Abstract

This thesis argues that the United States authorities did not solely respond to the threat the 'red menace' posed during the years of the First Red Scare (1917-1921) on a short-term scale, namely by deporting those held responsible: radical left-wing immigrants. Rather, it adds to the existing historiography by contending that policymakers operated on a long-term scale as well, debating how best to prevent *future* immigrant radicalism. I identify three main sets of measures implemented by the authorities: checking for individual 'radical aliens' at the border, educating America's immigrant population, and finally, practically closing the border to certain European immigrants. I demonstrate that these measures evolved from focusing on what I call the 'agitator type', the evil-minded born radical out to destabilize the United States, to the so-called 'follower type', the un-Americanized, illiterate, and ignorant foreigner misled into radicalism by agitators. This new conceptualization of 'the radical' inspired the second set of measures, which held up 'Americanization' of the immigrant population as the solution to immigrant radicalism, thereby shifting the focus from the border to the interior. Finally, with the third measures, Congress re-shifted to the border by arguing for a *de facto* immigration ban for southern and eastern European immigrants, either because they wanted to keep the Americanization system from becoming overloaded or because they had lost faith in the power of assimilation all together. Crucially, throughout the years of the First Red Scare, policymakers pivoted from trying to pick out the few 'radical aliens' from an overwhelmingly deserving mass of immigrants to believing the entire New Stock population formed a perfect breeding ground for radicalism; potentially, each and every immigrant from southern and eastern Europe could therefore add to the 'red menace' – a key part of the logic behind the 1921 and 1924 Quota Acts.

Controlling the ‘Radical Alien’

American Debates on the Prevention of Immigrant Radicalism during the First Red Scare (1917-1921)

‘E. Levick, ‘Immigrants Being Registered at One End of the Main Hall, U.S. Immigration Station’, *New York Public Library, William Williams Papers*, (1902-1910).

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Introduction

> It is rampant in Germany. It is powerful in France. It is untiringly at work in Italy. Its activity in Great Britain is pronounced. He who thinks we do not face this great menace at our very doors is not a truly wide-awake American. He is a sleeping sentinel at the post of duty.[1]

The menace Congressman Frelinghuysen referred to in this alarming speech on October 21 1919 was left-wing radicalism, such as anarchism, communism, and 'IWW-ism' (industrial unionism named after the militant union, the Industrial Workers of the World).[2] He warned his fellow congressmen that the entire European continent had already fallen prey to this 'class government', and America would be next. Frelinghuysen was by no means the only policymaker who feared this 'red menace'. At the time of the speech, the United States was neck-deep in what would later be coined the 'First Red Scare', a brief but intense period between 1917 and 1921 characterized by popular fear and political repression of the so-called 'radical alien'.[3]

Though based on a decades-old anxiety surrounding the 'illegal anarchist alien', public and political panic rose to new heights in 1917, the year that marked both the United States' entry in the First World War and the Russian Revolution.[4] The former event introduced a strong sense of wartime hyper-nationalism, an increased level of scrutiny toward immigrants, and a notion that anything that might hurt the American war effort – be it striking workers, anti-

[1] *Congressional Record (Senate; hereafter CR and S)*, Vol. 58, October 21 1919, 7247.
[2] I use the terms 'radical(s)' and 'radicalism' freely throughout this thesis, as it was the term used most frequently by contemporaries and constitutes an general label for what was an extremely diverse political spectrum, ranging from unionism, socialism, to Marxism, and many strands of anarchism. However, it is important to be aware of the normative connotations of the term 'radical/radicalism'.
[3] E. Pope-Obeda, 'Expelling the Foreign-Born Menace: Immigrant Dissent, the Early Deportation State, and the First American Red Scare', *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 18 (2019), 32.
[4] Ibid., 42.

conscriptionists, or radical suffragists – was disloyal.[5] The latter 'amplified antiradical fears a hundredfold', by proving to the world that staging a successful Bolshevik revolution had moved from mere theory to an actual possibility.[6] The authorities' resolve to crack down on radical immigrants was further strengthened by the 1919 wave of labor unrest that took the nation by storm, in which over four million workers organized more than 3600 strikes.[7] Finally, radical violence spurred on governmental repression, which in turn provoked radical retaliation.[8]

As will be explained in Chapter 1, US policymakers primarily believed immigrants, rather than those born in America (also called 'the native-born' at the time), were behind the 'red menace'. Their main response to the events of the Red Scare was therefore to remove what they perceived to be the root of the problem, radical immigrants, through deportation. However, the American authorities did not just try to get rid of the *immediate* threat; the First Red Scare also sparked debates on how best to prevent *future* immigrant radicalism. Exactly these discourses are the topic of this thesis, which addresses the ways in which the American authorities attempted to prevent future immigrant radicalism in the years of and right after the First Red Scare.

[5] Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You. World I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (2010), 201-202; D. M. Moloney, *National Insecurities. Immigrants and US Deportation Policy Since 1882* (Chapel Hill, 2016),163.
[6] K. Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State. Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America* (Baltimore, 2015), 36.
[7] A. Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty. American Countersubversion from World War I to the McCarthy Era* (Baltimore, 2013), 64.
[8] K. Zimmer, 'The Voyage of the Buford: Political Deportations and the Making and Unmaking of America's First Red Scare' in K. Zimmer and C. Salinas ed., *Deportation in the Americas: Histories of Exclusion and Resistance* (College Station, 2018), 139; Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State*, 152-153.

Research Question and Sub-Questions

After discussing the most influential radical acts during the years of the First Red Scare, I explore the main assumption made about the 'red menace', namely that left-wing radicalism was a European import and that all radicals were foreigners. This assumption lay at the base of the entire Red Scare and led US authorities to aim their policies at European migrants. Since this thesis is concerned with the methods through which the American authorities attempted to prevent future immigrant radicalism, it is crucial to first understand both how radicalism constituted a threat and why it was believed that European immigrants were responsible for this threat.

In my second chapter - which, like all the following chapters, is predominantly based on my original research - , I analyze the first tactic the policymakers applied to prevent future immigrant radicalism, which was to keep new radical immigrants out of the country through border control. I discuss how they developed three ways to pick the radical out of a line of 'normal' immigrants; they hoped to spot the 'radical alien' by asking immigrants about their political ideology, by evaluating their physical appearance, and finally, by testing the literacy of immigrants. American policymakers became increasingly aware that these methods were rather ineffective, while the threat of radical agents remained larger than life in the minds of those in power. This discrepancy between theory and practice produced frustrations regarding the inevitable limits of American border control. Finally, I delve into the method Congress came up with to circumvent these limits: the so-called passport-visé system, which would extend the arm of control to the European continent (a process Aristide Zolberg had coined 'remote control').[9]

[9] A. R. Zolberg, 'Managing a World on the Move', *Population and Development Review*, 32 (2006), 222-253.

In my third chapter, I address the second set of measures intended to counter future immigrant radicalism, which centered around the notion of 'Americanizing' the immigrant population already living in the United States, particularly those called 'New Stock' immigrants in the parlance of the time. US policymakers believed that these immigrants were uniquely susceptible to left-wing radicalism. On the one hand, this shift of focus from incoming immigrants to those already residing in the country was a response to the lack of proper execution of the immigration laws. On the other hand, however, I argue that this shift reflected a new conceptualization of 'the radical'. Instead of focusing on what I call the 'agitator type', the clever zealot who snuck into the country in order to disrupt the American way of life, US policymakers increasingly worried about the 'follower type', the meek, illiterate immigrant who was easily led astray by left-wing demagogues and whose community therefore formed a 'hotbed of radicalism' and a 'fertile field' for radical propaganda.[10]

Finally, I delve into the third tactic American policymakers adopted in their quest to prevent future immigrant radicalism, which was to *de facto* close the border to southern and eastern Europeans, while keeping it open for northern and western Europeans through the Quota Acts of 1921 and 1924. I make the case that here too, the new conceptualization of the 'follower type' radical was a key part of the argument to specifically ban New Stock immigrants. While policymakers certainly imagined individual northern and western Europeans to be radicals, they did not consider the entire 'stock' to be prone to radicalization – a framing that fit seamlessly into contemporary racial theories on Anglo-Saxon superiority. Southern and eastern Europeans, on the other hand, *were* suspected to be extremely likely to radicalize *en masse.* Following this line of reasoning, dramatically reducing the entire immigrant population seemed to be an apt solution in the fight against radicalism.

[10] *CR (House of Representatives; hereafter HR),* Vol. 59, December 20 1919, 991.

Sources and Methodology

The sources I examined can be split into three categories. First and most importantly, I used the American Congressional Record from the years 1916 to 1926 in order to track the debates surrounding both radicalism and immigration in the years of, and directly following the First Red Scare.[11] The Congressional Record is 'the official daily record of the debates and proceedings of the US Congress' and is organized chronologically and then based on discussion theme.[12] I accessed the digitalized 'Bound Edition' of the Record, a slightly edited version of the daily Record and searched the database for the keyword 'anarchist'. This search produced 244 documents, each ranging from thirty to around one hundred pages of debates, speeches, and newspaper clippings referenced by the congressmen.

After some trial and error, I discovered that the term 'anarchist' was the most helpful keyword, since it was specific enough to exclude irrelevant debates (unlike the terms 'Bolshevik' or 'communist' which also produced many hits about USSR politics and the civil war following the revolution) and random usage of the word (as was the case with the term 'radical' or 'red(s)'). Additionally, since congressmen often used 'anarchists' and 'anarchy' as umbrella terms for left-wing radicalism, the keyword 'anarchist' produced most, if not all congressional debates on (immigrant) radicalism in the United States.

In addition to the Congressional Record, I used the transcripts of seven congressional hearings (available online) to complement my understanding of the debates on immigrant radicalism.[13] Whenever Congress wanted to delve more deeply into a pressing topic, the relevant sub-committee invited a numbers of experts to be interviewed by the sub-committee at

[11] Available via 'GovInfo', *US Government Publishing Office*, [https://www.govinfo.gov/] (last accessed on 20 June 2021).
[12] 'About the Congressional Record', [https://www.congress.gov/help/congressional-record] (last accessed on 21 May 2021).
[13] Available via Google Books.

a congressional hearing. The hearings I consulted were held by the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, the Sub-Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs.[14]

The second group of sources I studied gave me insight into immigration practices 'on the ground', particularly at Ellis Island, which was (by far) the largest port of entry at the time.[15] In the 'Annual Reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration to the Secretary of Labor', which I examined for the years of 1916 to 1926, the head of Immigration informed his superior on general immigration trends, the enforcement of exclusionary immigration laws (including anarchist exclusion), and the state of his corps of employees.[16] Additionally, I turned to a number of articles and speeches written by professionals involved in border control at Ellis Island (including top immigration officers and doctors), collected by the digitally available Gjenvick-Gjønvik archive.[17] Finally, I studied the weekly 'Situational Surveys' for 1919 and 1920, the military reports sent to the Department of Justice, which included information on

[14] *Communist and Anarchist Deportation Cases. Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization (66th Congress, hereafter C.., HR),* Second Session, April 1920; *Immigration and Labor. Hearings Before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization (67th C., HR),* Fourth Session, January 1923; *Restriction of Immigration. Hearings Before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization (68th C., HR),* First Session, December 1923 and January 1924; *Sedition, Syndicalism, Sabotage, and Anarchy. Hearings Before the Committee on the Judiciary (66th C., HR*), Second Session, December 1919; *Conditions at Ellis Island. Hearings Before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization (66th C., HR),* First Session, November 1919; *Charges of Illegal Practices of the Department of Justice. Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary (66th C., S.),* Third Session, January to march 1921; *Extension of Passport Control. Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs (66th C., HR),* First Session, October 1919.

[15] B. Lüthi, 'Germs of Anarchy, Crime, Disease, and Degeneracy. Jewish Migration to the United States and the Medicalization of European borders around 1900' in T. Brinkmann ed., *Points of Passage. Jewish Transmigrants from Eastern Europe in Scandinavia, Germany and Britain 1880-1914* (New York, 2013), 36.

[16] *Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration to the Secretary of Labor (hereafter Annual Report),* Washington, 1916-1926. Available via 'HathiTrust Digital Library', [https://www.hathitrust.org/] (last accessed April 2 2021).

[17] Available via 'GG Archives: Ephemera Archival Collections 1800s-1950s', [https://www.gjenvick.com/] (last accessed March 23 2021).

radical individuals in Europe and therefore give insight into the military anti-radical intelligence networks.[18]

Finally, I used the publications of the 'North American Review' for the years 1916 to 1926 to gain a sense of the public discourse surrounding immigration, immigrant radicalism, and Americanization.[19] The 'North American Review' was America's oldest and one of its most culturally influential literary magazines. This monthly publication enjoyed a large readership and covered the prominent themes of the day, including topics extremely relevant to this thesis such as the great strike wave of 1919, immigration control, and radical politics.

Together, these sources shed light on the perspective of America authorities on immigration and radicalism, the reality of immigration control 'on the ground', both in the US and Europe, and the influential cultural and social theories of the time (such as the ones on New Stock immigrants, individualism, democracy, and Americanization), which informed policymakers' views on immigrant radicalism. However, the sources I consulted are limited in a number of ways. The fact that I utilize official governmental sources on the one hand and mainstream media (which formed a feedback loop with the worldview of those in power) on the other means that this top-down view of history shapes the parameters of this thesis. Since this project is primarily occupied with how authorities *imagined* immigrant radicalism and how they *believed* they could best prevent it in the future, this narrow view of the events of the First Red Scare does not necessarily pose a problem. However, it is important to remember that these sources mainly show the worldview of those in power, warts and all. We see their prejudices, their anxieties, and their blind spots. One such blind spot is the Eurocentric bias of many

[18] *Radical Activities (Case #377098)*, Series: Old German Files 1909-1921, Collection: Investigative Reports of the Bureau of Investigation 1908-1922. Available via 'Historical Military Records', *Fold3 (By Ancestry)* [https://www.fold3.com/] (last accessed April 12 2021).
[19] Available via 'The North American Review', *JSTOR* [https://www.jstor.org/journal/nortamerrev] (last accessed May 5 2021).

policymakers which led them to ignore the existence of left-wing radicalism in Asian and Latin-American immigrant communities.[20] More generally, using official sources means that one completely misses the perspective of left-wing immigrants in the US.

I use the methodology of 'policy tracing' to track the evolution of policies vis-à-vis immigrant radicals in the years during and right after the Red Scare.[21] The true essence of this thesis, however, is made up of the worldviews that shine through those policies: How did the American authorities imagine one became a 'radical alien'? Was radicalism a congenital condition or was it a sign of extreme ignorance, which meant radicals could be 'saved'? And why did policymakers believe southern and eastern European immigrants were more likely to be radical? These are just a few of the questions that make tracing the policies made to prevent immigrant radicalism worthwhile.

[20] J. Fowler, *Japanese and Chinese Immigrant Activists. Organizing in American and International Communist Movements, 1919-1933* (New Brunswick NJ, 2007).
[21] A. Wood, 'Tracing Policy Movements. Methods for Studying Learning and Policy Circulation', Environment and Planning 47, 2 (2016), 391-406.

Historiography and Relevance

The topic of this thesis is at the intersection of three historiographical fields: it draws upon the body of work on the First Red Scare and the wider anti-radical context it occurred in, upon the extensive historiography on nineteenth- and twentieth-century American immigration policy, and finally, the research on the Americanization movement which aimed to turn the nation's immigrant population into true American citizens.

With her 1931 legal study, *Deportation of Aliens from the United States to Europe*, Jane Perry Clark laid the groundwork for later research on the First Red Scare.[22] She was the first to gather much of the statistical information on the deportations and arrests during those years, and she critically examined the governmental and legal scaffolding of the deportations. Robert Murray's 1955 *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria* and William Preston's 1966 *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933* placed the deportations in the early 1920s in a historical framework, linking both the popular fear of the foreign alien and the governmental ability to deport them to the First World War, an idea which more recent academics such as Christopher Cappozola and Alex Goodall have expanded upon.[23] Additionally, Murray and Preston explored the role of immigrants' uniquely precarious legal position during the First Red Scare. More recently, academics like Kenyon Zimmer and Travis Tomchuk have researched both the perceived and real overlap of immigration and radicalism and delved deeply into the microcosms of Italian, German, and Jewish immigrant radicalism in the United States.[24]

[22] J. P. Clark, *Deportation of Aliens from the United States to Europe* (New York, 1931).
[23] R. K. Murray, *Red Scare. A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (Minneapolis, 1955); W. Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters. Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933* (Cambridge MA, 1963); Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You;* Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty.*
[24] Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State;* T. Tomchuk, *Transnational Radicals. Italian Anarchists in Canada and the US, 1915-1940* (Winnipeg, 2015).

A number of historians have worked at placing the events of the First Red Scare in a broader context, both geographically and temporally. Nathaniel Hong and Alexander Noonan have argued that the First Red Scare did not just pop up out of the blue, but rather rested on a longer tradition of the demonization of left-wing radicals in politics and media.[25] One of the ways in which this happened was through Lombrosian theories on the radical as a 'criminal type'; Jonathan Simon and Daniel Pick have developed the historiography of the radical body.[26] Emily Pope-Obeda and Ethan Blue have further widened the chronological scope by comparing the First Red Scare to later periods of deportations, suggesting that the First Red Scare was the start of the United States as a 'deportation nation', as it introduced the public to the idea 'that 'letting out' immigrants could be a useful safety valve for a variety of mounting social pressures'.[27] Finally, historians such as Richard Bach Jensen, Julia Rose Kraut, and Beatrice de Graaf, have tackled the transnational aspects of anti-radicalism, delving into the emergence of international cooperation to address radical terrorism, and the importance of intelligence agencies in the fight against radicalism.[28]

The second historiographical field relevant to this thesis is that of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century immigration to the United States and the nation's restrictive turn. John Higham's 1955 discourse-defining *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism,*

[25] N. Hong, 'The Origin of American Legislation to Exclude and Deport Aliens for Their Political Beliefs, and Its Initial Review by the Courts', *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 18, 2 (1990) 1-36; A. Noonan, "What Must Be the Answer of the United States to Such a Proposition?' Anarchist Exclusion and National Security in the United States, 1887-1903', *Journal of American Studies* 50, 2 (2016), 347-376.

[26] J. Simon, 'Positively Punitive: How the Inventor of Scientific Criminology Who Died at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century Continues to Haunt American Crime Control at the Beginning of the Twenty-First', *Texas Law Review* 84, 7 (2006), 2135-2172; D. Pick, 'The Faces of Anarchy: Lombroso and the Politics of Criminal Science in Post-Unification Italy', *History Workshop* 21 (1986), 60-86.

[27] Pope-Obeda, 'Expelling the Foreign-Born Menace'; E. Blue, 'Building the American Deportation Regime: Governmental Labor and the Infrastructure of Forced Removal in the Early Twentieth Century', *Journal of American Ethnic History* 38, 2 (2019) 36-64.

[28] R. B. Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism. An International History, 1878-1934* (Cambridge, 2013); J. R. Kraut, 'Global Anti-Anarchism: The Origins of Ideological Deportation and the Suppression of Expression', *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 19, 1 (2012), 173; B. de Graaf, 'Van "helsche machine" en Russische provocateurs. De strijd tegen het anarchisme in Nederland', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 125, 3 (2012), 317.

1860-1925 framed late nineteenth century American immigration policy as increasingly restrictive and nativist, which he believed was how the country collectively subverted its frustrations over industrialization and urbanization.[29] Though Higham's psychopathological argument is considered somewhat outdated, his narrative of increasing nativism remained influential and was expanded in the 1990s with greater attentiveness to gender, race, language, and sexuality by academics such as David Scott FitzGerald, David Cook-Martín, and Erika Lee.[30]

Other historians have looked into the practicalities of immigration restriction and border control in the US, such as Deirdre Moloney, Tobias Brinkmann, and Barbara Lüthi.[31] Aristide Zolberg, on the other hand, developed the concept of 'remote control', 'the requirement of obtaining permission to enter before embarking on the journey, by way of a visa entered in the passport by an official of the state of destination', to conceptualize the process of the increasingly 'long arm' of border control from the 1920s onwards.[32]

In 2006, Zolberg introduced another influential framework in his book *A Nation by Design.* This work centered the history of American immigration restriction around the concept of nation-building, an approach further developed by academics such as Robert Fleegler and Deirdre Moloney.[33] Through restricting those deemed unfit to become Americans at the border, the American authorities attempted to optimize the American body-politic – an objective shared by the country's eugenicists.

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[29] A. R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design. Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (2006), 6.
[30] Moloney, *National Insecurities*, 17; D. Scott Fitzgerald and D. Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses. The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas* (Cambridge MA, 2014), 58; E. Lee, 'America First, Immigrants Last: American Xenophobia Then and Now', *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 19, 2 (2020), 3-18.
[31] Lüthi, 'Germs of Anarchy'; T. Brinkmann, *Points of Passage. Jewish Transmigrants from Eastern Europe in Scandinavia, Germany and Britain 1880-1914* (New York, 2013); Moloney, *National Insecurities.*
[32] Zolberg, 'Managing a World on the Move', 223.
[33] Moloney, *National Insecurities;* R. L. Fleegler, *Ellis Island Nation. Immigration Policy and American Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia, 2015), 1.

This ties into the historiography of the top-down construction of the American identity through the extremely influential Americanization movement, which started in the 1880s as a way to help immigrants adjust to their new lives in the United States, but eventually morphed into a 'comprehensive program of reshaping American national identity'.[34] Maria Lauret and James Barrett have worked to develop the theory and rationale behind the Americanization movement, while Alex Goodall and George Lewis have set up the relatively new field on 'un-Americanism' and its importance in the first half of the twentieth century.[35]

As discussed above, the historiography on the First Red Scare is very much focused on the immediate response of surveillance, arrests, and deportation of 'radical aliens', in an attempt to rid the nation of the (perceived) colossal threat of immigrant radicalism. In this thesis, I add to the existing historiography by shifting the focus away from this immediate response to the debates on the prevention of *future* immigrant radicalism, thereby connecting the historiography on the First Red Scare with the historiographies on American nativism, immigrant restriction, and the Americanization movement. In addition to answering a research question that had not yet been addressed, I propose a new frame through which to view the American policies regarding immigrant radicalism; through combing through the debates on radicalism, I have found that policymakers imagined the 'radical alien' in two distinct ways (the 'agitator type' and the 'follower type'), even if they themselves did not always explicitly or even consciously separate the two. I contend that these two frames heavily influenced their views on policies vis-à-vis immigrant radicalism, even if they themselves did not consciously tease out these two images of 'the radical'. Finally, I present a new hypothesis regarding the

[34] M. Lauret, 'When Is an Immigrant's Autobiography Not an Immigrant Autobiography? The Americanization of Edward Bok', *MELUS*, 3, 3 (2013), 8, 17-18.

[35] M. Lauret, 'Americanization Now and Then: The "Nation of Immigrants" in the Early Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries', *Journal of American Studies* 50, 2 (2016), 419-447; J. B. Barrett, 'Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930', *The Journal of American History*, 79, 3 (1992), 996-1020; Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty*; G. Lewis, 'An Un-American Introduction', *Journal of American Studies* 47, 4 (2013), 871-879.

question why the prevention of radicalism was an important argument in (practically) closing the American border for some Europeans, but not for others.

While this thesis seems to be primarily interested in the American context of the Red Scare and the policies it spawned, it is also very much related to Europe. Not only were the main actors around which the majority of anti-radical policies revolved transnational actors hailing from Europe, but the US attempted to approach what they believed was an intercontinental threat in a transnational manner, by setting up a system of remote control and somewhat of an international intelligence network tracking radicals overseas. Finally, this thesis sheds light on how American authorities viewed different groups of European immigrants, using the argument of radicalism as one more way in which they split Europeans into 'desirables' and 'undesirables'.

Theoretical Framework

Between 1815 and 1930, over 32 million Europeans migrated to the United States, in search of economic opportunity or in an attempt to escape religious persecution.[36] In possession of recently 'freed' land – to use a euphemistic term - and in need of cheap labor, the United States welcomed migrants with open borders throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. By the 1880s, however, anxieties surrounding immigration increased significantly.[37] Following drastic cuts in the cost and price of trans-Atlantic travel, the amount of immigrants increased rapidly.[38] Additionally, the demographic make-up of the immigrants changed significantly, shifting from immigrants from northern and western Europe ('Old Stock') to those hailing from eastern and southern Europe, 'New Stock' immigrants who were considered racially 'weaker'.[39]

While immigrants were still 'wanted', they were no longer 'welcome', in the words of Aristide Zolberg. He argues that nation-states were (and are) constantly shifting along two axes in their attempt to deal with immigration. [40] The first axis is one of 'capitalist dynamics', while the second axis is about identity. Generally, nation-states want to invite immigrants for economic reasons; they provide cheap labor, and consume goods and services once settled in the host country.[41] However, nation-states are simultaneously trying to define and guard their national identity; often, immigrants are presented as a danger to this identity and national unity.[42] In the case of late nineteenth-century America, shipping companies and employers valued the economic opportunity immigrants presented and therefore operated on the 'capitalist axis'.[43] Traditional labor and nativist groups, however, fell on Zolberg's 'identity axis'; they

[36] T. Feys, 'Bounding Mass Migration across the Atlantic: European Shipping Companies between US Border Building and Evasion (1860s-1920s)', *Journal of Modern European History* 14, 1 (2016), 84.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Moloney, *National Insecurities*, 12.
[39] Fleegler, *Ellis Island Nation*, 1.
[40] Zolberg, *A Nation by Design*, 19.
[41] Ibid., 14-15.
[42] Ibid., 17.
[43] T. Feys, 'The Visible Hand of Shipping Interests in American Migration Policies 1815-1914', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 7, 1 (2010), 44-49...

lobbied intensely for greater restrictions to immigration, as a way to protect American identity from what they considered to be an attack.[44] This cacophony of opinions on immigration control is described by the 'migration governance' framework, which directs the attention away from the state as the sole actor, and towards the plethora of other actors, such as NGOs and companies, involved in the process of immigration policy and control.[45]

Increasingly, immigration restriction came to be seen as more than a way to keep out unwanted competition for American-born laborers; it became one of the most important tools the wildly popular eugenics movement wielded.[46] In their quest to 'optimize' the American body-politic, the eugenics-inspired Immigration Restriction League (and the many other organizations that followed in its wake) promoted the idea that only healthy, morally upright, and productive citizens able to participate in American-style democracy should be admitted to the country.[47] This view heavily influenced the increasingly restrictive immigration laws created between the 1880s and 1920s, which first excluded Chinese migrants in 1882 and eventually barred those suffering from a 'loathsome or contagious disease', 'imbeciles', those 'likely to become a public charge', criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, polygamists, among others.[48] The 1917 Immigration Act further restricted immigration through a literacy test and the creation of a 'barred Asiatic zone', that excluded the majority of Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants.[49] Finally, the 1921 Quota Acts introduced a new system of filtering out the 'undesirables' from southern and eastern Europe; per country, the amount of immigrants allowed to enter the US was limited to a small percentage of the total amounts of residents of that country living in America in 1890, thereby privileging northern and western Europeans

[44] Feys, 'The Visible Hand', 52-54.
[45] M. L. J. C. Schrover, T. S. Vosters, I. A. Glynn, 'NGOs and West European Migration Governance (1860s until present): Introduction to a Special Issue', *Journal of Migration History* 5, 2 (2019), 2.
[46] Scott Fitzgerald and D. Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses*, 58.
[47] Moloney, *National Insecurities*, 106-107, 123.
[48] Ibid., 13-14.
[49] Fleegler, *Ellis Island Nation*, 11.

over southern and eastern Europeans.[50] Made permanent by the 1924 Quota Act, the restrictive quota system definitely 'marked an abandonment of America's traditional commitment to open borders and a fulfillment of trends dating back at least to the 1880s', in the words of Alex Goodall, and remained law until 1965.[51]

Not only did the United States increasingly *want* to shape its society through eugenics and immigration, it was increasingly *able* to do so. In the post-Civil War period, the federal bureaucratic apparatus expanded quickly.[52] Immigration and border control, too, became federal, rather than state, issues. Technological advances such as photography and fingerprinting, pioneered in the late nineteenth-century by (colonial) police forces, helped to control the population, although it took a few decades before these methods were applied to immigration control.[53] Finally, the system of passports and visas immensely enlarged the power of governments to 'identify their citizens, to distinguish them from non-citizens, and thus to construct themselves as "nation-states"', a process John Torpey has coined the 'Identification Revolution'.[54] Despite these innovations, the dream of complete control over immigration remained very far out of reach throughout the 1920s.

These concepts provide a theoretical context for the anti-radical policies created during the First Red Scare. Not only does this framework shed light on the increasingly xenophobic tendencies that preceded and shaped the Red Scare, but particularly Zolberg's notion of the two axes highlights a certain tension tangible in the debates on how border control and the restriction of immigration could prevent immigrant radicalism: Congress knew America *needed*

[50] Scott Fitzgerald and Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses*, 102.
[51] Ibid., 82.
[52] Moloney, *National Insecurities*, 13.
[53] R. B. Jensen, 'The International Campaign Against Anarchist Terrorism, 1880-1930s', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, 1 (2009), 94-95.
[54] J. Torpey, 'The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System', in J. Caplan and J. Torpey ed., *Documenting Individual Identity. The Development of State Practices in the Modern World* (Princeton, 2018), 269.

immigrants, but was deeply suspicious of their ability to bring in unwanted radicalism and thereby endanger the American identity, democracy, and way of life. Additionally, the concept of citizenship as a prerequisite for entering the country played an important role in the Red Scare. By branding left-wing politics as 'un-American' and 'Americanism' as anti-radical, those in power defined radical leftist politics as outside the realm of respectable politics and portrayed radical immigrants as antithetical to both democracy and good, American citizenship.[55] This framing not only discredited their critiques of the system but also paved the way for their deportation and exclusion, since radical immigrants would never be productive citizens anyway.

[55] Barrett, 'Americanization from the Bottom Up', 997, 1019.

Chapter 1: Characteristics of a Threat, Real and Imagined

'We know that within the last twenty years or more, because of the influx of foreign immigration into this country, we have had brought to our land a great many of the vicious and unwholesome and un-American doctrines […].'[56] In his 1919 speech, Congressman Black expressed the popular view that left-wing radicalism was a European import brought to the United States by immigrants and that all radical acts were carried out by foreigners, an assumption which shaped US policies regarding radicalism deeply.[57] In this chapter, I explore this association between radicalism and European immigration, after having given an overview of the events of the First Red Scare, which will shed light on why American policymakers felt that these 'vicious and unwholesome and un-American doctrines' were a significant threat to the nation. In doing so, I provide the historical context necessary to fully understand the debates surrounding immigrant radicalism.

1.1 Events of the First Red Scare

Anxieties surrounding left-wing radicals, specifically immigrant radicals, had plagued the American psyche ever since the 1886 Haymarket riot in Chicago, when 'anarchism literally exploded onto the American political scene', in the words of Dan Colson.[58] When a police officer seemed to interfere in an anarchist-organized demonstration, a bomb was thrown in his direction, after which chaos ensued. Eight police officers and a number of protesters were killed, and despite the lack of convincing evidence, eight anarchists were convicted for the murder of the policemen; four were executed.[59] The Haymarket riot politicized many who would later go on to work for the radical left cause, including Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, two prolific speakers and writers who became the center of the American anarchist

[56] *CR (-),* Vol. 58, July 30 1919, 3374.
[57] Ibid.
[58] D. Colson, 'Propaganda and the Deed: Anarchism, Violence, and the Representational Impulse', *American Studies* 55, 4 (2017), 163.
[59] Kraut, 'Global Anti-Anarchism', 173; Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State*, 3.

universe.[60] A second extremely impactful act of radical violence occurred in 1901, when the self-professed anarchist Leon Czolgosz shot president McKinley at the Buffalo Pan-American Exhibit. In response to this assassination, Congress enacted the 1903 Anarchist Exclusion Act, which forbade foreign anarchists from entering the United States; 'a new legal and political subject – the illegal anarchist alien' had been born.[61]

These concerns were kicked into a higher gear in 1917, when the Bolsheviks toppled the Provisional Government in the October Revolution, sparking governments all over to fear the specter of communism. Just a few months before, the US had joined the First World War and launched a militant pro-Allied propaganda offensive which demanded '100 percent Americanism' of citizens and particularly of foreigners residing in the US.[62] The war inspired a political environment which stifled anyone who dared to criticize the US government, including draft dodgers, suffragettes, pacifists, and left-wing radicals.[63] Two 'loyalty codes' were enacted. Firstly, the 1917 Espionage Act stipulated that citizens who would 'willfully cause or attempt to cause insubordination' in wartime could receive a penalty up to twenty years of prison time; non-citizens were deported.[64] Secondly, the 1918 Sedition Act made it a crime to defame the US government, army, or Constitution.[65] Though a wartime measure, Deirdre Moloney argues that the Sedition Act was 'directed primarily toward immigrant radicals'.[66]

As most left-wing radicals were staunchly anti-war and actively preached for draft dodging, the 1917 Espionage Act and the 1918 Sedition act were used to eliminate many sought-after radical leaders. Eugene Debs and 'Big Bill' Haywood, founders of the IWW, got

[60] Colson, 'Propaganda and the Deed', 163, 168.
[61] Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State*, 10.
[62] Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 201.
[63] Ibid., 175, 201.
[64] H. Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York, 1980), 365.
[65] Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State*, 148.
[66] Moloney, *National Insecurities*, 163.

sentenced to ten and twenty years of prison respectively, while Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman (and 248 other left-wing Russian-born immigrants) were deported to Russia on the USS 'red ark' Buford.[67] Alex Goodall estimates that between one and two thousand were prosecuted under these two acts, 'the vast majority left-wingers'.[68]

These 'loyalty codes', however, could only be used in wartime. Once the US signed the armistice in 1918, the only countersubversive law that could still be used was the 1918 Immigration Act, which excluded any foreign-born anarchists from entering and stipulated that they could be deported at any time, regardless of their immigration status. [69] One did not have to act on their left-wing beliefs to fall under the Anarchist Exclusion clauses of this act; just being a member of a communist or anarchist organization, or even a union deemed 'radical' was enough.[70]

The year following the war saw an unprecedented wave of labor unrest. Finding themselves in a powerful position due to extreme labor shortages, unions all over the nation were both willing and able to put their foot down and fight for better working conditions and wage parity at a time of rampant inflation.[71] In total over four million workers – one fifth of the total workforce – would strike in 1919 alone, including textile workers, cigarmakers, police officers, and over 365.000 steelworkers and 400.000 miners.[72] A number of local incidents and a slew of coordinated bombings, including the bombing of Attorney General Palmer's home in 1919 and the 1920 Wall Street bombing, further incensed those in power.[73] The governmental

[67] Zimmer, 'The Voyage of the Buford', 132; Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty*, 18-19.
[68] Ibid., 18.
[69] Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State*, 148.
[70] Zimmer, 'The Voyage of the Buford', 138.
[71] Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty*, 62-63.
[72] Zinn, *A People's History*, 381-382; Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty*, 64; S. Mintz, 'Historical Context: Post-World I Labor Tensions', [https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/teaching-resource/historical-context-post-world-war-i-labor-tensions] (last accessed on 27 May, 2021).
[73] Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State*, 150-151; Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 360.

raids of radical immigrant organizations, which Alex Goodall has characterized as 'an indiscriminate frenzy of violence in thirty-three cities spanning twenty-three states', in turn, evoked more radical violence.[74]

Crucially, America's powerful were convinced that all these events - the anarchist bombings, the radical draft dodgers, the great coal and steel strikes – were part of an 'organized plan or conspiracy on the part of alien enemies here to weaken and destroy the institutions of our country', in the words of Congressman Heflin.[75] In his discourse-defining work *Political Hysteria of America*, Murray Levin writes that the essence of the period was a 'universal belief in the imminent destruction of American civilization by a highly organized, brilliantly directed, and well financed Bolshevik conspiracy in America'.[76]

Fearing this apparently coordinated, funded radical takeover, the American authorities arrested tens of thousands radical immigrants in raids all over the country, while the Bureau of Investigations (the FBI's predecessor) kept dossiers on over 200.000 inhabitants considered suspicious.[77] However, only 979 individuals were deported on account of their being 'alien anarchists' (although Zimmer argues that 'an unknown number of additional 'alleged anarchists were arrested and deported […] on grounds other than the charge of anarchy').[78] The relatively low deportation count was partially due to the fact that many immigrants accused of being radicals successfully appealed to the courts; more importantly however, the US was unable to deport anyone to the USSR, as the former did not officially recognize the latter before 1933.[79]

[74] Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty*, 76; Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State*, 142.
[75] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 58, November 19 1919, 8818.
[76] M. B. Levin, *Political Hysteria in America. The Democratic Capacity for Repression* (New York, 1971), 3.
[77] Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 202; Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State*, 151; Zimmer, 'The Voyage of the Buford', 140.
[78] Ibid., 132.
[79] Clark, *Deportation of Aliens*, 224-225.

1.2 The 'Foreign-Born Menace': All Radicals Are Foreign

An assumption crucial to the logic of the First Red Scare was the idea that radicalism was a European import and that all radicals were therefore European immigrants. This belief was certainly based in part on reality. Many strands of radical left-wing thought had indeed been theorized in Europe, and the continent had seen its fair share of radical violence; between 1880 and 1914, European anarchist terrorist attacks claimed around 160 lives, including those of the French President Carnot, Italian King Umberto I, Spanish President Cánovas del Castillo, and Empress Elizabeth of Austria ('Sisi'), and injured an additional 500 or so.[80] The Bolsheviks took power in Russia in 1917 and inspired workers in Germany, Hungary, and Italy to attempt the same.[81] It was also true that many of the members of radical organizations in the United States were foreign-born (primarily Italian, German, and Eastern European Jewish immigrants).[82]

However, in a number of ways this equation of radicalism with Europe on the one hand and immigration on the other was skewed. Alexander Noonan argues that those who categorized radical philosophies as purely European, 'ignored the long-established tradition of individualist anarchism in the United States – which drew upon the writings and speeches of William Lloyd Garrison, Henry David Thoreau, Josiah Warren, and Benjamin Tucker, among other […]'.[83] Additionally, as Kenyon Zimmer argues, taking the over-representation of immigrants in radical organizations as proof for a European propensity to left-wing extremism is too simplistic. He writes that this over-representation is not surprising given the fact that immigrants also made up the majority of all employees working in mining and manufacturing – two industries notorious for their tough working conditions, and thereby more likely to

[80] Noonan, "What Must Be the Answer", 368; De Graaf, 'Van "helsche machines"', 317.
[81] Mintz, 'Historical Context'.
[82] Pope-Obeda, 'Expelling the Foreign-Born Menace', 38.
[83] Noonan, "What Must Be the Answer", 366.

produce radical workers.[84] Moreover, 'only a small handful of avowed anarchist exiles and labor migrants carried these doctrines with them from Europe'.[85] The vast majority of immigrants who joined the radical left-wing once on American soil, had not adhered to radical politics before they arrived. Rather, the combination of rapid economic growth and poor working conditions (particularly in the industries accessible to immigrants) put immigrants under great pressure, leaving them to seek out radical politics as a way to better their circumstances.[86]

Two processes further exaggerated the perceived connection between European immigration and radicalism. Firstly, xenophobic nativism, fueled by the unprecedented amount of immigrants coming into the nation (over 1.2 million in 1914), portrayed foreigners as the bearers of any social ills present in the nation, including left-wing radicalism. [87] Secondly, a number of historians have argued foreigners were the chief targets of the First Red Scare partially because they were easy prey; non-citizens could be removed without any 'slow and troubling practices of legal due process', whereas citizens enjoyed much more constitutional protection.[88] The fact that the most significant and effective tool to repress radicalism was geared exclusively towards immigrants (the 1918 Immigration Act) in turn created a powerful self-reinforcing cycle, as Goodall argues: 'In this sense, the implementation of laws that selectively targeted foreigners helped to cement the xenophobic presumptions that had underpinned their creation in the first place.'[89]

[84] Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State*, 2.
[85] Ibid., 1-2.
[86] Pope-Obeda, 'Expelling the Foreign-Born Menace', 38.
[87] Ibid., 33.
[88] Pope-Obeda, 'Expelling the Foreign-Born Menace', 39; Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty*, 74.
[89] Ibid.

Chapter 2: The 'Radical Alien' at the Border

Policymakers believed drastic steps needed to be taken to tackle what they saw as a radical attack on the American institutions, coordinated and financed by Russia, executed by the immigrant population. The immediate response was to deport the problematic 'element', the 'radical alien'. However, deporting radical immigrants while potentially letting new radicals slip into the country would be counterproductive. Therefore, another, more long-term, response to the 'red menace' was to exclude 'radical aliens' at the border. In this chapter, I discuss both the theory and the practice of border control vis-à-vis radical immigrants. While there had been laws excluding foreign anarchists on the books since 1903, spotting radicals amidst a crowd of other immigrants proved rather more difficult in practice.[90] I further explore how policymakers tried to circumvent the limits of American border control by extending their sphere of influence into the hinterlands of Europe through a system of 'remote control'.

2.1 How to Spot a Radical?

In a 1917 article, doctor E. H. Mullan, surgeon for the United States Public Health Service, described the entire vetting process immigrants went through on Ellis Island (in theory, at least).[91] After all steerage passengers (third and fourth class) had been brought over from their ship to the island, they were herded into a large hall were each immigrant passed two medical doctors who checked for medical and mental conditions.[92] Any sickly, deformed, or 'inattentive and stupid-looking aliens' were given a chalk mark and sent to a separate hall for further medical and mental inspection.[93] Those unmarked were directed towards the upper floor where they were questioned by the Immigration Service, 'who take every means to see that he is not an anarchist, bigamist, pauper, criminal, or otherwise unfit'.[94] The immigration officers cross-

[90] Noonan, "What Must Be the Answer", 370.
[91] E. H. Mullan, 'Mental Examination of Immigrants. Administration and Line Inspection at Ellis Island', *Public Health Reports (1896-1970)* 32, 20 (May 18 1917), 733-746.
[92] Ibid., 734.
[93] Moloney, *National Insecurities*, 112.
[94] Mullan, 'Mental Examination of Immigrants', 736.

examined their answers with the ones they had given on the slip of questions they had had to fill out on board; these questions covered a number of topics, including their race, occupation, and whether they were an anarchist.[95] If the officers had any doubts about the immigrant, they sent them on to the Board of Special Inquiry; if they then decided the immigrant was somehow unfit to enter, the individual in question was placed in the detention quarters (also on Ellis Island) to await deportation.

This vetting process included two ways of checking for radicals amidst the immigrants. Firstly, the immigration officers on the upper floor were supposed to ask every immigrant flat out whether they were an anarchist. A second way of 'catching' radical immigrants at the border was to recognize them as such based on their physical appearance. This, however, raised a complicated question: how does one spot a radical?

According to early twentieth-century science, all sorts of undesirable traits such as 'feeblemindedness', sexual 'degeneracy', and radicalism manifested themselves biologically and were therefore visible in immigrants' bodies.[96] In the case of radicalism, the influential Lombrosian school stipulated that a radical's 'degenerative characteristics' were similar to those of criminals and the insane. [97] When Cesare Lombroso examined his first 'real anarchist in person' in 1900, he noted that this man had 'flaring ears, premature and deep wrinkles, small, sinister eyes sunk back in their orbits, a hollowed, flat nose, and a small beard […]'.[98] While Lombrosian theories were no longer state-of-the-art in the years of the Red Scare, they had definitely left their mark, so that even as late as 1921, General Attorney Palmer conjured up a Lombrosian image when describing radicals during a congressional hearing: 'Out of the sly,

[95] Mullan, 'Mental Examination of Immigrants', 736.
[96] Ibid., 735, 745; M. Canaday, *The Straight State. Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, 2009), 29, 31-32.
[97] Simon, 'Positively Punitive', 2158.
[98] N. Hong, 'Constructing the Anarchist Beast in American Periodical Literature, 1880-1903', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 9 (1992), 121-122.

crafty eyes of many of them leap cupidity, cruelty, insanity, and crime; from their lopsided faces, sloping brows, and misshapen features may be recognized the unmistakable criminal type.'[99]

More generally, the Congressional Record shows that certain stereotypes regarding the physical appearance of radicals were pervasive during the years of the Red Scare. Firstly, more often than not, radicals were imagined to be male. Kenyon Zimmer writes that this was partially a reflection of the fact that both the American left and a number of immigrant communities were male-dominated, but he adds that 'it was also a product of authorities' tendency to ignore female activists and to view unattached males as a particularly dangerous group'.[100] The Congressional Record, however, shows that the radical immigrant was by no means *exclusively* imagined as male. As Congressman Raker pointed out, 'there is no distinction between men and women. One of the strongest Bolshevists and syndicalists in this country was a woman in California.'[101]

Another common stereotype invoked by congressmen was that of the scraggly radical sporting long hair and 'whiskers'.[102] When asked to testify about a group of Russian detainees awaiting deportation in Detroit, the journalist F. R. Barkley, who had reported on them in 1921, confirmed that he had had a certain image of a radical in mind. He pointed out that 'they were clean. Most of them were fairly well dressed for workingmen, not dirty-looking fellows. They did not look like what we have been led to believe Bolsheviks look like – that is, when they

[99] *Charges of Illegal Practices (Hearings),* 623; K. Zimmer, 'Positively Stateless: Marcus Graham, the Ferrero-Sallitto Case, and Anarchist Challenges to Race and Deportations' in M. Jung ed., *The Rising Tide of Color: Race, State Violence, and Radical Movements Across the Pacific* (Seattle, 2014), 132.
[100] Zimmer, 'The Voyage of the Buford', 145.
[101] *Immigration and Labor (Hearings),* 442.
[102] *CR (-),* Vol. 58, August 11 1919, 3767; *CR (S),* Vol. 59, February 20 1920, 3163; *CR (S),* Vol. 58, October 27 1919, 7587.

were taken in there. After four or five days, of course, they had all grown a pretty good crop of beard.'[103]

Stereotypical, perhaps even Lombrosian, ideas of what a radical looked like most probably also pervaded the minds of the immigration officers and doctors who performed the vetting process at the American border. This is all the more relevant since immigration officers and doctors were instructed to keep their eyes peeled for any behavior or physical appearance that seemed out of the ordinary, thereby granting them a lot of leeway for subjectivity and personal interpretation of who might be an unfit immigrant. As Mullan wrote, 'the alien's manner of entering the line, his conversation, style of dress, any peculiarity or unusual incident in regard to him are all observed. […] Any suggestion, no matter how trivial, that would point to abnormal mentality is sufficient cause to defer the immigrant for a thorough examination'.[104] Being picked out of the line for looking or behaving as an 'undesirable' could then have very real consequences through the workings of the 'Likely to be a Public Charge' clause (LPC), which was used as an easy way to exclude anyone who was suspected of being undesirable, but could not necessarily be proven to be so.[105]

In practice, however, these two ways of spotting radicals at the border, namely based on their answers during examination and their physical appearance, were rather ineffective; between 1903 and 1921 only thirty-eight immigrants were excluded for holding anarchist beliefs.[106] Immigrants could rather easily evade the anarchist exclusions laws by lying about their political ideology and slightly changing their appearance.[107] Policymakers became increasingly aware of these shortcomings as well. As Congressman Green pointed out in 1916,

[103] *Charges of Illegal Practices (Hearings*), 718.
[104] Mullan, 'Mental Examination of Immigrants', 737.
[105] Moloney, *National Insecurities*, 21.
[106] R. B. Jensen, 'The United States, International Policing, and the War against Anarchist Terrorism, 1900-1914', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13, 1 (2001), 34.
[107] Noonan, "What Must Be the Answer", 355.

'unfortunately there is no method of ascertaining definitely the condition of a man's mind or whether he is controlled by criminal instincts. For that reason we have found that anarchists and dangerous criminals often elude every safeguard.'[108]

In an attempt to improve the rate of 'catching' radical immigrants at the border, Congressman Burnett introduced a third way of testing immigrants for radicalism by proposing a literacy test clause for the Immigration Act of 1917, which stipulated that all immigrants over sixteen should be able to read around thirty words worth of text in either English or any other language or dialect of their choosing if they were to enter the country.[109] Congress had sought to enact a similar literacy test on several occasions throughout the previous decade, with the primary goal of functioning as a sieve that would let immigrants from northern and western Europe through but would keep the 'undesirables' from southern and eastern Europe out.[110] In 1916 and 1917, however, Congressman Burnett attributed a new expected outcome to the literacy test; he contended that it would also prove to be a useful tool in the fight against radical immigrants. He used the (rather flawed) argument that workers who had participated in large strikes such as the 1912 IWW-led Lawrence textile strikes had been predominantly illiterate and that therefore the literacy test could prevent future IWW activity.[111]

Burnett was met with considerable criticism. Many of his colleagues on Capitol Hill argued that this reasoning was both entirely illogical and incredibly unjust. Congressmen such as Mr. Smith pointed out that the literacy test would be ineffective in targeting radicals, as they were more than likely to be literate and intelligent, 'although misguided'.[112] Not only would the test fail to keep radicals out, it would deny the deserving immigrant, the 'big, strong, brave, sober man, of clean life and patriotic motives', the opportunity to migrate to the US, just because

[108] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 53, March 27 1916, 4940.
[109] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 53, March 25 1916, 4877.
[110] Scott Fitzgerald and Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses*, 99; Fleegler, *Ellis Island Nation*, 7.
[111] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 53, March 24 1916, 4773.
[112] *CR (S)*, Vol. 54, December 13 1916, 269.

'poverty and oppression in his native country have prevented him from learning how to read 30 little words upon a slip of paper'.[113] In the minds of many progressive congressmen, this made the literacy bill 'unfair, unreasonable, un-American, un-Christian, inhuman'.[114] Despite this protest, the bill passed in February of 1917 by a vote of 287 to 106 in the House and 62 to 19 in the Senate.[115]

[113] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 53, March 25 1916, 4877.
[114] Ibid., 4874.
[115] H. Pratt Fairchild, 'The Literacy Test and Its Making', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 31, 3 (May 1917), 459.

2.2 'Largely a Farce': The Limits of American Border Control

While Congress had already been preoccupied with closing the gap between the theory and practice of the anarchist exclusion laws in 1916 and 1917, anxieties surrounding the immigrant radical sneaking into the US unnoticed grew to unprecedented heights in 1918-1919, the wake of the First World War. This was partially a response to the ramping up of the Red Scare, but also very much related to the expected resurgence of immigration to pre-war levels after a wartime immigration lull, at a time when it became increasingly clear that border control at Ellis Island was anything but robust.[116]

The 1919 congressional hearing on the 'Conditions at Ellis Island' laid bare just how overwhelmed and overworked the Immigration Service had become. In his congressional interview, Byron H. Uhl, the acting commissioner of Ellis Island, explained that there were far too few inspectors in comparison to the formidable amount of immigrants coming through every day.[117] The Immigration Service was spread thin both because the officers were expected to perform a host of new tasks stipulated by the Immigration Act of 1917, and because it was difficult to hold on to good inspectors, as they were expected to work 'beyond the eight-hour day and six-day week', but only compensated with a measly salary (as the Commissioner General of Immigration repeatedly alluded to in his Annual Reports to the Secretary of Labor).[118] The result was that the working immigration officers only had an estimated fifteen seconds to spend on the inspection of each incoming immigrant; this also meant that 'there is no place or time to see whether he is an anarchist'.[119] The congressional Committee on Immigration and Naturalization finished Uhr's interview completely disillusioned about the

[116] Lee, 'America First', 3; Fleegler, *Ellis Island Nation*, 12.
[117] *Conditions at Ellis Island (Hearings)*, 7.
[118] Ibid.; *Annual Report*, 5.
[119] *Conditions at Ellis Island (Hearings)*, 14, 20.

quality of border control at Ellis Island: '[…] Don't you think that work out there is largely a farce?' Mr. Uhl agreed, stating that it was 'largely a matter of checking names'.[120]

If this was the state of immigration restriction at a time when immigration levels were lower than they had been in a decade, policymakers wondered, how could the system possibly function properly once immigration picked up where it had left off before the war?[121] With Europe in tatters and facing enormous debt, American policymakers feared a gargantuan increase in European immigration once the shipping systems were up and running again.[122] The inspection of immigrants for radicalism – already a lot less meticulous than hoped for – would be further reduced under the pressure of up to fifteen million European immigrants annually, which was the number estimated in a report by the Committee of Immigration and Naturalization.[123]

This was particularly distressing to policymakers because they felt that the stakes were higher than ever, since they believed 'more wavers of the red flag' were amongst the incoming immigrants 'than ever before'.[124] American ambassadors and Consul Generals all over Europe had been wiring in telegrams warning the American government that 'Bolsheviki elements of enemy countries will swarm into the United States and endanger the country's welfare'.[125] In his letter to President Wilson on October 22, 1919, Secretary of State Robert Lansing wrote that 'these elements of unrest and disorder' were both coming of their own volition, having 'broken their bounds in various quarters, particularly in Russia and central Europe' as a result of the 'unsettled conditions arising from the war', and were being sent by anarchistic organization

[120] *Conditions at Ellis Island (Hearings),* 21.
[121] Lee, 'America First', 3.
[122] 'Our Foreign-Born Citizens', *The National Geographic Magazine*, 31, 2 (February 1917), 95-130; *CR (HR),* Vol. 60, December 10 1920, 172.
[123] Ibid.; Torpey, 'The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System', 265.
In hindsight we know that 'only' 652.364 immigrants entered the country in 1921, compared to 24.627 in 1919.
[124] *CR (HR),* Vol. 58, October 15 1919, 6977.
[125] *CR (S),* Vol. 58, October 22 1919, 7302.

'attempting to send agents to this country to spread their propaganda'.[126] Telegrams such as the ones sent by the American ambassadors in London and Archangel (Russia) repeated these same sentiments, guaranteeing that Russia was 'acquiring genuine American passports' in order to send Bolshevik agents to the US.[127] Others, such as the ambassador in The Hague, pointed out that a number of governments were looking to dump their agitators in the United States: 'It is likely that other countries will try to get rid of these persons and that the worst of them will go to the country to which the entry is easiest and where there is the least to explain.'[128]

The sense that the country's 'defenses' were completely down while the threat of radicalism was at an all-time high sparked an intense congressional debate on an innovative tool heralded as the solution for the nation's lacking border control: the so-called 'passport-visé' system.

[126] *CR (S)*, Vol. 58, October 22 1919, 7302.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

2.3 'A Much Stronger Safeguard': Remote Control & the Passport-Visé System

Although the US had had a system of passport control since May of 1918 as a way to keep tabs on wartime 'alien enemies', Congressman Nolan revisited the issue in July of 1919, suggesting that the passport-visé system be extended in peacetime, as it could aid in the ongoing attempt to detect radical immigrants before they enter the United States. He proposed that all immigrants wanting to migrate to the US must first have a passport 'viséd' by an American consular agent in their home country.[129] This would allow the consular agent to examine each candidate much more thoroughly than immigration officers at Ellis Island ever could, 'as we have no machinery on this side under the present law to detect those that preach sabotage, direct action, and other dangerous doctrines'.[130]

Following Nolan's proposal and the many calls of American consular and diplomatic offices to extend the wartime measure, the Committee on Foreign Affairs was put in charge of a congressional hearing to further develop the idea that passport control could be used to better monitor radical immigrants.[131] While passport control was also seen as a good way to avoid the so-called 'refoulement' of immigrants, the 'inconvenient and risky' forced return of those deemed unfit to enter, the main objective of this system was to keep out radical immigrants.[132] As Wilbur Carr, director of Consular Service, stated in the congressional hearing, 'the real purpose of this act is to keep out of this country political agitators, revolutionists, propagandists, anarchists, and people whose admission into this country would be against its best interests'.[133]

In their joint statement in front of the committee, Carr and Richard Flournoy, Division Chief of the Department of State, argued that there were a number of reasons why this system of 'remote control' would function as a superior measure of control vis-à-vis radical

[129] Torpey, 'The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System', 265; *CR (-),* Vol. 58, July 30 1919, 3376.
[130] Ibid., 3375.
[131] *Extension of Passport Control (Hearings),* 5.
[132] Zolberg, 'Managing a World on the Move', 223.
[133] *Extension of Passport Control (Hearings),* 33.

immigrants, making it a 'much stronger safeguard' than the country had seen before.[134] Not only could the passport-visé system deflect some of the pressure to inspect away from the severely overwhelmed Ellis Island, it would make it significantly easier for immigration officers to refuse immigrants the right to migrate than it had been previously. Flournoy pointed out that the amount of evidence required to decline a visa application would be much lower than the proof necessary to bar an immigrant at the American border: 'Even if there is no proof but if he believes that he is a dangerous man for any reason, he would have discretion to refuse the visé.'[135] Carr added that the 'burden of proof' would be put upon the immigrant rather than the immigration authorities; it was up to the individual to prove that he or she was in no way a radical and thus fit for American citizenship, instead of the other way around.[136] Finally, and somewhat paradoxically, they made the case that the real power of the bill resided in the fact that it would finally grant the opportunity to do a thorough background check of immigrants, since 'the only place where you can investigate those people is where you have the information about them, or where the information can easily be obtained. That is at the foreign port.'[137]

The question of how they imagined to actually 'investigate those people' is a bit more complicated to answer. At least before the war, the American intelligence was in no shape to track radicals across the globe. Although a number of European nations, including Italy, France, and Germany, which had set up sophisticated global anti-anarchist networks from the turn of the century onwards, the US had had no such intelligence network to speak of.[138] Additionally, the US had declined to ratify the 1904 St. Petersburg Anti-Anarchist Protocol, the multi-national accord signed by well over a dozen nations which promoted the inter-police exchange

[134] *Extension of Passport Control (Hearings)*, 36.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid., 33-34.
[137] Ibid., 33.
[138] Jensen, 'The International Campaign Against Anarchist Terrorism', 96.

of information on the whereabouts of anarchists.[139] Richard Bach Jensen, a major contributors to the field of the history of global anti-anarchism, argues that this was probably due to the lack of a national policing system powerful enough to meet the demands set by the Protocol.[140] American intelligence and police was infamously disorganized and decentralized, so much so that European nations were forced to hire private detectives in the US or send over their own agents to monitor European anarchists residing in the US who they feared would come back to their home country to plan an attack.[141] Even by 1919, President Wilson admitted in a letter to Congress that 'developing a system of intelligence and investigation abroad' that would 'work in sufficiently close relationship to the immigration organization in the United States' was an 'impracticability'.[142]

Although the US did not seem to command an international intelligence network that could effectively track radicals overseas, there are indications that two networks, newly established during the war, may have provided alternatives. Firstly, I have found evidence that the US military sent a young J. Edgar Hoover, Special Assistant the General Attorney, copies of their weekly 'Situation Survey', at least in the years of 1919 and 1920. These reports contained a summary of the global intelligence the military had collected during the week, mostly pertaining to 'radical and racial activities and propaganda'.[143] Crucially, some of these reports included intelligence on the whereabouts of radical individuals, often warning the Department of Justice that they were *en route* to the US. Though there may be reports with more useful information, the reports I found only included rather vague indications of place and time. One report did not even include the name of the 'very important representative of the

[139] Jensen, 'The International Campaign Against Anarchist Terrorism', 96; Jensen, 'The United States, International Policing', 21.
[140] Ibid., 26-27.
[141] Ibid., 28; Jensen, 'The International Campaign Against Anarchist Terrorism', 95.
[142] *CR (S)*, Vol. 58, October 22 1919, 7303.
[143] *Radical Activities (Case #377098)*.

Soviet Government' who was 'said to be in Holland and will arrive in the United States toward the end of September'.[144]

A second network with perhaps more clout to it was the consular network itself. According to Wilbur Carr, the American consulates throughout Europe received communications on radicals 'through the intelligence services of the allied Governments, through our own consular officers, and the diplomatic officers'.[145] These communications included a list of names of individuals whose visa application had been denied, which was then sent 'to principal places in other countries where he would likely seek an opportunity to embark'. [146] This way the American consular networks had the potential to function similarly to an intelligence network that investigated the movements of radical individuals.

Motivated by their desire to rid the nation of its 'red menace', policymakers worked to improve the apprehension of radical immigrants at the border. Having realized that the American system of border control was hardly sufficient, they took to remote control as a way to reduce the pressure on Ellis Island and to better investigate the political ideologies of immigrants on their way to America.

[144] *Radical Activities (Case #377098*), September 22 1920, 7.
[145] *Extension of Passport Control (Hearings)*, 36.
[146] Ibid.

Chapter 3: Americanization as Anti-Radicalism

'To beat back the red tide of anarchy will require constructive measures. Every alien already here should be Americanized if he desires it; and if he does not desire it he should be deported.'[147] Congressman Kelly was one of many policymakers to evangelize 'Americanism' or Americanization in the wake of the war, presenting it as a powerful antidote to immigrant radicalism in addition to, or even instead of, border control regarding radicals. This second set of measures, which included teaching the American immigrant population the English language, American history and civics, and the 'American way of life', was by no means solely intended to keep the immigrant population from radicalizing. It was part of the much broader Americanization movement, which had started in the 1880s as a way to better prepare the immigrant for the American labor market, but had morphed into 'an increasingly coercive States-wide program' which sought to 'produce a "one-minded" nation through assimilation of the "foreign element".[148] Additionally, the movement sought to mold both immigrants and native-born Americans to a WASP-inspired middle-class standard, and thereby normatively construct a new national identity.[149]

The fact that congressional debates on immigrant radicalism increasingly focused on the foreign population already residing in the US, as opposed to on new immigrants entering the country, marked a shift away from the border towards the interior. In this chapter, I argue that this shift was partially a response to the continued frustrations surrounding border control. More importantly, however, it reflected the development of a new conceptualization of the 'radical alien', his attributes, motivations, and radicalization pattern. This new conceptualization explains why assimilation, something seemingly unrelated to radicalism and its critique of society, was considered to be an effective measure against future immigrant radicalism.

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[147] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 58, October 15 1919, 6981.
[148] Lauret, 'Americanization Now and Then', 435-436.
[149] Ibid., 435, 446; Barrett, 'Americanization from the Bottom Up', 997.

3.1 A Shift to the Interior

In 1919 and 1920, Congress engaged in numerous debates on Americanization bills and how Americanization measures such as curtailing illiteracy and the education of immigrants would combat immigrant radicalism.[150] During these same debates, congressmen periodically lamented the nation's inadequacy to exclude radicals at the border, accusing the 'whole immigration system' as being 'in a wretched state' and denouncing the 'loopholes through which such people could come'.[151] Despite the innovative remote control enacted in the fall of 1919, intended specifically to improve America's ability to filter out radical immigrants, the sense that border control was somehow failing remained among many policymakers. Although the congressmen did not make the connection explicitly, it seems plausible that this feeling that border control was not and could never be completely foolproof, enabled the congressional conversation surrounding immigrant radicalism to shift away from the border towards the interior. If Congress was not able to keep radicals from entering the nation, at least they could limit the damage they could do once on American ground.

Another factor seems to have facilitated this shift as well. The Congressional Record shows that, from around 1919 onwards, policymakers did not solely imagine 'the radical' as the cunning foreign agent whose sole reason for coming to the United States was to wreak havoc and undermine the nation – what I call the 'agitator type'. Increasingly, they collectively cobbled together a new conceptualization of the radical, 'the follower type': the illiterate and unassimilated foreigner who was so painfully ignorant that he or she could easily be taken advantage of by demagogical 'reds' of the former type. In this conceptualization, the radical was no longer necessarily a 'born criminal' as had been the case in Lombrosian-inspired

[150] *CR (S)*, Vol. 59, January 21 1920, 1830; V. Y. Remnitz, 'The Story of Senate Bill 5464', *North American Review* 210, 765 (August 1919), 204.
[151] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 59, May 11 1920, 6873; *CR (S)*, Vol. 61, May 2 1921, 915; *CR (HR)*, Vol. 59, December 20 1919, 985; *CR (HR)*, Vol. 59, January 23 1920, 1973.

theories on radicalism; under the right circumstances, anyone (or at least, any immigrant) could become one. This realization sparked a sense of urgency surrounding the immigrant population, which is nicely illustrated by a 1919 essay on Americanization in the North American Review:

> Then anarchy […] sought out its predestined victims - for only in the soil of ignorance can the germs of anarchy develop. […] We had thought ourselves so enlightened as to be immune from this hideous plague, and here were thousands upon thousands of neglected men and women who might become centers of infection.[152]

This new conceptualization of the radical as an ignorant foreigner accidentally swept up by a demagogue further drove home the point that focusing on the nation's immigrant population was both an effective and necessary step in the prevention of future immigrant radicalism, thereby further pushing the discourse away from the border.

[152] Remnitz, 'The Story of Senate Bill 5464', 204.

3.2 New Stock Immigrants as 'Fertile Fields'

One group of immigrants was particularly at risk to become a 'fertile field' for radical propaganda and a 'dangerous breeding ground for infection': the so-called 'New Stock' immigrants from eastern and southern Europe.[153] The congressional debates reveal two main lines of argument supporting this claim. Firstly, these immigrants were considered to be generally weak, passive, and at worst, parasitical, making them an easy prey for left-wing agitators. They were often portrayed as passive consumers of resources, 'nonproducing and nonsupporting men and women', in the words of Congressman Parrish.[154] Policymakers such as Congressman Williams lamented the fact that New Stock immigrants no longer went westwards to carve out some land to cultivate, 'carrying a rifle into the wilderness and plowing with one hand while he watches the woods for Indians with both eyes'.[155] Instead, they tended to stay in America's industrial centers; this was taken as evidence of their apathetic nature, rather than of changing labor demands and the closing of the Frontier.[156]

Some policymakers argued that this presupposed weakness was the result of the increasing ease with which Europeans could migrate to the United States. Previous generations of immigrants had had to face enormous hardship on their journey to the US, ensuring that only 'those men and women of excellent character, of more than average intelligence' who possessed more than the average spirit of enterprise' made it to the US.[157] As transportation prices dropped and shipping companies increasingly facilitated the journey, anyone, even the most 'beaten folk, spirits broken', could migrate to the US by the 1910s.[158]

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[153] *CR (-),* Vol. 59, January 17 1920, 1650; *CR (HR),* Vol. 59, January 23 1920, 1972.
[154] *CR (HR),* Vol. 60, December 10 1920, 180.
[155] *CR (-),* Vol. 61, May 3 1921, 956.
[156] *CR (HR),* Vol. 60, December 10 1920, 174, 177.
[157] *Immigration and Labor (Hearings), 516.*
[158] *CR (S),* Vol. 60, February 19 1921, 3450; *CR (HR),* Vol. 61, April 20 1921, 498.

Others explained the New Stock immigrants' general weakness in explicit racial terms. Following the Madison Grant's lead, one of the nation's most influential proponents of eugenics, doctor Arthur Sweeney wrote an article for the North American Review, contending that 'Slavic and Latin' immigrants were significantly less intelligent than their northern and western counterparts. He believed this lack of intelligence inhibited them to think rationally, describing these immigrants as beastlike creature who 'think with the spinal cord rather than with the brain'. Being 'creatures of transient and often violent emotions', Sweeney argued that they would easily be 'swayed by the voice of the demagogue with consequences dangerous to orderly government'.[159]

The second set of arguments used to support the claim that New Stock immigrants were dangerously likely to be persuaded by the 'agitator type' centered around their supposed preference for radicalism, dictated both by their racial 'stock' and their cultural background. As many academics have pointed out, the US portrayed certain groups, including African Americans, Asians, Catholics, and eastern and southern Europeans as unfit for democracy as a way to both exclude them from participating in the political process and to restrict their immigration.[160] New Stock immigrants were considered too unintelligent to 'comprehend the beneficent principles on which our Government is based' and too communal to function in the individualistic American democracy.[161]

Other policymakers argued that southern and eastern Europeans were not fit for American democracy, not because they were inherently unable to participate, but because they simply had not had any practice in democratic citizenship in their home countries. Instead, they had been 'subjected to the iron heel of despots' and therefore 'taught at their mother's knee to

[159] A. Sweeney, 'Mental Tests for Immigrants', *North American Review* 215, 798 (May 1922), 603, 606, 609.
[160] Scott Fitzgerald and Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses*, 4.
[161] Sweeney, 'Mental Tests for Immigrants', 609; 'The Enemy Within Our Gates', *North American Review* 210, 769 (December 1919), 738; *Immigration and Labor (Hearings)*, 349.

despise their oppressor and governments', as Congressman Robsion stated. This condition naturally spawned 'anarchism, bolshevism, communism, syndicalism, and other monstrous conceptions of law and government'.[162] Whether because they were supposedly racially unfit for democracy or because they lacked experience in that department, New Stock immigrants were very often considered ill-equipped to deal with American-style democracy. Since radicalism was thought to be a 'rule of minority', and therefore, the polar opposite of democracy, being unfit for democracy equaled being drawn to radical politics.[163]

[162] *CR (-)*, Vol. 65, April 5 1924, 5665.
[163] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 58, May 23 1919, 182.

3.3 Americanization through Education

Viewing the immigrant population as a large reservoir of potential 'follower types' who could suddenly be 'activated' by agitators, policymakers felt they were sitting on a political powder keg. The Americanization movement was praised as the tool that would diffuse the imminent explosive situation; its main instrument was education. The Smith-Bankhead Bill of 1919 planned to allocate twelve million dollars annually to broadly tackle illiteracy in the US.[164] Although Congress estimated that almost half of the eight million illiterates were actually native-born Americans, the debates on this bill centered around the problem of immigrants not being able to speak, read or write English.[165] While some congressmen somewhat uncritically assumed that teaching foreigners English would automatically protect them against being swept up by demagogues without further explaining exactly how that would help, others were more precise in pointing out the benefits of teaching immigrants English. In a speech responding to a recent steel strike, Congressman Smith, for example, argued that most strikers 'had been misled into entering upon the strike', because 'they could not read a paper published in the English language'.[166] Congressman Myers, too, warned of the fact that many immigrants, unable to read English, relied on 'their foreign-language papers for all of their information and guidance' which could easily misinform 'the ignorant, prejudiced, easily misled class of foreigners'.[167]

Others, such as Congressman Kenyon, pointed out that teaching immigrants a basic knowledge of English was an absolute necessity, as it would provide immigrants access to the mythical stories of America as the land of equal opportunity: 'If they can not read or speak or understand the American language, how can they know the wonderful stories of opportunity in

[164] Remnitz, 'The Story of Senate Bill 5464', 204.
[165] *CR (S),* Vol. 58, October 27 1919, 7568.
[166] *CR (-),* Vol. 59, January 17 1920, 1664.
[167] *CR (S),* Vol. 59, April 28 1920, 6207.

this country? How can they understand the heights to which their children may attain in this land of freedom?'[168] Without English, Abraham Lincoln's inspirational 'rags to riches' story of 'the humble, poor boy's pathway from the log cabin of Kentucky to the Presidency of the United States' would remain 'closed books'.[169]

A similar sentiment speaks out of congressmen's desire to teach immigrants the basics of American history and its democratic institutions; they felt that immigrants would never get involved in radical politics if they just knew of 'our Constitution, of our great traditions of liberty and justice, law and order', in the words of Congressman Owen.[170] In a 1920 speech, Attorney General Palmer explained how radicalism might have made sense in the European context, where 'they were without political rights', but that it was completely uncalled for in the US, where 'the political rights of every citizen are guaranteed to him, and no man is so poor that he can not look forward to the time when he will himself be a man of property and even of much property'.[171] Congressman Kenyon invoked the same ardent belief in the 'American Dream', when he stated that immigrants 'are to be pitied', as they 'do not know that this is in fact the land of the poor boy; that men have given their lives that the doors of opportunity might ever be open to the children of tomorrow'.[172]

Education was thus supposed to keep the immigrant population from radicalizing in two ways. On the one hand, policymakers sought to make immigrants less dependent on their countrymen by teaching them English in the hope that they would become less likely to be misled by radical agitator from their country of origin. On the other hand, education in American civics and history was supposed to imbue the immigrant population with a sense of

[168] *CR (S),* Vol. 58, October 27 1919, 7569.
[169] Ibid.
[170] *CR (S),* Vol. 59, January 20 1920, 1774; *CR (S),* Vol. 59, January 23 1920, 1950.
[171] *Charges of Illegal Practices (Hearings),* 620.
[172] *CR (S),* Vol. 58, October 27 1919, 7569.

pride in, and more importantly, gratitude towards America's sacred mission of justice and equality, so that they would refrain from – in the eyes' of many elites, unfairly - criticizing the American system.

Somewhat surprisingly, hardly any policymakers proposed the improvement of immigrants' living and working conditions as a method to prevent future immigrant radicalism. In total, I have found just two references of congressmen stating as much. Congressman Thomas mentioned that 'we must resort to other methods than education, we must mete out even-handed justice to all men, substitute sympathy and due consideration […] if we are to remove the perils menacing our future', while Congressman Welty contended that immigrants came to "the land of the free and the home of the brave" and only became anarchists when they realized how much power Big Business and war profiteers had.[173] Other than these two, congressmen upheld Americanization as a more fitting response to immigrant radicalism.

In doing so, they completely denied the agency of left-wing activists and strikers, since congressmen portrayed radical immigrants as 'follower types' who neither had a clue about the broader consequences of their radical actions nor a stake in them; they had merely been 'misled'. Additionally, through presenting Americanization as *the* remedy to immigrant radicalism, congressmen implied that if only immigrants would learn about the American system, with 'the best form of government devised by the wit and wisdom of man to insure liberty, justice, and happiness', that 'gives to every man the opportunity to work out for himself the highest good', they would automatically fall in line and revere the American project as much as Congress did.[174] This line of thinking assumed that there was absolutely no reason for immigrants to critique either the American democracy or the socio-economic system and the

[173] *CR (S),* Vol. 59, January 20 1920, 1780; *CR (HR),* Vol. 59, December 20 1919, 988.
[174] *CR (HR),* Vol. 57, February 22 1919, 4034.

social mobility (or lack thereof) it provided. At a time of deep economic inequality and precarity, in which the top one tenth percent of families made as much as the 42 percent at the bottom and annually 25.000 workers were killed on the job, this blind faith in American institutions and consequently, the power of Americanization was both extremely entitled and rather delusional.[175] Regardless, many policymakers remained staunch supporters of Americanization as the solution to radicalism 'breeding' in the nation's immigrant population.

[175] Zinn, *A People's History*, 382-383.

Chapter 4: Closing the Border to 'A Mass of Indigestible Stuff'

By 1920, more and more congressmen challenged the notion that education would be a sufficient buffer against the spreading of radical ideas as long as new immigrants were coming in; in addition to Americanization (or sometimes, instead of), they argued for the closing of the border, the third measure US authorities adopted in their quest to prevent future immigrant radicalism. Crucially, however, Congress enacted not a general bar against European immigrants, but rather the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, which prohibited the majority of southern and eastern Europeans from entering, but kept the border open for western and northern Europeans. In this chapter, I contend that the dominance of the 'follower type' conceptualization of the radical formed a crucial part of the logic behind the 1921 Quota Act (and its successor, the 1924 Quota Act) and can explain why radicalism became an argument for excluding some, but not other European immigrants.

4.1 The Quota Act of 1921: A Partial Exclusion

The 1921 Quota Act stipulated that per nation, only three percent of the amount of co-nationals that had been living in the US in 1910 could enter annually. [176] Using the census of 1910 (and particularly the 1890 census, as was specified in the 1924 Quota Act) was a strategic choice. Since the amount of northern and western Europeans living in the US in those years was relatively high, the Act had the effect of favoring northern and western European immigrants over southern and eastern New Stock immigrants; only one fifth of the prewar level of immigration from southern and eastern Europe was permitted, while northern and western Europeans were allowed to come at the same rate as they had in 1914.[177]

While congressmen presented a plethora of arguments pushing for the exclusion of immigrants, including the general disdain of New Stock immigrants, a loss of the 'American standard of living', and unemployment, the specter of radicalism unfalteringly loomed large

[176] Lee, 'America First', 10.
[177] Fleegler, *Ellis Island Nation,* 27 ; Scott Fitzgerald and Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses*, 101.

over these congressional debates.[178] A substantial amount of congressmen argued that closing the border to southern and eastern European immigrants (while permitting northern and western Europeans to enter the country as they had before the war) was a necessary step in the battle against future immigrant radicalism. While few congressmen contended that this was the case, because a substantial amount of southern and eastern Europeans were raging radicals when they arrived at Ellis Island, most did not operate on the premise that *all* southern and eastern Europeans were born agitators.[179] Similarly, it was not the case that Congress imagined *none* of the northern and western European immigrants to be radicals.

Throughout the years of the Red Scare, policymakers considered Old Stock radicals entirely within the realm of possibility. Alaska's dispatch in the 1920 Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration likened Scandinavians to radicalism when stating that 'the Territory has been remarkable free from the activities of radicals and anarchists', despite 'the Scandinavian race dominating'.[180] Other inferences and questions from policymakers also show that Scandinavian radicals were on their minds. During the 1923 congressional hearing on Immigration and Labor, for example, Congressman Johnson enquired about a particular community of Finnish miners in the copper district of Michigan, asking whether 'these Finnish people talk revolution'.[181] The 1919 hearing 'On Sedition, Syndicalism, Sabotage, and Anarchy' reveals that Congressman Siegel discussed the role that a certain Swedish revolutionist named 'Jerkendalle' played in financing the American radical left.[182]

Scandinavians were not the only Old Stock population considered to breed possible radicals; in his statement in the hearing on passport control, Mr. Carr referred to Anglo-Saxon

[178] *CR (S),* Vol. 60, February 19 1921, 3456; *CR (HR),* Vol. 60, December 9 1920, 128.
[179] *CR (HR),* Vol. 64, December 5 1922, 42.
[180] *Annual Report* (1920), 411.
[181] *Immigration and Labor (Hearings),* 272.
[182] *Sedition, Syndicalism, Sabotage, and Anarchy (Hearings),* 45-46.

Switzerland as a place 'which has always been center of Bolshevik propaganda and anarchistic circles', while a 1920 article in the North American Review on radicalism in Europe pointed out that 'Germany is the home of Socialism' and that 'hundreds of thousands of their soldiers were exposed to Bolshevistic propaganda', but that 'one of the strongest of drives to overthrow the government and set up a proletariat was made in the Netherlands'.[183] Finally, an exchange between Congressmen Perlman, Robsion, and Jacobstein is a case in point. Perlman reminded his fellow congressmen that 'there were more northern and western European nationals in this country who favored Bolshevism than there were among those who have come from southern and eastern Europe', referring to '[Eugene] Debs and the [Bill] Haywards and the like of that'; Robsion retorted that Lenin and Trotski were Russian-born, to which Jacobstein responded the following sarcastically: 'I assume, of course, then, that the gentleman thinks that Carl Marx [sic] was born in southern or eastern Europe […].'[184]

These examples show that radicalism was not seen as a solely New Stock trait, right up until (and beyond) the months in which Congress debated the Quota Act. Why, then, was radicalism only an argument for the exclusion of southern and eastern Europeans, but not for the barring of northern and western Europeans? Here too, the new conceptualization of the radical, namely that the 'radical alien' did not necessarily have to be a born agitator, but could just as easily be the ignorant and un-Americanized foreigner led astray, can offer an explanation. While policymakers clearly recognized the existence of Old Stock radical individuals, they did not believe northern and western European immigrants *as a whole* would become a breeding ground for radicalism, as they were racially and culturally considered to be too strong, masculine, active, intelligent, and easily assimilated to be misled by agitators.[185]

[183] *Extension of Passport Control (Hearings)*, 57-58; S. Crowther, 'Phases of Unrest (I). The Rivets of Society', *North American Review* 211, 774 (May 1920), 621.
[184] *CR (-),* Vol. 65, April 5 1924, 5666.
[185] *CR (-),* Vol. 61, May 3 1921, 956; *CR (HR),* Vol. 60, December 10 1920, 174, 177.

Considered their polar opposite, New Stock immigrants were not afforded the same courtesy. Even if many congressmen did not adhere to the idea that all New Stock immigrants were born agitators, they *did* think them collectively dangerous kindling for the flame of radicalism.

A similar reasoning underpinned the increasing tendency amongst policymakers to recognize that certain individuals in the radical movement were native-born (meaning Anglo-Saxon or at least of Old Stock heritage), but that they were always in leadership roles and therefore of the 'agitator type'. Congressman Thomas, for example, conceded that radicalism was 'not entirely of foreign origin', but 'a home product as well', since radical organizations such as the IWW were 'officered by American citizens of the United States'.[186] Congressman Borah, too, maintained that 'the most pronounced leaders' of the radical cause 'were born in America […] and their families have been in America for generations'.[187] Additionally, Congress worried about the American-born 'parlor Bolsheviks', some being 'women who appear to be suffering from *ennui*', others being intellectuals who supported the radical left from the comfort of their armchair.[188] Just like northern and western Europeans could be the 'agitator type', but not collectively 'follower types', Congress conceded that some native-born individuals were attracted to radicalism; as a group, however, the mass of American workers, 'brave, industrious, patriotic', in the words of Congressman Crisp, would not be in danger of being swayed by the 'despicable creatures' preaching their 'nefarious doctrine'.[189]

[186] *CR (S),* Vol. 58, June 27 1919, 1910.
[187] *CR (S),* Vol. 59, December 3 1919, 68.
[188] *CR (HR),* Vol. 59, December 20 1919, 992-993.
[189] *CR (HR),* Vol. 59, May 25 1920, 7607.

4.2 The Rationale Behind Barring New Stock Immigrants

Contemporary views on racial 'stock' led policymakers to believe it was highly improbable that both the Old Stock (and older Anglo-Saxon stock) native-born Americans already in the US and the Old Stock immigrants coming from northern and western Europe would form 'fertile fields' for radicalism. New Stock immigrants, on the other hand, were extremely likely to do so. According to this line of reasoning, letting southern and eastern Europeans migrate to the United States was equal to inviting new bodies off of which the 'virus' of radicalism could feed. This was firstly dangerous because 'the hordes which will be fleeing from impoverished Europe' would 'augment' the 'hotbeds of radicalism' and 'constitute a real menace', as Congressman Davis pointed out.[190] More importantly even, a substantial amount of congressmen feared that the unbridled importation of New Stock immigrants could actually overwhelm the Americanization mechanisms to a point of failing.

Congressman Raker, for example, declared that 'it has been demonstrated during the last three years that America is in more danger from within than she is from without', and that 'we should not admit any more of these people […] until we assimilate those who are here […]'.[191] He went on, stating that the purpose of closing the border would be to 'take a rest', and 'to allow ourselves and this country to digest that which we already have', since 'we have some 10 million already here, many of them who do not understand or receive the idea of our form of government'.[192] This same sentiment was echoed in a large number of speeches, with Congressman Crisp asserting that it would be 'suicidal to the best interest of America to continue to permit further immigration until the millions of aliens now within our borders are Americanized […]'; Congressman Hayden contended that 'it is time to call at least a temporary halt to immigration so that better means may be found to instruct those who are already here in

[190] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 59, December 20 1919, 991.
[191] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 61, April 20 1921, 513.
[192] Ibid., 514.

the essentials of good citizenship', threatening that 'those who will not accept the instruction should be deported'.[193]

In addition to keeping the Americanization system from collapsing, some championed the closing of the border to New Stock immigrants for another reason. Skeptical about the power of Americanization, these policymakers believed that southern and eastern Europeans were too set in their ways to Americanize, 'a mass of indigestible stuff' in the words of Congressman Layton, and would therefore never be turned into productive, individualistic citizens useful to the Nation; rather, un-Americanized and un-assimilated, they would remain vulnerable to radical persuasion.[194] Congressman Davis also used the imagery of indigestion to underline his belief that southern and eastern Europeans were inherently unable to 'melt into the national form of Americanism'; to attempt to assimilate them would 'give us a bad – perhaps incurable – case of national indigestion'.[195] According to Arthur Sweeney, the doctor who wrote for the North American Review in 1922, New Stock immigrants simply did not possess 'intelligence enough to receive the education which we wish to give them'.[196] He continued that it was an impossibility to 'make worthy citizens of the subnormal' and that it was wishful thinking to hope that they would ever be led by something other than their emotions, 'too often played upon by the demagogue and crooked politician'.[197] Since Americanization would not work on the 'unassimilable', these policymakers believed the only way to protect the nation from future immigrant radicalism was by stopping their immigration all together.

[193] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 59, May 25 1920, 7607; *CR (HR)*, Vol. 60, December 9 1920, 143.
[194] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 60, December 11 1920, 230.
[195] *CR (HR)*, Vol. 59, December 20 1919, 991.
[196] Sweeney, 'Mental Tests for Immigrants', 609.
[197] Ibid., 610.

Conclusion

Triggered by the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and a wave of labor unrest following the war, the American government responded forcibly to the events of the First Red Scare, which they believed constituted a coordinated attack from the radical immigrant left. They did so primarily by organizing nation-wide raids of left-wing immigrant organizations and deporting those apprehended. However, US policymakers did not solely respond to the 'red menace' on a short-term basis; the Red Scare also sparked intense debates on how to avert future immigrant radicalism – a topic hardly explored before my research.

The early discussions on the prevention of future immigrant radicalism centered around the exclusion of 'radical aliens' at the American border (particularly at Ellis Island). Before the Red Scare, immigration officials applied two methods to spot these radicals. Firstly, they flat-out asked each immigrant about their political ideology. Secondly, policymakers believed that radicalism could be discovered by looking at an immigrant's physical appearance. Certain immigrants may very well have been excluded just because they *looked* like a radical to immigration officials, who most probably were influenced by common contemporary stereotypes of 'the radical' as an unkempt, long-haired, bearded man perhaps even with marked Lombrosian facial features. Frustrated by the apparent inefficacy of these two methods, congressman Burnett championed a new way of detecting radicals at the border. Since he believed that radicals were generally illiterate individuals (because their illiteracy was surely why they had radicalized), he advocated for the 1917 Literacy Bill as a way to keep radicals from entering the country.

Finally, facing the fact that immigration control at Ellis Island was anything but water-tight and fearing further collapse of control due to an expected increase of immigration after the end of the war, Congress searched for ways to strengthen their grip on immigration. They

found one in the passport-visé system, a system of 'remote control' which made it obligatory for each immigrant to have their passport stamped with a visa by an American consular agent stationed in immigrant's country of origin. This system would both relieve the pressure on the American border and, more importantly, would improve the exclusion rate of radicals since consular agents were believed to be in a better position to dig into the political past of each applicant. The passport-visé was hoped to simultaneously function as an alternative to a centralized anti-radical intelligence network which the United States lacked, even by the early 1920s (although European nations had run such networks since the late 1890s).

In the wake of the war, Congress shifted its attention away from the border toward the American interior, championing a second set of measures to prevent future immigrant radicalism: Americanization through education. This was partially a response to the sense that the system of border control was deeply flawed and not nearly as effective as it should be, but also very much a reflection of a new way of conceptualizing 'the radical'. Increasingly, the blood-thirsty radical agent sneaking into to the country for the sole purpose of destabilizing the US was no longer the only 'red menace' policymakers imagined; rather, policymakers focused on the un-Americanized and illiterate New Stock immigrant, who was uniquely likely to be misled by radical agitators of the first type. Congress did not think teaching English and American civics would 'convert' the former 'agitator types', but certainly believed it could prevent the latter 'follower types' from being led astray by making them less dependent on foreign news sources and the immigrant community in general, while convincing them that they should revere and be grateful for the opportunities bestowed on them by the United States. The fact that immigrants might have actually joined radical organizations and strikes to improve their living and working conditions seemed to never have crossed the minds of most Congressmen.

Finally, by 1920, congressmen frequently argued for the (temporary) closing of the American border, the third method in the ongoing quest to avoid future immigrant radicalism. The exclusionary law Congress enacted, the 1921 Emergency Quota Act, did not seal off the nation to all European immigrants, but rather specifically excluded southern and eastern Europeans, while continuing to welcome northern and western Europeans. While by no means the only rationale behind the Quota Act, radicalism did play a significant role in the passing of the act. Crucially, the closing of the border for New Stock, but not Old Stock immigrants was not based on the belief that *all* southern and eastern Europeans, but *none* of the northern and western Europeans were radical agitators. Rather, the logic behind this partial ban of Europeans rested on the assumption that New Stock immigrants were all easily misled, illiterate, difficult to assimilate, and were therefore bound to both overload the Americanization system and become 'follower type' radicals. Old Stock immigrants, on the other hand, were considered immune to the persuasive powers of 'agitator types', being racially and culturally too individualistic, democratic, and strong to be led astray.

In conclusion, my primary research shows that American authorities responded not just on a short-term, but on a long-term scale to the threat they believed the 'red menace' posed; they implemented a number of policies to prevent future immigrant radicalism. Crucially, these policies evolved from trying to pick out the 'agitator types', the few 'bad apples' amongst the overwhelmingly deserving group of immigrants to considering an entire 'stock' of people as 'follower types', and therefore inherently dangerous. This new conceptualization of the radical evoked Americanization as the buffer that would protect the immigrant population from becoming 'infested' with radicalism. When Congress became convinced Americanization wouldn't do the job, it practically shut the border to New Stock immigrants and did not lift this ban for four decades.

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