* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981) 195.
[188] Daily Jewish Courier, "The American Jew in the Great World War" May 19, 1919; Jewish Sunday Courier, "The Jew is No Slacker" June 9, 1918.
[189] Daily Jewish Courier, "The American Jew in the Great War" May 19, 1919.
[190] L'Italia, "An Italian Youth in the United States Army" October 7, 1918.

organizations. This official ethnic strategy deliberately exacerbated the intense competition between immigrant groups for the best participation and highest contribution levels. Despite much rhetoric to the contrary, the federal government sought to encourage ethnic group identification in the cause of the unified national effort.[191]

Liberty Loan fever gripped Chicago. It was not the only variety of fever the city experienced in wartime but it proved more difficult to contain than the influenza epidemic that coincided with the Fourth Liberty Loan drive in 1918. Although city authorities had banned public dancing and restricted funeral attendance to close family members to contain the spread of the disease, one hundred thousand Chicagoans attended a Liberty Loan parade downtown, complete with ethnic floats and banners.[192] The competition between ethnic groups escalated as each nationality sought to prove itself the most worthy, most self-sacrificing citizens. Even the poorest contributed – a survey of unskilled workers in the South Chicago packinghouses in 1918 found that 84 per cent of their families owned Liberty Bonds. Ultimately, the city's Bohemians subscribed the most but Poles and Germans were hard on their heels amid clashing claims and counter-claims of greater sacrifices and expressions of loyalty.[193]

Women were often in the forefront of organizing and promoting bond sales. Theresa Petrone took the lead role in organizing a mass "invasion" of the Loop by 30,000 Italian Chicagoans to promote bond sales; at the post-parade rally addressed by Governor Frank Lowden, a "squadron of Neapolitan beauties" netted $50,000 in subscriptions from the crowd.[194] Immigrant women participated in the inter-ethnic loyalty contests in a variety of other ways too: they hung flags, "Hooverized" their family diets according to government guidelines and

[191] Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 77.
[192] Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson*, 75.
[193] Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 77; Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Let us Achieve First Place" April 26, 1918; Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Poles in First Place" May 8, 1918.

displayed colored silk stars in their front windows to represent sons, husbands, brothers and fathers fighting in Europe. The Council of Foreign Language Women sponsored a fashion parade of immigrant women in their native costumes, all of whom gave a pledge of loyalty, saluted the flag and sang patriotic songs following the cultural catwalk celebration. Such highly visible activities functioned competitively to demonstrate the strong sense of duty and sacrifice immigrant families willingly embraced as adoptive Americans.[195]

Patriotic rivalry worked at the city level too, as Chicago persistently outperformed its allotted Liberty Loan subscription levels and promoted large parades demonstrating active and loyal citizenship, usually with a prominent ethnic component. Thus, in liberty loan drives, in wartime demonstrations and parades, through military service and the inculcation of patriotic domestic habits, immigrants in Chicago pushed for greater recognition of their place as loyal Americans. City and federal authorities encouraged ethnic groups to embrace Americanism through their own cultural organizations and immigrants willingly did so, as they became increasingly aware that their cultural identities might act as either a bridge or as a barrier but in any case were proving increasingly important in determining their access to citizenship status. They set out to prove that some ethnicities – their own in particular – were more of the bridge than the barrier variety and that they were, or could be, loyal American citizens, whatever their national origin.

Ethnicization and Ethnic Politics

Conflict between nationality groups over the breadth and depth of their American patriotism

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[194] Chicago Daily Tribune, "Italians Parade Today" April 21, 1918, 3 and "30,000 Italians Invade Loop to Aid Bond Sales" April 22, 1918, 5.

[195] Chicago Daily Tribune, "Pulpit Plea to Save on Foods Goes Out Today" May 26, 1918, 13 and "Meet En Masse to Put Potato on the Table" April 28, 1918; Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Stars" July 31, 1918; Chicago Daily Tribune, "Chicago Women of Many Nationalities Pledge Allegiance to America" July 31, 1918, 3.

obscured some of the internal skirmishes and divisions within each group. Indeed, leaders of ethnic nationalist organizations, churches, trade unions and political parties orchestrated inter-ethnic competition and rivalries in order to cohere and unify the members of their own national grouping. This strategy of 'ethnicization' allowed ethnic leaders to control and reduce the influence of more radical political groups more effectively, as well as boosting their own status and standing into the bargain. The growth of ethnic nationalism in Chicago (and elsewhere in the nation) did not spring from a mass primordial sentiment carried from Europe but developed and grew within the host nation, nurtured by a nationalist leadership. The experience of divided immigrant communities in Chicago coming together during the war and into the 1920s offers a prime example of the process.[196]

Few European immigrants from the peasant class had a history of political mobilization for any national cause in Europe before arriving in Chicago. More affluent and sophisticated members of these and other national groups, however, responded to the political situation in the city by attempting to promote nationalist ideas among their fellow countrymen and women.[197] As already noted, this somewhat defensive ethnic nationalism could be presented as being in harmony with strong American patriotism. However, if ethnicization and Americanization were not necessarily in conflict, neither did they necessarily go together. Chicago's ethnic community

[196] Both historians and sociologists have examined the process known as "ethnicization" whereby ethnic communities and/or identities are formed on entirely new bases by immigrant groups. Thomas Philpott's study of the pre-war slums around Hull House discovered as many divisions within national groups as between them and the host society, see Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto,* chapter 3. Helena Z. Lopata "Polonia and the Polish Peasant in Europe and America" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16 (Fall, 1996) 37-47 argues that leadership positions in voluntary associations provided status both inside and outside the national group and that internal competition for such leadership positions acted as a kind of glue holding the national community together. Robert Slayton's *Back of the Yards: The Making of a Local Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) examines Chicago's stockyard district and concludes that Slavic groups there only came to embrace nationalist ideas after a concerted campaign by community leaders in the pre-war and WWI years. Werner Sollors also concludes that "Enough ethnic distinctions have emerged in the United States to put the theory of old world survivals to rest" see *Beyond Ethnicity*, 260.

[197] Dianne M. Pinderhughes *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics: A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Robert Slayton, *Back of the Yards*, chapter 6.

leaders worked hard during the course of the war to convince the immigrant masses that they did and should. For example, Polish leaders encouraged Chicago Poles to vote for Woodrow Wilson in the 1916 presidential elections since, they argued, he had a genuine concern for Poland as well as the welfare of America at heart.[198] Earlier, they had called upon Polish voters in the city to "make voting in the American elections an act of Polish nationalism."[199] As Chicago's immigrants came to understand that ethnicization was the surest route to Americanization, they embraced it to a greater extent than they had before the war.

As nationalist politicians, intellectuals and other ethnic community leaders promoted their ideas in the amenable wartime politics of Chicago, they did so with a strong sense that this was the American way of conducting political life. The *Magyar Tribune* told its readers that every nationality group in the cosmopolitan city must organize in order to have any political influence. The paper chastised Hungarians for their backwardness and beseeched them to come together to elect one of their own to city hall.[200] Such reprimanding calls also emanated from Polish, Jewish, Lithuanian, and Italian newspaper editors who hoped for better political representation for their respective national groups. The Lithuanian Republican League pointed out that the Irish had an unfair share of city patronage and that municipal posts should be shared with deserving Lithuanian party workers.[201] Two Polish candidates in the 1916 city elections agreed to the decision of a public meeting at which one of them was asked to stand down in order to avoid splitting the Polish vote.[202] The Jewish press asked why Jews should not vote for their own candidates if other nationalities did.[203] And an Italian editor informed his readers that while

[198] "How Should Poles Vote"? *Polonia* Vol. XI 44, November 2, 1916.
[199] Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Our Platform for Tomorrow" November 2, 1914.
[200] Magyar Tribune, "The Hungarians and American Politics" January 25, 1919.
[201] Lietuva, "Lithuanian Republican League of Illinois" April 16, 1915.
[202] Dziennik Zwiakowy, "An Agreement Between Messrs N. L. Piotrowski and Z. H. Kadow" September 4, 1916.
[203] Daily Jewish Courier, "Modern Problems" July 15, 1914.

Italians should generally vote Republican, they must also vote for every Italian candidate, including Democrats such as Francio Borrelli for Municipal Court judge.[204]

Foreign-language newspaper editors were clear that ethnic voting was the only way to get ahead in the American political system but the castigating tone of the remarks directed at their readership indicates that their message had not yet been fully accepted. In 1917, the organ of the Polish National Alliance endorsed Stanley Adamkiewicz for committeeman in the Seventeenth ward and scolded the city's Poles for their previous inability to unite for political purpose. Attempting to shame Polish voters into action, the paper informed them that whenever Polish wards elected a non-Pole, other groups simply laughed at them "saying we are weak-minded and have no conception of American politics." Instead, the paper asserted, Poles should show Chicago that they are capable of holding public office and of uniting behind their own candidate.[205] Thus, nationalist editors and other community leaders effectively cajoled voters into an ethnic voting pattern by appealing to their desire to become more American. Dr. A. Lebenson spelt it out for Jewish voters in 1916 – although arguably he could have been speaking to any ethnic grouping – when he argued that Jews could and should vote for Jewish candidates not because Jewish voters do not understand American political traditions but quite the contrary. Since politicized ethnicity was the American way, he noted, "the longer Jews dwell in a community, the more they become Americanized, and the more they understand the American spirit of political activity, the stronger and more self-expressive becomes the Jewish vote."[206] As with the 1915 mayoral election, however, many immigrants in Chicago were not in any case eligible to vote until sometime after the war. As Dianne Pinderhughes points out, identifiable and self-conscious ethnic voting patterns were not firmly established in the city until well into the

[204] L'Italia, "The Meaning of the Republican Victory" March 30, 1918.
[205] Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Citizens of the Seventeenth Ward, Let Us Unite!" April 2, 1917.

1920s. Thus, newcomers became socialized to the political norms, values, structures, processes and expectations of ethnic group politics even before becoming voters.[207]

Alongside the "Americanization" of groups into an ethnic voting pattern, city ward gerrymandering and other structural changes increased the likelihood of ethnic groups winning political representation in the postwar period. In the twenties, the coalition-building efforts of Czech politician Anton Cermak overcame residual resentment about earlier Irish domination of city politics among other ethnic groups. Cermak successfully consolidated the fluid, local "scattered fragments of power" into a centralized, bureaucratic and hierarchical Democratic city machine.[208] A founding member of the United Societies for Local Self-Government which campaigned against Prohibition and had 200,000 members from Irish, German, Bohemian, Italian, Polish, French and Hungarian organizations, Cermak became president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners in 1922, chairman of the Cook County Democratic Party in 1928, and mayor of Chicago in 1931.[209] His ascendancy represented both the growing political purchase of ethnic voting and the embedding of ethnic block voting into disciplined party politics; his career marked the official acceptance of cultural pluralism in the city.

The Irish were something of an anomaly in their early and continued success in Chicago politics and their domination of city and city-contracted jobs. In 1900, forty-three per cent of Chicago's watchmen, policemen and firemen and fifty-eight per cent of gas works employees were first and second generation Irish men despite only making up fourteen per cent of the male labor force. In 1926, Irish politicos held thirty-three of the fifty Democratic ward chairmanships. Their political success was no doubt due to their early arrival and English language skills but also

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[206] Dr. A. Lebenson, "The Jewish Vote in Politics" *Daily Jewish Courier*, August 25, 1916.
[207] Pinderhughes, *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics*, 42.
[208] Ibid., 71. Following Cermak's assassination in 1933, control of city politics passed back to Irish politicians but the Democratic machine remained.

to their relative unity as a national group, particularly in terms of class and religion.[210] However, in the early twentieth century, nationalist groups like Clan na Gael and the Ancient Order of Hibernians were beginning to lose wealthy members to the Irish Fellowship Club and working class members to the labor movement, specifically the Chicago Federation of Labor. The social divisions that had plagued most attempts at ethnic unity within other immigrant groups beset the Irish in the lead-up to the war and in the furious debates about Home Rule and the Easter Rising during the neutrality period.[211]

Nationalist loyalties and ethnic identities were forged outside of formal politics too. In Chicago, the church – particularly local Catholic priests – had a strong influence on the growth of ethnic identifications. In the Back of the Yards neighborhood, for example, priests and other community leaders encouraged residents to expand their circle of trust out from kinship and village groupings to all those of the same nationality. Churches and other community institutions established forums and events to signify and symbolize national pride. They endowed cultural artifacts with particular significance as symbols of ethnic culture. After the war, Father Grudzinski of St John of God parish brought over beloved Polish pianist Ignace Paderewski who presented Grudzinski with the Polish Commander's Cross of Poloniae Restitute, thereby confirming the authenticity of his Polish patriotic leadership.[212] In the Back of the Yards and other immigrant neighborhoods, community leaders – especially clergy – strongly encouraged, if not directly imposed, ethnic identity from above.

Ethnic nationalism not only provided a means to cohere the community but also buttressed the power and control of local priests, intellectuals, professionals and other would-be

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[209] John D. Buenker, "Dynamics of Chicago Ethnic Politics, 1900-1930" *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 67.2 (April 1974): 198-199.
[210] Ibid., 193-196; Michael F. Funchion, "Irish Chicago: Church, Homeland, Politics, and Class – the Shaping of an Ethnic Group" in Holli and Jones, 57-92.
[211] Elizabeth McKillen, "Ethnicity, Class, and Wilsonian Internationalism Reconsidered," 570-71.

leaders who sought recognition and respect within and without their national groups. In part, this elevation of the national group as a source of cultural identity was a defensive response to Americanization efforts. This dynamic is clear in Chicago's Catholic Church, which underwent an Americanization drive during the war. In 1916, the Americanizing archbishop George Mundelein took the reins in Chicago and set out to rid the city's church of its federated and foreign character. The Catholic publication *New World* announced his appointment with the patriotic claim that "he is fitted for Archbishop of Chicago where the Gospel is preached in twenty-five languages, but where Catholics are all Americans in the making."[213] Yet, while the *Chicago Tribune* lauded Mundelein's abolition of foreign textbooks in Chicago's 240 Catholic parochial schools, local priests loudly opposed his usurpation of their power over city-wide church issues, particularly the assignment of priests. Father Grudzinski and other nationalist priests responded to this German, centralizing and "Americanizing" archbishop by redoubling their attempts to construct and fortify a resilient ethnic nationalist identity among their congregations. Some Polish priests went so far as to threaten to defect to the Polish National Church but Mundelein made just enough concessions to keep them within the fold.[214] Perhaps local priests genuinely held a strong national identification but they must surely have understood that it was also a means through which to build their own cultural authority in Chicago.

Initially at least, the efforts of priests and leaders of other community institutions were not, like those of nationalist editors and politicians, entirely successful among the mass of

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[212] Slayton, *Back of the Yards*, 138.
[213] From *The New World*, December 5, 1915, quoted in Charles H. Shanabruch, *Chicago's Catholics,* 176.
[214] Rev. Thomas V. Shannon, "Paints Prelate the Right Man for Vast Field" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 10, 1916; *Chicago Daily Tribune* Editorials, "Language of the Land" May 20, 1916, 6 and "For Americanism" July 26, 1916, 6. For the Mundelein controversy see Edward R. Kantowicz "Polish Chicago: Survival through Solidarity" in Holli and Jones, 173-198; Slayton, chapter 6; and Shanabruch, *Chicago's Catholics*, chapters 8 and 9. Mundelein co-opted Poles into administrative positions to give them greater status and reassured them about the use of the Polish language in parochial schools but of the forty-one new parishes he commissioned, only nine were national parishes representing a substantial drop from previous policy.

immigrants. Early in the war, the turnout at nationalist meetings in the city was low.[215] It was only once the US had entered the war and ethnic groups wanted to prove their American patriotism that such public meetings became well attended. Ironically, the best way for ethnic leaders to gain a hearing among their group was to portray ethnic allegiance and national patriotism as an American characteristic; as one Polish editor trumpeted, "Let us learn from the Americans how to love our flag!"[216]

The controversy surrounding the burial and memorial of Sam Meisenberg who had lost his life fighting for the US in Mexico and was then taken to the bosom of Chicago's Jewish community provides a glimpse into the gaps between the leadership and the sometimes reluctant followers in that community. The Order of the Western Star, a Jewish fraternal organization, taxed its members to pay for Meisenberg's burial and to erect a monument at the Jewish Waldheim cemetery to honor him as a Jewish hero. Sam's brother Eddie disrupted the monument unveiling ceremony with accusations against the Order, claiming that the family had been promised half of the funds raised but had not received a penny and had not even been invited to the unveiling ceremony. Eddie Meisenberg confronted the organization's officers and demanded the family's share of the funds but the officials refused to hand anything over. Eddie therefore halted the ceremony, denouncing it as an advertising scheme for the Independent Order of the Western Star.[217] For the Meisenbergs at least, the claims of ethnic identity had not as yet replaced those of kinship and they resented the Order's attempt to act as community guardian of their loved one's memory. On the other hand, Sam's two brothers Eddie and Meyer wrote to President

[215] For example, see Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Nationalistic Mass Meeting" September 14, 1914.
[216] Dziennik Zwiakowy, "We and the Americans," November 11, 1914.
[217] Daily Jewish Courier, "A Monument on the Grave of a Jewish Hero." September 22, 1916; and "Unveiling of Meisenberg's Monument Halted." September 25, 1916. The United States awarded Samuel Meisenberg a purple heart, but not until 75 years after his death.

Wilson to tell him that they "stood ready" to fill their dead brother's shoes to fight for the honor and the flag of the United States.[218]

Many nationalist community organizations were little more than empty vehicles designed to generate status for the ethnic leadership. The more effective and popular institutions among them, however, erected and sustained ethnic divisions within neighborhoods and among the ethnically diverse working class. Unsurprisingly, the packers of South Chicago promoted and utilized ethnic nationalism largely for their own purpose just as politicians, priests, and community leaders had done. Meat-packing bosses recognized that ethnic identity was a powerful tool with which to weaken the collective spirit within their workforce and hinder union-building. John O'Hern, superintendent of Chicago's Armour & Co., told a Senate commission that the company preferred workers to join ethnic nationalist societies because it made them better American citizens.[219]

The stockyard unions themselves played a dual, even contradictory, role during the war. In 1917, the newly-formed Stockyards Labor Council launched a recruitment drive to which unskilled Slavic immigrants were extremely responsive. By war's end there were around 20,000 Slavic union members, mostly Poles. In 1918, the SLC won the 8 hour day and other concessions from the federal arbitration process, which inspired loyalty to both the union and the federal government among the rank and file. On the one hand, the union had a powerful assimilative effect, introducing and familiarizing immigrants to the collective nature of industrial work and encouraging them to combine together with thousands of fellow citizens from a mix of ethnicities, nationalities and races. On the other hand, the Stockyards Labor Council structured its membership by skill level and community residence, reinforcing ethnic divisions among the

[218] New York Times, "Three Sons for the Flag," (April 30, 1914): 4.
[219] Frederick Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 321; Robert Slayton, *Back of the Yards*, 144.

workforce. Moreover, the SLC provided separate union locals for women and blacks, further segmenting workers along gender and race lines.[220]

Ethnic divisions may not have been as deeply structured within Chicago's labor unions as racial divisions but they were nevertheless significant. While it might be fair to conclude as Barrett and Roediger do, that "teaching Americanism, the labor movement also taught whiteness," it also seems fair to add that immigrants were made more sharply aware of their own ethnicity during their wartime stint as union men.[221] The AFL selected Polish nationalist John Kikulski, a former president of the Polish Falcons and an active member of the Polish National Alliance to direct union work among Poles. Kikulski presided over the largest affiliated union in the stockyards with a membership of 16,000 in early 1918. If the stockyard workers were rising during the war, Polonia rose with them.[222]

In the city-wide labor movement too, ethnic and labor identities merged and bolstered one another. Irish labor activists dominated the leadership and sought to rally Chicago's workers on behalf of Irish freedom. John Fitzpatrick headed both the Chicago Federation of Labor and the Chicago-based Labor Bureau of the American Commission on Irish Independence. Anti-British sentiment during the neutrality period, particularly after the Easter Rising, led the CFL to a strong anti-war position; its membership campaigned hard against militarism and imperialism. However, shortly after the US entered the war, the CFL pragmatically capitulated to organizational pressure from national union leadership to endorse the American Federation of Labor's Loyalty Pledge.[223]

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[220] James R. Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987): 155, 230.
[221] James R. Barrett and David Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality and the "New Immigrant" Working Class" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16, 3 (Spring, 1997): 15.
[222] Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 196.
[223] Elizabeth McKillen suggests that although Gompers employed strong-arm tactics and avoided democratic processes in pushing through the Loyalty Pledge, local labor leaders were not so timid as to agree quietly to a pledge they fundamentally disagreed with. McKillen persuasively argues that the "yes" verdict from union men represented as much an assent to corporatist forms of power sharing as to the war itself. The CFL voted 140 to 59 to endorse the

Still, they struck the right note with both Samuel Gompers and their anti-British Irish membership as they continued to press the Irish case during the war and into the post-war period using emblems of both Irish and American patriotism such as boycotts of British tea.[224]

After the war, ethnic identities began to be felt in a more divisive way inside the labor movement. As the wartime momentum for labor improvements faltered, nativism grew. In 1920, the Butcher Workmen passed a "100 per cent" resolution and stipulated that all officers of the union must be citizens. In 1921, following the end of federal arbitration and on the heels of a big drop in membership the *Butcher Workman* dropped foreign language columns from its pages. A period of bitter in-fighting and recriminations, including the brutal murder of Polish leader John Kilkulski and his replacement Stanley Rokosz, led to a massive union defeat at the hands of the packers in 1922.[225] In the early twenties, as the union crumbled and the Americanization movement gained ground, immigrant workers' attachment to class solidarity declined but the unions had helped to create the impression that by cleaving to their ethnic identity, they could yet prove that they belonged in America. Polonia may have risen with the union but it proved more resilient than the labor movement through the 1920s. Ethnic unity and identification certainly made more progress during the war and into the next decade than class unity and identification, thanks to the efforts of Chicago's religious, community, workplace and union leadership. Through the workings of both Americanization and ethnicization, both of which emphasized the importance of cultural attachments, Chicago's immigrant workers learned that it was more "American" to claim an ethnic than a class-based identity.

Pledge. See McKillen's *Chicago Labor and the Quest for a Democratic Diplomacy, 1914-1924* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995): 66-79.

[224] Elizabeth McKillen, "Ethnicity, Class, and Wilsonian Internationalism Reconsidered," 580.

[225] James Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 227.

The Meaning of America

Why then did Chicago's immigrants feel the need to prove themselves worthy citizens and to express their support for the American nation during the war and in its aftermath? Perhaps it was simply a defensive posture against growing nativist assaults on foreigners hailing from official and semi-official quarters – the federal government, city hall, the mainstream press, and super-patriotic groups like the Daughters of the American Revolution? No doubt the essentialized version of Americanism these groups promoted forced the issue. I would argue, however, that European immigrants had a powerful tool at their disposal in erecting a defense – their genuine belief in the founding political ideals of the United States.

During the wartime debate about assimilation, loyalty, and Americanization, Chicago's immigrants demonstrated a strong faith in American democracy and freedom and they embraced the opportunities that American society afforded themselves and their families. If local Polish priests resisted Mundelein's Americanizing efforts in the Catholic Church by erecting and defending their ethnic culture to protect their autonomy, the mass of Chicago's immigrants sought freedom and control in other ways. At home, in their neighborhoods, in their families, at work, in politics, and in all aspects of their lives, the city's immigrant populations sought to resist numerous forms of external control. They understood that American citizenship would allow them access to the freedom and civil rights that they had been denied in their home nations. Indeed, alongside other motivating reasons, their direct experience of oppression and arbitrary rule had stirred them to seek a brighter future in the United States. Becoming American offered them longed-for access to democracy, freedom and the rule of law as well as enticing economic prospects.

Far from the rather reluctant Americans often portrayed by immigration historians, the immigrants of Chicago embraced American citizenship during the First World War. In the spring

of 1917, between the breaking of US diplomatic relations with Germany and the declaration of war, the city's immigrants rushed to file their applications for citizenship. From early February until late March 1917, almost eleven thousand Chicagoans took out their first papers, almost as many as for the entire previous year.[226] Morton A Sturges, the chief naturalization examiner for the Chicago district, noted that between April and June 1917, fifty thousand immigrants filed papers indicating their intent to naturalize and a further twenty thousand completed the application process and become full citizens.[227] When the US resumed acceptance of citizenship papers from German and Austrian immigrants at the end of the war, officials had to deal with thousands of applications that had accumulated at the Cook County offices.[228] To be sure, some European immigrants returned to their home nations during and in the aftermath of the war but those who remained in Chicago fought hard not only to prove their own identification with the nation but to specify and define what that meant to them as American citizens. Faced with anti-hyphenism and 100 percent Americanization drives, these urban immigrants offered an alternative image and vision of the nation that had given them refuge and still gave them hope for the future. Fired by their own belief in the American creed, they actively contested the version of Americanism presented to them by superpatriots.

The city's immigrants possessed an extraordinary determination to exercise control over the process of their own Americanization. If some immigrants appeared indifferent or even hostile to official efforts to Americanize them, whether by settlement workers, city commissions or federal agencies, it was the imposed means rather than the desired ends that they usually resented. They recognized that as conformity and unquestioning obedience replaced assimilation and loyalty in Americanizers' demands, "Americanization" was used to discredit and destroy the

[226] Magyar Tribune, "Masses Acquire Citizenship" March 30, 1917.
[227] Chicago Daily Tribune, "Council Votes to Make 'Em All Yanks on the Fourth" June 12, 1917, 12.

labor movement and other organizations deemed radical, foreign or 'Un-American.' Yet, rather than reject Americanization altogether, community groups began their own Americanization campaigns and ran their own citizenship classes. Chicago's Catholic Church did back away from the term "Americanization" and started courses in "civic instruction" instead, but it continued to teach citizenship education, English language and civics. The Chicago-based United Societies for Local Self-Government, which acted as the umbrella organization for 1,200 societies embracing twenty nationalities, launched its own campaign to make citizens of newcomers in 1918.[229]

The immigrant press criticized Americanization crusaders not for their attempts to Americanize immigrants but on the basis that they misunderstood the nature of America and the process of immigrant assimilation. In short, editors suggested, Americanizers behaved in a 'un-American' way in their denial of self-determination to immigrants. A Polish paper charged that rather than adding fuel to the melting pot, intensive Americanization campaigns instead diverted strength and energy away from the nation, suggesting that they had in them "not the smallest particle of the true American spirit, the spirit of freedom." A German paper agreed, declaring that while the Department of Justice was right to investigate the sources of German propaganda, it was also justified in investigating the disloyal actions of the super-patriotic National Security League. When the masses failed to show up for a "mass meeting" organized in Chicago to protest the actions of pro-immigration congressman Adolph Sabath, the immigrant press celebrated the poor turnout. Pointing out that most "so-called" Americans were actually descendants of immigrants themselves, they hailed true Americanism as including acceptance of an open door.[230]

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[228] Sonntag Post, "One Has to Be Patient" September 22, 1918.
[229] John F. McClymer, "Gender and the 'American Way of life': Women in the Americanization Movement" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10 (Spring, 1991): 10; Shanabruch, *Chicago's Catholics*, 205; Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto*, 81; Chicago Daily Tribune, "United Societies to Turn Aliens into Americans" May 24, 1918.
[230] Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Americanization Temptations" August 7, 1918; Abendpost, "Three Cheers for Investigation!" December 9, 1918; Daily Jewish Courier, "A Mass Meeting without Masses" March 4, 1914."

Chicago's immigrants embraced the notion of the melting pot as a symbol of cultural acceptance but they did not cherish cultural symbols in the same way that they revered the *political* traditions of the United States. One editor argued that despite many immigrants returning to Europe, the melting pot continued to fuse nationalities – including those from the Central Powers – into a unified body; and what unified them was their common love of freedom, democracy and the American way of life.[231] Another editorial in the *Daily Jewish Courier* expressed concern that the war had reversed the effects of the melting pot, hardening differences among the various nationalities in the United States. When the process operated smoothly, the editorial opined poetically,

> the powerful flame under the melting pot brings out the finer characteristics in all the nationalities that live in America, and the interplay of the different character traits – each nationality manifesting in its own way its love for America – makes the whole very interesting.[232]

The city's foreign language press engaged in many discussions about the nature of Americanization and its cultural and political implications. For them, Americanization was not a one-sided process but an attempt at mutual understanding, cooperation and communication: "it is the interpretation of America to the foreign born and vice versa."[233] Foreigners could not be converted into Americans through force or by a denial of their liberties. The opposite was the case. As one editor put it, while prejudices against foreign languages and organizations posed a threat to smooth assimilation, they had no impact on political allegiances. No cultural melting pot could change an individual, he argued,

> "but the love of liberty, the love of ideals, the love of a great country of freedom and honor for its traditions and past have united the spirits of many nationalities, of which America can be proud."[234]

[231] Magyar Tribune, "The Melting Pot" May 17, 1918; "Immigration and Americanization" March 7, 1919.
[232] Daily Jewish Courier, "The Fire Beneath the Melting Pot" June 5, 1918.
[233] Magyar Tribune, "What is Americanization?" April 18,1919.
[234] Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Americanization Temptations" August 7, 1918.

Dodging criticism and defending attacks from both workers and bosses, Chicago's immigrant groups denied that immigration itself posed a problem for either the American labor movement or for social elites. Yet, while they were forthright in their insistence that immigrants had helped build and develop the nation and had contributed toward the creation of an elevated and diverse culture, their central emphasis was their own embrace of the American political heritage of individual aspiration and democratic ideals.[235]

Chicago's immigrants accepted that the war demanded an acceleration of the Americanization process but they denied that this meant sacrifice of their distinct cultural features as 100 per centers required. They did not see that their cultural characteristics, particularly the use of their native language, were relevant to their Americanization or in any way contradicted their support and service to the United States; indeed, national ideals, values and heroes could be acclaimed and celebrated in any language. Clearly, foreign-language newspapers had a vested interest in keeping native language use alive but they made a strongly patriotic case against the imposition of English on immigrant populations. When a federal grand jury recommended the suppression of the foreign language press, the *Daily Jewish Courier* pointed out that this undermined the freedom inherent in the idea of Americanism and was not only draconian but would prove ineffective as an Americanizing tool. When a Chicago judge refused a Lithuanian plaintiff's request for an interpreter and instead postponed his case, ruling that he must return to the court after he had learned English, the German *Abendpost* noted that not only did such an

[235] Narod Polski, "Nationalism," July 12, 1916; Daily Jewish Courier, "The Fear of Immigration," April 20, 1916.

approach fail to create good Americans but that its arbitrary nature discredited and undermined the principles of American jurisprudence.[236]

The immigrant press also took on strident Americanizers over the capacity of immigrants to fully appreciate and exercise the benefits of citizenship. They pointed out that their appreciation of American democracy was all the greater because a previous lack of it in their home nations had taught them to realize its value. The deliberate choice of immigrants to migrate to and reside in the United States and to renounce allegiance to their own governments when they became US citizens was driven by the guarantee of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," for all peoples. Indeed, in their flight from oppression, their search for freedom, and their adherence to democratic ideals, one writer argued, the European immigrant was – just like the Puritan aboard the Mayflower – an American before they had even arrived in their adopted land.[237]

The immigrant press took up the nativists' charges against immigrants one by one. On the whole, the press agreed that the more unsavory elements of American political culture, such as racial prejudice and anti-Semitism, had been imported from Europe where they had festered for generations. In the more tolerant American atmosphere, such prejudices were bound to dissipate. On the other hand, radicalism and bolshevism were just as likely to occur among natives as immigrants. And despite protest about illiterate immigrants, the American-born children of immigrants had a lower rate of illiteracy (1.1 %) than Americans in general (3.7 %) since education was a highly valued opportunity newly available to them in the US. In other words, immigrants arrived in Chicago uneducated and with a variety of unenlightened attitudes but they

[236] Narod Polski, "Americanization," February 6, 1919; Abendpost, "Americanization," November 10, 1919; Daily Jewish Courier, "The Fire Beneath the Melting Pot," June 5, 1918; Magyar Tribune, "The Melting Pot," March 7, 1919.
[237] Abendpost, "Americans of Foreign Origin," January 2, 1919; Illinois Staats Zeitung, "Personal Liberty," February 3, 1914.

did not pose a threat to the industrial order and would work to correct any perceived or actual shortcomings.[238]

In Chicago, ethnic groups paraded their patriotism in loud and colorful public displays on national holidays such as the Fourth of July, Lincoln's birthday and Thanksgiving Day as well as on the various Flag Days and Citizen's Days inaugurated by the government during the war years. Yet, rather than simply responding to an official call or decree, Chicago's immigrant population found ways to make the national celebrations its own. Intertwining American history with those from their home nations, immigrants used national holidays to strengthen their own status as Americans. So, Chicago Poles celebrated the shared birthday of Abraham Lincoln and Tadeusz Kościuszko, a hero of both the American Revolution and the 1794 Polish Uprising, as a day to celebrate the spread of freedom around the world. Chicago's Lithuanians hoped to take from the public celebration of Washington's Birthday lessons in how to fight for the freedom of their nation. Chicago's Jews also stressed the ideals of George Washington, who led a people to freedom and whose political principles still resonated with American immigrants even if some home-grown Americans had abandoned them.[239] Numerous events tied support for the American war effort to ethnic celebrations and patriotic commemorations. As part of the Fourth of July celebrations in 1917, immigrants performed a pageant called "The Melting Pot" in Stanford Park. The spirit of Columbia, bearing the banner of liberty, watched dances from Italy, Germany, Lithuania, Ireland and Russia performed before her. The dancers formed a circle around her and pledged allegiance to the Stars and Stripes as thousands of immigrant onlookers cheered.[240] The

[238] Daily Jewish Courier, "Silliness," July 26, 1914 and "Less Anti-Semitism in Summer," July 20, 1914; Polonia, "The American Pole," XII: 41, October 10, 1918 and "Americanization," XIII: 19, May 6, 1920.
[239] Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Kosciusko-Lincoln" February 12, 1915; Lietuva, "Chicago Lithuanians to Observe Washington's Birthday," February 22, 1918; Jewish Sunday Courier, "Washington's Birthday," February 22, 1914.
[240] Chicago Daily Tribune, "City Observes Fourth, Sane but Patriotic," (July 5, 1917): 5.

melting pot represented, for these immigrants, an embrace and celebration of ethnic cultures rather than the destruction of them.

In the many wartime parades and loyalty "manifestations" that took place in Chicago, ethnic identity played a central role. Both the city government and the ethnic leadership encouraged public displays of ethnic allegiance as well as of patriotic loyalty. On July 4, 1918, the government requested immigrants to "show their true colors" and unfurl their own national flag alongside the Stars and Stripes. The ethnic press put pressure on their readership to not only attend patriotic manifestations but to do so in national dress. One Polish editor said that although Poles do not need to prove what they know to be true, "since all other nationalist groups want to manifest their loyalty, we must too." Similarly, a Jewish editor argued that hanging flags, buying bonds and attending patriotic meetings were not visible enough demonstrations of loyalty and that Jews must make their own presence felt, seen and heard among the seventy-five nationalities parading in Chicago's loyalty manifestations or else "go on record as not being in sympathy with America."[241] Clearly, some felt a little uncomfortable about the elevation of their ethnic culture to the status of political symbol but they recognized that their public status depended upon it. Paradoxically, their willingness to don ethnic dress and flags expressed their American patriotism as much as their ethnic identification.

For most immigrants in Chicago, Americanization did not contradict their affection for their homeland. The different relationships belonged in different compartments of their lives: past and present, accident of birth and conscious choice – or as one German American described it, "Germania my mother, Columbia my bride."[242] Yet the forceful demands of the wartime and

[241] Dziennik Zwiakowy, "Let us Participate in Demonstrations," May 29, 1917; Jewish Sunday Courier, "On the Community Stage," June 23, 1918.
[242] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 51; Werner Sollors explores, to great effect, the tensions between descent and consent in American culture in his *Beyond Ethnicity*.

postwar Americanization movement combined with official and community efforts toward ethnicization pushed them to defend and promote their cultural heritage on the political stage. In order to do so without losing their initial driving wish to become US citizens, they began to embrace a new ideology – cultural pluralism – that understood the United States as a nation of subcultures.

The politicization of cultural identity during the war and in its aftermath transformed traditional definitions of American citizenship, undermining and challenging its historical pretensions to universality. The process worked from two directions. First, the one hundred per centers of the Americanization movement attached implications of political disloyalty and subversion to the cultural expressions, behaviors, attitudes and values of immigrants in the name of national unity. This story is the more familiar one. The dogmatism and authoritarianism of wartime super-patriotism sprang from a fear that the founding ideals of the nation were becoming increasingly irrelevant in the heated wartime and postwar atmosphere. The other, less familiar, story that emerges from the current analysis of the wartime activities, political arguments and cultural conversations of immigrants in Chicago is that the war also transformed mundane cultural diversity into a pragmatic nation-building strategy and mobilization policy. Thus, official and unofficial Americanizers altered the nature of citizenship, turning the lofty principles that the nation had been founded on from political ideals to be attained into inherited cultural characteristics that an individual had to prove they were in possession of. Meanwhile, ethnic leaders, associations and spokespersons redirected immigrants' desires to attain citizenship status into a politicization of their own ethnic identities. Moreover, the dual process of Americanization and ethnicization was given official legitimacy by the local and federal authorities. In wartime campaigns for Liberty Loans subscription and in the promotion of group-based ethnic support for

the war effort, city and federal governments worked together with ethnic leaders to politicize the hyphen.

In wartime Chicago, the modern "glowing oven of the melting pot", immigrants forged an abiding loyalty to the American nation.[243] Coercive Americanization does not provide the whole story as the examples of immigrants resisting ethnicization and seeking to become more American attest. The evidence suggests that in Chicago at least immigrants possessed a strong desire to assimilate and combine with their fellow Chicagoans to fully embrace the rights and obligations of American citizenship.[244] They sought to put their pasts behind them and look toward the future as American citizens in full possession of the freedoms and opportunities that status promised.[245] Eschewing the consensus and conformity often associated with national allegiance and patriotism, ethnic groups engaged in a series of conflicts that ultimately contributed to the production of a modern American citizenship. The legacy of their aspirations lived on into the twenties but so too did the changes wrought by the processes of ethnicization and Americanization. During the 1920s – as I shall discuss in chapter 5 – the politicization of ethnicity continued apace so that while ethnic associations became structurally integrated into American life, the door to new immigrants who would become American swung shut.

[243] Illinois Staats Zeitung, "The United Associations," May 29, 1918.
[244] A strong argument that the US State did indeed relate to immigrants as groups is put forward by Desmond King, *The Liberty of Strangers: Making the American Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[245] Philip Gleason, "American Identity and Americanization," in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups,* edited by in Stephen Thernstrom (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1980).

CHAPTER 4

RIOT! AFRICAN AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP IN CHICAGO

Men talk of the Negro problem. There is no Negro problem. The problem is whether the American people have honesty enough, loyalty enough, honor enough, patriotism enough to live up to their own Constitution.
Frederick Douglass, 1893

American Negroes think of themselves as Negroes first and only secondarily as Americans.
E. Franklin Frazier, 1930

The bloody and spectacular race riot that took place in Chicago in 1919 provides a dramatic medium for an analysis of the shifting meanings of race and citizenship in a modernizing industrial city. Breaking out on 27 July, the riot proper lasted for five days although shockwaves continued to be felt in the city until August 8. Thirty-eight people lost their lives in the riot, hundreds more were injured and rioters destroyed thousands of dollars of property. Among those killed, twenty-three were black and fifteen were white. Almost twice as many black Chicagoans as whites (342 black to 178 white) sustained some kind of injury.[246]

The scope and extent of the violence testifies to the strength of racial enmity and division in the city but it does not tell the whole story about race relations in the postwar period. This chapter builds upon the causal explanations of the riot developed by both contemporary commentators and historians to examine the meanings of the conflict for black Chicagoans within the context of shifting notions of race, class and citizenship. The riot was a turning point in race relations – indeed, it arguably created the concept of 'race relations' – in the city of Chicago. It represents a moment of crisis when social relations were disrupted by a convergence of events; a

[246] Peter M. Hoffman, *Biennial Reports, 1918-19 and Official Record of Inquests on the Victims of the Race Riots of July and August, 1919 (*Chicago, Ill., 1919), 20; Chicago Commission on Race Relations*, The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923).

veritable "perfect storm" that arose out of existing social relations but actually worked to radically transform social and political life for many Chicagoans, black and white.[247]

The extent of change to the content of national and racial identities during the second decade of the twentieth century – as black Chicagoans wrestled with the consequences of mass migration, war and a violent race riot – comes into sharper focus when we consider the struggles of African Americans for citizenship rights and inclusion in the preceding period. Once they had gained formal citizenship status with the post-Civil War amendments to the Constitution, black citizens demonstrated their desire and capacity to make that status meaningful and to exercise the full range of citizenship rights. In a myriad of ways in the decades leading up to the riot in Chicago, black residents of and migrants to the city continued their struggle to participate in the civic life of the nation on an equal basis with other citizens. That struggle became more concentrated and challenging in the 1890s, after the Supreme Court effectively condoned racial segregation in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision and black elites began to be seduced by Booker T. Washington's accommodationism. When Southern black migrants came to Chicago during the Great Migration that began with the onset of the First World War, the conditions they met in the city were often exclusionary and discriminatory. However, black Chicagoans continued – and migrants refreshed – the fight for civil rights and, in the interaction between their hopes and the realities of the modern city, they gave citizenship itself a new shape.

Much historical accounting of the African American experience either portrays a teleological story of progress full of valiant struggles for civil rights, or casts blacks in the role of tragic victims of racist discrimination. There is some truth in each of these histories, of course, as there is in the more recent correctives which seek to insert African American agency and

[247] See David Fort Godshalk's excellent analysis of the impact of the 1906 Atlanta race riot, *Veiled Visions: The 1906 Race Riot and the Reshaping of American Race Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,

engagement into an array of cultural, political, economic and social endeavors. Black Chicagoans were not simply victims of the 1919 race riot but were active participants, driven by a mixture of hope for the future and disillusionment with the present. The subsequent response of the black community in the 1920s – a gradual withdrawing into the group protectionism of race consciousness – was also multifaceted and complex, containing elements of fear, pride, and cynicism as well as sheer determination to survive and take a full part in the challenges and opportunities of modern life in the American city.

African Americans made and remade their own claims to social status, racial identity and American citizenship in Chicago. Examination of the meanings and consequences of the 1919 race riot not only underlines the subjugated position of African Americans but it also highlights the strength of black Chicagoan's desire for social inclusion and equal citizenship status. Moreover, the cultural and political responses of black citizens in the weeks, months and years after the riot indicates the new path set by this violent exchange between citizens. The riot helps us to understand that the meaning of racial and national identities are made – at least in part – on the ground, in the streets, clubs and community organizations by ordinary citizens acting together, if not necessarily harmoniously.

Race and Riot, 1919

The immediate catalyst to the riot was a racial disturbance on a segregated beach during which a white man, George Stauber, threw stones at black teenager Eugene Williams, who was offshore, swimming in the waves of Lake Michigan.[248] Williams had not been part of the small

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[248] Friend and witness John Turner Harris recalled Eugene Williams being hit by a rock thrown by Stauber, see William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago and the Red Summer of 1919* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1996): 5-7. However, the Coroner's official record has it that Williams was not struck on the head and death

demonstration against segregation on the beach that day; he was just out with his friends cooling off, happened into the middle of it and tragically lost his life. When he went under, blacks and whites stopped fighting one another and dived to retrieve Williams's body. The black crowd that gathered demanded that the on-duty policeman arrest the stone-throwing Stauber but the officer refused and instead arrested a remonstrating black man. Anger mounted and James Crawford, an African American, fired at police reinforcements who had just arrived – one of them, also African American, fired back and killed Crawford. All order was then lost as the blacks and whites turned on one another, shooting, stabbing, and beating.

Many ingredients present on that hot summer's day had the power to ignite a racial inferno: black Chicagoans had gathered to demand access to an informally designated "white" beach; white bathers resented and actively resisted the intrusion of African Americans; the policeman present supported the discriminatory action; black anger at the official defense of Jim Crow increased as the "lynching" of Williams also went unpunished; police responses fell heaviest on the black demonstrators rather than the white murderer; and finally, one sole African American man took direct action, aiming his gun at the unjust law enforcers. The unfolding narrative of the event itself spoke volumes about the African American demand for, and denial of, social inclusion, equal treatment and citizenship rights in postwar Chicago.

During the course of the riot, gangs of whites pulled blacks from street cars and beat them, sometimes to death; cars loaded with white youths – and sometimes a policeman or two – rode into the South Side's "black belt" shooting indiscriminately; black homes and businesses were bombed and burned. For their part, blacks shot at whites from the windows of apartment buildings; they sniped at cars with white occupants passing through the black belt; and a group of

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was due to drowning alone, see Hoffman *Biennial Reports 1918-19*, 28. However he died, the incendiary result of William's death remains the same; his drowning was a catalyst rather than a cause of the riot.

young black men pulled an elderly Italian peddler from his bicycle and stoned and stabbed him to death. However, while the majority of blacks were killed at the hands of marauding white mobs, a large proportion of white deaths were the result of blacks acting in self-defense. Chicago's African Americans were more the victims than the aggressors in the violent confrontation but when they found their community under attack, they fought back and they fought hard.[249]

There had been a great deal of posturing in the early days of the riot between political rivals Mayor William "Big Bill" Thompson and Governor Frank Lowden, both refusing to accept responsibility for calling out the state militia. The standoff prolonged the violence but ended on the evening of 30 July following appeals by city employers and a delegation of black community leaders for Mayor Thompson to restore order with the troops at his disposal.[250] The militia moved in and after their crackdown, violence became sporadic, with only isolated incidents throughout the rest of the week.

The riot had confined most African American residents of the black belt to that area for several days since travelling through the adjacent white neighborhoods was too dangerous. By Saturday, however, the meat packers – against the advice and wishes of union leaders – were liaising with the police and militia about a return to work at the stockyards of around 15,000 black men and women on Monday morning. That evening, however, a fire was set among the homes of Polish and Lithuanian workers in Packingtown rendering almost one thousand of them

[249] Narratives of the riot can be found in Peter Hoffman, *Biennial Reports 1918-19;* CCRR *The Negro in Chicago* and Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 32-66. Beside differences over the exact cause of Eugene William's death, these narratives are supportive. The coroner came to a conclusion about the cause of death and the suspected killer(s) in most of the 38 cases. Besides the drowning of Eugene Williams, 13 of the 22 blacks killed were beaten, stabbed or shot by white mobs or white individuals within a mob, 8 were killed by policemen, one was a policeman himself killed in the line of duty. The coroner determined that only 3 of the 15 whites who died were killed by black mob action whereas 6 were killed by blacks (and one Mexican) defending themselves in what the coroner termed "justifiable homicide." Two others were part of a rioting crowd (one shot by a black man and one hit on the head by a brick). Four more died at the hands of an unknown assailant or by someone whose race was not specified.

[250] "Negroes Call on Mayor, Lowden, to Stop Riots" *Chicago Tribune* July 31, 1919; Although sections of the State Militia and National Guard were called into active duty on July 28 and 29, Mayor Thompson did not mobilize them until July 30. See Field Orders "Headquarters Mobilized State Forces", in CCRR Minutes, Illinois State Archives.

homeless. The authorities were not able to fix the source of the fire – reports of a carload of black men leaving the scene led to speculation that anyone from local white gangs to members of the I.W.W. had blacked up and set the fires in order to prolong and intensify the racial inferno. Most contemporary observers agreed that African Americans would not enter that neighborhood themselves.[251] The fire did delay the return to work of black workers until the following Thursday, when they traveled to and entered the stockyards under a heavy military guard and thus sparked a 10,000 strong walkout by union men who objected not only to the presence of these largely non-union workers but also to that of their armed guard at a time of intense union organization. Two days later – August 8th – the militia withdrew and the race riot was officially declared over.[252]

The search for causes began even while the riot still raged and has continued within the historical literature. Contemporary observers focused particularly on the dramatic increase in Chicago's black population following the Great Migration during the war years and the resulting overcrowding and expansion of the black belt. They also focused on the hostility and racist activities of the Irish gangs, or "athletic clubs" in the neighborhood adjacent to the black belt.[253] The Cook County Coroner pointed to failures of resources, training and will within the police force that allowed the conflict to grow to such massive proportions.[254] Local journalist Carl Sandburg investigated the racial strife caused by competition in housing, jobs and city politics.[255]

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[251] "General Dickerson says Negroes Did Not Start Stockyards Fire" *Chicago Whip* August 9, 1919. Reformer Mary McDowell testified to the CCRR that she believed the fire was set by white "hoodlums" in blackface; a Superintendent at Armour & Swift reported that Polish workers were the most likely arsonists because of conflict between them and Lithuanians, he added "there isn't a colored man . . . who would attempt to go over into the Polish district and set fire to anybody's house over there. He wouldn't get that far." See CCRR *Negro in Chicago*, 21. See also Walter F. White "Chicago and Its Eight Reasons" *The Crisis* XVIII (October, 1919): 295-6.
[252] "Troops Freed; Chicago Men at Home Tonight" *Chicago Tribune*, August 9, 1919.
[253] CCRR *Negro in Chicago*, chapters 1 and 3; *Report of the Cook County Grand Jury, August 1919*; The Coroner's Report stated that "Uncontrolled hoodlumism running wild was the prime and moving factor in the production of race rioting," see Hoffman *Biennial Reports 1918-19*, 24
[254] Hoffman, *Biennial Reports 1918-19, passim*
[255] Carl Sandburg, *The Chicago Race Riots* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1919).

Most historians understand the riot as the result of a combination of racial tensions that exploded in the summer of 1919, although there is some disagreement over how important specific factors were. The major existing account of the riot, William Tuttle's excellent *Race Riot,* points to increasing tensions over housing, deteriorating workplace relations, including racist union policies; city-wide political resentment following the re-election of Mayor Thompson in the spring of 1919 with the help of the black vote; and the emergence of a new militant outlook among urban blacks in the postwar period. Historians Allen Spear and Thomas Philpott both emphasize conflict over housing although they disagree about the extent of segregation in the black belt.[256] More recently, labor historians Rick Halpern and James Barrettt make the case that racial policies and practices in the stockyard unions during and after the war were much improved, but that the "Big Five" packers worked to exploit existing racial tensions in the workforce and created the conditions for violent conflict.[257] Urban sociologist Janet Abu - Lughod concludes that intense competition over jobs and housing in the post-war period allied with challenges to the hegemony of Chicago's North Shore social elite brought on a riot that was about class, economics and the use of city space as much as it was about race.[258]

Investigating the causes of a race riot necessarily highlights the ways in which racial antagonism was mounting in the period leading to the riot. It leaves little space for an assessment of the windows of opportunity that existed for good and peaceable relations among the citizens of Chicago. But it is worth remembering that even in 1919, all options were not foreclosed and the

[256] Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto,* 1890-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); Thomas Lee Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto: Immigrants, Blacks, and Reformers in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991)
[257] See Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago's Packinghouses, 1904-54* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997) and James Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990). The "Big Five" packers were Swift, Armour, Morris, Cudahy & Schwarzschild and Sulzberger.
[258] Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): chapter 2.

position of African Americans in the city was not fully determined. There were spaces, both figuratively and literally, for challenges to the racial veil that had begun to fall across the city from the late nineteenth century. The riot, however, narrowed those spaces to a significant extent and transformed the ways in which black Chicagoans related politically to the city and to their own citizenship.

My argument departs from earlier accounts of the riot because rather than emphasize the sociological factors that caused the riot, I try to understand the political meaning that the riot held for black Chicagoans and the ways in which they refashioned the nature of their citizenship in response to it. William Sewell's discussion of historical sociology's various approaches to temporality suggests the potential richness of an interpretation that accepts both path dependency and contingency but exaggerates neither.[259] The 1919 race riot did not emerge as the inevitable result of larger historical processes such as urbanization or modernization or of even of the labor migration of black workers from the South. Nor was it simply an accident that might have happened anywhere but just happened to occur in Chicago. It was an "event," brought about through political contestation (and its failure), which gave, in Sewell's words, "new meaning to existing social networks and cleavages, thereby creating new collective identities." Similarly, the consequences of the riot were largely the result of the political meanings that Chicagoans attached to the event. That is, the riot did not act like a metaphorical "Big Bang" that set in motion unavoidable consequences for racial citizenship but rather, it represented a crossroads in race relations that was subject to the interpretations and political decisions of the urban community. This chapter's focus on African Americans highlights the pivotal nature of the riot as

[259] William H. Sewell, "Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology," in *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*, edited by Terrence J. McDonald (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996): 245-80.

an event that shaped black citizens' relationships with one another, with other Chicagoans, and with the nation. The following chapter examines the official response of the city.

Across the country in 1919, especially in the cities, few releases existed for the many tensions produced by abrupt social, economic, and political postwar dislocations. In a national context of economic hardship, job competition, union busting, and political repression, and at a time when African American expectations were higher than ever, racial conflagrations broke out in twenty different cities across the United States. Chicago witnessed the largest and most violent of the race riots that took place during the national "red summer" of 1919. The riot brutally drew the color line through areas of city life previously untouched and increased race consciousness on both sides of the line. Its impact on urban race relations proved dramatic and far-reaching, not least in the framing of the problem as one of "race relations." The riot underlined to Chicago's African American population that their hopes and aspirations for full, unequivocal and color-blind citizenship were not as attainable in the urban North as they had hoped. By doing so, the riot produced a very different kind of African American citizen; one with less hope invested in national ideals but with a greater attachment to racial group identification.

Jim Crow's Strange Chicago Career

In the post-Civil war period, Illinois had earned the reputation of being a fair state in the promotion and protection of civil rights for all of its citizens. Not only did the state repeal its stringent antebellum Black Codes in 1865, it was also the first state to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment. Freedmen in Illinois further won the right to vote, serve on juries, hold office, and send their children to public schools alongside white children following the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment and the adoption of a new color-blind state constitution in the 1870s. African American legislator John Jones, elected by white and black voters alike in 1871, was the

first African American to hold public office in Illinois and his politics were solidly within the abolitionist-Republican tradition of the state. Accountable to the party rather than to black voters and with many powerful white allies and supporters, Jones eschewed special pleading for African Americans but insisted that civil rights "are essential to our complete freedom." After the Supreme Court overturned the 1875 Civil Rights Act, Illinois secured its liberal reputation by passing a state provision for the protection of civil rights in 1885.[260]

Between the end of the Civil War and the 1890s, then, black Chicagoans demanded and came to enjoy many formal rights of citizenship. They could vote and serve on juries, send their children to integrated schools, and expect to be treated equally under the law and in all public spaces and public accommodations. In fact, civil rights and equal treatment under the law represented a political priority for black Chicagoans who vigilantly guarded against all infringements.[261] However, in the wake of the *Plessy* decision which formally separated equality from racial integration, state legislators and the courts began to narrow the meaning and application of civil rights legislation. Illinois was typical in this regard. Despite continued agitation to advance and protect their status, including a number of legislative amendments to the civil rights act, enforcement grew patchy.[262] Increasingly, previously "inalienable" rights were

[260] Charles Branham, "Black Chicago: Accommodationist Politics before the Great Migration" in *Ethnic Chicago,* edited by Holli & Jones, 211-261; David Gerber, "A Politics of Limited Options: Northern Black Politics and the Problem of Change and Continuity in Race Relations Historiography." *Journal of Southern History* 14:2 (Winter, 1980): 235-255; "John Jones on the Colored Race," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (January 2, 1874): 5.

[261] Allan H. Spear dates the shift within Chicago's black elite from civil rights activism to accommodationism at around 1900. Before that date, black leaders held "Indignation" meetings at the first evidence of any discrimination and organized a formal Vigilance Committee to protect civil rights as a central part of their civic activities. See Spear, *Black Chicago*, chapter 3.

[262] Elizabeth Dale, "'Social Equality does Not Exist among Themselves, nor among Us': Baylies vs. Curry and Civil Rights in Chicago, 1888." *American Historical Review* 102. 2 (April 1997): 311-339. Although the provisions of the Civil Rights Act were strengthened in 1902, Dale shows how this had little impact on real access to public accommodations for African Americans in Chicago.

recast as privileges that black Chicagoans had to earn. As black newspaper the *Chicago Defender* advised its readers, "Our progress depends on the quality of our citizenship."[263]

Chicago's African American leaders responded to encroaching legal discriminations at the national and state level during the 1890s in a number of ways. Some clung tight to the Republican-abolitionist tradition and fought hard against the gradual increase of official discrimination and segregation in the city. Others took a more conservative course, preferring to follow the lead of Booker T. Washington whose 1895 Atlanta Compromise address shifted the emphasis away from citizenship rights when he said, "It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercise of these privileges."[264] Most prominent black Chicagoans combined elements of each approach, defending civil rights gains wherever possible but often accommodating to the seemingly unstoppable march of Jim Crow etiquette. Chicago did not adopt the *de jure* system of segregation laws that was coming to dominate the South by the turn of the twentieth century but the extralegal practice of racial discrimination and segregation – in schools, housing, and public accommodations – did become a more evident feature of the city's racial dynamic in these years.

The question was, however, far from settled and many Chicagoans worked hard to resist any deterioration in black citizenship status. One woman stood out in her attempts to defend post-emancipation advances in civil rights during the 1890s and into the twentieth century. Arriving in the city in 1893, Ida B. Wells was already an established crusader against lynching and defender of black civil rights. A close associate of Frederick Douglass, Wells followed his example by touring Britain in 1893 to increase awareness of her cause and to create external pressure on the

[263] Editorial, *The Chicago Defender*, October 4, 1919; See also Kevin Gaines *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) for a discussion of how the black elite accommodated to increased discrimination and segregation by adopting an ideology of "uplift" and respectability.
[264] Booker T. Washington, "Atlanta Compromise Address" downloaded from http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39/.

US government to take action against lynching. In a British publication, she outlined her understanding of black American identity, expressing her preference for the term "Afro-American" over "Negro." She explained,

> Negro leaves out the element of nationality and we are all Americans, nor has the Republic more faithful and loyal citizens than those of our race. Some of the 'colored' people are not distinguishable from whites, so far has their Negro blood been diluted, but they are all African Americans – that is, Americans of African descent.[265]

Strongly committed to the nation but cognizant of the color line, Wells believed that black citizens had taken great strides in education and civil rights since emancipation but were experiencing a backlash from some white Americans who wished to keep blacks in an inferior position. She aimed to defend the gains stridently and forcefully by encouraging adherence to the national creed and its promise of equal citizenship status.

Wells arrived in Chicago just as preparations for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition were getting underway. The famous fair was designed to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America, and to act as a showcase for the progress of the nation in the four centuries since. Organizers excluded African Americans from its planning, organization and exhibitions, despite numerous attempts by black community groups and individuals to gain access to organizing committees and state boards. Even as prominent an American as Frederick Douglass only found a way to participate by gaining appointment as representative of Haiti. Wells joined together with her old friend Douglass to write, publish and distribute a protest pamphlet, *The Reason Why the Colored American is not in the World's Columbian Exposition*.[266]

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[265] Article from *Lady Pictorial* (May 1893), quoted in Ida B. Wells, *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, edited by Alfreda M. Duster (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970): 108.

[266] The literature on African American exclusion from the fair includes "Introduction" to Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*; Ann Massa, "Black Women in the 'White City,'" *Journal of American Studies* 8 (December 1974): 319-37; Elliott M. Rudwick & August Meier "Black Man in the 'White City': Negroes and the Columbian Exposition, 1893" *Phylon* 26.4 (1965): 354-61; and a slightly more upbeat version provided by Christopher Robert Reed's *All the World Is Here": The Black Presence at White City* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

The pamphlet proudly and defiantly documented the progress and achievements of blacks in education, the arts, business, and the professions over the previous quarter-century. It also catalogued the past and present discriminations of the United States against African Americans. Contributor Ferdinand L. Barnett was sorely disappointed that the "first opportunity to show what freedom and citizenship can do for a slave" was squandered by the fair's organizers. The pamphlet protested the whitewashing of the "White City" and along with it America's racial past. Douglass encouraged black Americans to contest the status quo, to refuse to cooperate in their own re-enslavement, and to fight for their place in the American future. In the struggle for citizenship rights, "conflict," he thundered "is better than stagnation."[267]

Wells's own approach to racial justice was direct and unapologetic. At the fair, she "rejoiced with all my soul" when a black man refused service at the Kentucky Building broke the nose of the manager.[268] She spent most of her time at the fair in the Haitian Pavilion alongside Douglass, handing out copies of their pamphlet. Her protest extended to opposing the proposed "Colored American's Day," an objection that was shared by other black Chicagoans who insisted that since "there is no 'white American citizen's day,' why should there be a 'colored American citizen's day?'" Wells betrayed some class snobbery when she expressed her fear that the black hordes "attracted there by the dazzling prospect of free watermelons to eat, will give our enemies all the illustration they wish as excuse for not treating the Afro-American with the equality of other citizens." While the subsequent stereotyped depiction of blacks in the press coverage of the day proved her fears at least partially founded, her principle objection was not to the black

[267] Ida B. Wells et al., *The Reason Why the Colored American is not in the World's Columbian Exposition* edited by Robert W. Rydell (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1999): 14-15.
[268] Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform*, 96.

masses but to their official designation as a racial subset of citizens.[269] Resentment about the patronizing and segregationist character of Colored Jubilee Day was not universal, however, and a number of prominent blacks, including Frederick Douglass, participated in the hope of influencing the event in a positive way. Wells retracted and begged Douglass's pardon for boycotting his speech when she read of the use he put his platform to – a strong argument on behalf of African American citizenship, participation and progress.[270]

During their protest, Douglass and Wells were made aware of the importance of presenting a united front in public. In earlier planning appeals, the Board of Lady Managers had justified its sidelining of black women by pointing to the irreconcilable approaches of two of Chicago's black women's groups to the representation of African Americans at the fair. In the event, black women were able to insert one exhibit which counterbalanced the "Aunt Jemima" representation selected for them by whites. Joan Imogen Howard of New York presented a national statistical survey, which concluded with an integrationist assessment:

> [Black women] feel themselves American, as truly as do those who proudly trace their ancestry back to the Pilgrim Fathers, the Puritans of England, the broad liberal-spirited Hollanders, the cultivated and refined French Huguenots; and as an element in the progress of this boundless home . . . there is implanted in the minds of the best of this struggling people a determination to rise to a common level with the majority.[271]

Yet, despite this small triumph, the most significant result of the local dispute with the Board of Lady Managers was that many black Chicagoans came reluctantly to accept the need to appear at least to have no political differences among themselves, however untrue that was in fact. Race was gaining rather than losing significance and had come to trump gender solidarity, political affiliation, and even patriotism, however ardent.

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[269] *Topeka Call*, July 15 and May 7, 1893 quoted in Meier and Rudwick "Black Man in the 'White City'", 360; Patricia A. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University North Carolina Press, 2001): 95.
[270] Wells *Crusade for Justice*, 118-19.
[271] Joan Imogen Howard quoted in Massa, "Black Women in the 'White City,'" 335.

Although Wells had met with some criticism from black Chicagoans over her protests, many welcomed her strident outspokenness and she was honored when the first women's club in Chicago named itself the Ida B. Wells club shortly after the fair ended. Settling down with her family (she married Ferdinand L. Barnett in 1895 and had four children), Wells-Barnett involved herself in numerous civil rights and social justice cases in the city and state as well as touring nationwide. Even she was surprised, however, at the stiff resistance by other members of the black elite to her plans to establish a kindergarten for black children on the south side because of their fear it would entrench the color line. While Wells-Barnett felt that a black kindergarten was better than no kindergarten and ensured no reference to race was made in its recruitment publicity, the strong opposition to the kindergarten signaled the continuing high level of sensitivity among Chicago's black leaders to encroaching racial segregation at the turn of the century.[272]

Wells-Barnett pursued an integrationist agenda, being elected secretary of the Afro-American League in 1899, playing a role in the founding of the NAACP, and taking an active part in the work of the National Equal Rights League. A grass-roots, maverick campaigner, she was critical of the accommodationism of Washington and his supporters and of the more conservative members of the NAACP. In 1910, she established a community settlement, the Negro Fellowship League, in Chicago and funded it in part with her own probation officer wages. Her biographer argues that despite being known as the "Jane Addams of the Negroes," Wells-Barnett's approach to social work could not have been more different to Addams's. Wells-Barnett "had neither the resources nor the temperament to seek out a middle ground in "the Negro Problem" in the way Addams appealed to a natural harmony of interests in her discussion

[272] Wells, *Crusade for Justice*, 250.

of 'the labor question.'" Wells-Barnett had to tread on many toes to get the results she needed. Moreover, while Hull House and later the Chicago Urban League worked to "adjust" immigrants and black migrants to the city, Wells-Barnett asserted that it was the social system and not the people caught in it that needed most adjustment.[273]

In the early years of the twentieth century, Wells-Barnett's radical voice grew increasingly exceptional. Among her dwindling number of allies, Wells-Barnett counted attorney Albion Tourgée, who she called "the Negro's best friend" for his outspoken opposition to racism. Until 1898, Tourgée wrote a column for the Chicago newspaper *The Daily Inter-Ocean* in the mode of an unredeemed Radical Republican.[274] He had actively campaigned against racial distinctions under law. As Plessy's defense lawyer, he challenged the reductionist legal definition of "race," pointing out that neither legislators nor scientists recognized the binary distinction between black and white races in Jim Crow laws:

> They are called 'races' it is true, but the only racial distinctions recognized by the act are 'white' and 'colored'. . . [T]hey reduce the whole human family into two grand divisions which [are given] the term 'races', the white 'race' and the 'colored' race."[275]

Tourgée's legal arguments proved futile and racial bifurcation proceeded apace within national law and political culture at the turn of the century, finding its local analogue in Chicago.[276] Upon his death in 1905, Wells-Barnett saluted Tourgée's tireless efforts to "arouse the conscience of the country that justice should know no race, color or creed."[277] She grew dismayed as Northern white liberals and urban black leaders began to distance themselves from the political rhetoric of

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[273] See Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform*, chapter 5 for a full discussion of the social service work of Ida B. Wells-Barnett; Addams quotation, 172.
[274] Wells *Crusade for Justice*, 120-21.
[275] Quoted in Mark Eliot, "Race, Color Blindness and the Democratic Public: Albion W. Tourgée's Radical Principles in Plessy v. Ferguson," *Journal of Southern History*, 67 (May 2001): 322.
[276] See Matthew Pratt Guterl, "The New Race Consciousness: Race, Nation and Empire in American Culture, 1910-1925," *Journal of World History* 10.2 (1999): 307-352 and Matthew Pratt Guterl, *The Color of Race in America, 1900-1940* (Harvard University Press, 2001) for detailed and insightful analyses of this development.

Reconstruction, refocusing their attentions on "uplift" and self-help rather than arguing for equal access to citizenship rights as Tourgée had done.[278]

The turn to accommodationism among Chicago's black leadership was certainly not uniform or complete but many acceded to it. While a liberal integrationist outlook had still held sway, the black elite refused to entertain segregated facilities in the city. Proposals for a black YMCA on the South Side had been shelved in 1889 because of protests about community segregation. Yet just two decades later, some of the city's black leaders led the campaign for one – including Ida's husband Ferdinand L. Barnett. Sears and Roebuck magnate Julius Rosenwald put up half the funds and the project opened its doors in 1913. Chicago's black leadership remained divided, however, over the wisdom of entertaining any segregated facilities. Calling on Chicago's strong assimilationist tradition, black lawyer Edward E. Wilson opposed the Jim Crow YMCA scheme, calling it "a means to travel to heaven by a back alley."[279]

Similarly, when black physician and civic leader Dr. Daniel Hale Williams founded Provident hospital in 1891, it had been a consciously integrationist project. Designed to give black doctors and nurses equal access to training and jobs, the hospital was initially staffed by an interracial team and admitted patients irrespective of race; around sixty-five per cent of patients in the first decade of operation were white. Funding and support for the hospital came from wealthy white Chicagoans such as Philip Armour and George Pullman as well as from the black community. However, after white philanthropists relocated the hospital building southward and left more of the financial support to black donors, Williams's bitter rival George C. Hall drew the hospital into the black belt's community structure. When a well-baby unit opened in the hospital

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[277] Mark Elliott, *Color-Blind Justice: Albion Tourgée and the Quest for Racial Equality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): 314.
[278] Arvarh E. Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1966): 1-8; Gaines *Uplifting the Race*, passim.
[279] *Broad Ax,* December 31, 1910. Spear, *Black Chicago*, 100-101.

in 1918, regular *Defender* columnist Dr. Wilberforce A. Williams's response indicated the lowering of vigilance against racial segregation among black community leaders. Williams cheered: "It is highly gratifying to note that we as a people are laying aside a great deal of tomfoolery about "drawing the colored line" and have gotten down to the fundamental principles of self help and self uplift." By the time of the race riot in 1919, all of Provident's nurses and almost all of the staff physicians were black, African Americans provided around 90 per cent of its funding, and the numbers of white patients had fallen substantially.[280]

Thus, as the emphasis shifted in the early twentieth century away from equal status and civil rights and toward racial uplift and self-help, options for Chicago's black citizens began to narrow and scope for meaningful democratic citizenship eroded. Political participation, which African Americans had been relatively free to exercise in Chicago, also became altered in meaning and substance. Largely confined to the Republican Party, black politics became limited further by considerations of race. Although political parties and municipal machines had proven to be effective mechanisms for social integration and mobility for ethnic immigrant groups, black candidates remained marginal and confined to ever more segregated black constituencies.[281] In Chicago, black politicos were able to trade black votes for a degree of political influence but unlike the interracial partisanship available to John Jones in the 1870s and 80s, this often meant forging a politics based on group racial interests first and foremost.[282] Black participation in politics in twentieth-century Chicago increasingly worked to deepen rather than ameliorate African Americans' isolation from mainstream political life in the city.

[280] Dr. A. Wilberforce Williams, "Child Welfare – Save the Babies Weighing and Measuring Station," *Chicago Defender* August 17, 1918; See Spear *Black Chicago*, 97-100 for a fuller discussion of Provident Hospital's racial positioning.
[281] Gerber, "Politics of Limited Options" 240-41.
[282] Branham, "Black Chicago," 260-61.

Yet despite such increases in systemic racial segregation and discrimination, substantial openness and fluidity in the city's race relations remained. In 1910, for example, African Americans were less residentially segregated from native whites than the city's Italian immigrants. Moreover, in the face of setbacks in the scope of civil rights and despite encroaching racial marking, black Chicagoans continued to present disruptions and refusals to the prescriptive racial veil falling across the city. Until the riot, at least, the city still offered African Americans a range of possibilities for living integrated lives as American citizens. Although some black community leaders grew jaded in response to the undermining of their citizenship rights, thousands of African American migrants arrived from the South during the First World War. These migrants to the city re-injected a large dose of hope and energy into the fight for democratic citizenship as they discovered and developed new and alternative modes of making themselves over as northerners, urbanites, soldiers, workers and union members.

African American Claims on Citizenship

Modern city life proved liberating in many ways for black migrants from the South. In Chicago, African Americans gained access to votes, schools, jobs, civic participation and other benefits of citizenship previously denied to them. Yet the emancipating dynamic at work in Chicago also undermined those traditional, intimate, personal relations that many blacks had known in the rural South and replaced them with impersonal relationships. The modern city represented a whirlwind of change that disrupted and destabilized established identities but also offered Southern migrants unprecedented access to individual freedoms.[283] Moreover, of the

[283] See chapter 3 "Tradition" in Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World* (London: Profile Books, 1999) on the impact of modernity on tradition and custom and James R. Grossman *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and Migration, 1916-1930* (Chicago, 1989) on the opportunities presented by migration.

myriad allegiances and identities available to African Americans in Chicago, racial attachments numbered as only one option. There was nothing determined about the nature of group relations that individuals formed in the city – and for African American migrants, they certainly did not have to be based on their racial identity. As we have seen, the generation of African Americans living in Chicago in the decades before the Great War had not been tightly circumscribed by race either in their treatment nor their political outlook. For sure, black Chicagoans had felt the promise of the founding political ideals – of civil liberties, democracy and equal treatment under the law – begin to slip from their grasp in the decades before the war. The arrival of energetic young migrants burning with passionate patriotism and a desire to cash the 'promissory note' signed by the founders of the nation brought fresh hope to the struggle for black citizenship.[284]

Between 1910 and 1920, the city's black population increased by around one hundred and fifty per cent.[285] Historians have followed contemporary commentators in citing the in-migration of large numbers of African Americans as a contributing factor to the increase in racial friction in the city and particularly the racial violence of 1919.[286] The migrants themselves, of course, intended no such consequence to their move from the rural and small town south to the industrial giant of Chicago. Moreover, the Great Migration of the war years only actually increased the

[284] Martin Luther King's famous 'I Have a Dream' speech in 1963 referred to the promissory note: "When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

[285] The increase was from 44,103 in 1910 to 109,458 in 1920. The total Chicago population stood at 2.7 million in 1920. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States 1910, Volume 2, Population Reports by States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913): 512; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States 1920, Volume 3, Population* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923): 274.

[286] See especially CCRR, *The Negro in Chicago*, 2-3; William M. Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago and the Red Summer of 1919* (Champaign, Ill., University of Illinois Press, 1996): 106-107; Spear, *Black Chicago*, part 2; and Grossman, *Land of Hope*, passim. Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots* offers the only discussion about the Chicago riot which explicitly states that a large influx of black migrants was not the cause of an increase in racial tensions

black percentage of the city's population from 2 per cent to 4.1 per cent.[287] The riot was neither inevitable nor caused by the Great Migration. It cannot be explained by the simple presence of African Americans but rather must be understood in the context of their political reception in and reaction to the city.

Those southern blacks who made the journey north faced numerous challenges and adjustments to their lives, relationships and identities. Some came as individuals, others as part of a family, still others as part of the transplantation of an entire church congregation or small community. But whether they came alone or as a member of a group, they came in search of freedom, opportunity and a greater degree of status recognition. The Great Migration represented the search for an alternative conception of citizenship for many African Americans; whereas many southern blacks had previously sought improvement in their condition by claiming the autonomy gained through land ownership, they now looked to the employment opportunities and life chances of northern industrial cities to fulfill their thirst for full and equal citizenship and its perquisites. As migration historian James Grossman has it, the Great Migration represented a "second emancipation."[288]

African Americans living in the South obviously knew that their skin color marked them as former slaves or descendents of slaves. In the politics of the New South, this status came to compromise their claims to citizenship.[289] Yet those who left in the Great Migration hoped that the force of their constitutional rights would negate the weight of the past and allow them access to freedom and opportunity as individual citizens in the Northern cities. Black migrants wrote letters to institutions in Chicago expressing this hope and articulating their desire to leave the

[287] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States 1910, Volume 2,* 512; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States 1920, Volume 3,* 274.
[288] Grossman, *Land of Hope,* 19.

South where blacks were lynched, segregated, disfranchised, and prevented from earning a decent living. One migrant – a disabled teacher from Lexington, Mississippi – wrote, "I am so sick and tired of such conditions that I sometimes think that life for me is not worth while and most eminently believe with Patrick Henry 'Give me liberty or give me death.'"[290] Migrants also expressed hopes that the North would provide opportunities for them as American citizens. Behind the drive to take advantage of the new economic opportunities opening up to them in the industrial North was a deep longing for something better than second-class citizenship status. One man wrote to the Chicago Urban League from Memphis, Tennessee, "Seeing the wonderful opportunity that is being offered the colored man of the south by the northern industries and the aid in which your organization is giving them it aroused within me the ambition that prompts every man to long for liberty."[291] Similarly, from Sanford, Florida a would-be migrant enquired after work opportunities and stated, "I still have the desire to seek for myself a section of the country where I can poserably better my condishion in as much as being asshured some protection as a good citizen under the Stars and Stripes . . ."[292]

Once they had migrated to the city, migrants wrote letters home noting the improvements in their standard of living as well as the accoutrements that came with having citizenship rights. Access to a good education for themselves or their children, the availability of the ballot, and the recognition of equality that is transmitted through modes of address were important gains for many southern migrants seeking the "promised land" in Chicago. Writing to his relatives in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, one migrant lamented not having come to Chicago earlier:

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[289] Steven Hahn, in *A Nation Under Our Feet,* makes a strong but ultimately unconvincing case for the growth of race consciousness in the slave and post-Emancipation South. His suggestion that Black Nationalist ideology and practices originated under slavery is not substantiated.
[290] Emmett J. Scott, ed. "Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-18," *The Journal of Negro History* 4. 3 (Jul., 1919): 304.
[291] Emmett J. Scott, ed. "More Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-18," *The Journal of Negro History* 4.4 (Oct., 1919): 447.
[292] Ibid., 439. The original language of the letters was retained and published so I have not corrected it here.

> I should have been here 20 years ago. I just begin to feel like a man. It's a great deal of pleasure knowing that you have got some privilege. My children are going to the same school with the whites and I don't have to umble to no one. I have registered – Will vote the next election and there isn't any 'yes sir' and 'no sir' – its all yes and no Sam and Bill.[293]

Thus, African Americans came to Chicago with some expectation of finally enjoying the rights of the individual they had hoped were secured with the post-emancipation constitutional amendments. The Great Migration was a movement infused with hope for a better future, animated by a strong patriotic belief in what the United States could deliver and interwoven with a deep yearning for inclusion in the nation's body politic.[294]

African American migrants were certainly not passive in their new claims to citizenship and they did not shy away from its responsibilities, contributing to the nation as workers, soldiers, and citizens. One significant means of underlining the commitment of black citizens to the national community and demonstrating their patriotism – as well as allowing for their inclusion in the satisfactions of citizenship and national belonging – was military participation. Indeed, historian Steven Hahn notes that freedmen and women first constructed a conception of citizenship for which they qualified by linking the natural rights theory of the Declaration of Independence with black participation as combat troops in the Union army.[295] It was a conception that rested on claims to a robust and strong manly character with an independence of spirit. Frederick Douglass underlined this notion when he said, "Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters, U.S.; let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and

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[293] Ibid., 459.
[294] For a contemporary study of the migration that conveys this sense of optimism, see Emmett J. Scott, *Negro Migration during the War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1920). See also Peter Gottlieb *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-1930* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996) for details on the motivation of migrants.
[295] Steven Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press): 110.

bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on earth that can deny he has earned the right of citizenship."[296]

African Americans in Chicago sought to continue this conception of citizenship through participation in the state militia. Black companies formed as a tribute to the achievements of the Civil War and as a signifier of black independence. Participation gave black men access to public space in which to openly demonstrate their active duty as responsible citizens. The citizen-soldiers of the black militia companies utilized the trope of republican citizenship but also challenged older forms of citizenship, reinforcing the ability of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to remove whiteness from citizenship requirements and insisting on the ability of the militia to both recognize and foster model citizens.[297]

In the 1890s, the state had refused to officially recognize or support any black militia company and did not admit blacks to regular units. Yet, financed and supported by Chicago's black community, African American soldiers persevered in their service, drawing on the legacy of the Civil War and on the glory of military service to the nation in their participation in the militia. Following a long political campaign that took the unit's Major John Buckner into the state legislature where he drafted a resolution for state support of the company, the Ninth Battalion finally gained official recognition, becoming part of the Illinois National Guard in 1895. The following year, Buckner was commissioned to lead the battalion.[298] Buckner, a Republican stalwart, had been instrumental in forming and drilling the battalion and he refused to accept second-class treatment of his men. In late 1897, after he had declined substandard transportation for the battalion to training camp and withheld them from marching in review

[296] Douglass quoted in Eleanor L. Hannah, "A Place in the Parade: Citizenship, Manhood and African American Men in the Illinois National Guard, 1870-1917," *Journal of Illinois History*, 5 (Summer 2002): 85.
[297] Ibid., 86.
[298] Ibid., 95; Willard B. Gatewood, "An Experiment in Color: The Eighth Illinois Volunteers, 1898-1899" *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 65 (1972): 296.

before Governor Tanner in protest, Buckner was court-marshaled and suspended from duty for six months. The call to arms in the Spanish-American war came while Buckner was under suspension and although he was soon reinstated, he immediately resigned under Tanner's threat to disband the battalion if he continued to lead it.[299]

Many black soldiers saw Cuba as a proving-ground for the race's national loyalty and patriotic intent. Buckner's replacement, Major John R. Marshall, helped build the Ninth to regimental strength and readied them for action. Illinois was one of only three states to send an all-black regiment with a complete roster of black officers into combat. Presenting their colors on July 31, 1898, Governor Tanner noted the import: "This is the first regiment in the world . . . to give the Afro-American race the full measure of citizenship in mustering in 1300 Negroes, all Negroes from colonel down to private, to go to the front to battle for the country."[300] The black press too got behind the war effort; even the pro-Buckner *Illinois Record* proclaimed, "the Negro shall grow in the full height of his American manhood and stand out in the battle as a soldier clothed with all the inalienable rights of citizenship."[301] The black regiment served in Cuba as the Eighth Illinois Infantry Regiment and returned to Chicago in March 1899, receiving a thunderous welcome home – from the people in the streets and in both the black and white press.[302]

African American men demonstrated their loyalty and capacity as citizens in military service of the nation. The "Old Eighth" as the regiment became known inspired both patriotic and race pride in black Chicagoans. John R. Marshall, who became the first African American to gain the rank of Colonel, led the regiment into the twentieth century, securing nationwide support and

[299] Hannah, "A Place in the Parade" 97-8; Gatewood, "An Experiment in Color," 296-300.
[300] Gatewood, "An Experiment in Color," 303.
[301] *The Illinois Record* (Springfield) August 5, 1898.
[302] Gatewood, "An Experiment in Color," 308; "History of the Old 8th Regiment" *The Chicago Defender* February 22, 1919.

funding for the regiment, including funds for a designated armory.[303] In 1917, the regiment entered the Great War. Black migrants to Chicago registered to fight in large numbers and their letters home expressed patriotism and willingness to serve the nation as citizen-soldiers. One migrant wrote to his old southern doctor as the country entered the Great War: "I am praying that God may give every well wisher a chance to be a man regardless of his color, and if my going to the front would bring about such conditions I am ready any day."[304]

In total, two and a half thousand black Chicagoans went to war in segregated army units with the aim of fighting for democracy abroad and then bringing it home with them. Many of them served in the 370th US Infantry (as the Old Eighth became).[305] The Chicago press recorded the courage, fortitude and heroism displayed by the "fighting devils" of Chicago in France and heralded the patriotic support they were receiving from African American citizens at home. The city's leading black newspaper, *The Chicago Defender*, editorialized about the objectives of the Race in entering the war with such enthusiasm: "We hope to win, not only freedom for America, but full and unquestioned citizenship for ourselves."[306]

African American newspapers, just like the ethnic immigrant papers and the mainstream white press, promoted Liberty bond drives and announced public meetings and parades to rally support for the boys in France. The black press went out of its way to encourage and to demonstrate the patriotism of the black community. The community rallied to the cause. In February 1918, 18,000 people – both black and white – attended a commemorative celebration for Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. At the event, a 500-man chorus sang "America" and four companies of soldiers surged through the aisles to great cheers. Editor of *The Defender*,

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[303] "History of the Old 8th Regiment" *The Chicago Defender* February 22, 1919.
[304] Emmett J. Scott, ed. "More Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-18," 461.
[305] *The Broad Ax's* lead story (February 15, 1919) gives the figures as 2,500 black soldiers who left Chicago for war and 1,298 returning. A slightly lower figure of 1,850 black troops is given by Walter White in "Chicago and Its Eight Reasons," *The Crisis* 18 (October, 1919).

Robert Abbott, presented the 365th Infantry with a regimental flag and Governor Lowden sent a message declaring that African American soldiers serving the nation had fully justified Lincoln's greatest act. To rapturous applause, Rev. C. T. Walker hailed the glory and sacrifice of black soldiers who, he declared, had fought in every important conflict in American history – from Bunker Hill to San Juan Hill – and who continued to do so in the Great War.[307]

Patriotic editorials supporting American participation in the war abounded in black newspapers and they were often wedded to a plea for greater racial justice and democracy at home. In the pages of *The Defender*, editor Abbott argued that while the revolutionary war had created a nation and the civil war had united the nation, that "this Great War changes the meaning of 'American' . . . America having placed high before the world her standard, must let herself be lifted up to her ideal and let "all men" be drawn with her to this upper level."[308]

Such rhetoric was at once inspirational and restrictive, tying black advancement at home to evidence of their national loyalty and unbending support for the war. At the national level, W. E. B. Du Bois received much criticism for his patriotic call-to-arms in the pages of *The Crisis* magazine but there is evidence to suggest that Du Bois and other black leaders believed that wartime loyalty and black citizen-soldier participation would prove useful levers in the pursuit of full citizenship for all African Americans. Despite federal investigation and his personal promise of loyalty to the U.S. government, Robert Abbott's *Defender* continued to carry articles denouncing racial injustice and segregation. At the same time, his newspaper did all it could to galvanize its readership's loyalty to the national cause.[309] While some black leaders no doubt

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[306] Editorial, *The Chicago Defender*, January 5, 1918.
[307] *The Chicago Defender*, February 16, 1918.
[308] *The Chicago Defender* September 21, 1918.
[309] Historians have debated the motivation for Du Bois's article "Close Ranks" which appeared in *The Crisis* in July, 1918 and which called for blacks to "forget our special grievances" for the duration of the war. See Mark Ellis, "'Closing Ranks and Seeking Honors': W.E. Du Bois in World War I," *Journal of American History* 79 (June 1992): 96-124; William Jordan, "'The Damnable Dilemma': African American Accommodation and Protest during World

made compromises in their civil rights' position because of the war effort, it is clear that most, including Abbot, saw no contradiction between their passionate support for the national military cause and their demand that African Americans receive their national due.

The strength of the black press's patriotic position was apparent in their adoption of strident nativist rhetoric. *The Chicago Defender* in particular latched on to mainstream nativism in order to emphasize and underline black American's national loyalty and undivided citizenship. Above a photograph of the 350th Machine Gun battalion, composed largely of black Chicagoans, the paper emblazoned the headline, "Just 100 Per Cent Americans – No Hyphens or Traitors Here."[310] Undoubtedly, this patriotic posturing was designed to demonstrate that African Americans deserved better treatment since their loyalty as born-and-bred citizens could not be questioned. One *Defender* piece re-printed with approval a *Tribune* article, "Damn the Hyphen," in order to underscore the evil of racial segregation. If, as the *Tribune* insisted, "there are only Americans in this land," then to divide them by either hyphens ***or*** segregation was surely wrong, unjust and unpatriotic.[311] The *Defender's* objection to segregation extended even to principled opposition to the "misguided friends" who hoped to raise a separate support fund for sending provisions to the black troops:

> The white, the black, and every other loyal American citizen is fighting for the same cause. They are all soldiers, all depending on those they leave behind for every comfort and necessity. Why, then, is not every man of whatever color, entitled to the same thing? Why should our men depend on our group for what the people of the entire country owe them?[312]

With the return of black troops to Chicago at the end of the war, the patriotic jubilation in the press hit new highs. As the arrival of the "Old Eighth" approached, the *Broad Ax* listed the

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War I," *Journal of American History* 81 (March, 1995): 1562-1583, as well as Ellis's commentary in the same issue, 1584-1590.

[310] *The Chicago Defender*, February 16, 1918.

[311] "Two Viewpoints," *The Chicago Defender*, August 17, 1918.

[312] "Misguided Friends," *The Chicago Defender*, February 16, 1918.

regiment's accomplishments. Sacrificing 95 men and an officer, the regiment had broken through the Hindenburg line and driven back the Prussian Guard in September 1918. For their bravery, soldiers from the regiment had been awarded 100 honorary medals, 22 American distinguished service crosses, and 68 French war crosses.[313] Almost half of them would never return from France but for those courageous men and officers who arrived back in Chicago in February 1919, the *Broad Ax* proclaimed breathlessly:

> We've got to give them the time of their lives, and you who are prejudiced against colored people, if you don't want to be sneezed at, laughed at, and jeered at, you had better take your dear old mangy carcass into the country, because . . . the Eighth are coming, the Eighth are coming, coming, yes, coming from over there in France.[314]

In the event, their fellow Chicagoans welcomed home the highly decorated Old Eighth with loud enthusiasm as it paraded through the city.[315] Once the war was over, the black press continued to encourage African Americans to take matters into their own hands and to fight for democracy and justice at home with the same spirit that black soldiers had shown in France. *The Defender* argued that unless real democracy for all became a reality, it might have been better for black men to have stayed in unmarked graves in France.[316]

For sure, Chicago's African Americans hoped that their service and sacrifice for the nation during the war would assist in bringing democracy home and making it applicable to all US citizens. The education of their children was a priority and essential to securing access to full citizenship status for the next generation. During the war, they continued to fight hard to retain equal access to public schools and resisted the growing tendency to segregate them. When the Chicago Board of Education circulated a letter attempting to obtain the acquiescence of leading black citizens to the separation of black and white children in city schools, the *Defender* ran a

[313] Leader, *The Broad Ax* February 15, 1919.
[314] "Whoop it up for the Eighth," *The Broad Ax* February 15, 1919.
[315] "The Gallant Eighth," *The Broad Ax,* February 22, 1919.

defiant piece, declaring that "Separate schools may be desired by a few traitorous Negroes who would put the possible increase of jobs as teachers above the great question of equal rights, but for the great masses of our people – NEVER!"[317] The paper continued to run editorials and articles condemning the "growing custom" of placing black teachers in black belt schools and of segregating students in separate classrooms within schools that were traditionally integrated, such as Wendell Phillips High.[318] It traced some of the African American support for segregation in education to the founding of the all-black Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity at the University of Chicago. Condemning KAP members as cowardly "scalawags" who sought to entertain the ignorance of the South in Chicago simply to create better employment opportunities for graduates, the *Defender* pointed to the University's tradition of resistance to Jim Crow and demanded it remain integrated throughout.[319]

The newspaper cast its own resistance to segregating trends in terms of citizenship rights and patriotic opposition to the wartime "un-American Kultur" that was driving Jim Crow's advance. That is, criticism of Jim Crow marked it as an alien imposition, an intruder into the national psyche and not a genuine aspect of the American national creed. As such, it could be confronted and defeated in the same way as the Central Powers – with an outright victory for democracy and justice. Similarly, positive developments during the war were often framed as the accomplishment of national goals and ideals. When a former black janitor became a First Lieutenant in the war effort, his white former boss, who held the rank of Second Lieutenant, had to salute him, and the black press ran the story as a patriotic lesson in the opportunity and

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[316] Editorial, *The Chicago Defender,* February 22, 1919.
[317] The letter from Chicago Education Board member Max Loeb is reprinted in full in Robert S. Abbott, "Loeb's New Propaganda," *The Chicago Defender* August 17, 1918.
[318] See, for example, *The Chicago Defender* editorials on June 15, 1918 and October 5, 1918.
[319] Articles arguing against KAP as a cowardly Jim Crow institution appeared in *The Chicago Defender* on February 2, 1918 and February 9, 1918.

possibility offered to African American citizens by the national cause.[320] The mudsills and bottom rails were rising; wartime victory would make real the promise of the American creed for all.

Hopes ran high on the home front. Black migrants' desire for acceptance and inclusion in the nation as citizens contained an expectation of improved living standards, upward social mobility and economic well-being. As employment opportunities opened up in northern cities during the war, African Americans seized them with both hands. Writing home to his former pastor in Alabama, a black worker reflected on how the prospect of a good income helped him keep faith with the national creed:

> I witnessed Decoration Day on May 30, the line of march was four miles, eight brass bands. All business houses were closed. I tell you the people here are patriotic. . . People are coming here every day and find employment. Nothing here but money, and it is not hard to get.[321]

Industrial employment had afforded a route to integration for many foreign immigrants and promised to do the same for African Americans during the war. In 1910, a majority of Chicago's black workers had jobs in domestic service but labor shortages caused by the war and the temporary abatement of mass immigration from Europe meant that jobs became available for African Americans in the city's industries.[322] By 1917, around 12,000 blacks worked in the Chicago stockyards, making up approximately one quarter of the workforce. While the work was mostly dirty, hard and unpleasant, it also offered better pay, conditions and a greater degree of independence and dignity than domestic service.[323]

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[320] "White Lieutenant Salutes Superior" *The Chicago Defender*, January 5, 1918.
[321] Quoted in Carl Sandburg, *The Chicago Race Riots* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1919): 35-36.
[322] Scott, *Negro Migration during the War,* chapter four details the employment situation in Northern cities generally and Chicago in particular. In 1910, a little over sixty percent of employed black men and more than eighty percent of employed black women were in domestic service.
[323] James Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*; Alma Herbst, *The Negro in the Slaughtering and Meat Packing Industry of Chicago* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1932).

Black workers had previously been used in the yards as strikebreakers. In 1894 and again in1904, packers had dismissed black strikebreakers once the strike was over and the union broken.[324] When African Americans did gain a more permanent entry into the yards during the war, the packers found the presence of these "loyal" and "American" workers a useful bulwark against labor radicalism. One Chicago packer recalled:

> You know the foreigners we had were Bolsheveki, dangerous, radical . . . Therefore the big businessmen in the stockyards got together. We sent our agents into the South . . . we pulled through the war and the last strike . . . because we could count on the black man.[325]

The stockyard packers were able to cultivate loyalty among African American workers despite their relatively low status in the yards, the difficulties they faced in getting hired initially, promoted subsequently and of finding steady, reliable employment.[326] Union leaders at the time and historians subsequently have queried the apparently misplaced loyalty inspired by the packers – when told about the functions of collective bargaining, one black worker famously asked, "It all sounds pretty good to me but what does Mr Armour think of it?"[327] Sociologist Alma Herbst suggests that black workers brought with them a legacy of plantation paternalism and patronage and were too cowed – or ignorant - to question the authority of the boss.

Yet many African American migrants had made the conscious decision to leave paternalism and patronage behind them in their movement northward and were hardly likely to embrace it once more in Chicago. Their decision to act as strikebreakers and turn away from the unions had other rationales, the most important being their experience and knowledge of racial

[324] Alma Herbst, *The Negro in Slaughtering*, chapter 2 *passim*; Paul Street , "The Logic and Limits of Plant Loyalty: Black Workers, White Labor, and Corporate Racial Paternalism in Chicago's Stockyards, 1916-1940" *Journal of Social History* 29, 3 (Spring 1996): 659-681.
[325] Quoted in Paul Street, "Logic and Limits," 661-2.
[326] Ibid., *passim*.
[327] Street, "Logic and Limits," 659.

discrimination within the labor movement itself.[328] As one black stockyard worker explained, "unions ain't no good for a colored man. I've seen too much of what they don't do for him."[329] For many black workers, the chance for industrial employment appeared a more viable and rational choice than collective class action and consciousness.

Nevertheless, an opportunity for solidarity with fellow workers did arise in the years before the riot. During the war and in the postwar period, leaders of the labor unions – most notably those of the Stockyards Labor Council – made a sincere attempt to make their movement interracial. At the start of a mass recruitment drive, organizer John Kikulski appealed to the patriotism of black, immigrant and native white workers, "While there will be varied differences in our physical makeup and thoughts, there is one thing we all hold in common and that is our right to a living wage, and our rights in the pursuits of happiness as American citizens."[330] The SLC leadership tied wartime patriotism to the union membership drive and appealed to blacks to embrace their national heritage through the collective bargaining process.

Yet, it still proved too difficult to bring black and white workers together in common cause – at the peak of wartime union membership, only about one quarter of black workers were unionized. There were too many difficulties to surmount: as well as the history of union color bars and the residual resentment caused by black strikebreaking, wartime union practices did not match the color-blind rhetoric. The SLC organized membership by neighborhood residence instead of along race lines but this effectively placed the majority of black workers in Local 651, located in the heart of the black belt. The physical separation of black neighborhoods from the

[328] Other reasons being the relatively precarious position of black employment in industry (numerous other Chicago employers still refused to hire blacks), blacks' lack of access to ethnic and foreman-based hiring networks which kept them more dependent on employer favor, and the support that packers provided for black community institutions. See Street, "Logic and Limits" 663-665 and James R. Barrett, "Unity and Fragmentation: Class, Race, and Ethnicity on Chicago's South Side, 1900-1922" *Journal of Social History* 18. 1 (Autumn, 1984): 48.
[329] CCRR *The Negro in Chicago*, 424.
[330] Kilkulski quoted in Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 134.

yards and black Local 651 from the heart of community labor organization were clearly factors in the weakness of black support for the union.[331] The union failed to play the integrative function for black citizens that it played for foreign immigrants in Chicago's stockyards.

Employers helped to prevent interracial unionism from becoming a reality. When, in July 1919 – only days before the riot broke out – the SLC organized a mass interracial march right through the heart of the black belt, the packers used their influence to have the march banned. Police insisted that black and white workers must march different routes in order to keep the racial peace. The black newspaper *The Whip* was skeptical of official motivations for keeping a mixed parade off the streets, noting that the separation of workers by race was actually far more divisive and destructive of relations than allowing it to go ahead. The paper also reported that when the black workers arrived at the final rallying point, immigrant workers cheered an enormous welcome for their black brothers: "All the bands played 'The Star Spangled Banner' and heads were bared which showed undivided sentiment in the 100 per cent Americans that assembled there."[332] The assembled workers waved their American flags and listened to a number of speakers, including T. Arnold Hill of the Urban League and black union organizers. The rally provided a glimpse of the possibilities for a united American workforce.

Yet Chicagoans took out their many – work and community related – frustrations on each other's bodies just a couple of weeks later. Many of the conflicts that begun in the yards – between union members and black strikebreakers, between labor organizers and the packers, and between skilled Irish and German butchers and unskilled Polish and Lithuanian workers – all played themselves out in the course of the race riot and subsequent recriminations. African American workers occupied a pivotal position between all key players in the yards despite their

[331] Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 195.
[332] "Big Parade by Stockyard Workers Features Big Drive for Members" *The Chicago Whip,* July 19, 1919.

own relative powerlessness – as Alma Herbst observed, "by July 27, 1919, the conflict between the packing house employers and workers for the allegiance of the Negroes had become so sharp that each laid the responsibility for the race riot upon each other."[333]

The riot ended black Chicagoan's limited experiment with interracial unionism. Prior to the Packingtown fire, Slavic immigrant populations had been sympathetic toward their black neighbors; they had been conspicuously absent from the mobs attacking blacks and some residents of Packingtown had come to the assistance of blacks being mobbed. Parish Priest Father Louis Grudzinski had labeled the riot a "black pogrom" and appealed for calm, while Polish labor leader John Kilkulski tried to redirect anger away from blacks and toward the packers, hinting that they had had a hand in causing the racial strife. The goodwill between white immigrant workers and black is demonstrated by the fact that a Polish foreman reported that his white baseball team had been playing a black team in the black belt when the riot broke out; as soon as they realized the danger, the black players became concerned for their white colleague's safety and insisted on escorting them to the elevated train station. Reformer Mary McDowell later wrote, "our Polish neighbors were not the element that committed the violence; it was committed by the second and third generation of American born young men."[334]

The riot irreparably damaged the formerly good relations between white and black stockyard workers as each group witnessed the color line descend despite the union's efforts to prevent it. In the aftermath of the riot, black workers left the union in droves. By 1921, membership of black Local 651 had fallen from a war-time high of approximately 10,000 to a

[333] Alma Herbst, *The Negro in Slaughterin*g, 45.
[334] Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor,* chapter 2 *passim*; Herbst, *The Negro in Slaughtering ,* 49-50; Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle*, 222; Mary McDowell quotation from Alma Herbst, *The Negro in Slaughtering.,* 22.

post-riot low of 112, of whom only 49 were in good standing. Moreover, union membership as a whole fell from around 68,000 in 1919 to less than 40,000 a year later.[335]

Black participation in the war, the wartime migration north, the embrace of industrial employment, and union membership were all driven by African American hopes for a better life for themselves and by an optimistic and patriotic belief in their nation's stated creed. Postwar expectations of an improvement in citizenship status for African Americans were therefore extremely high – and quickly dashed. Indeed, the raised hopes and increased demands of black citizens who had done their part in the war could also have led to an increase in anxiety and resentment among some white Chicagoans. Just three days before the riot, the black 803rd Pioneer Infantry arrived back from Europe and its eighteen hundred members marched with pride through Chicago's downtown district.[336] No doubt this was a threatening and provocative sight to the Irish street gangs who habitually beat up black people in neighborhood parks as well as their political sponsors in the city's Democratic Party. Perhaps too, the sight of patriotic African American heroes parading in public rankled the resentful white homeowners of Hyde Park. In that neighborhood, members of the Kenwood and Hyde Park Property Owners Association placed a large banner across the street bearing a slogan borrowed from the French trenches, "They Shall Not Pass" to keep blacks out.[337]

Reports and rumors that black ex-soldiers had been instrumental in inciting the race riot were refuted by the Coroner who noted that, on the contrary, a number of black former servicemen had volunteered to assist in the suppression of the riots. These twenty-six men had "performed valuable service in patrolling, quieting the excited colored population and relieving

[335] Herbst, *The Negro in Slaughtering,*, chapter 3; Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor*, 70.
[336] "Chicago Welcomes Its Colored Heroes" *Chicago Daily News*, July 24, 1919.
[337] Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 174.

the grave fears of the women and children."[338] The charges against the ex-soldiers, however, attest to the anxiety that armed uniformed black men aroused in some Chicagoans. This was an anxiety that was excited further by the existence of the Old Eighth armory, situated in the black belt; during the riot, a rumor that black rioters had broken into the armory and taken rifles and ammunition circulated but proved false.[339]

Black soldiers returning to Chicago had fought for their country in the name of democracy and they hoped that their dedicated wartime service had earned them the equality of treatment that citizenship status promised. When they were met instead with an increase in segregation, a decrease in employment opportunities, a campaign of bombing against their homes, and finally, a full-scale race riot, many became understandably bitter. One black ex-soldier recounted how he felt as he lay in hiding from a white gang during the riot:

> The injustice of the whole thing overwhelmed me – emotions ran riot. Had the ten months I spent in France been in vain? Were the little white crosses over the dead bodies of those dark-skinned boys lying in Flanders for naught? Was democracy merely a hollow sentiment? . . . Must a Negro always suffer because of the color of his skin? "There's a nigger – let's get him!" Those words rang in my ears – I shall never forget them.[340]

Others were more angry than despairing, another ex-soldier said "I can shoot as good as the next one, and nobody better start anything. I aint looking for trouble but if it comes my way I aint dodging it."[341] With heavy hearts, members of the Old Eighth donned their uniforms again to fight a new battle on the streets of their hometown.[342]

African Americans living in or moving to Chicago in the second decade of the twentieth century sought a new place for themselves in American society, a place that promised more freedom, more dignity and more opportunity than they had previously known. Migrants from the

[338] Hoffman, *Biennial Reports 1918-19*, 23.
[339] CCRR, *The Negro in Chicago*, 29.
[340] Quoted in Ibid., 483.
[341] Ibid., 481.
[342] Ibid., 42.

South and existing black residents of the city looked for access to full citizenship status through legal and political avenues, by participating in civic organizations and community institutions, by joining the war effort, and by securing employment and union membership. Yet, everywhere they encountered discrimination based on their race – either through outright exclusion, differential treatment or through a myriad of other methods that denoted their difference as racial. Despite this, black Chicagoans continued to seek equal access to mainstream services and facilities in the city and they resisted strongly the many attempts to segregate or exclude them. They struggled to make the promise of American citizenship real. The riot of 1919, an assault on their bodies, their property and their very lives, made that struggle appear futile.

The New Negro and the Growth of the Black Metropolis

The riot had a powerful impact on the way that black Chicagoans understood their position in the city and the nation. While shifts were already taking place in the political outlook of Chicago's African American leadership in the years leading up to the riot, the conflict itself hardened and deepened the trajectory, heightening race consciousness among black community leaders and encouraging all black Chicagoans to strengthen their racial identifications. Black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier observed a decade after the riot that, "American Negroes think of themselves as Negroes first and only secondarily as Americans." African American identity had become mediated by race to a much greater extent than previously.

On the national stage, a new official taxonomy of race joined with the postwar "New Negro" movement to displace older understandings of race and nation.[343] From 1920, the US census no longer contained a "mulatto" category. An ossified black/white race-as-color division replaced race-as-national origin within cultural understandings. Some black intellectuals and

members of the black elite resigned themselves to, while others positively welcomed, the new racial bifurcation. The hopes of many black Americans for a fully integrated citizenship had been dashed so many times that national black leaders like W.E.B. Du Bois began to embrace racial consciousness and separate development as the way forward. Mixed race novelist Jean Toomer lamented that "the New Negro is much more negro and much less American than was the old negro of fifty years ago."[344]

This shift was apparent even in the career of one of Chicago's most radically integrationist black activists, Ida B. Wells-Barnett. During the war, Wells-Barnett had maintained a critical independence from the national cause, although she was certainly no pacifist. Indeed, she kept a gun in her house and advised that "a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home."[345] Investigated by the FBI for her "treasonous" activities during the war, she refused to retract her criticism of the government for the "legal lynching" of black soldiers in Houston in 1917.[346]

Although Wells-Barnett's biographer argues that she was, unusually, able to combine a pride in African American institutions with an insistence on equal citizenship rights and full participation for blacks in American society, the balance between these approaches shifted after the 1919 riot. She had become convinced of the utility of and necessity for self-reliance within black communities when she visited East St Louis to investigate the race riot of 1917. Indeed, after studying the St. Louis situation and noting the recent increase in racial incidents, including murders, bombings and physical assaults in Chicago, she presciently cautioned that a race riot was brewing in the windy city. In July 1919, she wrote a letter to the *Chicago Tribune* urging the

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[343] Guterl, "The New Race Consciousness," 352.
[344] Toomer quoted in Guterl, *The Color of Race*, 182.
[345] Ida B. Wells, "Southern Horrors," in Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *On Lynchings* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2002): 52.
[346] Wells, *Crusade for Justice*, 367-370.

"legal, moral, and civic forces" of Chicago to take preventive action. When the riot erupted just a few weeks later, Wells-Barnett braved the pavements every day to investigate. Although she saw no violence first-hand, she took gruesome reports from "dozens" of riot victims at her home, testimony she recorded for the use of the grand jury.[347] Despite her indefatigable nature and her years of working tirelessly for integration, equality and civil rights, her close-up view of the riot dented her optimism about black chances of achieving full citizenship rights.

In the 1920s, Wells-Barnett displayed very little interest in interracial organizing and instead involved herself in a number of race-based initiatives, institutions and clubs. She had met Black Nationalist leader Marcus Garvey during the war, hosting a dinner for him when he visited Chicago and came to endorse his positions and projects.[348] In her memoir, Wells-Barnett recalls W. T. Stead speaking at the first meeting of the Ida B. Wells' Club in January 1894. He had then berated the black community for not being unified enough in action, "You people have not been lynched enough! You haven't been lynched enough to drive you together!"[349] In 1919, perhaps Wells-Barnett thought at last they had.

With the demise of the radical Republican tradition represented by Wells-Barnett in Chicago, black citizens became increasingly disillusioned about the possibility of national belonging. The riot capped the process. Black community leaders and the black press shared in the bitter sense of disillusionment, becoming increasingly cynical about the promises of American life. In 1920, the radical paper *The Whip* editorialized: "Americanism! Inspiring, exhilarating, and pulse-enlivening, is now ludicrous, contradictory, evanescent, and disgusting."[350] In their despair and disappointment, black Chicagoans moved more and more

[347] Letter to Editor, *The Chicago Tribune* July 7, 1919; Wells, *Crusade for Justice* 406; it is likely that the transcripts of Ida B. Wells-Barnett's interviews with black riot victims were destroyed in a fire at her home in the 1920s.
[348] Wells, *Crusade for Justice*, 380-2.
[349] Ibid., 123.
[350] "The Magic of Names," *The Chicago Whip,* July 31, 1920.

toward racial solidarities and away from civic pride in the nation to which they belonged. One man told the Race Commission,

> The recent race riots have done at least one thing for the colored race. In the past, we Negroes have failed to appreciate what solidarity means. We have, on the contrary been much divided. Since the riot we are getting together and devising ways and means of protecting our interests.[351]

The new racial ideology of self help and racial solidarity had begun to develop among the black elite as racially exclusive institutions became more common. Providing an alternative to the increasingly marginal role African Americans could claim in mainstream society, the black middle classes embraced this outlook in the decade after the riot. Made possible by the large numbers of black southern migrants during the war, the growth of the "black metropolis" on the Chicago South Side was also a pragmatic response to enforced and persistent segregation.

Moreover, a new generation of black leaders cast a positive light on these developments rather than framing them as an external imposition or even simply realistic accommodationism. When southern migrants initially arrived in Chicago, they were scolded by black community organizations and the black press for their casualness of dress, speech and deportment. One headline in the *Chicago Defender* admonished black Chicagoans to "Work, Bank Your Money, Dress Neatly, Don't Giggle."[352] Concerned about the poor impression ignorant and uneducated southerners might create in Chicago's public spaces – which would reflect badly on the race as a whole – black leaders sought to "adjust" the migrants to urban life. Their patronizing and condescending position arose from their keen desire and intention for African Americans to belong to the city as a whole.

After the riot, some "Old Settlers" went further, blaming the southern newcomers for the deterioration in race relations that had led to the violence. For them, the riot marked a turning

[351] CCRR, *The Negro in Chicago*, 46-7.

point away from a "golden age" of integration and equality in Chicago history. The migrants, they felt, did not know how to behave in the city and their unrefined manner reflected badly on all black Chicagoans. Long-term city residents recalled the greater degree of freedom they possessed in earlier days, before the wartime migration and the riot. One woman who had arrived in 1906 noted that the city then was "as night and day" to the city in the twenties. She noted that "Why, you could work anywhere. You could even demand what you wanted, but you can't do that now. The people wasn't so prejudiced then as they are now." Another early settler, who had arrived in 1887, recalled that in the early years, 'respectable' miscegenation and racially integrated neighborhoods were common. When one early migrant arrived in 1912, he recalls "there wasn't any difference shown in color at all. In the Loop, they had Negro clerks in all the stores . . . people would get the first doctor they could, regardless of color. . . You take the restaurants – you could go into any one of them downtown and you would still be served courteously." Some old settlers grew bitter toward the changes they attributed to the slow, ignorant Southern character of black migrants who arrived during the war. As one city dweller argued, earlier settlers "were just about civilized and didn't make apes out of themselves like the ones who came here during 1917-18. We all suffer for what one fool will do."[353]

In fact, as I have shown, both segregation and race consciousness were already increasing before the wartime migration began but the impression among long-term residents that the riot represented a break with the past was not altogether mistaken. For example, the Manasseh Society, a social club for black men with white wives, had been a thriving organization with hundreds of members in the 1890s but the club disintegrated in the twenties as interracial social

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[352] *The Chicago Defender*, 8 June 1918.
[353] St Clair Drake & Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: a Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962): 73-4.

contacts decreased.[354] Despite the migratory influx of black workers, at the time of the riot in 1919 there were still many white residents of the "black belt" neighborhood – perhaps as many as a half of its population.[355] Moreover, relations between blacks and whites within the black belt were generally very good and peaceable. During the riot, those whites killed or injured in the area all came from outside of it.[356]

There were two sources of conflict on the borders of the black belt: the middle class area of Hyde Park to the south, into which affluent blacks had begun to move only to be greeted with threats, intimidation and organized resistance from the Kenwood and Hyde Park Property Owner's Association – including a targeted bombing campaign; and the Irish working class area to the west, with its vicious street gangs, said to be the riot's ringleaders. However, another adjacent white neighborhood, Woodlawn, had seen a large expansion of its black population with very little conflict despite campaigning in the area by white Hyde Park agitators. A white nurse who lived in Woodlawn, told investigators that, "We surely don't want to be like the people in the South who make colored persons get off the walk when they come along."[357] Another white resident, a pastor of a Woodlawn church said that he was "very anxious that the Negro should be treated fairly. I do not want him to feel that I have stood in the way of his opportunities and his rights."[358]

Such sentiments demonstrated the possibilities for peaceable and just interracial living in Chicago despite large and rapid increases in the black population. Yet, in the years following the riot, the racial character of Chicago's black belt intensified dramatically as campaigns of

[354] Ibid., 145-6.
[355] Abu-Lughod *Race, Space, and Riots,* chapter 2.
[356] CCRR *The Negro in Chicago*, chapter 4. The CCRR report gives the residence figures for the black belt in 1919 as 54,906 black and 42,797 white. The figure for blacks represents around 50 per cent of the 1920 black population in Chicago but the CCRR report confusingly (and misleadingly) states that 90 per cent of Chicago's black population resided in the black belt.
[357] CCRR, *Negro in Chicago*, 455.

intimidation and violence against black encroachment into white neighborhoods made an impact on residential patterns. Between March 1918 and August 1919, 25 bombs exploded at the homes of blacks, or the homes or offices of block-busting realtors.[359] After the riot, the bombing died down only to be replaced by restrictive covenants, a more orderly and effective means of enforcing racial segregation. In 1920, the second ward was 71.6 per cent black, a decade later it was 86.6 per cent black. As whites moved out and more black migrants arrived, the black belt became more wholly African American. While there was not one single census tract even ninety per cent black in 1920, a decade later two-thirds of blacks lived in areas at least ninety per cent black, one-fifth in tracts exclusively black.[360] By the late thirties, when sociologists Drake and Cayton conducted the research for their monumental study of the *Black Metropolis*, the segregated South Side appeared to them so universally divided and settled by race that it seemed to be almost a consensual arrangement.[361] Over the next few decades, the pattern continued to intensify so that Chicago was more racially segregated during the 1968 race riot than it had been during that of 1919.[362]

The post-riot change came not only in segregated neighborhoods but also within the now unopposed attitude of black community leaders, the black press, and black businessmen, who encouraged greater racial unity and addressed themselves to healing the divide between black Chicagoans and newly-arrived migrants. The *Chicago Whip* criticized *The Defender* for running an editorial attacking the black "hottentots" from the South who were "straining themselves" to purchase homes on the city's Boulevards. Defending the migrants from charges of ignorance,

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[358] Ibid. 455.
[359] See Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto*, 168; CCRR *Negro in Chicago*, chapter 1.
[360] Gareth Canaan, "'Part of the Loaf:' Economic Conditions of Chicago's African American Working Class During the 1920's." *Journal of Social History* 35.1 (2001): 163.
Lizabeth Cohen*, Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 34.
[361] Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 80-81

idleness, and immorality the *Whip* urged unity in a time of race rioting, "there are no Northerners and Southerners, just oppressed men fighting for freedom."[363]

Having fought alongside newcomers in the riot, the black middle classes probably felt a stronger identification with the masses than previously – but race unity also made good business sense. Black businessmen built their businesses servicing the 50,000 migrants who expanded the black belt in the wartime and post-riot years. Banker Jesse Binga, whose home had been bombed several times as racial tensions mounted before the riot, made his fortune with the savings of black migrants. In 1928, he noted the rise of "a new generation of business and professional men, coming to the fore," and spoke of black businessmen's hopes of controlling the market in the Black Belt. His own bank held millions of dollars of deposits from black Chicagoans.[364]

Moreover, for black consumers race-based business became a matter of survival since the white neighborhood stores and businesses that they depended on had closed during the riot, creating great hardship for many black families.[365] Once the riot was over, black banks and businesses leafleted south side neighborhoods urging residents to make use of them rather than white institutions. For example, Woodlawn Bank assured black Chicagoans of its own reliability:

> Men out of work during the fierce riot needed money and we gave it to them. . . We had money to cash all of these checks amounting to thousands of dollars and we can handle your money. DO BUSINESS WITH YOUR OWN PEOPLE who live with you, eat with you, sleep with you, and are willing and able to help you.[366]

Similarly, the white printers of Robert S. Abbott's paper *The Chicago Defender* had refused to run any editions during the riot for fear of rebuke from white rioters. Abbott later purchased his own press, which opened in 1921, making the paper the largest black business enterprise in Chicago and Abbott among the richest African Americans in the country. Black business leaders

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[362] Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space and Riots*, chapter 2.
[363] "Living on the Boulevards," *The Chicago Whip*, October 4, 1919.
[364] Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 82-83.

made the best of a bad situation after the riot, even if some saw the building of a "black metropolis" as a makeshift dream, a "substitute for the real American dream" of integration, equality and affluence.[367]

In politics, too, race began to determine outcomes to a far greater extent. Despite its historical connection with black citizenship and civil rights, loyalty to the Republican Party began to falter among black Chicagoans in the teens and twenties. In 1915, Republican Oscar de Priest had been elected Chicago's first black alderman, serving the majority-black Second Ward. Three years later, he narrowly lost the aldermanic contest by only 300 votes when he ran as a race-based Independent against the regular Republican candidate (who was also African American). During this 1918 campaign, the *Chicago Defender*, which supported the regulars, took a strong line against de Priest's drawing of the color line in politics. While emphasizing its support for racial unity in other areas, the *Defender* stated that within the American political system, "Persons are elected or defeated for office, or should be, on account of their political or party affiliations and not on account of their race identity."[368] De Priest's racial strategy may not have won the battle but it was ultimately to triumph. .

During the 1920s, the deployment of racial identity in black belt politics was transformed from a difference over strategy among the black elite to the only political game in town. While the *Defender* and most black political leaders remained loyal to the Republican Party throughout the twenties, that loyalty became hedged about with exceptions, limitations and one important condition: that leadership of the Second Ward machine shift into black hands. When Oscar de Priest reentered the regular Republican fold in 1920, he took with him a distinct politics of race

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[365] Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 149.
[366] Woodfolk Bank "The Riot is Over," reprinted in Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit In*, 313.
[367] Drake & Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 80-81.
[368] "Ignoring the Color Line" *Chicago Defender*, April 13, 1918.

pride and unity; the days of the white ward "bosses" were indeed numbered. In 1928, when the white liberal Congressman Martin B. Madden died, de Priest replaced him on the ticket and became the first African American elected to the U.S. House in the twentieth century. While de Priest clearly needed the Republican machine to win elections, it is equally clear that his emphasis on black candidates for, and black control of, a black constituency also helped to shore up support for the Party in the Second Ward.

In mayoral elections, Republican "Big Bill" Thompson took landslide majorities among black voters in 1915, 1919 and 1927. Yet, African Americans seem to have placed their loyalty in Thompson personally rather than in the Republican Party *per se*. In the 1923 mayoral contest, around 60 per cent of the black Second Ward voted for the Democratic candidate William Dever after Thompson backed him. Thompson had been forced out of the contest himself following his involvement in a graft scandal in the city schools and he backed Dever over his own party's candidate. When Dever stood again, against Thompson in 1927, only 16 per cent of black voters stayed with him while 82 per cent went for Thompson.[369] Moreover, in the 1928 presidential election, Democrat Al Smith again made heavy inroads into the Republican support among the city's African Americans.[370]

The Republican Party lost its hold on black voters in Chicago because it had failed to deliver on its political promises to black voters. When migrants had arrived in Chicago, they voted in larger numbers than eligible voters in the city as a whole, largely because the vote was a

[369] See *Chicago Daily News Almanac* for respective years.
[370] For discussion about black political affiliation and voting patterns in Chicago see John M. Allswang, "The Chicago Negro Voter and the Democratic Consensus: A Case Study, 1918-1936" *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* LX (Summer 1967): 145-75; Dianne M. Pinderhughes *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics; A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Harold F. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: the Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1935); and Rita Werner Gordon, "The Change in the Political Alignment of Chicago's Negroes During the New Deal," *The Journal of American History*, 56.3 (December, 1969): 584-603.

new possession, a prized badge of citizenship, and partly because there was a viable Party that was *not* the Democratic Party. Thompson retained their votes and increased them through his pragmatic use of rhetoric, patronage, the unstinting support of the *Defender* – and race politics. In post-riot Chicago, of course, a black mayoral candidate elected on a citywide basis was not considered a possibility. During the twenties, the nature of black political allegiances shifted so that loyalties were first to black candidates and second only to political party, in much the same way as came to operate among ethnic voting blocs. Although the Republican Party delivered the first US congressional seat to a black community, it did not augment black partisanship by doing so: black voters in Chicago were already beginning to move toward the Democratic Party.

Many of the trends of the 1920s, including the upsurge in separatist black politics and business, were already underway before the riot. Yet the riot made race consciousness and unity more necessary at the same time that it thwarted any alternatives for African Americans. Ironically, the riot was the consequence of more vocal demands for citizenship rights but it also, of course, represented a negation of those rights both in the physical harm done during the violent confrontation and in its aftermath. Ultimately, the riot resulted in a reconfiguration of the very meaning of black citizenship in Chicago. African Americans increasingly withdrew from engagement with the nation as citizens with inalienable rights, and instead privileged their racial group identity. Blackness became something of a protective buffer between the individual and the nation.

For some African Americans, particularly among the professional and political elites who profited, the making of a Black Metropolis on eight square miles of land was an affirmation of

the opportunities they had access to in the northern city. For others, as Drake and Cayton point out,

> it was a makeshift dream, a substitute for the real American dream of complete integration into American life. To some who watched Negroes inherit the city's slums, crowded together amid squalor and vice, where schemers, white and black, battened on their blood the dream seemed a fraud and a delusion.[371]

Other black Chicagoans saw the building of a black city within the city as a tactical manoeuvre within a broad strategy to gain complete equality as citizens. But, after the riot, all came to accommodate to it in one way or another. The riot strengthened racial identifications for African Americans in Chicago. Before the riot, racial identities existed within an assortment of possible and multiple identifications for African Americans. Black citizens' experience in and of the city, particularly the violence of the riot, following the democratic hopes and aspirations of mass migration and war, encouraged a hardening of these racial identification into a rigid political identity with little fluidity. African Americans' longing for freedom was only partially met in Chicago and their desire for belonging was met only through an insistence on their racial group as their primary "community of descent."[372]

Still, the process was not complete. One year after the riot, outside a café frequented by both blacks and whites, a group calling themselves the Order of the Star of Ethiopia held a demonstration during which they set light to an American flag. A black policeman approached the group and attempted to rescue the burning flag but he had to retreat under a volley of bullets. Several white sailors intervened and they too tried to save the flag but were also fired upon and one of them was shot dead. Shots fired into the gathering crowd killed another white man. Police

[371] Drake and Cayton, 81.
[372] David A. Hollinger, "National Culture and Communities of Descent" *Reviews in American History* 26.1 (1998): 312-328.

eventually apprehended the group but not before rumors of another race riot had spread across the city.[373]

A riot did not follow from the incident – which came to be known as the "Abyssinian affair," – and the racially mixed crowd behaved calmly, but the affair inflamed passions in the city press. *The Chicago Tribune* claimed that radical propaganda had filled black heads with "wild dreams of power." The *Whip* noted that until now, blacks had always exemplified loyalty and patriotism but this was "history's first opportunity to record contempt for the American flag by a black man."[374] The paper threw down the challenge that if the government did not want the flag to be burned, it must not allow its own citizens to be burned. Although some observers remarked that radicals could feed on the disappointments of the race, black nationalist organizations like the Garveyite UNIA probably suffered from the wild display of extremism. The UNIA never became a potent force in Chicago. The general feeling about the Abyssinian incident was that both black and white Chicagoans had acted with dignity and patriotism on the day. The black community and press condemned the protest as forcefully as anyone. Graham Taylor, Executive Secretary of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, felt that by uniting all races in the protection of the flag, the incident could actually help race relations rather than hurting them.[375] Although this was probably wishful thinking, the incident did demonstrate that the American flag still had the power to unite Chicagoans, black and white.

The meaning of the flag, of course, may have been different for Chicago's white and black citizens. The riot and its subsequent interpretation by black elites configured a new political outlook among many African Americans in the city. When black Chicagoans, who had met all the obligations of citizenship during the First World War and who carried heightened

[373] "Fanatics Burn Flag," The Chicago Whip, June 26, 1920; *The Negro in Chicago*, 64.
[374] "The Meaning of the Flag Burning" *The Chicago Whip,* June 26, 1920.

expectations of gaining the full compliment of civil rights following their sacrifices, were met with this violent riot instead, it bought home to them that they were not equal citizens and many began to believe that they would never be accepted on an equal basis. Although segregation and discriminatory treatment had begun to make inroads in Chicago earlier, the injection of hope and optimism that southern migrants bought with them during the war created a new momentum to make real the integrationist ideal that had dominated since the end of the Civil War. It was not just that the city offered them freedom and opportunity but that they bought with them the potential to make the city free and equal. Their patriotic commitment made the triumph of the war more energizing and the subsequent shock of the riot so much more disappointing. Their enthusiasm spent, they abandoned the liberal individualism they had revered and retreated into a defensive group pluralist position. Commenting on the Coroner's riot report in 1919, the *Chicago Whip* denied that segregation could solve Chicago's race problems and that by recommending it, the Coroner's jury failed as American citizens: "the idea of Americanism is to obliterate the hyphen. Segregation aggravates and intensifies the hyphen and causes us to be colored Americans and not pure and simple Americans."[376] Over the next decade, the power of segregation to do just that became increasingly obvious.

[375] Letter from Graham R. Taylor to F.W. Shepardson, June 21, 1920 in CCRR Minutes.
[376] "Segregation by Agreement" *The Chicago Whip,* November 15, 1919.

CHAPTER 5

CITIZENSHIP BY RACIAL DIVISION: THE CHICAGO COMMISSION ON RACE RELATIONS, 1919-1922

There is no caste here. Our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens.
Justice John Marshall Harlan, 1896

"Let us work, not as colored people or as white people for the narrow benefit of any group alone, but TOGETHER as American citizens for the common good of our common city, our common country."
Chicago Urban League, 1929 Report

A period of intense hand-wringing, introspection and reform-mindedness followed the catastrophe of the 1919 race riot in Chicago. The official response to the riot provides an insight into how Chicago's reformers and intellectuals understood the racial conflict that citizens faced on the city streets. These thinkers and reformers sought to contain and manage urban discord and civic frustrations but the ostensibly progressive solution to racial conflict they proposed resulted in the official recognition of race as an essential component of modern American citizenship.

The Chicago Commission on Race Relations (CCRR), the semi-official body established to facilitate the transition back to a peaceful, orderly city and citizenry, ultimately restored order by formalizing and institutionalizing racial difference in the aftermath of the riot. The CCRR's final report *The Negro in Chicago*, published in 1922 was, in the words of sociologists Drake and Cayton, "the first formal codification of Negro-white relations in Chicago since the days of the Black Code."[377] Responding to and perpetuating a distinctly binary conception of race and an increasingly reified notion of black/white racial division, the riot commission set the pattern for the activities of Chicago's public and civic agencies with respect to "race relations" for at least

[377] St. Clair Drake & Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern*

the next twenty years. The CCRR oversaw the erection of institutionalized racial identity as one pillar of a rapidly expanding bureaucratic state.

In a sense, the commission's work represented the culmination of the discussion about citizenship that had been underway since the passage of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth constitutional amendments. In the immediate post-Civil War period, many had felt optimistic about the meaning of these amendments and saw in them a bridge to a wholly national basis for citizenship – orator Robert G. Ingersoll, for instance, hailed them as "a new foundation for a new nation."[378] Yet as the nineteenth century closed, the meaning that the amendments held for citizenship status had begun to erode following a series of legal decisions that reinserted a more even balance between state and national citizenship once more. The 1896 *Plessy* decision underlined the limitations placed upon the new citizenship, especially for African Americans, who maintained their formally equal status but lost the right to enjoy it in the company of their fellow citizens. *Plessy* defense lawyer and Chicago resident Albion Tourgée had fought to retain a unified notion of right; when critics charged that he had failed to challenge the unequal condition of railroad cars for blacks and whites as part of his defense, he dismissed this as irrelevant. "The gist of our case," Tourgée insisted, "is the unconstitutionality of the [racial] assortment" and not the question of equal accommodation."[379] Tourgée's radical republican understanding of citizenship defined the *separateness* of accommodations as unconstitutional whereas later reformers and civil rights activists, including the CCRR, came to concentrate on the second part of the "separate but equal" ruling. In 1896, the court had struck down color-blind citizenship; in post-riot Chicago, the grounds of the discussion had shifted to make separate

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City (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, originally published 1945): 69.
[378] Quoted in Mark Eliot, "Race, Color Blindness and the Democratic Public: Albion W. Tourgée's Radical Principles in Plessy v. Ferguson," *Journal of Southern History*, 67 (May 2001): 295.
[379] Ibid., 306.

accommodation the only *national* possibility, a process capped and made concrete by the riot commission and its report.

Chicago's Response to the Riot

In the immediate aftermath of the riot, it seemed axiomatic – at least to many whites – that the way forward was a more rigid segregation of the races. Keeping black and white Chicagoans apart would prevent them from fighting and thus ensure racial peace and civic harmony in the future. Before the violence had even come to an end, the *Chicago Tribune* went so far as suggesting not only separate housing districts but also an official policy to separate the races on beaches and the provision of separate public transportation in order that "life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness be maintained."[380] Noticeably, here and elsewhere, at the forefront of calls for racial segregation was the language of citizenship; even rabid segregationists felt the necessity of reconciling the universal political values of the nation with the social demand for urban racial marking.

Just a few days after the rioting ended, the city council considered a resolution suggesting that "many of the causes of friction can be removed by an intelligent and equitable separation of the races" and proposing an interracial commission to investigate the causes of the riot. Such a commission might "equitably fix a zone or zones . . . for the purpose of limiting within its borders the residence of only colored or white persons." Mayor Thompson ruled the resolution out of order for procedural reasons and his black floor leader, Alderman Louis B. Anderson, spoke "with acerbity and resentment" against it. Much of the hostility to the creation of an interracial commission and of racial zoning emanating from the Mayor and his supporters came from their political opposition to both the reform establishment of Chicago (who often targeted

them critically) and from the factional partisan dispute between Thompson and Governor Lowden, who was strongly behind both.[381] In any case, Thompson's opposition proved futile.

Calls for segregation and to put blacks "back in their place," came from local, state and national sources following the riot. Charles E. Fox, president of the Hyde Park-Kenwood Home Owner's Association suggested that the city deal with the issue "without fear, favoritism or politics," and attributed the recent rioting to "the promiscuous scattering of Negroes throughout the white residential sections of our city." Illinois Senator Medill McCormick protested that black migrants in Chicago thought "they could sit in your lap or do anything they pleased," and undoubtedly had to be taught their place. From the national scene, Walter Lippman opined that it was possible to segregate the races without terrorizing one of them and argued, in an introduction to Carl Sandburg's pamphlet on race in Chicago, that urban blacks imitated whites because they were denied the fruits of civilization; their poverty, ignorance and lowly status led to "that terrible confusion between the idea of social equality and the idea of social mixture."[382] At all levels, there was agreement that the rights of citizenship guaranteed to African Americans by the post-emancipation constitutional amendments should be fully respected but those rights certainly did *not* include the freedom to mix socially with whites in the modern city. Lippman summed the feeling up well when he concluded that the race problem was "a by-product of our planless,

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[380] "Race Riots" *The Chicago Tribune*, July 29, 1919.

[381] "Segregation to Prevent Race Riot is Urged," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (August 6, 1919): 3; Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 70; "Jim Crow Ordinance Blocked" *The Chicago Whip* August 9, 1919; that Louis B. Anderson's opposition to racial residential segregation was not a position of principle is evident in his comments a few months later that, "most Negroes would prefer to live in a district exclusively inhabited by people of their own Race," and "The colored man has no desire to mix indiscriminately with the whites." See "Facts Show We Came Here First and Are Here to Stay" *Chicago Defender* (February 7, 1920) and Thomas Lee Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto: Neighborhood Deterioration and Middle-Class Reform, Chicago 1880-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978): 223.

[382] Arthur I. Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit In* (New York: Doubleday, 1966): 56-57; "Segregation to Prevent Race Riot is Urged," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (August 6, 1919): 3; Walter Lippman, "Introductory Note" in Carl Sandburg *The Chicago Race Riots* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1919): *xx*.

disordered, bedraggled, drifting democracy."[383] Such an outlook suggested that race relations, like other problems thrown up by chaotic modernity, were bound to be conflict-ridden and therefore required a strong measure of order and control.

There had in fact been official plans for citywide residential segregation in the years preceding the riot. In 1917, the Chicago Real Estate Board developed a segregation ordinance, which it submitted to the city council. However, it dropped this strategy when it was able to forge a private agreement with black realtors and community leaders to improve and reconstruct the black belt neighborhood. The idea animating the reconstruction plan was that if improvements could be made to black homes, businesses, schools, and churches within the black belt and if good lines of transportation between the black belt and the rest of the city could be developed then blacks would have no reason to move into white neighborhoods. A more efficient use of space could accommodate the growing black population in the available area and a neighborhood "clean-up" of slums and vice would induce middle class blacks to remain among their social inferiors.[384]

To this end, realtors and businessmen put together a black belt reconstruction plan and signed up a committee of two black and two white men to coordinate it. One committee member, black realtor George H. Jackson, outlined its plans to the community and, believing he had won a large number of concessions for black business interests, told the press: "We do not want to live in the same block with white people if we can help it because it is not conducive to our happiness." He offered a deal whereby black realtors would swap their holdings in buildings in white districts for the holdings white realtors had in those buildings occupied by whites in the black belt. Black community leader and realtor Eugene F Manns also offered his support for the

[383] Lippman, "Introductory Note," *xix*.
[384] Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto*, 215-217.

project and suggested that the next step might be the appointment of an interracial committee to study the housing situation and to "develop a plan whereby one section of the city be given exclusively to colored people."[385]

The reasoning and intentions of the Real Estate Board's black-belt reconstruction plan were shared by both the Coroner's Jury and the criminal Grand Jury following the riot. The Grand Jury worked hard to afford all those bought before them a fair and just hearing. Despite ultimately recommending more blacks than whites for trial, the jurors made it clear that black Chicagoans were not the main instigators of the conflict and had in fact suffered most at the hands of white "hoodlums" during the riot. Indeed, the Grand Jury took a dramatic stand against State's Attorney MacClay Hoyne's racial prejudices by refusing to hear any more cases against blacks before hearing at least some against white rioters. Hoyne, who was responsible for preparing and presenting cases to the Jury, charged that black migrants had little or no respect for the law and were being "pandered to" by corrupt city officials; he argued that the "vicious element" had begun to invade the surrounding respectable white neighborhoods and proposed, a "scheme of segregation, to which the majority of the black people will themselves consent."[386] When pressed, by both the Grand Jury's own suspension of hearings and by the national civil rights group the NAACP, Hoyne managed to find some white participants in the riot to present for prosecution – although Walter White of the NAACP had to collect the affidavits personally.[387]

Despite its preference to dispense color-blind justice and its intolerance for Hoyne's blatant bias, the Grand Jury nonetheless reiterated the recommendation of voluntary segregation

[385] Negroes Offer Housing 'Swap' With Whites" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 10, 1917.
[386] MaClay Hoyne, "Why the Negro Appeals to Violence" *Literary Digest* LXII (August 9, 1919): 11.
[387] *Final Report of the Cook County August 1919 Grand Jury*, 1; Walter White, "The Chicago Riots" in NAACP *Branch Bulletin*, Vol. 3.10 (October, 1919): 94.

in its final report. Black people, the Jury concluded, were happier living among themselves than among whites where they knew they were not welcome. By making the black belt a decent place to live for a larger population than it currently held, the jurors reasoned, the city would relieve congestion thereby enabling black Chicagoans to "voluntarily segregate themselves."[388] The jurors saw little conflict between their ideals of universal color-blind justice and their support for racial residential segregation.

Although it did not conclude that conflict over housing was a cause of the riot, the Coroner's Jury also advised that improving the living quarters and providing better sanitation in the black belt might help avoid future racial unrest by encouraging voluntary segregation.[389] One juror insisted that while "all men should be entitled to and benefited by the application of Principles as announced by our Constitution," this did not, could not, and should not include "social equality" (a codeword meant to evoke the stain of race-mixing and miscegenation). Another juror suggested that the leaders of both races "come together and agree for the general good to dwell apart."[390] Neither the notion of an interracial deliberating body nor the idea of voluntary segregation as a solution to race conflict were novel ideas in 1919; the Chicago Commission on Race Relations was born out of this political milieu.

The Chicago Commission on Race Relations

Indeed, a proposal for an interracial commission to investigate race relations in Chicago was in fact first put through the assembly of the Illinois state legislature in the year before the

[388] *Final Report of the Cook County August 1919 Grand Jury*, 3.
[389] Peter M. Hoffman, (Cook County Coroner) *Biennial Reports, 1918-19 and Official Record of Inquests on the Victims of the Race Riots of July and August, 1919* (Chicago, Ill., 1919).
[390] Jurors Roy C. Woods and John Brushingham in Ibid., 59-64; for a full discussion of the coded meanings of "social equality" in reference to race relations in this period, see Kevin K. Gaines *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

riot. Opposition to the bill, however, had been strong. African American congressman Sheadrick B. Turner questioned why there should be a commission for black citizens when there was none for Poles, Serbs or Croats. Black Senator Warren B. Douglas believed that the establishment of such a commission would be "unpatriotic and un-American and unfair to twelve million loyal souls," ultimately leading to segregation and disfranchisement of the black population of Illinois.[391]

Governor Lowden had been a strong proponent of the bill in the Assembly so when it failed, he willingly lent his support to an interracial group of (unelected) Chicago community leaders who proposed the creation of a race commission to study and solve Chicago's race problem. In fact, in the closing days of the riot, Lowden received two delegations of reform-minded civic leaders, each proposing an interracial commission. On July 30, a committee dominated by personnel from the NAACP, including national chairman Joel Spingarn and Chicago branch president Edward Osgood Brown, as well as editor of the Chicago *Defender* Robert S. Abbot and an assortment of judges and ex-judges, approached Lowden with a request that he appoint a commission to "study the troubles and formulate a definite program of race relations for the state." They insisted the law be enforced equitably and swiftly to restore racial calm.[392] Carl Sandburg, himself a member of the delegation, later quoted Spingarn as suggesting that a representative interracial commission would "take the thought of people away from violence." Citing his own involvement in and experience of interracial cooperation in post-riot Atlanta, Spingarn evidently hoped a commission might restore order to race relations. This was, of course, not an argument designed to convince and reassure black migrants from the South

[391] "Hon. Lee O'Neil Browne. . . to Defeat the Race Commission Bill" *The Broad Ax* August 30, 1919
[392] Joel E. Spingarn, "Chicago Race Riots" in NAACP *Branch Bulletin* Vol. 3.8 (August, 1919); Steven J. Diner, *A City and its Universities: Public Policy in Chicago, 1892-1919* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980): 292; Waskow *From Race Riot to Sit-In*, 60-65.

living in Chicago. One black newspaper reacted to the notion of a southern model for northern race relations with the pointed question, "Is Illinois to become like Georgia, a hell hole for blacks?"[393]

The second delegation to approach Lowden emerged out of a meeting called on August 1 at Chicago's Union League Club. Attended by eighty-one representatives from forty-eight civic, professional, and commercial organizations, the meeting unanimously resolved to petition the Governor to appoint a race commission – despite, of course, the prior rejection of such a commission by elected state representatives.[394] The committee appointed to wait upon the governor included Graham Taylor of Chicago Commons, Julius Rosenwald's Secretary William C. Graves, and T. Arnold Hill, president of the Chicago Urban League.[395] The composition of both delegations is noteworthy because they included persons from Chicago's reform establishment, both black and white, and from both the DuBoisian NAACP and the Washingtonian Urban League.

Lowden was happy to appoint the commission although he noted that it would have to raise its own funds since he could not lawfully appropriate state funding to finance its work. Still, demonstrating his commitment, he offered a personal promise of financial support if all else failed. Governor Lowden announced the work of the commission to the press as urgent and necessary and stated that the commission was working under no political brief or guidance but purely in the spirit of fairness and justice. Some sections of the press, however, reported the governor's declared hope that the commission members would work to find a solution to the race problem with "a tacit understanding that the colored race should occupy certain residences,

[393] Carl Sandburg, *The Chicago Race Riots*, 81-82; "Hon. Lee O'Neil Browne. . . to Defeat the Race Commission Bill" *The Broad Ax* August 30, 1919.
[394] "Brief Report of Citizen's Conference on the Race Riot," in CCRR Files, Folder 7.
[395] Letter from Union League Club chairman Charles W. Folds to Governor Frank O. Lowden, August 1, 1919, in CCRR Files, Folder 7.

certain beaches and parks for amusement and so on." And "by the same understanding certain similar areas and facilities would be reserved for the white race."[396] Although some members of the commission were embarrassed by this early endorsement of segregation, it was clear in which direction the state executive hoped the commission would head.

Composed of twelve members – six black and six white – representing commercial, business, political and community interests, the Chicago Commission on Race Relations set to work in October 1919. Historians have generally viewed the equal racial representation on the commission's board (although the later addition of Shepardson tipped the balance in the whites' favor) in a positive light along with applauding the apparently liberal and enlightened conclusions the commission reached. Indeed, much of the historical literature commends the aims and intentions of both the riot commission and of the individual commissioners themselves, portraying them as "friends of the Negro".[397] Allen H. Spear remarks upon the "balanced treatment and judicious analysis" of the Commission and concludes that the CCRR's final report was "the one achievement of interracial cooperation to come out of these years of racial strife." Similarly, William Tuttle's *Race Riot* portrays the CCRR as a "ray of hope" which should have been granted more power while Arthur I. Waskow's *From Race Riot to Sit In* notes some failures but ultimately condemns only the commission's impotence to act. More recent works have noted that the CCRR might have been more open to the positive contributions of black culture but continue to endorse the report as "a model of objective investigation," which offered a challenge

[396] Lowden's announcement of the CCRR and its work appeared in the *Chicago Daily News*, August 20, 1919. An article from the *Herald Examiner* is cited as evidence of Lowden's intention to use the commission to perpetuate segregation and Lowden is directly quoted in "Hon. Lee O'Neill Browne . . . to Defeat Race Commission Bill" *The Broad Ax* August, 30, 1919.

[397] See Allen H. Spear's *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 219; William Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970): 258; Arthur I. Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit In*; Ralph L. Pearson, "Charles S. Johnson and the Chicago Commission on Race Relations" *Illinois Historical Journal* 81 (Autumn 1988); Naomi Farber, "Charles S.

to many racial assumptions and might have been a force for good, if only its recommendations had not been ignored.

The evidence shows, however, that the commission was neither benevolent nor toothless; rather, the CCRR shaped the future of Chicago race relations, entrenching Jim Crow and racial politics into the fabric of the city's political culture. Particularly problematically, by recognizing communities of race through their individual representatives on the commission, the state put the official stamp on racial difference. The bi-racial makeup of the commission indicated that the state government perceived race (defined in black/white terms) as an important marker of interest and identity, and it ultimately gave those race-based interests and identities greater cultural resonance and political weight. Although the commission's report claimed that interracial understanding was its aim and the reason for the selection of an interracial committee, by approaching the question of racial conflict through the prism of racial group membership rather than with an emphasis on individual citizenship rights, they reinforced the very social division – that based on race – they apparently sought to heal.

The composition of the commission gave a clear signal about the direction that investigations would take. Governor Lowden had delegated the choice of commission personnel to his Secretary of Education Francis W. Shepardson who would come to play an active role in the commission and eventually become its Vice-Chairman. Shepardson selected some of the white members, including Sears & Roebuck magnate Julius Rosenwald and then turned to Rosenwald to nominate the black members. Shepardson overlooked some of Rosenwald's suggestions, such as Alexander L. Jackson who ran the Jim Crow YMCA that Rosenwald had built and funded and the newly-arrived T. Arnold Hill of the Chicago Urban League, in the final

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Johnson's The Negro in Chicago" *American Sociologist* (Fall 1995): 78-88. The only critical treatment of the CCRR's work is Thomas Lee Philpott's *The Slum and the Ghetto*, chapter 9.

selection process because of their weak levels of legitimacy within the black community. Others, as we shall see, he quickly appointed.[398]

Julius Rosenwald dominated the commission from the outset. A major philanthropist interested in race issues, Rosenwald had supported and funded Booker T. Washington's work at Tuskegee and shared in his accommodationist racial philosophy – a picture of the great advocate of racial "uplift" still hung on Rosenwald's office wall. Rosenwald chaired the screening committee for the selection of an Executive Research Secretary and he provided funds on a number of occasions so that the commission could begin and continue working. In an interview on the Chicago racial situation, Rosenwald reassured readers of the *Daily News* that "I know from experience that the negroes are not anxious to invade white residence districts any more than white people are willing that they should come." He encouraged others to support housing reform efforts in the black belt, pointing out that the dire health and crime consequences of slums would ultimately be visited upon all Chicagoans.[399] Besides being the chief benefactor of the black YMCA, Rosenwald also developed plans for a model tenement for affluent black Chicagoans on the edge of the black belt in 1916. Although this projected initiative did not prove profitable enough, Rosenwald succeeded in developing other Jim Crow building projects in the 1920s.[400]

Acting Chair and Vice President Shepardson shared – or came to share – Rosenwald's concerns and outlook. Outlining his understanding of the race problem in Chicago, Shepardson lamented that "we have no intelligent segregation that will permit the Negro to live among those of his kind whom he prefers, but a segregation that throws all Negroes into one vicious

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[398] CCRR Minutes, 9 October 1919, CRR Files, Folder 13; Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit-In*, 63-65.
[399] Carl Sandburg *The Chicago Race Riots,* 76-77.
[400] Junius B. Wood, *The Negro in Chicago* (Chicago: Chicago Daily News, ca 1916): 23; Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto*, 205-08.

neighborhood." The solution was obvious: an orderly enlargement of the black belt providing enough space for respectable blacks to establish clean and healthful districts.[401] Shepardson's approach so impressed Rosenwald that he appointed him president of the Rosenwald Fund in 1921.[402]

Most of the other white commissioners were members of the reform establishment and were, or had the support of, "the most substantial, powerful, and honored men in the city."[403] Commissioner Victor Lawson, editor of the *Daily News,* was so high-ranking a member of the reform elite in Chicago that Mayor Thompson had singled him out for attack in his 1919 inaugural address, denouncing the "dictatorship which this one citizen seeks to exercise over all the other citizens of Chicago."[404] Lawson's reform agenda included support for "voluntary" segregation; his newspaper had publicly approved the initial black belt reconstruction plan. Fellow white commissioner Harry Kelly, director of the Union League Club, had previously served as the black belt development corporation's vice-president.[405] William Scott Bond, a realtor and Hyde Park neighbor of Rosenwald's and Shepardson's had to rescind and publicly deny his former membership of the notorious segregationist Kenwood-Hyde Park Property Owner's Association when his appointment to the commission became public knowledge.[406]

The black membership of the commission similarly suggested official segregationist intentions albeit tempered by the necessity of appointing members who carried real weight with black Chicagoans. Representative Adelbert H. Roberts, a staunch political ally of Governor

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[401] "Rebuild Black Belt, Plan of Race Board" *Chicago Daily News*, 25 February 1920.
[402] Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto*, 226.
[403] Steven Diner points out that all white commissioners but Harry Kelly were "reform leaders", that is, they held leadership positions in three or more reform agencies. See Diner, *A City and its Universities,* Appendix I, "Reform Leaders of Chicago, 1892-1919," 187-90; Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit-In*, 70.
[404] Lawson was head of the Municipal Voters League which campaigned vociferously against corrupt machine politics in Chicago's city council and exercised a reformist, if undemocratic, leverage over committee matters in the town hall. See Mayor Thomson's *Inaugural Address*, April 28, 1919.
[405] Philpott, *Slum and the Ghetto*, 221.

Lowden's, had sponsored the initial race commission bill in the state's General Assembly.[407] Three of the six black members (Jackson, Hall and Williams) had formally been involved in the Chicago Real Estate Board's plans for reconstruction of the black belt – realtor George H. Jackson being a member of its 1917 interracial committee. Jackson had also financed a pamphlet on black housing which made the case for the involvement of black realtors in any reconstruction work in the black belt, and which promoted his own Pyramid Building and Loan Association specifically.[408] Renowned surgeon and proprietor with over $100,000 in real estate holdings, commissioner George Cleveland Hall supported Rosenwald's earlier Jim Crow tenement plan.[409] Despite his wealth and position, Hall was a long-term honorary member of the Meat Cutter's and Butcher Workmen's Union and a consistently strong advocate for racial justice if not integration. Although he called upon the language of citizenship to explain the motivation of black migrants, insisting that, "the trouble started when the Declaration of Independence was written." So long as African Americans have greater access to right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in the north than the south, he argued "they are going to keep coming and they are going to stay.[410] A member of the "Protective Circle of Chicago," which was formed by black Chicagoans to combat and oppose the racist Homeowners' Associations, Hall struck the right note as racial conciliator when he reported to the City Club that "Negroes want the rights of citizens," but needed the help of upstanding white citizens to help "cultivate a taste for them."[411]

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[406] Editorial in *The Broad Ax*, January 24, 1920; Letter from William Scott Bond in *The Broad Ax*, February 2, 1920; CCRR minutes, February 6, 1920.
[407] "Hon. Lee O'Neil Browne. . . to Defeat the Race Commission Bill" *The Broad Ax* August 30, 1919
[408] Negroes Offer Housing 'Swap' With Whites" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 10, 1917; Charles S. Duke, *The Housing Situation and the Colored People of Chicago with Suggested Remedies and Brief References to Housing Projects* (Chicago, 1919); "The Housing of Colored People," *The City Club Bulletin: A Journal of Active Citizenship* 12. 33 (Monday August 18, 1919).
[409] Wood, *The Negro in Chicago*, 23; Sandburg, *The Chicago Race Riots*, 59.
[410] Hall quoted in Sandburg, *The Chicago Race Riots*, 62.
[411] Minutes of meeting at City Club of Chicago, February 25, 1920, CCRR Files.

Black committee member and pastor of the largest Protestant congregation in the nation, Reverend L. K. Williams of Olivet Baptist church told a post-riot meeting that although enforced segregation would only increase racial consciousness and bitterness in both groups, given the chance "Negroes will flock to themselves naturally and instinctively just the same as the white people do." Echoing the merging of Washingtonian and DuBoisian philosophies that many blacks embraced, Williams insisted that blacks demanded their citizenship rights but did not need or desire "social equality" with whites.[412]

The only black commissioner with an unequivocal record on civil rights and opposition to segregation was lawyer Edward H. Morris. A former counsel for, among others, Rosenwald's Sears & Roebuck and a leading light in the Anti-Vilification Society's campaign to defend blacks from charges of criminality, Morris argued that allegations about a black criminal "nature" directly affronted the intentions of the framers of the US constitution. An outspoken member of a radical group of delegates to the Illinois State Constitutional Convention in 1920, Morris insisted on meaningful changes to insure real democracy in the state. Once he had taken the measure of the CCRR, he lodged a complaint, refused to attend the meetings relating to the final recommendations and withheld his signature from the final report.[413]

Unsurprisingly, many black Chicagoans expressed suspicion about the intentions of the commission. Black newspapers *The Broad Ax* and *The Whip* ran campaigns against the commission from the outset, lamenting the seemingly inevitable outcome. *The Whip* questioned the very concept of racial division undergirding the commission's work arguing that state-sanctioned segregation was unworkable since "it would take enough geneticians to bankrupt the city in trying to ascertain who was white and who was colored." The paper proclaimed that a

[412] "Race Problem Discussed at Olivet Baptist Church" *The Chicago Whip* August, 9, 1919

racially amalgamated citizenry needed no commission or investigation; "What we do need is an executive that has the backbone to enforce the laws already made. We want men in public office who are class and color blind. We want men . . . whose acts will subscribe to the principles of the fathers of this great land, 'that all men are created equal.'"[414] For its part, *The Broad Ax* charged Governor Lowden with packing the commission with Jim Crow men in a cynical maneuver to play the race card in his campaign for the presidency in 1920.[415] Questioning the integrity of colored members of the commission, the paper breathlessly accused them of colluding in the stripping away of "manhood rights" in Illinois:

> The Colored people in this state which gave to the world the immortal Abraham Lincoln and many other able and noble sons and daughters of the Democracy will be forced to renew the long fight again for absolute freedom and full American citizenship and assist to repel or drive those back who are endeavoring in any way to curtail those inalienable rights which have been guaranteed to the Colored race by the Constitution of the United States.[416]

These newspapers pressed for color-blind justice and civil rights for blacks, not a color-based commission that they feared would mark black citizens as a special case needing separate laws and separate provision. By contrast, the black newspaper *The Chicago Defender* supported the commission; Shepardson had appointed its editor Robert Abbott a member.

Other black Chicagoans raised their voices against the commission. The butcher workmen of black Local 651 wrote an open letter to Governor Lowden pointing out that their membership was generally law-abiding and patriotic, that many of them fought overseas for democracy, that they had assisted in his election, and that they objected to his plans for a commission, which they feared would result in some form of official segregation.[417] Similarly, Assistant Attorney General

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[413] Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit In*, 89; Philpot, *The Slum and the Ghetto*, 226-7; "Edward H. Morris," *Journal of Negro History* 28. 2 (April, 1943): 258-9.
[414] "A Dangerous Experiment" *The Chicago Whip*, August 9, 1919.
[415] Leader, *The Broad Ax*, September 20, 1919.
[416] "Segregation in the Public Schools" *The Broad Ax*, August 30, 1919
[417] "Copy of Letter to Gov. Lowden from EC of Butcher Workmen, Local 651" *The Chicago Whip,* 8 August, 1919.

James G. Cotter wrote an open letter to Lowden warning him that his plans for a race commission would only fan the flames of racial animosity, that African Americans would refuse to accept any so-called mutual agreement over segregation since "equality of opportunity and racial segregation cannot stand together in any free republic," and pleaded with him to "let the race question alone."[418]

Associate Executive Secretary for the commission, Charles S. Johnson, expressed concern that black Chicagoans were not supportive of the commission's work and had not contributed financially to its support. He pointed out to Vice Chairman Francis Shepardson that, "the belief has been current, despite the presence on the commission of respected Negroes, that a scheme for compulsory segregation will be proposed in the commission's recommendations" and that blacks were deeply suspicious of the commission's political motives. He proposed a series of meetings in black churches to try to mend public relations in the black belt and circulated an appeal to 300 prominent African Americans requesting financial support for the commission's work. The circular noted that white donors had given $22,000 toward a total $30,000 budget and urged blacks to contribute their share. By the end of November 1920, the commission's Negro Committee had raised a paltry $349 underlining the low level of support among black Chicagoans.[419]

Doubts about the CCRR's intentions surfaced outside Chicago too. W.E.B. Du Bois, canvassed by the commission for his views on race relations, objected to the nature of the questions and published a piece in *The Crisis* assailing the questionnaire and the commission. He warned his Chicago friends to watch the commission's work very closely and indicated that

[418] "An Open Letter to Frank O Lowden from James G. Cotter, Asst. Attorney General" *The Chicago Whip* August 9, 1919
[419] Charles S. Johnson to F.W. Shepardson, 10 September 1920, CCRR Files; CCRR minutes, November 23, 1920, CCRR Files.

neither black nor white commission members were trustworthy; that both sought to devise a program of racial segregation, "under the guise of impartiality and good will." Noting how African Americans' developing racial consciousness and race pride could be turned to the advantage of the segregationists, Du Bois charged the commission with betraying blacks through a confusion of the concepts of "segregation" and racial "solidarity." By use of leading questions, the commission's survey implied the inoffensiveness of Jim Crow.[420] Du Bois had had his own painful experience working with an interracial body (more properly, "bi-racial") in the wake of the 1906 Atlanta race riot; he had concluded that such a strategy could not produce any real understanding. After attending a meeting of Atlanta's post-riot biracial league, he reported "everybody went away with the idea that, after all, they did not know each other."[421] Du Bois's view that biracial work ultimately reinforced racial divisions rather than overcoming them was apparently shared by a significant segment of black Chicago in 1919.

Mapping out the Commission's Work

Despite this opposition, the commissioners pressed on with their work, appointing Graham Romeyn Taylor to the position of Executive Secretary and Charles S. Johnson as Associate Executive Secretary. An expert on urban problems, Taylor was the son of Graham Taylor who headed the Chicago Commons settlement house and who had instigator of the call for a race commission in the wake of the riot. Johnson, an African American student of Robert Park's at the University of Chicago, also served as Director of Research and Investigations at the Chicago Urban League. The two men formulated and directed the research plans for the commission,

[420] W.E.B. DuBois, *The Crisis,* January 1921.
[421] David Fort Godshalk *Veiled Visions: The 1906 Race Riot and the Reshaping of American Race Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005): 158-9.

although much of the work and writing was completed by Johnson alone despite his more junior position and notably smaller salary.[422]

Johnson had impressed the commissioners with a fully developed research plan at his initial interview and the two directors adopted most of his plan as final. However, the commission subsequently dropped two areas of investigation: a proposed study of the politics of the black belt and, notably, a survey of the extent and causes of racial segregation. In the final research design, six separate committees oversaw research into relations between the "two races" in the context of racial clashes, housing, industry, crime, racial contact, and public opinion and each comprised a separate section of the final report.[423]

Beyond undertaking the ambitious research plan, the commission also sought to play a role in calming the immediate situation in the city by intervening where racial tensions seemed to be mounting. One source of constant concern was the activities of the Kenwood-Hyde Park Homeowner's Association. The commission loudly and publically condemned this and other "protective" associations that had bombed black homes and realtors' offices selling homes to blacks in the Hyde Park neighborhood prior to the riot. When bombings continued to increase into 1920, the commission petitioned the Mayor, the State's Attorney and the Governor, protesting that "there seems to be no authority interested in the protection of Americans whose skins are black. The condition is a disgrace to American citizenship. Unless something is done soon another riot is certain."[424]

The "something" that the commissioners felt ought to be done to focused on the strategy of "intelligent" segregation. Executive Director Taylor submitted to the commission a letter he

[422] Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit-In*, 71-74; Ralph L. Pearson , "Charles S. Johnson and the Chicago Commission on Race Relations," 212-14.
[423] CCRR Minutes, November 20, 1919 and December 11, 1919 in CCRR Files; Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit-In*, 74.

had received from a real estate developer who reported that he had minimized racial conflict in Beloit, Wisconsin by constructing an additional housing subdivision for blacks on a site at the edge of town, built with the assistance of the YMCA. The developer, a Mr. Hovey, testified that, "There has been no effort made to force the Negroes to live in this community but on the other hand we have tried to make it so attractive that they would desire to do so, and it is working out very satisfactorily along this line." Taylor commended the project to the commission, noting that he had invited Mr. Hovey to a meeting of the CCRR's Housing committee.[425] Similarly, Taylor corresponded with Shepardson about a Chicago housing development called Alberta Park, a scheme designed exclusively for black residents. Taylor reported that he had been in touch with the developer of the project for some time and had attended a meeting held on the South Side to outline the development plan.[426]

The commission collected newspaper clippings of other practical solutions it favored, among them an interview with the African American mayor of Robbins, a small town in Cook County with approximately 1,000 residents, 98 per cent of whom were black. Mayor Thomas Kellar, who was the only black mayor of a Cook County municipality, advised Commissioner Victor Lawson's *Daily News*, "let the colored people have transportation and housing and they are going to segregate themselves naturally. Help them get situated right, and they'll work it out by themselves."[427] A piece that appeared in Chicago's *Real Estate News* was also of interest to the commission. Arguing that property depreciation in Hyde Park was not caused by an increase in black residents but by the construction of adjacent industrial plants and railroad lines nearby,

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[424] Handwritten memo, Frances Shepardson (FWS) to Frank Lowden (FOL), 30 January 1920, CCRR Files; Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit In*, 55.
[425] Letter from Graham Romeyn Taylor to CCRR, July 19, 1920; enclosed letter from Mr. Hovey to Mr. Taylor, July 17, 1920, CCRR Files.
[426] F.W. Shepardson to G. R. Taylor, November 15, 1920; G. R. Taylor to F. W. Shepardson, November 17, 1920, in CCRR Files.
[427] Carl Sandburg, "Colored Folk Rule Cook County Town" *Daily News*, n.d., CCRR Files.

the article condemned the use of violence to keep blacks out of white neighborhoods. It recommended using economic strategies instead.

> . . . remodel the present "black-belt" on a big, broad plan. Tear down the outworn, dilapidated two-storey buildings. Put up good-grade, fire-resisting apartment buildings of 12 to 16 stories with small suites, rentable at rates to yield a safe return. Provide for the colored men who can afford to pay for modern conveniences . . . Realty values are fixed by uses, not by nationalities, creeds or colors.[428]

Long before the research findings were in, the commission believed they had hit upon the best means of reducing racial conflict. By strong vocal public opposition to racial violence and forced segregation, commissioners worked to keep the peace and earn themselves a progressive reputation into the bargain. Privileging racial order above all else, the commission reasoned that since contact between black and white citizens would certainly result in conflict, separation of the races could enhance the welfare of all Chicagoans, including – perhaps especially – blacks.

The Research Agenda: Johnson, Park and the Chicago Urban League

The CCRR published its final report and recommendations in 1922. Written in large part by Associate Executive Director Charles S. Johnson, who would go on to become a leading sociologist of American race relations, *The Negro in Chicago* stood as a serious and impressive social scientific study. Johnson organized and oversaw a team of researchers – many of whom were fellow students of Robert Park – in the execution of a comprehensive research strategy that included detailed surveys, questionnaires, interviews, conferences, the rigorous use of maps and statistics, as well as employment of case studies (an innovative research tool, developed at the University of Chicago).[429]

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[428] "Solving Chicago's Race Problem" *Real Estate News,* February 1920 (Vol. 15) no. 2, CCRR Files.

[429]Patrick J. Gilpin and Marybeth Gasman, *Charles S. Johnson: Leadership Beyond the Veil* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003) and Richard Robbins, *Sidelines Activist*: *Charles S. Johnson and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996) both establish Johnson's authorship of most of the report through testimony of contemporaries, including Graham Romeyn Taylor's wife. The only credit Johnson

Johnson's life experiences, research expertise and sociological approach all fed into the writing of the report and helped shape its conclusions. Born in 1893 in Richmond, Virginia, during the "nadir" of race relations – just two years before Booker T. Washington delivered his "Atlanta Compromise" address and three years before the Supreme Court handed down the *Plessy* decision. The son of a preacher, Johnson attended his father's alma mater, Virginia Union University, and engaged in some social welfare work in Richmond before moving to Chicago for graduate study in 1917. Robert Park was impressed with the young sociologist and helped to secure his appointment as director of the Chicago Urban League's research and investigations office. In this post, Johnson conducted studies of the African American migration to northern cities as part of a Carnegie-funded project, published under Emmett J. Scott's authorship in 1920.[430] Johnson emphasized the economic motivations of migrants and understood the urban tensions that arose following their arrival in the city as a response to the economic and social challenge they posed to the dominant white majority. According to his biographer, Johnson grew convinced of the need for the scientific study of race relations when he witnessed the misunderstandings created in the conflict-ridden modern city. As his biographer notes, "it was Chicago, even before the riot of 1919, that challenged him."[431]

Like many other Chicagoans, Johnson had enlisted in the armed forces when the United States entered the war in 1918. As a regimental sergeant major in the segregated 803rd Pioneer Infantry Division of the US Expeditionary Forces, he came under heavy and sustained fire in France. One week after his unit had returned to the United States, Chicago erupted in riot and Johnson found himself now under civilian fire from his own countrymen. In late July, as he

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received in the report was his listing as Associate Executive Director, see The Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1923).

[430]Emmett J. Scott, *Negro Migration during the War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1920).

[431] Richard Robbins, *Sidelines Activist,* 30-32.

approached his office at the Chicago Urban League on Wabash Avenue, he saw a man stabbed to death on the steps of the building. He was then shot at himself. As he made his way from the Loop to the Midway he "ran into fresh bursts of rioting all the way." The irony was not lost on him; after aiding as many victims as he could, he resolved to get to the root of the conflict he was witnessing. In the words of Edwin Embree, a lifelong friend, "without washing the blood off his clothes, he sat down and wrote out a detailed plan for the study of the Chicago riot as a symptom of the social and economic conflicts of the time."[432]

The riot intrigued Johnson on many levels, not only as a significant social event worthy of scientific study but also as evidence that black and white Americans required an objective and dispassionate intermediary. Embree noted that Johnson's goal was the interpretation of "colored people to whites and white people to Negroes, Southerners to Northerners, rustics to city dwellers; analyzing people's problems so that they can understand themselves."[433] Johnson sought to overcome racial discord through conciliatory mediation and bi-racial negotiation, making him an excellent fit for the riot commission's task.

Johnson's approach to the study of race and the race riot in particular was strongly influenced by his studies with Robert Park at Chicago. As the following chapter will show in more detail, Park developed a thoroughly modern and pragmatic model of race relations. His "race relations cycle," influenced by the fluid and dynamic models of Dewey's philosophical thought, shifted the way race was thought about on a number of levels. A student of both George Simmel and Graham Sumner, Park developed a theory of race that was rooted in transformative conflict, suggesting race relations were susceptible to struggles for status and position but immune to any form of state-engineered interference. For Park, race became a social process

[432] Ibid., 33-34; Gilpin and Gasman, *Charles S. Johnson*, 6-11; Embree quoted in Ralph L. Pearson, "Charles S. Johnson and the Chicago Commission on Race Relations," 218.

rather than a biological fact; a matter of social relationships rather than innate inheritance. The interactive social process that produced modern race relations emerged from the relationships forged among strangers thrown together in modern society. The impersonal contacts of the city and the market undermined local cultures and traditional ways and racial differences thus became maintained as a cultural means of retaining social distances. Race "consciousness" arose to enforce such distance, or as Park put it, "Race relations, in this sense, are not so much the relations that exist between individuals of different races as between individuals conscious of these differences."[434]

Park and Johnson's aversion to race "consciousness" as a divisive psychological mechanism is reflected in the riot commission's report. Park understood the kind of racial pride advocated by Black Nationalist leaders such as Marcus Garvey as a defensive posture but that it ultimately presented an obstacle to assimilation into broader American culture – which was the final phase of Park's race relations cycle. A strange mixture of an elitist condemnation of "public opinion" (both black and white) as the central barrier to racial harmony combined with a broadly democratic optimism about the capacity of American culture to embrace all comers characterized both Park and Johnson's ideological perspective.[435]

Johnson followed Park in looking to large and impersonal social forces such as migration and war to bring about change in race relations. While black migrants to northern cities might bring conflict and social turbulence in their wake, this was not altogether a bad thing. Indeed, it was a sign that "the Negro is rising in America." Although Park did not study the riot himself, he

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[433] Edwin Embree *13 Against the Odds* (New York: The Viking Press, 1944) quoted in Pearson, 214.
[434] Robert Park, "The Nature of Race Relations" in Edgar T. Thompson (ed.) *Race Relations and the Race Problem* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1939), 3; See also James B. McKee, *Sociology and the Race Problem: Failure of a Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).
[435] CCRR *The Negro in Chicago*, see particularly chapter 9 "Public Opinion in Race Relations"; Robert Park, "Review of The Negro in Chicago" in *The New Republic* (April 11, 1923): 194-6; Farber, "Charles S. Johnson's The Negro in Chicago." 84.

had predicted that the mobility of black troops would unsettle their attitudes, raise their expectations and thus result in conflict upon their return home. While Park explained the Chicago riot as "part of a process by which America is purging itself of its memories," Johnson explained it in a similar but more positive light suggesting that, "riots with all their horror are strangely enough evidence of progress. Peaceful coexistence of ruler and ruled is possible only in a static society in which relations between 'superior' and 'inferior' races are fixed, mutually understood and unquestioned." For both Johnson and Park, in a dynamic modern society both conflict and change were inevitable. There was little either the individual citizen or the state could do to promote or even accelerate any positive changes.[436]

The most that could – and should – be done was an "adjustment" of the black citizen to his new urban circumstances so that some form of racial accommodation could take place. Park railed against reformers and "crusaders" for social justice, imparting to his students instead the notion that as social scientists they must maintain an objective distance and seek to get beneath the surface appearance of things. He told them their role was to be "that of the calm, detached scientist who investigates race relations with the same objectivity and detachment with which the zoologist dissects the potato bug."[437] It was this painstakingly thorough but cautious and detached intellectual spirit that Johnson brought to his role at the Chicago Urban League, an organization that sought primarily to "adjust" black migrants to the city.

The Chicago Urban League had been a key player in bringing the riot commission to fruition and it supplied both personnel and resources to the endeavor. Robert Park was serving as president of the League at the time of the riot and for some of the period of the CCRR's

[436] Fred R. Matthews, *Quest for an American Sociology: Robert E. Park and the Chicago School* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1977) 174 -76; Gilpin and Gasman, *Charles S. Johnson*, 35-6; Johnson quotation, Ibid., 64; Robert Park, "Review of The Negro in Chicago," 196.
[437] Ernest Burgess quoted in Gilpin and Gasman, *Charles S. Johnson*, 36.

investigations, so he influenced the commission through his office as well as through his student researchers. During the riot, Park had been appointed chair of the Joint Emergency Committee set up by the CUL, NAACP, black YMCA and other groups and which sought to look after the interests of black riot victims, their families and those blacks accused of riot-related offences. Park's preference for fact-finding and his opposition to activism led Mary White Ovington of the NAACP to characterize him in this role as a "slow-going conservative, the astute political kind."[438]

Indeed, the Urban League was not known for its radicalism. Animated by the racial philosophy of Booker T. Washington, the National Urban League had been established by George E. Haynes and Ruth Baldwin, the widow of William H. Baldwin, who had been a good friend of Washington's and a trustee of Tuskegee. Park had himself worked for several years as Washington's advisor and publicist. When the Chicago chapter of the League was founded in 1916, the affiliation of supporters such as George C. Hall with the accommodationist racial outlook of Washington won the confidence of powerful and philanthropic whites. Julius Rosenwald supplied one full third of the budget of the CUL in its first year of operation while contributions from African Americans totaled around ten percent.[439]

The Chicago Urban League also benefited from the largesse of the federal government. Wartime exigencies meant that labor recruitment and placement became a national concern, so in March, 1918, the US Department of Labor assumed responsibility for the CUL's employment office, paying all salaries and office overheads. Later that year, a second Chicago office opened with three paid government employees under the League's supervision. Park encouraged such

[438] Mary White Ovington quoted in Matthews, *Quest for an American Sociology*, 176.
[439] For a history of the National Urban League, see Nancy J. Weiss, *The National Urban League*, *1910-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); for a history of the Chicago Urban League, see Arvarh E. Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966). For budget report, see Chicago Urban League, *First Annual Report* (Chicago, 1917).

support, noting that although black Americans faced similar challenges in adjustment to modern industrial life as immigrants, they were "citizens without a hypen," so their loyalty in wartime was unquestioned. Federal support during the war was crucial to the success of the CUL and gave it a great advantage over the more independent and less sympathetic social welfare concerns such as Ida B. Wells Barnett's Negro Fellowship League. Federal support also meant enhanced sponsorship from Chicago industrialists and positioned the CUL to take a leading role in establishing, staffing and guiding the riot commission and its investigations. In effect, the federal government – through its support of the Chicago Urban League – indirectly stamped its approval on the character of the commission.[440]

Like the national organization, the Chicago chapter of the Urban League did not challenge segregation but rather, sought "to make living conditions better within the framework of the existing pattern." Support from Chicago industrialists for the CUL increased as it became clear that the first priority of the organization was industrial efficiency. For Park, this meant an emphasis on understanding the motivation and attitudes of rural African American migrants so that they might be more properly adjusted to the modern industrial city. As he argued in his first presidential message, "Efficiency rests in the long run upon knowledge." By drawing on the resources of the "adjusted" black community, Park suggested, the CUL could turn the "liability" of Jim Crow into a positive asset and provide the means by which black migrants could navigate the complex urban north.[441] In Park's optimistic and progress-oriented outlook, neither segregation nor race consciousness were too much of a problem since they would inevitably disappear as the race relations cycle worked itself out.

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[440] Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League*, 16; CUL, *First Annual Report*, 3-4; Patricia A. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001): chapter 5.

[441] Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League*, 16; CUL, *First Annual Report*, 4; Matthews, *Quest for an American Sociology*, 177.

The connections between the Chicago Urban League's position and the riot commission's final report and recommendations are clear. Park's influence on both the League and the commission through his presidency and his students respectively was significant. Park gave considerable time and assistance to Johnson and his team in organizing the research and analyzing its findings. Indeed, he would often accompany Johnson in walking tours of the black belt as he mapped the area or collected case study materials. The Executive Directors told the commissioners that Park knew the research materials for the report better than anyone and that "he colored the research work with his interests in great popular migrations, in the city as a confluence of various cultures, in the impact of urban industrialism on the rurally bred, and in the growth of popular stereotypes and their influence on public opinion."[442] *The Negro in Chicago* featured all of these themes.

Moreover, the chief benefactor for the CUL – Julius Rosenwald – was also a commissioner who took a great interest in Johnson's work. He would occasionally turn up at the CUL offices to offer Johnson a ride home so that he might discuss the day's research findings with him.[443] In addition, commissioner George C. Hall served as the CUL's vice-president, commissioner Edward Osgood Brown served on the CUL's executive board, and commissioners Robert Abbott and Harry Kelly were CUL members who both joined the organization's executive in 1921. Research director Graham R. Taylor's father was also a CUL member and regular financial contributor. Governor Lowden praised the contribution of the League to the achievements of the riot commission, stating that the CUL "knew exactly what to do and what to advise and consequently our job was made an easy one." Ten years later, the CUL was still

[442] Matthews, *Quest for an American Sociology*, 177; Martin Bulmer, "Charles S. Johnson, Robert E. Park and the Research Methods of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, 1919-22: An Experiment in Applied Social Research." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (July 1981): 301; Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit In*, 81.
[443] Gilpin and Gasman, *Charles S. Johnson*, 34.

buoyed by the legitimacy it gained through its association with the riot commission; its 1929 report asserted that the Chicago Urban League had acted as the "permanent local body" arbitrating race relations in the city, as recommended by the Chicago Commission on Race Relations. By serving as a liaison between the "two racial groups", the CUL claimed to have been instrumental in preventing any repetition of the 1919 race riot over the subsequent decade – a riot assumed, with little if any evidence, to have been inevitable unless such oversight was in place.[444]

The Final Report and Recommendations

The CCRR's final report represented the triumph of a perspective about race and American citizenship that valued conciliation over justice, compromise over conflict, and propriety over democracy. It was a perspective that was not uncommon in the post-*Plessy* era. Neither was it unusual in the period historians refer to as the "progressive era" when social reformers grappled with dramatic and disconcerting social change by trying to recreate and impose new, more flexible, structures of order. The clashes and conflicts of modern city life unnerved the respectable middle classes and prompted them to seek ways to calm the "passions" of the mob, even if this meant curtailing, even sacrificing, democratic principles which they also held dear. In matters of race, a preference for stability and order overrode concerns about segregation. Indeed, if racial segregation could be recast as a freely chosen and voluntary arrangement on both sides, then it could be justified as serving the general good and observing national constitutional principles.

Although Park and Johnson portrayed large scale racial turbulence and upheavals such as riots and mass migration as inherently progressive forces, they ultimately sought ways to avoid

[444] Weiss, *The National Urban League*, 142; Chicago Urban League *Annual Report* (1929): 1.

mundane daily conflicts and pursued methods of harmonious adjustment of black migrants to urban life. This model of managing racial harmony dominated the analysis and recommendations of *The Negro in Chicago*. It assumed that without the oversight and regulatory governance of an objective body or mechanism, the urban population would be otherwise destructively conflict-ridden. In his own review of the CCRR report, Park highlighted the matter of public opinion as of the greatest importance and commended the commission for its psychological emphasis, derived from the pragmatic philosophy of William James, on "what goes on behind the faces of men." Johnson's study sought to reveal racial conflict as a matter of widespread ignorance and miscomprehension in the urban population which could be adjusted and improved through education and racial contacts of the respectable kind (i.e. not in "black and tan" establishments). With a sleight of hand, the struggle for – and denial of – access to full citizenship rights for all became instead a matter of engineering a mutual reconciliation between two established, distinct and inevitably warring races, watched over by an elite of social scientific experts.[445]

The report approached the problem of race relations in an even-handed manner, identifying from the outset the central problems that the 'white' and the 'black' communities each needed to address to avoid further racial antagonism. For whites, the report stressed the barrier to progress that racial prejudice represented;

> The great body of anti-Negro public opinion, preserved in the literature and traditions of the white race during the long, unhappy progress of the Negro from savagery through slavery to citizenship, has exercised a persistent and powerful effect, both conscious and unconscious, upon the thinking and the behavior of the white group generally.

Racial prejudice, the report noted, could be detected in white opinions regarding black character and behavior in most facets of life. Whites held many stereotypical notions – divided into 'primary' and 'secondary' beliefs – of their fellow black citizens as inherently unintelligent,

[445] Robert Park, "Review of The Negro in Chicago," 194-96; Farber, "Charles S. Johnson's *The Negro in Chicago*"

illiterate, lacking in morality, prone to criminal activity, physically repellent and unhygienic, overly emotional, lazy, and boisterous. Although the report actually quoted a number of white Chicagoans offering distinctly positive and egalitarian (or sometimes contradictory) views of African Americans, the final analysis determined that white prejudice was deep-rooted and ingrained within the white cultural outlook. One white woman canvassed by the commission, for example, reported that she knew of "no distinguishing traits" of the Negro race and agreed with the interviewer's concern that educating Negroes increased their demands, but that therefore the city should "Grant their demands."[446] Such evidence did not disrupt the sociological interpretation of entrenched prejudice.

On the other hand, the report identified the existence of a "cultural lag" as the central issue that black Chicagoans needed to address. Both African American migrants and long term urban residents, the report advised, should continue to cultivate the industry, efficiency and moral character necessary for good citizenship. It further called upon the nation at large to ensure that "the Negro is educated for citizenship."[447] Assessing the ways in which black migrants could be 'adjusted' to city life, the commission commended social agencies like the Chicago Urban League, YMCA, black churches, schools and other civic organizations for their role but noted that many such agencies were poorly supported and under-staffed. The report contained a benign evolutionary view of black progress, implying that once African Americans caught up to the standards of citizenship required of them, racial peace and order would be restored. One black businessman quoted in the report disagreed with such an outlook, reflecting on the fact that the nation already had the necessary laws in place to enforce racial justice. "When a man becomes a

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83-84.
[446] A woman club member, quoted in *The Negro in Chicago*, 466.
[447] CCRR, "The Problem" in *The Negro in Chicago*, xxiii-xxiv;

contented citizen there will be little chance of causing him to fight anyone. Give us the things that are due us – law, protection and equal rights – then we will become contented citizens."[448]

Following a detailed narrative of the riot and its unfolding, the report provided a brief history of African American migration to Chicago. The main body of documented research surveyed the six areas of investigation that the commission had identified: racial clashes, housing, racial contacts, crime, industry and public opinion. The research findings presented a description of the conditions African Americans experienced in Chicago. The overall picture suggested that while employment and educational opportunities were expansive in the city, black Chicagoans faced discrimination in many public accommodations and experienced particularly difficult problems in the quality of housing they had access to. Racial violence and intimidation by formal and informal groups, notably Home Owners Associations and the many "Athletic Clubs" or street gangs such as the "Ragan's Colts" or the "Lorraine Club," also presented problems requiring redress. White gangs, the report noted, appeared to benefit from police protection and patronage from city and county politicians; the most notorious gang having the support of Frank Ragen, a Democratic alderman and Cook County commissioner. Yet, rather than explore the political structures that supported such arrangements, making racist violence officially rewarding for young white (mostly Irish or second-generation immigrant) men, the report focused on social-psychology as the motive to their actions.

While the report discussed some of the failings of the police, the courts, banks, employers, unions, and the city government in protecting black citizenship rights, its emphasis lay heavily with the prejudicial power of public opinion. Its central recommendations aimed at overcoming the mutual isolation of and misunderstanding that existed between the races, which it

[448] African American businessman, quoted in *The Negro in Chicago*, 478.

located as the main cause of the riot. It concluded that the moral responsibility for race rioting did not just lie with the hoodlums of the athletic clubs but with all citizens of Chicago "who do not condemn and combat the spirit of racial hatred" expressed through violence. The remedy, therefore, was a "necessarily slow" one, since apparently "no one, white or Negro, is wholly free from an inheritance of prejudice in feeling and thinking as to these questions."[449] The aim of the commission, therefore, was to expose and correct false cultural beliefs and attitudes in order to promote racial harmony.

The issue of culture was key. Park's theory of racial adjustment rested on a cultural rather than a biological definition of race. The inclusion of this perspective in *The Negro in Chicago* meant that the CCRR endorsed such a shift, which had powerful consequences – both positive and negative – on the way American citizenship came to be understood. Less rigid, permanent and hierarchical than biological versions of race, cultural understandings continued to assume racial categories as scientifically valid, albeit within social rather than natural science. As Park and the CCRR shifted the terms of debate about race and citizenship onto sociological grounds, race relations took on a reflexive character; with no 'races,' there were no 'race relations,' of course. The report assumed a stark division between the black and white races, thereby both reifying and institutionalizing a binary racial division, making firm and formal a social rupture that had previously been highly contested, fluid and flexible in Chicago.[450] Moreover, with its anthropological, cultural, sociological or socio-psychological understandings of race relations, the report replaced earlier emphases on legal and political definitions of citizenship.

Insisting that the problem of race conflict "must be solved in harmony with the fundamental law of the nation and its free institutions," *The Negro in Chicago* did not endorse

[449] CCRR, "The Recommendations of the Commission," in *The Negro in Chicago*, 640, 644.
[450] Stow Persons, *Ethnic Studies at Chicago, 1905-1945* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987): 67.

compulsory segregation. Rather, it pointed out that "measures involving or approaching deportation or segregation are illegal, impracticable and would not solve, but would accentuate, the race problem." This did not mean that it proposed official efforts to encourage racial integration instead. Rather than support an open housing policy, for instance, the commission recommended improvements in existing black housing and an orderly expansion of the black belt when and where it became necessary. Stressing the need for constructive rather then destructive remedies, the report insisted that "more and better housing" for African Americans would alleviate race problems more effectively than bomb-throwing or exclusionary propaganda. Similarly, in its discussion of the use of city parks and other recreational facilities, the report noted that while the attitude of park directors could be crucial in avoiding racial friction, it stressed that the most important remedy was the creation of additional recreational facilities within the black belt itself.[451] Updating *Plessy*, the report squared the values of American citizenship with racial marking in the modern, industrial city. Through engineering a consensus around black residence and recreation in an enlarged, improved black belt, the commission sought to turn social conflict into a harmonious and balanced social arrangement.

The CCRR sought to put in place a modus operandi of race relations that rested on an assumption of racial difference necessitating inter-racial mediation and an oversight of inter-racial etiquette. Its final recommendations directed advice and action points to different sections of the Chicago government and population: the police, the city government, the Board of Education, Community Organizations, and "the Public" divided into two sub-headings, White and Negro. The most general and most significant directives aimed at the general public, who

[451] Commissioners had to be particularly careful following the unanimous Supreme Court decision in *Buchanan v. Warley* 245 US 60 (1917) that outlawed civil government instituted racial segregation in residential areas. For the commission's housing and recreational recommendations see *The Negro in Chicago*, 645-6 as well as the individual chapters on Housing (chapter 5) and Racial Contacts (chapter 6) in the main body of the report.

were urged not to spread rumors or promote prejudiced attitudes among themselves. Since the commission assumed that racial conflict would continue in the city, its central recommendation was the creation of a permanent race-relations body to guard against future clashes and promote "the spirit of interracial tolerance and co-operation." Since all citizens were culpable, the commission stressed the necessity of diligent surveillance. In his introductory comments published as a prologue in the official report, Governor Frank Lowden singled out and heartily endorsed the call for a permanent commission on race relations so that misunderstandings between the races could be assuaged.[452]

The commission and its report formed a response to the 1919 race riot engineered by state officials, shaped by the social reform elite – particularly philanthropist Julius Rosenwald and the Chicago Urban League – and guided in its policy recommendations by experts in the field of sociology. There was no sense in the selection of personnel, research design or final recommendations that commissioners desired, promoted, or even considered any form of political solution to racial strife, inequality and segregation. They placed little emphasis on the securing of citizenship rights for African American Chicagoans or on methods of preventing *de facto* segregation.[453] Rather, the report advised black citizens that their defensive embrace of race consciousness and race pride was not advisable and only likely to obstruct efforts at racial 'adjustment.' The CCRR dismissed any objections to their line of questioning or approach, including the earlier formal rejection of the proposal for an interracial commission by the people's elected representatives and the informal opposition of many black Chicagoans, as unhelpful, antagonistic and "unscientific." The people of Chicago, after all, did not know best but were so blinded by their cultural aversions to members of other races and so duped by

[452] CCRR, "The Recommendations of the Commission," in *The Negro in Chicago*, 640-51; Frank O. Lowden, "Prologue" Ibid.

sensationalist newspaper accounts and rumor-mongering, that they required the wiser guidance and regulatory oversight of an unelected, self-appointed, unrepresentative and undemocratic body of community leaders and social-scientific experts.

Since he was the chief architect of the report, Charles Johnson's later career is instructive. In subsequent publications, Johnson presented the findings of the CCRR as his own work, not merely implying his own authorship of the report but also his agreement with it and its conclusions. Johnson spent most of the 1920s in New York as research director for the National Urban League and editor of the journal *Opportunity*, during which time he became known as one of the "midwives" of the Harlem Renaissance. Johnson saw his role again as an intermediary between blacks and whites – this time between black artists and intellectuals and their white patrons and publishers. In 1928, Johnson moved to Nashville to head Fisk University's department of social research and over the next two decades, he published a number of monographs on race relations in the South.[454]

While his research was vigorous, his writing exact and his aspirations scientific, Johnson navigated southern race relations cautiously and in a conciliatory manner. He worked most consistently and effectively with a group of white southern liberals, who are best described as "benevolent segregationists." That is, they supported the improvement of economic conditions for black Southerners but preferred not to meddle with social relations. In other words, they sought – like Johnson's former Chicago colleagues – to emphasize *Plessy's* "separate but equal" formulation, believing that an acceptance of separateness might enhance the likelihood of achieving equality. If he made little real headway for black citizenship status in this way, Johnson did further his own career, gaining continued support from philanthropic foundations, particularly

[453] Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit In*, 98-100.
[454] Gilpin and Gasman, *Charles S. Johnson*, 12-13.

the Rosenwald fund. Indeed, by positioning himself as a "conciliatory realist" in the mold of Booker T. Washington, Johnson was able to build a Fisk "machine" (he was elected to the presidency of the University in 1946) that replaced Washington's Tuskegee as the recipient and distributor of research funds, teaching posts, and other desirable credentials.[455]

Johnson's 1922 *The Negro in Chicago* served as a model in the study of urban race relations across the nation. More than two decades later, Robert C. Weaver utilized its methods and research model in his own work in Chicago. In 1944, Johnson suggested that Weaver organize a city conference on race relations in response to a number of wartime race riots breaking out in other cities. The two men coordinated their efforts with Edwin Embree, president of the Julius Rosenwald fund, and Mayor Edward J. Kelly and together they created the permanent Chicago Mayor's Committee on Race Relations - Johnson acting as consultant, Weaver as Executive Director.[456]

Contrary to its depiction in the historical literature as a well-meaning but toothless and ultimately ineffective body, the Chicago Commission on Race Relations established the way forward to American racial citizenship into the twentieth century. In Chicago itself, the commission perpetuated and formalized the dynamic toward increasing residential segregation and racial estrangement. By placing an emphasis on the separateness of racial groups and institutionalizing racial difference in a quasi-state organization, the commission set the stage for race-based citizenship for decades to come.

[455] Richard Robbins, *Sidelines Activist*, 28; Gilpin and Gasman, *Charles S. Johnson*, 145; August Meier, "Black Sociologists in White America" *Social Forces* 56 (1979): 259-70.
[456] Mayor's Committee on Race Relations, *Race Relations in Chicago* (December 1944).

CHAPTER 6

ROBERT PARK'S AMERICA: IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE 1920S

It is very far from our thought to suggest the slightest question of racial superiority or inferiority. What we suggest is merely racial difference and it is of such character and extent that the great body of our people instinctively recognize it and reject the thought of assimilation.
Supreme Court Justice Sutherland, 1923

"What is the Constitution between friends?"
Robert Park, 1926

After the initial postwar paroxysms of racial violence, xenophobia and red scare, political and intellectual elites turned in the twenties to the task of reconstituting the nation. The war had intensified and exaggerated a growing sense of disillusionment among American intellectuals and deepened their anxieties about the nation's historic purpose. Among the articles of faith discredited by the war and in its repressive aftermath was the easy assimilative power of the nation's "melting pot." As John Higham, the preeminent historian of the process notes, "with the passing of faith in the melting pot there perished the ideal of American nationality as an unfinished, steadily improving, cosmopolitan blend."[457] With the death of that ideal, there arose a need to reimagine the ways in which individuals and social groups connected together to create and constitute the nation.

Most traditional histories of immigration and ethnicity during the 1920s, including Higham's, point to the rise of eugenics and other forms of race-based nativism as the dominant contemporary response to the apparent failure of the melting pot. Arguments put forward in nativist tracts such as Madison Grant's *Passing of the Great Race* (1916) and Lothrop Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color* (1920) as well as the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan indicated a new

[457] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2nd edition 1988): 301.

and more sinister direction for national self-understanding. The nation, it appeared, was losing its racial identity to a swarm of inferior but fecund racial types, who not only threatened to out-breed the historically dominant white Nordics but who refused to assimilate to established social values and political institutions. Within conventional accounts of postwar public opinion and public policy, then, the rise of pseudo-scientific racial thinking necessarily led to the passage of the protective and restrictionist Immigration Act of 1924. Albert Johnson, the principal author of that Act stated that "the myth of the melting pot has been discredited" and set about gathering expert advice from eugenicists to justify and explain the exclusion of unmeltable races and nationalities.[458]

However, while eugenics and racial nativism certainly help to explain the development of a restrictionist immigration policy, an examination of the broader historiography of social thought and intellectual life during the twenties reveals a rather different and more complicated story about the changing shape of American citizenship and national identity. During the decade, urban intellectuals, particularly social scientists but also artists, novelists and journalists, began to understand and investigate the collapse of the melting pot ideal in novel ways; they dismantled the premise and content of old forms of racial thinking and explored instead the impact of the social and cultural environment on the nature of citizens and citizenship. Even before the war, cultural anthropologist Franz Boas, philosopher Horace Kallen, sociologist and civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois and writer Randolph Bourne, among others, had challenged older notions of racial thinking and sought alternative ways of understanding and responding to the ethnic and racial mixture that composed the American nation. Foremost among those seeking to establish a new footing for national self-understanding in the twenties were the sociologists of the

[458] Johnson quote from Lawrence Fuchs, *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity and the Civil Culture* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1990): 61.

University of Chicago, who did more than anyone to establish through empirical research the social realm as a distinct and legitimate area of enquiry.[459] Throughout the decade, leading Chicago School sociologist Robert Park and his students conducted studies of race relations and ethnic communities that underlined the irrelevance of biological explanations for human behaviors and formulated new environmentalist and thoroughly modern approaches to questions of identity, community, and belonging.

This chapter therefore confronts the problem of reconciling the passage of a rigid restrictionist immigration policy, seemingly based on racial thinking, in an era of unprecedentedly liberal thought about race. The passage of the 1924 Act cannot be adequately explained by a general upsurge in racist ideas, at least not in the hierarchical and eugenicist sense that thinkers like Madison Grant and some legislators used. Rather, as this chapter will suggest, a fuller understanding requires attention to competing ideas about the meaning of race and nation in the postwar period. My argument is definitely not that racism played no role in the framing of the 1924 Immigration Act; Higham's thesis dominated the field for decades with good reason. It is not even simply the need to take into account the additional social and economic factors other historians have more recently suggested provide a more complete explanation for the passage of the Act.[460] Rather than focus on the legislative process as most historians of the Johnson-Reed Act have done, this chapter seeks to reassess and relocate the intellectual imperative that created a political culture supportive of a restrictive immigration policy. It does so by acknowledging the

[459] Martin Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology: Institutionalization, Diversity, and the Rise of Sociological Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984): 58.

[460] For example, Claudia Goldin argues that economic and workplace factors had more impact than previously understood, in "The Political Economy of Immigration Restriction in the United States, 1890-1921 in *The Regulated Economy: A Historical Approach to Political Economy,* ed. Claudia Goldin and Gary D. Libecap (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 223-57; Mae M. Ngai argues there were more complex sources than simply eugenics, notably the creation of novel racial taxonomies and an assumption of nationhood, behind the drive for regulation in "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924" *Journal of American History* (1999): 67-92.

very modern impulses that informed and cemented the broad consensus about the need to restrict immigration. In particular, it takes issue with the argument that the path of cultural pluralism was a missed opportunity for US policy makers or that cultural pluralist notions of national identity represented an overlooked alternative to the racist focus on national origins in the Act. I want to argue here, using the example of Park's Chicago sociology and the urban reform milieu in which it was embedded, that the development of an outlook conducive to support for tighter federal control over immigration came from sources other than racial nativism and eugenic science. Indeed, that cultural pluralism along with the postwar remnants of Progressive reformism contributed to the creation of a modern form of racial thinking and thus to comprehensive support for the passage and implementation of the 1924 Immigration Act.

Progressive reformers' calls for state regulation and the pluralists' emphasis on ascribed cultural identity at the expense of chosen political identity constituted two elements of a generally hesitant and guarded response by a growing urban intelligentsia to the advent of a diverse and cosmopolitan mass society. To be sure, some sections of the intellectual and political elite clung to increasingly discredited notions of racial hierarchy to make sense of the world and attempted to whip up hysteria about the threat posed by inferior races. Yet in the postwar period, the shrillness of their tone indicated the futility of their cause. During the war and into the 1920s, progressive social thought, with its attachment to a steadily improving civilization, became modified by growing discontent about the direction of American social life and the failure to heal developing rifts among and between social groups. The intellectual currents of the twenties, of which Robert Park's writings are a prominent example, resulted in a major readjustment of the terms of modern citizenship. The widespread rejection of the melting pot as a viable working

model, or even as a social ideal to aspire to, and the consequent introduction of a restrictionist immigration policy in that decade usefully illustrates the shifts taking place in social thought and public policy, as modern American citizenship took shape.

The 1924 Immigration Act

Although the central concern of this chapter is the public discussion about race and immigration control rather than the narrowly legislative, it is worth looking briefly at the legislative details of the 1924 Immigration Act itself to understand what lawmakers implemented in legal terms. This will provide some insight into what they hoped to achieve as well as the ideas that animated the decision-making process. It is also worth noting that there was some disjuncture between the arguments that informed the debate among lawmakers in the committees and chambers of Congress and that which supporters of immigration control, especially elected representatives, felt able to freely and openly express in public. As Mae Ngai points out, "The legislative genealogy of immigration quotas turns on the endeavors of lawmakers to make race-based laws appear to be not racist."[461] In other words, due in large part to their undemocratic nature, arguments based on racial hierarchy had ceased to be acceptable in polite company and were anathema to political campaigning. While Senator Ellison D. Smith of South Carolina may have cited Madison Grant's racist theories to support his demand that the US "shut the door and . . . breed up a pure, unadulterated American citizenship," and eugenics "expert" (*sic*) Harry Laughlin reported on the racial degeneracy of Southern and Eastern Europeans to a House committee, they were, I will argue, already out of step with mainstream racial thinking.[462]

[461] Ngai, "The Architecture of Race," fn 4, 68.
[462] Ellison DuRant Smith, April 9, 1924, *Congressional Record,* 68th Congress, 1st Session (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1924), vol. 65, 5961–5962; historians have focused a lot of attention on the eugenicist ideas of Laughlin who was appointed as an advisor to the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization in 1920. However, as Gary Gerstle notes, Laughlin's final report was massively flawed and his scientific evidence

The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act built on previous legislation to restrict immigration. The 1917 Immigration Act had denied entry to "undesirables" including illiterates, polygamists and anarchists and created an Asiatic Barred Zone, preventing East Asians and Pacific Islanders from legal entry. Most recently, the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 created a temporary nationality quota system, limiting the number of all immigrants to three per cent of the number of persons of any given nationality residing in the United States according to the 1910 Census. Under the terms of the 1924 Act, nationality quotas were extended until 1927 but were reduced to two per cent of the foreign-born population and the census base pushed back to 1890. The reason for the switch in census base was undoubtedly the desire to limit the inflow of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, the main source of immigration in the decades between 1890 and 1920.[463]

The central feature of the 1924 Act specified that in 1927, nationality quotas based on the census would be replaced with the 'national origins' system. This system imposed an absolute numerical annual limit of 150,000 and determined that each eligible nationality would gain their annual quota based on the proportion of inhabitants in the continental United States whose origin "by birth or ancestry" corresponded to each designated nationality. The 1920 census would provide the basis for calculations of national origin but the actual bloodlines of inhabitants involved a complicated analysis of ethnic ties and family names of native descendants from the 1790 census onward, as well as those of aliens. Excluded from these calculations were the descendants of "immigrant slaves," (which meant Africans), anyone not eligible for citizenship of the United States, (which meant Asians), and aborigines (which meant Native Americans). And

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unsurprisingly failed to prove his argument about the degeneracy of Southern and Eastern Europeans but that was of no matter since "the idea of innate racial difference between old and new immigrants was all that many members of Congress wanted to hear." Gerstle, *American Crucible*: 105, fn60, 392. See the in-depth discussion of Laughlin's role in Desmond King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[463] 1917 Immigration Act, H.R. 10384; Pub.L. 301; 39 Stat. 874, 64th Congress; February 5th, 1917;

there were a number of non-quota exceptions, including all the nations of the Western Hemisphere, so that Canadians, Mexicans and Caribbean islanders retained unlimited right to entry.[464]

Essentially, the national origins calculations that lay at the heart of the 1924 Act sought to retain and protect a definite "American type," by which was meant white Northern and Western Europeans who were dominant at the founding of the nation. It did so by extending group identity, which already served as the basis of restriction to Chinese and Japanese immigrants, to European nationalities and by reiterating the exclusion of non-white groups, including Asians, African Americans, Latin Americans, and Native Americans, from the calculations of the peoples who originally and rightfully composed the nation.[465] The story was not simply about racial exclusion; in fact, it was as much about determining (and freezing) the present character of American citizenship as it was about keeping 'undesirables' out.

The architects of national origins insisted that the system was the only way to avoid discriminating against the native-born population who were overlooked in quota based calculations. Of itself, their desire to appear non-discriminatory is significant but, of course, since they defined the 'native-born' as the descendants of the white population of 1790, their analysis assumed that the American character had been set at that time and was modified only slightly, if at all, in the dozen decades since. Neither exposure to the American experience nor intermarriage

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1921 Emergency Quota Law, H.R. 4075; Pub.L. 67-5; 42 Stat. 5, 67th Congress; May 19, 1921; Immigration Act of 1924, H.R. 7995; Pub.L. 68-139; 43 Stat. 153, 68th Congress; May 26, 1924.

[464] Immigration Act of 1924, H.R. 7995; Pub.L. 68-139; 43 Stat. 153, 68th Congress; May 26, 1924; King, *Making Americans* provides a fascinating discussion of the process by which quotas came to be specified, 206-12.

[465] In 1882, Chinese immigrants were the first targets of group-based legal restriction, followed by Japanese men under Theodore Roosevelt's 1907 Gentleman's Agreement" with Japan. All other controls on restriction before 1917 were based on individual, not group, characteristics such as disability or political beliefs. The 1917 literacy test was driven by a thinly-veiled desire to stymie the "new" immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe but it proved ineffective at halting or even reducing immigration levels from any particular group since learning to read was not beyond even peasants from Sicily or Poland. For a useful discussion of the history of immigration controls see Gary Gerstle's *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001): chapter 3.

during the intervening century had altered the cultural inheritance from ethnic forbears; no composite new identity had been forged.[466]

Eugenic arguments certainly featured in the legislative process, particularly the discussion of Southern and Eastern Europeans, but they were not the primary feature of the political handling of Asians, Native Americans or Mexicans. Instead, legislators relied upon a 1790 naturalization law to define Asians as ineligible for citizenship and thereby bar them from legal entry. Notably, in determining whether Asians could be classified as 'white' or not under the terms of the Act, the federal courts increasingly rejected scientific categories in favor of common or subjective understandings of race.[467] Neither could Mexicans be excluded through eugenicist racial logic since they possessed a nineteenth-century legal precedent of access to citizenship as a conquered people. And while Native Americans were *not* counted as part of the "native stock" within the national origins calculations, they were uniformly declared U.S. citizens by the Indian Citizenship Act passed the very same year as the Immigration Act. What binds the treatment of these non-white groups together with the restrictions on European immigration is not so much racial eugenics but a newly cast formula for American citizenship for the modern era, based on the fact of *being* rather than the process of *becoming* – or as Werner Sollors has it, on lines of "descent" rather than of voluntary "consent."[468] After 1924, eligibility for American citizenship became dependent upon ethnic identity. Moreover, by creating and defining *excluded* groups by their ancestry, the national origins system necessarily demanded the definition of those

[466] Ngai, "The Architecture of Race" makes the obvious but important point that "determining the national origins of the American people was theoretically suspect and methodologically impossible" 79-80.

[467] The most striking case was that of Bhagat Singh Thind who, in 1920, an Oregon Court had designated white and therefore eligible for citizenship; the US Supreme Court overturned this ruling three years later in *United States v. Thind* 261 U.S. 204 (1923). Justice Sutherland delivered the Court's opinion that neither "Caucasian" nor "Aryan" were valid scientific categories and that in fact, science itself had not proven a good or reliable guide in determining racial categories. Instead, the "understanding of the common man" properly determined racial status. See Ngai, "The Architecture of Race," 84; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): 236.

Americans properly *included* in the national stock by their ancestral inheritance. For both aliens and citizens, the 1924 Immigration Act transformed citizenship from a political identity, which was or could be chosen, to one determined by birth and inheritance, which was not.[469]

Too heavy an emphasis on the role of eugenic racial science also significantly ignores the general consensus among all contemporaries on the necessity of restriction *per se*. Since absolute limits on immigration remain a feature of American national policy, it is surely as important to account for its broad acceptance as to unravel the racial and ethnic divisions it rested upon.[470] This is particularly the case given that the national origins system laid out in 1924 was not due to come into effect until 1927 and was then delayed two additional years to allow for further scientific study and more accurate calculation of the national racial and ethnic stock. This legislative delay provided a full five years for opponents to mobilize against restriction and to leave a mark of their opposition in the historical record. In fact, despite the unreliability of the demographic data compiled by the Quota Board and the dubious assumptions it rested upon, political opposition to restriction proved minimal. Old and new immigrant groups, particularly those whose quotas would be most severely reduced, did campaign against the national origins system but not against a restrictive policy *per se*. In Chicago, immigrants of German, Irish and Scandinavian nationality and descent joined together to protest the "vicious, unworkable and un-American" legislation that cast a slur upon the quality of their citizenship. Yet, as late as 1929, just as the Act was about to go into effect, they continued to protest the means and method but

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[468] Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986)

[469] Walter Benn Michaels points out that under the national origins formula "While it remained true that, say, Italian Americans and Swedish Americans were equally American, their Italianness and the Swedishness now took on a new significance since it was their ancestral identity (their identity as descendents of Swedes or Italians) as distinguished from their political identity (their identity as Americans) that would determine the access to American citizenship of future Italians or Swedes." See his *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995): 30.

not the fact of immigration restriction.[471] One of the most outspoken critics of the 1924 Act and a widely-hailed spokesman for recent immigrants, Congressman Adolf J. Sabath of Chicago argued for the delay in implementation of national origins until 1929 on the grounds that "we should restrict immigration along sane, humane and scientific lines, instead of branding millions of our citizens as inferior."[472] By 1924, the argument for restriction had been won and remained uncontested notwithstanding the details.

The Progressive Origins of Immigration Restriction

The consensus on restriction held throughout the decade not because of a consensus over the need to keep America racially pure, since no such consensus existed. Even in 1924, Albert Johnson had been unable to openly justify his bill on the grounds of Nordic superiority which was why, in part, a seemingly fairer and more democratic rationale had to be secured.[473] Lawmakers claimed to find this in the national origins formula, which officially confirmed the importance not of racial superiority but of cultural difference. Secretary of Labor and member of the Quota Board James J. Davis argued that his restrictionist position rested not on a desire to exclude inferior races but on the belief that, "the mixing of the races, even though they might themselves be of high social, moral and intellectual standing, is not a good thing."[474] Speaking before the Commonwealth Club of Chicago, David Reed, the bill's original sponsor in the Senate, denied that "whether anybody is superior to anyone else enters into the immigrant question" but continued, "On the other hand, there is no question as to the fact that peoples are

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[470] This point is well made by Aristide R. Zolberg in his comprehensive *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006): 245.
[471] King, *Making Americans*, 221; "Meeting Shouts Protest against Immigration Law" *Chicago Tribune*, (March 28, 1929): 10.
[472] Congressman Sabath quoted in King, *Making Americans*, 205.
[473] Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, chapter 11.
[474] King, *Making Americans*, 206.

different." In support of the 1924 Act, the *New York Times* insisted that "There is no question of "superior" or "inferior" races, or of "Nordics" or of prejudice or of racial egotism."[475] Even ardent racial nativist Lothrop Stoddard conceded that the defense of American culture required no insistence upon Nordic dominance but that "when we discuss immigration we had better stop theorizing about superiors and inferiors and get down to the bedrock of *difference*."[476] Across the political spectrum, embarrassment about the antidemocratic and racist implications of immigration policy tempered eugenicist claims.

The transformation of racial thinking from a rigid hierarchical scheme to a more relativistic understanding had begun in the years before World War I but intensified in its aftermath. Historians generally accept that biological determinism declined significantly during the twenties. Indeed, during that decade, social scientists like Robert Park came to define themselves against biological or hereditarian explanations not least because their emphasis on social and cultural explanations gave them a professional purpose.[477] A 1929 conference paper pointed out that the racial classifications on which national origins quotas were based were a "fantastic" fallacy, which no reputable ethnologist would subscribe to.[478] Higham put the matter clearly, "From modest beginnings in the Progressive period, the repudiation of racial thinking mounted steadily until it became, in the 1930's, almost a hallmark of civilised man." For sure, the

[475] "Eliminating the 1890 Census," *New York Times* (March 1, 1924): 12.
[476] Lothrop Stoddard, *Re-Forging America: The Story of Our Nationhood* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1927): 103.
[477] John Higham, *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984): 215; Cultural historian Fred Wacker also notes, "it is clear that the environmentalist orientation became dominant by the end of the 1920s, see R. Fred Wacker, *Ethnicity, Pluralism and Race: Race Relations Theory in America Before Myrdal* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983): 11.
[478] King, *Making Americans*, 162; Barrett and Roediger (1997) argue that the 1924 Act itself defused the racial threat posed by immigrants but their analysis does not take into account a number of factors, including the fact that racial thinking faced serious challenge before 1924, that even the political authors of the Act could not justify it in terms of racial superiority in public, and that the five year delay in implementation made no difference to the terms of the national origins system.

relatively 'uncivilized' nature of prejudice against outsiders was a theme that flowed from Progressive reform through to Park's sociology.

The two strands of social thought that facilitated the shift toward cultural understandings of identity and difference – progressivism and cultural pluralism – also fed into and augmented the general consensus about the need for immigration control in the 1920s. Progressive and pluralist ideas about race, nation and identity emerged as part of the response of cosmopolitan urban elites to the experience of modernity and exerted a strong influence on the discussion about the nature of national identity during the 1920s. Estranged from traditional national symbols and ideals, urban intellectuals rejected classical liberal individualism and distanced themselves from the apparent 'irrationality' of the masses while employing rational scientific categories to explore the urban environment as the locus of collective social behavior. While many of their ideas were novel in the twenties, a direct consequence of their disillusion with the national project brought about by the Great War, many were carried over from the prewar period. For example, the war had the effect of deepening the Progressive belief that state intervention and regulation could and should correct the excesses of the economy and the vulgarities of the common culture.[479]

One such vulgarity was patriotism itself. In the aftermath of the First World War, suspicions about the destructive nature of nationalism in general and American national traditions, values and ideals – including the melting pot – in particular, were widespread among progressive thinkers. Even before US involvement in the war, Max Eastman had cautioned against the growing popularity of flag-waving patriotism as "coercive of . . . reasonable

[479] I see more continuity than Gary Gerstle, who argues that both the agenda and the personnel of "progressive" liberal intellectuals changed in the postwar period as a direct result of the war and the 1917 Russian Revolution, see his "The Protean Character of American Liberalism" *The American Historical Review*, 99.4 (October, 1994): 1043-1073.

judgment." In the aftermath of the war, patriotism's stock sunk even lower; Lincoln Steffens denounced it as "bunk; superstition; prejudice" and other liberal critiques abounded.[480]

A palpable elitism lay behind urban intellectuals' growing disenchantment with modern urban culture and disdain for popular attitudes and behavior. Patriotism was not the only irrational prejudice held by the masses; Progressives also despaired at the racial and ethnic prejudices rife in the cities. In 1922, John Dewey lamented that "race prejudice is a deep-seated and widespread social disease" which, he argued, arose from irrational "instincts and habits" against alien cultures. At times of social stress such as existed in postwar America, Dewey argued, the prejudices of the masses were reinforced by political and economic competition with immigrants to bring about inter-cultural tensions and conflict. He concluded that although educated and informed people were aware that race was "largely a fiction," the mass of American citizens were unable to grasp this truth and would not do so "until there has been a change not only in education, and in the means of publicity, but also in political and industrial organization." Meanwhile, Dewey reasoned, cultural adjustments might be ongoing but "unrestricted contact through immigration and by similar activities should not take place" since this would only increase racial antagonism. Sounding remarkably like the post-riot racial segregationists of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, Dewey urged that the United States needed "rest and recuperation," from the racial conflict that resulted from mass immigration and it was therefore properly in the national interest for the state to impose firm controls over alien entry. For their own safety, warring ethnic groups must be kept apart.[481]

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[480] Lincoln Steffen (1919) quoted in Higham, *Send These to Me,* 215; Max Eastman, "What Shall We Do With Patriotism?" *The Survey* (Jan 1, 1916): 403.

[481] John Dewey, "Racial Prejudice and Friction," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 6 (1922): 1-17, in *The Middle Works*, *1899-24,* 13: 243-55.

Progressive thinkers and reformers, who may have opposed the national origins system, nevertheless supported the demand for immigrant exclusion because, like racial nativists, they had largely lost faith in the capacity of the nation to assimilate newcomers. Unlike racial nativists, however, progressives did not locate the problem in the race of the immigrant but in the character of American culture and society – particularly in the character of the ignorant and prejudiced masses. Recounting the cycles of hostility toward newcomers in the "back o'the yards" district, Mary McDowell, chief resident of the University of Chicago settlement in that neighborhood, noted that Italians, Poles and latterly Mexicans had been the victims of local hatred and violent attacks, indicating, she argued, that "the prejudices against the newcomers are always with us where people of primitive habits predominate."[482] Presumably, federal restrictions on immigration would protect would-be future immigrants from such rough treatment and hostile attitudes by keeping them out of the country.

In Chicago, Progressive Era reformers had placed a strong emphasis on the environmental causes of social problems and pathologies. Grace Abbott, who chaired the Chicago Immigrants' Protective League, argued that if typhoid epidemics occurred most often in immigrant communities, then the elimination of typhoid rather than the restriction of immigration was the more sensible and desirable public policy option.[483] Clearly, Abbott, who was among the more liberal of Chicago's reformers, did not scapegoat immigrants for social and economic problems. But she did believe that a *laissez-faire* approach toward the assimilation of immigrants had not met the demands of a diverse and complex urban civilization. Abbott claimed that in a harsh, unhealthy and exploitative social environment the immigrant needed comprehensive protection from landlords, employers and corrupt political operators and, she argued, even sometimes from

[482] Mary McDowell, "Prejudice" in Caroline Hill, ed. *Mary McDowell and Municipal Housekeeping : A Symposium* (Chicago: Millar Publishing Co., 1937): 27.

the consequences of their own actions and decisions.[484] Social policy, she insisted, should be geared toward adjusting immigrants, ignorant of the pitfalls of American life, to the city. While the Immigrants' Protective League and other such agencies did what they could, only the state could deliver the necessary resources and regulations necessary to assist and protect immigrants if their social demoralization was to be avoided.

Chicago's Progressives argued that the state should not only protect the naïve immigrant from corruption and exploitation but it should also intervene to protect the American standard of living from the low wages, unemployment and overcrowding that immigrant workers inadvertently created in the city. Mary McDowell denied that the "new" immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe came to the United States for different reasons to earlier migrants; all came for their best economic chance. What had changed, McDowell testified, were neither the motives nor the racial qualities of the immigrant, but their reception. In the great urban-industrial centers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, immigrants were more likely to become degraded and demoralized and thus to undermine the very American standard of living upon which their own success depended. Federal immigration control was therefore a positive thing, for immigrants as well as natives, since they helped to protect the American standard of living.[485]

While Chicago's Progressives recoiled at the "doctrine of fear" espoused by wartime and postwar Americanization crusaders, they were among the first to promote the necessity of some form of training for citizenship. The University of Chicago settlement ran a "School of Citizenship" that offered classes in English, civics, and preparation for naturalization but settlement workers preferred not to use the term "Americanization" because of its negative,

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[483] Grace Abbott, *The Immigrant and the Community* (New York: The Century Co., 1917), 139.
[484] Ibid., 101.
[485] Mary McDowell, "The Struggle for an American Standard of Living," "Prejudice" and "The Foreign Born" in Hill, ed., *Mary McDowell*: 65, 125, 23.

conformist connotations and argued instead for acceptance of and respect for the immigrants' diverse cultural backgrounds.[486] Moreover, the technologies of Americanization could, Abbott suggested, be used to even greater effect on native-born Americans who swindled and exploited ignorant immigrants. Since the gap between cherished national ideals and the reality and practices of modern American life were so apparent, the danger was that unprotected immigrants might easily lose their faith in America and instead accuse the nation of hypocrisy. Thus, she asserted "until we live these beliefs we cannot honestly represent them as American."[487] Abbot, like other Chicago Progressives, held grave doubts about the ability of both Americans and aliens to hold firm to traditional American ideals given the nature of modern urban life.

Reformers cautioned against too-speedy an Americanization of the foreign-born since this could have a destabilizing impact on the immigrant community and its institutions. Mary McDowell cautioned that Americanization "by the dance hall and the movies" could lead young immigrants who were "cut loose too soon from their parents' old-country culture and traditions" to "adopt a scornful attitude that leads to irreverence and lack of authority in the family."[488] These types of concerns about the declining authority of the family and concomitant loss of social cohesion originated in prewar Progressivism and reflected discomfort with modern culture and an elitist aversion to mass cultural entertainment, themes that continued through the war years. In 1917, Grace Abbott particularly worried about the effect of neighborhood dances on young immigrant girl's morality and warned that,

> A too rapid Americanization is dangerous, and the girl who leaves her own people and eats strange American food, learns a new language, and gives up her old country clothes and manners, often wrongly concludes that all her old-world ideals are to be abandoned

[486] McDowell, "The Foreign Born" in Hill, *Mary McDowell*, 17.
[487] Abbott, *Immigrant and the Community*, 235.
[488] McDowell, "The Foreign Born" in Hill, *Mary McDowell*, 16.

> and that in America she is to live under a very different moral code from the one her mother taught her.[489]

Progressive thinkers and reformers retreated from a strident Americanization policy since they had come to think that perhaps an individual could not after all become what they were not, that is, an American. Or at least, that they could not do so without great loss and great danger to themselves, their moral codes, their families, and their cultural traditions. In the postwar period, Progressives' traditional concerns about the risks and problems immigrants faced in Chicago and other American cities came to outweigh their assessment of the opportunities that were open to newcomers. Moreover, Progressive's faith in their own ability – and in their fellow citizen's inclination – to make meaningful social change had been seriously compromised by the experience of the war. Faced with, as they saw it, a morally bankrupt commercial culture, an exploitative economic system and the obstacle of mass racial and ethnic prejudice, many postwar Progressives decided that most immigrants, after all, were better off staying at home. With lowered expectations, they looked now to the federal government not as an agent of social progress but as a veritable Cerberus, guarding the gates to American citizenship.

Cultural Pluralism

Most historical accounts of the path to immigration control in the twenties ignore the emergence of the strand of social thought known as cultural pluralism in the same decade. Where it is considered, it is invariably characterized as a missed opportunity that should have but did not gain a substantial hearing until later (some scholars specify the thirties, others delay its impact until the sixties).[490] However, cultural pluralism deserves a more prominent role in the

[489] Abbott, *Immigrant and the Community,* 67.
[490] Higham's*, Send These to Me,* chapter 9*;* F.H. Matthews's "The Revolt Against Americanism: Cultural Pluralism and Cultural Relativism as an Ideology of Liberation" *Canadian Review of American Studies* Vol. 1.1 (Spring 1970):

reconfiguration of national identity in the fraught postwar years. Although historians and political scientists continue to underestimate its impact and importance, literary theorists Walter Benn Michaels and Werner Sollors have critically reappraised cultural pluralism, demonstrating its importance to the creation of a modern American identity during the modernist twenties. Michaels points to two important shifts in racial logic in the postwar period that reflected novel understandings of national identity and identity within the nation: first, an emphasis on the neutral "difference" of aliens rather than on their racial inferiority; and second, a preference for representing difference in cultural terms. This meant that with the modern approach to citizenship, an individual could become an American citizen without being fully an American since Americanness was no longer simply a political status but also, perhaps primarily, a cultural identity.[491]

The way in which cosmopolitan urban intellectuals such as Randolph Bourne and Horace Kallen defined 'culture' explains why and how their cultural pluralist approach reinforced the drive toward immigration restriction. Indeed, it is only through a critical analysis of the identitarian nature of cultural pluralism that the widespread acceptance of both immigration control *per se* and of the general decline of biological determinism in social thought can be reconciled. The view of culture adopted by Kallen, Bourne and other cultural pluralists can be traced to the work of anthropologist Franz Boas. Combining philosophical egalitarianism with cultural relativism, the anthropological concept of culture served as the cornerstone of antiracist discourse. Applying anthropological definitions of culture (developed from the study of primitive

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4-31; Des King's *Making Americans* argues that the revival of racial and ethnic group "recognition" politics in the 1960s and 70s was a reaction against the repressive Americanizing politics of the 1920s that had been enshrined in the 1924 Immigration Act but released by the 1965 Immigration Act; R. Fred Wacker in *Ethnicity, Pluralism and Race* suggests that even though Horace Kallen backed away from his argument for cultural pluralism in the late 1920s, certain of its tenets began to be more widely accepted in the thirties, particularly among black artists and intellectuals.

societies) to modern society, however, raises real problems. For Boas, culture was synonymous with tradition and habit, the continuity and longevity of which functioned to hold society together in stable equilibrium. Cultural habits existed before any given individual and continued after their death; any change or alteration to cultural patterns could lead to social breakdown. Since they existed and functioned as integrated wholes, cultures could survive only if they were kept intact and, in particular, protected from disruptive external influences. A modern society characterized by constant change could therefore only be interpreted problematically.

Moreover, the anti-racist Boas continued to categorize human beings according to their inherent differences but labeled divisions cultural rather than racial. What Boas's cultural theory did, as Kenan Malik notes, was "effectively to turn the evolutionary ladder of Victorian racial theory on its side, and to conceive of humanity as horizontally rather than vertically segmented."[492] Cosmopolitan modern thinkers adopted versions of this approach in the twenties and applied it to the United States. Gone from pluralists' understanding of culture was the transformative, creative and future-oriented character of the melting pot ideal and in its place was an array of stable ethnic cultures, each located in a set of past traditions, customs and practices. The irony of pluralists' positive embrace of diversity is that it rested on an assumption of difference that divided American citizens from one another in an even more rigid and permanent way than older notions of race.

Rooted not in the optimism of the Enlightenment but in their disillusion with modernity, cultural pluralists' approach led them to embrace the multitude of ethnic nationalisms as a means of counter-balancing an overbearing, stultifying and ultimately unsatisfying Americanism.

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[491] Michaels, *Our America*; Werner Sollors, "A Critique of Pure Pluralism" in *Reconstructing American Literary History*, edited by Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).
[492] Kenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race: Race, History and Culture in Western Society* (London: MacMillan Press, 1996); see also George W. Stocking Jr., *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

Sharing a desire to discredit racial superiority as a justification for social policy with Progressive thinkers, cultural pluralists also shared their increasingly dim view of modern American culture. Yet while Progressives continued to measure immigrants by universal standards, such as the standard of living, cultural pluralists' particularistic and relativistic approach meant they denied any common cultural standard was either possible or desirable. Horace Kallen thought that the do-good progressive emphasis on economics and politics, or in his words "the greed of the capitalist and the indifference of the government," focused on mere external dangers and did not get to the crux of the social problem, which really lay within the torn, divided, hyphenated self of the assimilated immigrant.[493] Rather than pursue and fixate upon social equality, which only produced drab social conformity, cultural pluralists advocated an embrace of cultural difference and ethnic diversity.

The ire that cultural pluralists felt for modern Americanism, particularly the uniformity imposed by the operation of the 'melting pot,' was unreserved. Expressing his disdain for the process of assimilation, Randolph Bourne worried that the erosion of national ethnic cultures in the urban melting pot would produce "hordes of men and women without a spiritual country, cultural outlaws, without taste, without standards but those of the mob."[494] Although Bourne retained a democratic attachment to the self-direction of immigrants and declared respect for their cultural choices, he could not respect those who chose the path of assimilation for they were thus doomed to become

> the flotsam and jetsam of American life, the downward undertow of our civilization with its leering cheapness and falseness of taste and spiritual outlook, the absence of mind and sincere feeling which we see in our slovenly towns, our vapid moving pictures, our popular novels, and in the vacuous faces of the crowds on the city street.[495]

[493] Horace Kallen, "Democracy and the Melting Pot," (1915) in *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998, originally published Boni and Liveright, 1924): 83.
[494] Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America," *Atlantic Monthly* 118 (June, 1916): 86-97.
[495] Ibid. Werner Sollors offers an insightful commentary on the ambiguities of Bourne's 1916 essay in his "'Americans All': "Of Plymouth Rock and Jamestown and Ellis Island"; or, Ethnic Literature and Some

Bourne's contempt for the conformity imposed by both Anglo-Saxon elites and by mass commercial culture led him to promote the retention and celebration of ethnic identity in radical defiance. By doing so, he paradoxically embraced an argument for ethnic purity in the service of cosmopolitan diversity. As Werner Sollors points out, Bourne's attempt to construct a dynamic pluralistic trans-nationalism required "monistic stable ethnic identities based on fixed national origins." While Bourne advocated fluidity, hybridity and invention in modern national citizenship, he nevertheless condemned the Jew who forsook his "venerable culture" and the "faith of his fathers" and lost the "Jewish fire," as a "mere elementary, grasping animal."[496] He reserved his anti-Semitism for those Jewish immigrants who denied their cultural heritage, refused to be who they were, and chose instead to join the "mindless" American masses.

While cultural pluralists rejected the moralistic and patronizing philosophy of social "uplift" espoused by Progressive reformers like Abbott and McDowell, their own elevation of cultural over political identities did not in any way undermine or negate a restrictionist immigration policy based on exclusion according to national origin. Like other romantic nationalists, cultural pluralists disconnected individual and group identities from political citizenship, which could be chosen, and connected them to ancestral group membership, which could not. Kallen articulated this understanding well when he said,

> Men may change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent; they cannot change their grandfathers. Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons, in order to cease being Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons would have to cease to be, while they could cease to be citizens or church members or carpenters or lawyers without ceasing to be.[497]

Redefinitions of "America," (New York University Press: Electronic Titles, http://www.nyupress.org/americansall/americansall.html?$string), 5.

[496] Sollors, "Americans All," 5.

[497] Kallen, *Culture and Democracy,* 114-5.

Thus, cultural pluralists embraced the romantic premise that cultural differences were both intrinsic and valuable and argued that they should be protected, nurtured, and reinforced in order to resist conformity to a universal standard.[498] Indeed, Kallen advocated direct state action to preserve cultural depth and diversity; the federal government would take on the role of a conductor in a multi-ethnic orchestra, allowing each instrument freedom of expression within an overarching national symphony.[499] Just like the Johnson Act of 1924, cultural pluralists understood difference to be ancestrally determined so that an alien attempting to be an American was therefore not only misconceived but futile. In a sense, then, Kallen and other cultural pluralists offered a grandfather clause for the twentieth century, removing the authenticity of American citizenship from those who were really, essentially, and forever, Poles, Jews or Anglo-Saxons. As Michaels points out, in privileging culture, pluralism did not offer any real challenge to racism, it simply changed the form racism took; indeed, it "essentialized racism."[500] Cultural pluralism acted as an ideological support for immigration control because it operated in the same way as the national origins system in dividing citizens according to their ethnic heritage.

Progressivism and cultural pluralism came from different philosophical positions although they shared a desire to challenge and transform traditional notions of racial citizenship. Seeking to soothe their own doubts about the nation's historic purpose, urban intellectuals strove to reconcile traditional American citizenship values with the contingencies of modern life in the city. The intellectual frameworks they established to distance themselves from older modes of national belonging, particularly the mechanism of the melting pot, explains their acceptance of, even support for, the 1924 Immigration Act.

[498] Higham, *Send These to Me*, 202.
[499] Kallen, *Culture and Democracy*.

Park's America

Robert Park had very little to do with the actual framing of national immigration policy. However, his significant sociological contribution helped to frame the public debate about immigration and national identity in the "tribal twenties," giving intellectual respectability to the notions of difference that justified restrictive policy. In his writings on race and culture, Park merged and consolidated elements of Progressive social thought with the concept of culture that informed the ideas of cultural pluralists. His social science gave greater weight and a scientific stature to both environmental explanations for social behavior *and* the crucial nature of ethnic and racial group identities.

Divergent readings of Park have variously understood him as an optimistic and universalistic subscriber to the myth of the melting pot; a pessimistic hand-wringer over the inevitability of cultural clash and concomitant social disorganization; an unwitting racist; as well as a liberal anti-racist. Recently, it has even been claimed that his writings anticipate multicultural identity politics.[501] All of these positions are perhaps defensible even if they are seemingly contradictory. In the context of his times, when universalism had suffered a severe but not fatal blow and epistemological relativism could still sit comfortably within an overarching framework of scientific progress, the possibility of reconciling cultural pluralism and assimilation still existed.

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[500] Michaels, *Our America*, 64.

[501] Generations of sociologists and historians have offered interpretations of Park's sociological method and theory as well as his philosophical and political position on race and ethnicity. Gunnar Myrdal dismissed Park as a do-nothing fatalist in his classic work *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1944); Among Park's most severe critics is Marxist scholar and former Park student, sociologist Oliver Cox who argued Park's paternalistic attitude toward African Americans demonstrated his racism, see Christopher A. McCauley *The Mind of Oliver C. Cox* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004): 39; Jewish scholar Werner J. Cahnman viewed Park as an unreconstructed assimilationist, "Robert E. Park at Fisk" *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences* 14 (1978): 328-336; while Wacker in *Ethnicity, Pluralism and Race* and Barbara Ballis Lal, *The Romance of Culture in an Urban Civilization: Robert E. Park on Race and Ethnic Relations in Cities* (London: Routledge, 1990) both underline Park's philosophical pragmatism and his acceptance of some of the tenets of cultural pluralism. The most

At the University of Chicago, Robert Park fashioned a sociology of race and ethnic relations for the cosmopolitan urban era. Despite his rejection of social activism and reform, Park's thinking on issues of race and culture had emerged out of the Progressive urban milieu of the early twentieth century and was central to the framing of these issues in modern social thought. His most significant digression from the approach taken by both Progressives and cultural pluralists to American citizenship was his formal inclusion of African Americans in the citizenry. Indeed, Park came to the study of ethnic and immigrant groups via his early interest in the African American experience and his involvement in moderate civil rights reform. He had worked closely with Booker T. Washington and, two years after arriving in Chicago, had co-founded and presided over the Chicago Urban League. As discussed in Chapter Four, Park also chaired the city's Joint Emergency Committee in the wake of the 1919 race riot, as well as unofficially overseeing the research and writing of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations'1922 report, *The Negro in Chicago*.

A former student of both John Dewey and William James, Park's Progressive credentials were added to in the early 1920s, when he served as president of the National Community Center Association, which sought to provide a counterbalance to the atomizing influences of the city. In Park's own words, the NCCA represented "an effort to revive, under the conditions of modern life, the direct and spontaneous participation in community life characteristic of the American frontier village."[502] Yet despite its many romantic, even anti-modern, features, Park's intellectual response to the rise of the city – like that of many Progressives – represented less a rejection of

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comprehensive and balanced work is Fred H. Matthews, *Quest for an American Sociology: Robert E. Park and the Chicago School* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977).

[502] Matthews, *Quest for an American Sociology,* 177-78; Robert E. Park, "The Problem of Community Organization" *The Community Center Newsletter* July-Aug, 1922, in Park papers, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Box 6, File 3.

modernity than a means of more efficiently adjusting to the pace of change in an increasingly fragmented, mobile, and individualistic society.[503]

Park recognized that ethnic affiliations and racial consciousness were created and reinforced by the conditions of American life. Yet, he continued to distinguish between the changing, superficial aspects of culture and the relatively unchanging core. While second generation immigrants might appear "outrageously American in their manners and their sentiments," and may have abandoned their older cultural heritage, they were not quite in possession of the new. This, he argued, created a dangerous situation for public policy since too swift a cultural transfer would lead to social disorganization and characteristic social problems of divorce, delinquency, crime and desertion.[504] Marrying Progressive's fears about social demoralization to cultural pluralist's essentialist view of group identity, Park formulated a thoroughly modern and pragmatic approach to urban race relations.

Through his vivid empirical descriptions and cultural analyses of urban civilization, Park translated modern America to itself in the same way that Sigmund Freud interpreted individuals to themselves. Although he replaced the study of collective consciousness for that of the individual subconscious and he analyzed racial "wishes" rather than those of personal dreams, like Freud, Park attempted to use scientific technique to get beyond the external appearance of things to reveal their inner meaning and significance. He acknowledged that there was no scientific justification for racial distinctions; what concerned him was the ways that people came to understand themselves and others to be members of racial and ethnic groups. His focus on culture as an objective expression of underlying collective attitudes referred to both racial and

[503] My argument here agrees with that set out by T. Jackson Lears in his study of anti-modernism, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
[504] Park, "Culture and Cultural Trends" *Publications of the American Sociological Society* XIX (December, 1925), reprinted in *Race and Culture*, 27.

nationality groups – including those of the American nation. In his determination to expose, understand and dissect collective attitudes and behavior, Park put Americans, black and white, native and immigrant, on the couch.[505]

The subjective dimension of race relations was central to Park's work. He refers repeatedly in his own writing to William James's essay "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" which encouraged him to look behind the "mask" or racial uniform that racial groups donned in their interactions with each other. Park observed that only by overcoming the social distance that a group's cultural barriers maintained might we finally appreciate the common humanity of all. He observed that frontier conditions had allowed democracy to flourish and the melting pot to work effectively by dissolving tradition and breaking down personal reserve. However, with the passing of the frontier and the emergence of an urban civilization, intimate friendships and easy communication were made more difficult. In the modern city, social relationships were formed with strangers who did not, indeed could not, see each other as individuals, but instead classified one another according to "type," particularly racial type.[506] Thus, despite his claim that race consciousness was an acquired trait, Park placed racial prejudice within a web of inherited cultural traditions that were "imbibe[d] with our mother's milk."[507] An "instinctive and spontaneous" ethnocentric response to strangers generated race consciousness from within and racial prejudice from without.[508]

Park's analytical treatment of prejudice stripped it of the moralism that Progressives had injected into the category. He stated as a simple matter of fact that racial prejudices were, like all

[505] Park followed W. I. Thomas's formulation of the four universal human wishes: security, adventure, recognition and response, see Herbert A. Miller and Robert E. Park *Old World Traits Transplanted* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1921).
[506] Park, "The Concept of Social Distance" *Journal of Applied Sociology* VIII (1924), 339-344, reprinted in *Race and Culture*, 256-60.
[507] Park, "The Bases of Race Prejudice" *The Annals* CXXXX (November, 1928): 11-20, reprinted in *Race and Culture*, 230

prejudices, social attitudes naturally arising from an individual's membership in what William Graham Sumner had called a "we-group." Park did not condemn prejudices but believed that they performed a useful function in their support for cultural norms and mores.[509] In his view, the role of the social scientist was not to attempt to engineer better relations between the races but to observe and classify those relations and the processes that determined them in order to reach a more accurate understanding of the situation. He concluded that progress would not come about through the moral conversion of the prejudiced but as a result of, on the one hand, the demands and struggles of oppressed groups themselves and, on the other, the process of racial and ethnic groups sharing experiences, forging friendships and coming to a mutual understanding with one another. Any external meddling, he argued, would necessarily antagonize any existing tensions. Park's position can be interpreted either as conservative naturalism serving as an apology for the status quo or equally justifiably as a radically democratic faith in the self-determining power of the oppressed. Indeed, his argument was not with change *per se* but with the proposed mechanism of change; he did not believe improvements would come about through social engineering but "through the struggle and transformation of the peoples concerned."[510]

Regardless of his political ambiguities, Park's model of race was not an optimistic one. His adoption of the anthropological understanding of 'culture' indicated that he shared some of the cultural pluralists' pessimism about social progress. To be sure, his race relations cycle posited assimilation as the end result but Park assumed a difficult, multi-stage and protracted process full of conflict before cultural and racial peace could be attained. Moreover, the way in which his cyclical theory naturalized social relations meant that he emphasized the inevitability

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[508] Park, "The Concept of Social Distance," 259.
[509] Indeed, Park argues that "A man without prejudice is a man without conviction, and ultimately without character." See his "The Bases of Race Prejudice," in *Race and Culture*, 230-31.
[510] Matthews, *Quest for an American Sociology*, 185.

of race consciousness and racial antipathies. He may not have taken a moral position on prejudice but he did see it as an unavoidable feature of cultural contacts. In Parkean sociology, racial prejudice was no longer a political problem but had become a cultural fact, particular in its form but universal in its manifestation.

Park was interested less in the definition of racial categories than in the dynamic process of race *relations*, which nevertheless depended upon and presupposed the existence of race and racial difference. His assumption that conflict between the races was an inevitable feature of race relations did not apply at all times. That is to say, race consciousness only became truly problematic and unavoidable with the rise of modern living; it arose as part and parcel of the experience of diversity and democracy within the modern city. In 1926, Park announced, "for almost the first time in history the world has become 'race conscious."

> We have in the past sought immortality in various ways, in our family and in our clan, in our tribe and in our nation. Now we are seeking it in that somewhat mythical entity that we call race.[511]

Not until modern relations of trade, commerce and industry had brought different races and cultures together to cohabit a single civilization did problems arise. In the competitive city environment, racial prejudices emerged as newly-arrived cultural groups struggled against one another, seeking to gain or increase their status vis-à-vis other groups while established groups worked to maintain a social distance between themselves and the invading immigrants.[512]

For Park then, racial barriers were both created and surmounted by an increase in contact and communication between established racial/cultural groups (he used race and culture almost interchangeably). He predicted that, as personal friendships multiplied among and between groups, racial prejudices would gradually dissipate. Personal and social relationships were, for

[511] Park, "Our Racial Frontier on the Pacific," *Survey Graphic* IX (May, 1926) in *Race and Culture*, 141.
[512] Park, "The Concept of Social Distance," 259.

Park, far more significant than political status. After all, he asked, "What is the Constitution between friends?"[513] Since he believed that it was at the level of cultural contact and within the individual psyche that racial friction occurred and would eventually be overcome, Park elevated the concept of cultural identity to a position of dominance and downgraded the importance of political status as a marker of citizenship. He deemed unrestricted access to citizenship less important than maintaining correct racial etiquette; presumably immigration controls could assist by limiting racial contact thereby avoiding any rise in racial consciousness – at least while those already in contact got better acquainted.

The full policy implications of his position became clear in Park's discussion about Asian immigrants on the West Coast. Locating the origin of immigration restriction in the 1876 Sand Lot riots and its end point in the 1924 Act, Park asserted that "the situation on the Pacific Coast is not so much a problem of politics, in the ordinary sense of the word, as a problem of behavior – collective behavior."[514] In his reading, it was not so much the political opportunism of Californian leaders that created anti-Chinese hostility in San Francisco in the 1870s as an unavoidable cultural revulsion between Americans and Asians. The origin and source of immigration regulation was, according to Park, ancestrally-based prejudice and hostility toward cultural and racial outsiders. Similarly, Park noted that Japanese immigrants "had lost the battle in America before the passage of the Exclusion Law of 1924." Mounting race consciousness and the cultivation of racial prejudices against the Japanese within American culture led to a series of court decisions and discriminatory legislation, particularly the 1913 Alien Land Law, which totally undermined their position.[515] The courts and California legislators who removed the rights

[513] Park, "Behind Our Masks," *Survey Graphic* LVI (May, 1926) 135-139, in *Race and Culture,* 255.
[514] Ibid., 244-45, 255; Park, "Our Racial Frontier on the Pacific," 138.
[515] Park, "Behind Our Masks," 244.

of Japanese aliens set the stage for the passage of the 1924 Act because they had created a hopeless situation in a battle which Japanese statesmen were only too willing to bow out of, so long as they could retain some dignity and respect.

The battle, in Park's view, was primarily one of cultural recognition and racial etiquette and only secondarily that of legal status so that, in his reading, it was not the 1924 Act itself but the spirit that animated it that aroused the indignation of the excluded, particularly the proud Japanese. The pathos of their response to the passage of the Act – a Japanese man committed suicide on the steps of the American Embassy – seemed to Park to confirm that the immigration controversy belonged more in the realm of the spirit and the sentiment than in that of political equality or of economic interest.[516] In other words, Park's logic ran, so long as racial etiquette was observed and the cultural status of an ethnic group was given due recognition, immigration restriction could be effected fairly and without prejudice. Indeed, it might in itself prevent the growth of prejudice. Thus, as a member of the National Committee for Constructive Immigration Legislation, Park had joined other Progressive thinkers in arguing for a version of the national origins system as early as 1919. The Committee's chairman Sidney Gluick observed that a quota percentage system based on previously naturalized immigrants and their descendants should include all groups in its calculations and quotas, including Japanese who were currently barred. Such a system, the Committee reasoned would restrict Asiatic immigration without discrimination against Asiatic peoples since they would receive the same treatment as other groups. A policy containing such mutual respect would, the Committee believed, on the one hand allow those groups with proven assimilability the time and space to adjust to American conditions and on the other, would reduce incoming numbers so as not to provoke any greater

[516] Ibid., 245.

racial prejudice among native-born American citizens than could be avoided.[517] Thus, the irony of the Committee's position was that it endorsed a racially discriminatory immigration act in the name of anti-racism.

In his early work, Park had retained some biological notions of race but cultural difference had become a more prominent concept in his thinking by the twenties. Addressing the question of whether racial characteristics were biological or environmental, Park argued that these concepts were not in fact mutually incompatible since national culture was rooted in racial qualities which were then socially transmitted. Although Park was not a cultural pluralist, he shared the pluralist assumption that racial identity undergirded and reinforced cultural forms. He also shared pluralists' interest in the preservation of immigrants' cultural heritages although his reasons for doing so were more pragmatic than romantic.

Park was interested in the problems presented by the disruption of cultural transmission when a new society was created through colonization, conquest or (especially) through large scale immigration. The "catastrophic theory of progress" as he termed it, set race relations within the context of a steadily evolving civilization in which the social contacts of city and market undermined the integrity and viability of local cultures, traditions, and mores.[518] In a highly mobile society like the modern United States, Park noted, fashion and public opinion replaced custom as a means and method of social control. With the decline of traditional sources of authority, such as the family, the church and the local community, "the individual is emancipated and society is atomized."[519] Therefore, he reasoned, it was for sociologists to develop new and more efficient means of social control.

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[517] "Racial Discrimination in Immigration Laws," *New York Times* (April 13, 1919), 47; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 301-303.
[518] James B. McKee*, Sociology and the Race Problem: Failure of a Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993): 109.
[519] Park, *Race and Culture,*12; Wacker, *Ethnicity, Pluralism and Race*, 3-6.

For Park, ethnic and racial communities and cultural institutions not only offered useful mechanisms of social control but also facilitated the fulfillment of the essential human drive for status and recognition.[520] Although he did not accept Horace Kallen's presentation of the ethnic mosaic as a fully positive feature of American cultural life, Park did see a sharpening of ethnic identification as a viable psychological and cultural response to an alien environment.[521] He further argued that immigrants' cultural institutions, particularly the foreign-language press, played a useful role in adjusting the immigrant to modern urban life, which was especially important in the face of opposition from others. Indeed, he pointed out that one of the first effects of city life was to destroy provincialism among immigrants and to intensify their sense of racial and national solidarity. As he explained it, "It is an interesting fact that as a first step in Americanization the immigrant does not become in the least American. He simply ceases to be a provincial foreigner."[522] This process of ethnicization commenced, Park suggested, as individual immigrants sought respect and status within the host society but came to recognize that their own status as individuals depended upon the respect commanded by their ethnic group as a whole. Thus, nationalist movements represented an effort to improve that group status in order that its constituent members might participate more fully in American life.[523]

Park therefore acknowledged the pragmatic, modern nature of immigrant group life and endorsed it as a necessary stage of Americanization. His recommendations for efficient Americanization included official encouragement of national group identifications among immigrants rather than an "ordering and forbidding" policy of immediate cultural assimilation.

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[520] Park and Miller, *Old World Traits*; Ballis Lal, *Romance of Culture*, introduction.
[521] Wacker, *Ethnicity, Pluralism and Race*, 9-11. As we saw in Chapter 4, Park also extended his analysis to African Americans, whereas cultural pluralists virtually ignored blacks.
[522] Park, "Immigrant Community and Immigrant Press" *American Review* III (March-April, 1925): 143-52, reprinted in *Society: Collective Behavior, News and Opinion, Sociology and Modern Society* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1955): 157.
[523] Park and Miller, *Old World Traits*, 144; Ballis Lal, *Romance of Culture,* 106.

From social psychology, Park and his mentor W. I. Thomas utilized and developed the notion of an "apperception mass" which is the body of common memories available to a given community and which facilitated meaningful communication within the group. Park believed that an efficient and workable model of assimilation should seek not to destroy the attitudes and memories that already existed within an ethnic group but to build upon them.[524]

Many of Park's fellow contributors to a ten-volume Carnegie Americanization Studies series published in the early 1920s agreed with his position. Setting a precedent for Gunnar Myrdal's later and more famous Carnegie study on race relations, the series aimed to combat racial prejudices against immigrants by examining and explaining the nature of their (often difficult and challenging) experience in and with American schools, neighborhoods, the press, industry, housing and so on. Dealing with the process of cultural adjustment, contributors not only described the social environment that immigrants faced on arrival but also underlined and emphasized the alien nature of immigrant cultures. Since "different races and nationalities as wholes represent different apperception masses and consequently different universes of discourse and are not mutually intelligible," the meaning of the immigrant's experience was particular to them. So that "to the Sicilian, for example, marital infidelity means the stiletto; to the American, the divorce court."[525] For the purposes of the immigrant's adjustment to modern America, the studies suggested a range of cultural meanings could actually prove helpful since they would allow for the avoidance of social stagnation and cultural homogeneity; or, as Park pragmatically pronounced, "progress is dependent on the constant redefinitions of all immediate situations."[526] Of course, in the Sicilian example, it was obvious in which direction the cultural understanding

[524] Park and Miller, *Old World Traits*, 273; Ballis Lal, 103.
[525] "Americanization as Participation: Memorandum on Participation prepared by the Americanization Study, no author, no date in Robert Park Papers (Box 3, Folder 1): 3.
[526] Ibid., 4. Although no author is listed, it seems highly likely that Park drafted the memo.

should be redefined. As in much of Park's writings, the studies combined cultural relativism with a fairly clear, if compromised, faith in social progress and cultural "uplift."

Park worked on two of the ten volumes in the series. His official collaborator on volume three *Old World Traits Transplanted* was sociologist Herbert A. Miller, a strong and active supporter of the facilitation of ethnic bonds and nationalist institutions as both a haven from and a bridge to American society more broadly.[527] Indeed, during the war Miller had used his position working for the federal Committee for Public Information to help foment nationalist ideas among Central European immigrants in order to stir up nationalist revolt in Europe itself. An urgent proponent of independence for small nations, Miller had travelled from Chicago to Prague with a contingent of aspiring Czech-Americans before the war. In 1918, he was instrumental in bringing about the Czechoslovakian Declaration of Independence, drafted in Washington and announced from the steps of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, with Miller acting as master of ceremonies.[528] Miller had worked with Thomas at Chicago before Park arrived and although Miller was the most politically active in nurturing nationalist group identification, all three agreed on ethnic nationalism's utility in providing the otherwise inert and directionless masses with some moral guidance.[529]

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[527] In fact, W. I. Thomas was the principal author of *Old World Traits Transplanted* but he worked in collaboration with Park and Miller. Only their names, not Thomas's, appeared on the cover, however, because the series editor wished to avoid any connection to Thomas who had been involved in a personal scandal; see Fred B. Lindstom, Ronald A. Hardert and Kimball Young, "Kimball Young on Founders of the Chicago School" *Sociological Perspectives* Vol. 31.3 (July 1988): 294. When the series was republished in 1971, Thomas received his long overdue credit as author. See Milton M. Gordon, "Review: The American Immigrant Revisited," *Social Forces* 54.2 (December, 1975): 470-74.

[528] For a detailed discussion of Miller's work among Czech immigrants and aspiring nationalists, in Chicago and Europe, see Arthur J. May, "H. A. Miller and the Mid-European Union of 1918," *American Slavic and East European Review* 16. 4 (December, 1957): 473-488; See also Wacker, *Ethnicity, Pluralism and Race*, 25.

[529] Leon Fink notes that contemporary sociological discussion of "popular attitudes" such as patriotism "signalled a rising skepticism about the culture of the democratic masses." Fink further observes that W. I. Thomas's preference for the consciously patriotic Poles in Poland over the socially disorganized Polish diaspora community in Chicago was informed by a fear of the uneducated, undirected masses. See Fink's *Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997): 38-39.

Park shared with his co-authors a Progressive assimilationist goal *and* a belief in the desirability, perhaps even social necessity, of using social policy to encourage and promote ethnic affiliations and loyalties. The authors agreed that while forced Americanization would be counterproductive, public empathy and even state support for ethnic nationalism would not only provide an efficient mechanism of social control but would also actually assist in the assimilation process.[530] Immigrant groups with an "apperception mass" which included loyalty to their country of origin, the sociologists argued, could and would more readily transfer their loyalties to their country of adoption since they had already learned the importance of national loyalty. Thus, they pointed out, "when we appealed to the patriotism of our immigrants during the war, we found a ready response because they knew what patriotism was."[531] That is, immigrants, even hyphenated ones, understood the general nature of social bonds and were not, therefore, deracinated, free-floating individuals. Certainly, not all cultural symbols and meanings were as readily transferable as patriotism but within *Old World Traits Transplanted*, as well as in the Carnegie studies as a whole, the continued desire to assimilate urban immigrants merged with a hand-wringing concern about the pace of cultural transfer, the possibility of social disorganization and demoralization, and even an uneasy feeling at the possibility of being culturally overrun. A study memo calculated that if American birth rates increased too drastically and immigrant numbers rose too steeply, particularly among those groups most difficult to assimilate, such as Africans and "Chinese coolies," then American cultural and educational standards would be threatened and the likelihood of an actively engaged citizenship within a participatory democracy "would become very dismal. . . On the other hand it is conceivable that certain immigrant populations in certain numbers, with their special temperaments, endowments

[530] Park and Miller, *Old World Traits*, op cit.; Robert Ezra Park , *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1922)

and special heritages, would contribute positively and increasingly to our stock of civilization."[532] Given his view of the strength of primary cultural identifications, Park did not expect assimilation to be an easy, painless process but he did think it would work most effectively if it could be limited and controlled in some way.

In the second volume of the Carnegie Study he contributed to Park discussed foreign-language newspapers as an important mechanism of cultural adjustment and Americanization. *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* noted that the foreign press had the power to shape immigrants' attitudes toward both home nations and the United States among widely scattered communities; it preserved the native tongue; it helped create and perpetuate ethnic institutions and organizations; and it also provided material on which to build affection for the United States. It might function, therefore, to either hasten or retard assimilation. Park balked at the implications of press "control" but warned that if "honest and loyal Americans" did not take precautionary measures, negative influences could easily take hold of the foreign-language press. In true muck-raking style, Park vehemently denounced the manipulations of Louis Hammerling, the founder of the American Association of Foreign Language Newspapers. According to Park, this "un-American," thoroughly deracinated Polish Jew set out in 1908 to exert his corrupt influence over editorial content in foreign language newspapers through the AAFLN. Gaining national influence during the war by monopolizing political and commercial support for member newspapers, Hammerling continued his assault against free speech (and against Prohibition) after the war. Park reflected that Hammerling's uniquely "interesting and problematic" personality was the

[531] Park and Miller, *Old World Traits*, 273.
[532] "Americanization as Participation: Memorandum on Participation prepared by the Americanization Study, no author, no date in Robert Park Papers (Box 3, Folder 1): 5.

regrettable result of not only an over-hasty Americanization process but also of a too-rapid rise to wealth by an uneducated and previously obscure immigrant.[533]

Despite noble words in defense of the principle of free speech that Hammerling's AAFLN trampled upon, Park viewed the postwar purchase and operation of the AAFLN by the Inter-Racial Council, presided over by reformer Frances Kellor, as a legitimizing move. The Inter-Racial Council operated the Association in much the same way as Hammerling had done but with different political targets – the IRC was interested less in partisan politics and more in the industrial relations between immigrant workers and American capital. Kellor's control of the foreign-language press was "in the interests of America" since it encouraged the expression of immigrant heritages congenial to the United States – and opposed specifically to Bolshevism – thereby enhancing the press's role as an agent of Americanization.[534]

Park condoned, even actively advanced, the federal government's attempt to produce and manage ethnic nationalistic affiliations and loyalties, even if such policies resulted in a curtailment of traditional American rights, such as that of free speech and a free press. His motivation for doing so was his social scientific assessment of the needs of a diverse, fast-paced urban civilization. In his sociological framework, urban civilization gradually secularized all relations so that, as Park observed, "in the city, nothing is sacred." While Park shared the understanding of the differences between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* with earlier nineteenth-century European sociologists, his own formulation of social progress was not much hindered by a romantic longing for the certainties and securities of folk community. Yet neither did he fully embrace the contingencies, freedoms and rationality of modern urban society. Rather, he sought to find pragmatic use for traditional cultural concepts in order to adjust migrants to city relations

[533] Park, *Immigrant Press and its Control*, Chapter 16.
[534] Ibid., 450-53.

that were otherwise directed by impersonal contractual relations. As social historian Jean Quandt notes, Park's elevated cultural identities in "an effort to deal with the problem of the division of labor, the specialization of knowledge, and the fragmentation of social life."[535] Seeking to restore the city's soul without losing its efficiency, Park's own outlook on both "culture" and "civilization" was marked by a deep ambiguity about both, and about the nature of social progress.

This ambiguity in Park's thought is most apparent in his discussion about those individuals who resided on the boundaries between two cultures, or between 'culture' and 'civilization' as he defined them. While Kallen and Bourne displayed outright distaste for the culturally "impoverished" *assimilado* who knew no spiritual home or community, Park's treatment of the theme of "the marginal man" was more ambiguous. On the one hand, according to Park, the marginal man was emancipated from the constraints of custom and tradition and became an enlightened individual and cosmopolite, a citizen of the world; on the other hand, he is plagued by "spiritual instability, intensified self consciousness, restlessness and *malaise*" since he belongs nowhere fully.[536] The source of this restlessness is two-fold, existing first in the process of cultural adjustment experienced by all immigrants but felt as a permanent crisis by the marginal man and second, in the racial prejudice he confronts. Park notes that Ludwig Lewisohn's autobiographical *Up Stream* describes exactly the "restless wavering between the warm security of the ghetto, which he has abandoned, and the cold freedom of the outer world, in which he is not yet quite at home." The failure to resolve the conflict between "the old self and

[535] Robert Park, "Culture and Civilization" unpublished paper, printed in *Race and Culture*, 15-23; Jean Quandt, *From the Small Town to the Great Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970): 126; For a riveting discussion about changing understandings of progress, particularly among sociologists, see Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991): 120-167.
[536] Matthews, "Revolt against Americanism," 13; Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man" *American Journal of Sociology* XXXIII (May, 1928): 881-893, reprinted in *Race and Culture*, 356.

the new" results in profound disillusionment and a continuing warring within the divided self of the marginal man.[537]

The body of the marginal man did not have a racial identity but was a site occupied by more than one race and more than one identity; in Park's view, his competing identities could only exist in conflict, clash and riot, not harmoniously nor merged into a unified whole. In his discussion of marginality, as elsewhere, Park's emphasis is on cultural conflict but it ultimately rests on notions of racial difference and the racial prejudices that race consciousness provokes. Moreover, in his merging of the themes and approaches of Progressive social thought and cultural pluralism, Park's analysis of marginality is indicative of the diminution of his own faith in American ideals. Just as the races compete but fail to mix within the body of the marginal man, ethnic and racial groups compete and fail to mix within urban civilization. Yet, as Werner Sollors points out, Ludwig Lewisohn never actually lived in a ghetto, warm or otherwise, so the moral dichotomy he describes was never a direct testimony of immigrant experience. Park's theory rested more on his own disillusionment with the melting pot ideal than necessarily on any lived reality.[538]

The melting pot was arguably never an accurate description of lived reality either but as a social ideal it had stood for the optimism and faith in the future that many Americans had subscribed to. Park followed his former teacher John Dewey in trying to strike a balance between the claims of the past and the possibilities of the future, between "consent" and "descent" in the making of modern American citizenship. Dewey embraced cultural diversity but rejected the cultural pluralists' segregated model, insisting that segregation must be recognized "in order that

[537] Robert Park, "Mentality of Racial Hybrids" *American Journal of Sociology* XXXVI (January, 1931): 534-551, reprinted in *Race and Culture*, 388.
[538] Michaels, *Our America* discusses the cultural pluralists' preference for preserving the integrity of the race at the expense of the integrity of the body, see fn. 142, 165; Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity*, 10-11.

it may not be fastened upon us." He warned Kallen that while he recognized the danger "of underestimating the value of the past and its traditions," he could not help but feel that "on the whole, it has such a dead hand over us."[539] Similarly, Park's sociological models sought to use the steadying hand of cultural identity – ethnic and American - and the inherited past to allow racial and ethnic groups caught up in the whirlwind of modernity to navigate toward an American future.

Park pragmatically subscribed to the 'romantic' belief in the redemptive nature of ethnic culture and its utility for social control especially since he believed modern America had "to be sure, a civilization, but not a culture."[540] He did not deny – as Kallen had – the value of a common tradition or ethos in the broader urban or national culture. Indeed, he argued that policy makers should attempt to transmit through the shared "universe of discourse," the content as well as the form of American cultural life to immigrants, through the teaching of such things as national history. Yet, it was also important to bring an understanding of the heritages and backgrounds of foreign peoples into American schools. The goal should be to create and maintain a "mutual understanding" among the variety of peoples who made up the nation, "rather than perpetrating, as we have been disposed to do in the past, a sentimental and ceremonial patriotism based on a reverent and uncritical contemplation of our national heritage."[541] Here, at last, was an understanding that reconciled cultural difference with assimilation; cultural pluralism with national unity.

Progressive demands for federal regulation and amelioration allied to cultural pluralists' confirmation of ethnic groups as a basis for social policy lent positive support to the notion of a

[539] Dewey to Kallen, cited in Stephen J. Whitfield, "Introduction to the Transaction Edition," *Culture and Democracy*, xxviii.
[540] Park, "Culture and Cultural Trends," 30.
[541] Park, "Education in its Relation to the Conflict and Fusion of Cultures" in *Race and Culture*, 283.

therapeutic role for government and fundamentally altered the conditions of American citizenship during the 1920s. For all of his commitment to democratic participation, Park failed to recognize the contradiction between social policy formed on the basis of expert professional knowledge and the cut and thrust of democratic politics and government. He absorbed the elitism of those reformers and intellectuals who had become alienated from the norms of bourgeois existence and adopted a degree of hostility toward the culture and character of the democratic majority, particularly those with apparent prejudices toward outsiders, whether immigrants, African Americans or intellectuals.[542] By shifting the terms of debate from that of political access to citizenship to a condemnation of prejudiced public opinion as the central barrier to racial harmony, Park and his fellow Progressives reinforced the consensus about the need for immigration restriction. By reinterpreting race as culture, he helped provide a democratic façade through which such legislation could operate.

The national origins system of the 1924 Immigration Act did not require an acceptance of racial superiority to function effectively, rather it rested, as Lothrop Stoddard confirmed, "on the bedrock of difference." The cultural pluralist thrust of social thought in the twenties provided an egalitarian gloss on the exclusion of immigrants as determined by their ancestral identity. Park and his colleagues at Chicago participated in the intellectual reorientation of American national identity in the 1920s away from notions of universal political status and legal citizenship and toward a modern and ironic embrace of cultural group identification. His urban sociology challenged previous racial hierarchies and replaced them with the recognition, if not complete acceptance of, cultural difference. And his policy recommendations for Americanization founded national self-understanding on cultural and ancestral inheritances rather than on the future-

[542] Ballis Lal, *Romance of Culture*, 15-16; Matthews, *Quest for an American Sociology,* 185-6.

oriented, transformative melting pot ideal. These shifts did not transcend or eradicate racial thinking but they did transform its meaning and ultimately that of American citizenship in the modern era. The 1924 Act heralded the death of the melting pot and Robert Park helped to bury it.

CONCLUSION

I am a citizen of the American Dream.
Eldridge Cleaver

American citizenship changed in fundamental ways between 1890 and 1930. The concept of citizenship is crucial to understanding the significance of the events and policies that emerged in Progressive-era Chicago during these years. The language of citizenship animated public discussion at all levels from seminars at the University of Chicago and community meetings at Hull House to the editorials of the popular press and the banners of street parades. Chicagoans shared a sense that within the alien urban environment with its unprecedented cosmopolitan diversity, they must find new ways of living together. They did not all agree on the best way forward but the problem of how to make many peoples into one people – Americans – shaped political debate in the city in numerous and important ways.

Since the revolutionary period, the motto *E Pluribus Unum* had symbolized the unifying capacity of the nation. While it originally denoted the coming together of thirteen colonies to form one nation, it soon came to signify the bonds that tied together the various peoples, races, religions, and ethnicities of the American people. During the Progressive era, however, Americans questioned for the first time the ability of the nation to cohere and unify its people. Chicago's Progressives in particular reacted to the industrial city and its motley inhabitants with a nagging worry that national ideals and values could no longer be sustained in their traditional form.

The optimistic and universal nature of the claims of American citizenship, derived in large part from the European Enlightenment, came under intense pressure in the late nineteenth century as the frontier reached the Pacific, social inequalities grew in scale, challenges to the

industrial order emerged from 'mudsills and bottom rails,' and traditional forms of social organization seemed increasingly irrelevant. The national scope of economic consolidation and the coast-to-coast reach of new technologies of communication and media allowed a national conversation to take place but also induced anxieties about the nation's continuing ability to accommodate and assimilate assorted differences.

Modernity might have eroded unifying political traditions and the cultural authority they were based upon but a variety of possible responses to the array of social changes taking place existed. Some of the shifts in intellectual outlook, such as that from optimism to anxiety about the future and the growing relativization of knowledge and values, can be explained by uncertainty in the face of dramatic social change. However, not all of it can. Some of the explanation lies with less tangible, more subjective, causes but is evident in the rationale, reasoning and approach of Chicago's leading intellectuals at the start of the twentieth century. Rather than either wringing their hands in despair, for instance, or seeking new possible sources of authority, Progressives adopted a Pollyannaish air, putting a positive, pragmatic spin on developments. Faced with a decline in democratic participation, Jane Addams announced political contestation moribund and destructive in any case, embracing instead the rise of commission politics as a way to create social 'consensus.' Her individual reaction to the challenges posed to the fabric of citizenship was not wholly determined by external events and processes but emerged from her own social and political philosophy.

The elites and the masses responded in divergent ways to novel social conditions and they argued for different versions of democratic citizenship. The difference in outlook is, in part, why I adopted the unusual methodological approach that I did in this study. I hoped to uncover the ideas and ideals that went into the making of modern citizenship as well as to understand them through the prism of the lived experience of the city. I wanted to bring together insights gained

from the approach and methods of social history without losing a clear understanding of the independent status of ideas inherent in the approach of intellectual history. Ideas certainly gain meaning when examined within their historical and social context but they cannot be fully explained by that context.

My examination of the ideas of Chicago's key thinkers about citizenship and how they sought to remake it is the central focus of the study, my reason for writing it, but these ideas cannot be contemplated alone. The political ideas and arguments of ordinary Chicagoans, particularly the 'new' urban citizens from the U.S. South and from Europe, not only threw Progressives' ideas into relief but also demonstrate that there was a viable alternative route to modern citizenship. Despite their intention to expand and improve democracy, Progressives ignored the demands emerging from black and immigrant Chicagoans to stay true to the political principles outlined by America's founding fathers. This study recognizes the ultimate failure of African Americans and immigrant groups to realize their original hopes for being or becoming American citizens but it does not deny their political subjectivity or their historical agency. This is not only a winner's history.

The central arguments I develop within the dissertation take account of the desire of many ordinary Chicagoans to retain the emancipatory potential of political citizenship, with its focus on individual rights and freedoms. However, the trends I detect working to transform citizenship proved more powerful and influential on the making of public policy both in Chicago and at the federal level. The transformation occurred at two interrelated levels. First, citizenship became less a political status and more a sociological or cultural characteristic. The process of becoming an American citizen was no longer universally available to all and, importantly, was no longer viewed as a free and rational choice. Rather, it was increasingly defined by cultural inheritance and coding. Second, citizenship went from being considered an individual relationship to a

national state, with related rights and duties, to being a description of cultural group belonging – for both natives and newcomers. American citizenship, tied to cultural group identity, was exercised and expressed through established and inherited particular group claims.

While there had been racial restrictions on citizenship earlier in the nineteenth century, these had largely been removed with the Fourteenth Amendment. Restrictions on Asian naturalization in 1870 and immigration from 1882 gained a more permanent status in 1917 and became generalized to other groups. Moreover, not only did racial classifications expand between 1890 and 1930 but they changed in character as racial and ethnic identities gained an essentialized cultural quality. This study, then, identifies the political process through which cultural identity was elevated to a central component of U.S. citizenship. It was the beginning of a process that continued throughout the twentieth century albeit with some moments of resistance and reversal.

The transformation of citizenship from political status to cultural belonging involved a significant political reorientation and had a number of damaging consequences. The degradation of democratic politics was both part of the process and the end result. Since citizens were no longer individual actors but were instead determined and conditioned by their social and cultural environment, they lost (in the eyes, at least, of intellectuals and policy makers) their political independence and moral autonomy. Thus, their (non existent) political will could be over-ridden by either representatives of their cultural community on the one hand or objective scientific experts on the other.

The growth of the state did not necessarily follow but Chicago's Progressives, particularly Jane Addams, argued forcefully that both local and national government could and must act in the interests of the 'people' in general. However, the anti-political nature of these calls, drained of any popular self-interest, underlined the anti-democratic nature of consensus politics. Robert

Park, who in fact objected to an enlarged and tinkering state, also objected to political action of any sort – for him, as for cultural pluralists, the realm of culture was far more important. For Park, as much as for earlier Progressives, racial and cultural prejudice was a problem caused by the masses. Earlier reformers – and indeed those who came after – differed from him in looking for a cure in education and therapeutic state policies. The irony is that the very policy shapers and makers who institutionalized racial and cultural differences among the population and claimed them as essential, went on to brand the citizenry as prejudiced ignoramuses for adopting the same outlook.

Historians and other thinkers who project back a politicized ethnic identity into the nineteenth century and beyond ignore the shifting political contexts and construction of meanings that this study uncovers. Following the work of Walter Benn Michaels, I have uncovered the origins of 'identity politics' in the 1920s and I share his judgment that it did not represent a positive development. While Michaels locates its origin in Modernist literature, I detect it in sociological thinking. We both, I think, identify it in the anxious outlook of the intellectual elite and not as a grassroots claim. Neither do we claim, at least I do not, that it followed a straight line from the twenties to the sixties when the politics of identity exploded. All of the intellectual and political shifts that began in the Progressive era – the erosion of tradition and the authority based upon it, the relativization of knowledge, the elevation of culture, and the expansion of the state apparatus had deepened and developed to a far greater extent by the sixties. This study highlights where it all began.

Contemporary conceptions of citizenship are informed by the erosion of rational political interest and the loss of an active and engaged citizenry. Apolitical behavior management carried out in the name of the general good with the guidance of social scientific 'experts' but driven by no public interest is the hallmark of a political culture that has replaced principles with

pragmatism and lost sight of the importance of democratic citizenship. The cure will not come from a government commission, an educational theorist, a director of playgrounds or an objective social scientist. It is a problem for the citizens to solve together in frank and open debate.

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