The Domestic Peril: The Radical Alien and the
Rise of Corporate Americanism, 1912-1919

Ben Debney

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Department of Historical Studies
The University of Melbourne
Abstract

In the years preceding the First World War, corporate propaganda in the United States weighed in against the menace of the ‘radical alien,’ said to be a clear and present threat to American freedoms. This propaganda blamed strikes and other manifestations of class antagonism on unassimilated immigrants, who it claimed were, at best, vulnerable to peddlers of ‘un-American’ unionism, and, at worst, importers of the ‘alien’ ideologies upon which organised labour was said to be founded. This thesis argues that this propaganda was part of a conscious campaign of class warfare conducted by the National Association of Manufacturers and other representatives of Corporate America, who formed the vanguard of Corporate Americanism. Corporate Americanism, an ideology equating the self-interest of Corporate America with the interest of all, proclaimed as its operating principle that ‘those who are not for America are against it.’ In reaction to the Lawrence Strike of 1912, composed mostly of foreign-born workers and led by the hated Industrial Workers of the World, big business manipulated half-truths through propaganda to develop the mythology of the ‘radical alien,’ responding to the perceived peril with the movement to ‘Americanise’ the immigrant. Under the guise of providing lessons in English and Civics, this movement functioned to neutralise the threat of union militancy on the part of foreign-born workers by indoctrinating them in Corporate Americanism civic orthodoxies. The movement to Americanise the immigrant led to an experiment in Industrial Americanisation in Detroit in 1915, an experiment that sought to combine the indoctrination process of Americanisation with the benevolent paternalism of industrialists such as Henry Ford to provide a means of incorporating foreign-born workers into an industrial order in which they would be submissive pawns. With the onset of war the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace combined with war-fever to produce conditions in which the Americanisation movement would be accepted as state policy and the core principles of Corporate Americanism would come to be seen not as the self-interested ideology of a powerful lobby group, but rather as the desirable traits of citizens. Representing a significant shift towards corporate
oligarchy, this thesis argues that these changes laid the foundations for the Red Scare of 1919-1920 as well as providing continued political cover for Corporate America’s campaign of class war.
Declaration

This is to certify that
(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Masters,
(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,
(iii) the thesis is 30,000 words in length as approved by the Graduate School, Faculty or RHD Committee.

Signed,

Ben Debney
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# Table of Contents

Introduction  
1

Chapter 1  
19  
*The Seeds of Radical Alien Mythology*

Chapter 2  
37  
*The Crucible: The Lawrence Strike of 1912 and its Aftermath*

Chapter 3  
55  
*The Experiment: Corporate Americanisation in Detroit*

Conclusion  
89

Bibliography  
95
The Anglo-Saxon civilisation is not the only civilisation, but it is confessedly the highest one.

— *Overland Monthly*, 1886
Introduction

This thesis examines the relationship between the mythology of a ‘radical alien’ threat to American society that arose in the early decades of the twentieth century, during the Progressive Era, and the evolution of popular interpretations of democratic freedom and citizenship in the United States during that period. It examines both the events that led to the development of ‘radical alien’ mythology and the response to the perceived threat from the business community in what was undoubtedly a crusade to ‘Americanise’ the immigrant. It lays particular emphasis on the racist character of ‘radical alien’ mythology, the assumptions about the role of foreign-born workers in American society upon which the Americanisation movement was based, and the relationship between the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ peril and what I refer to as Corporate Americanist ideology. It argues that the relationship between the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ peril and mainstream interpretations of freedom and citizenship in America was a negative one insofar as the basic function of the ‘radical alien’ mythology was to scapegoat immigrants on the basis of the arbitrary factor of their country of birth for

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systemic defects within American democracy that were being exacerbated by the rise of corporate power.

The ‘radical alien’ mythology was best articulated by George Creel, future director of the wartime Committee on Public Information (CPI), who wrote in 1916 that the lack of allegiance to the United States of ‘great masses of aliens,’ who were responsible for ‘seditious attacks upon the government and bold disruptions of industry,’ constituted ‘a domestic peril that threatens the permanence of American institutions as gravely as any menace of foreign foe.’ Creel’s claims were typical of the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace insofar as they reflected the basis consensus shared by all Corporate Americanists—a consensus that functioned, in the words of James Madison, to ‘protect the minority of the opulent against the majority’—that the special interests of big business and the interests of the country as a whole were the same thing. Corporate Americanists such as Creel displayed a strong tendency to confuse, consciously or otherwise, any challenges to the power and privileges of the American ruling class with attacks on the nation. This tendency was exacerbated by their propensity to interpret notions of freedom and citizenship as they applied in America through the prism of the credo that ‘he that is not for America is against America,’ a belief that lead Corporate Americanists to identify criticism with attack and dissent with treason.

Taking this assumption for granted, Creel naturally viewed acknowledgement of the basic reality that the American state served—as all states do—to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority with ‘seditious attacks upon the government,’ just as he envisaged ‘bold disruptions of industry’ in strike action amongst immigrants. Given the basic assumptions of his credo, Creel and other Corporate Americanists could only interpret the strike action of foreign-born workers as a threat to the very foundations of American society. According to the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace, strikes and other such phenomena associated with class antagonisms did not—indeed, could not—arise spontaneously, in response to

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3 Ibid., 106.
pre-existing inequalities and injustices in American society. Rather, they could only be the result of the importation into the United States of ‘foreign’ ideologies by workers who wanted to destroy America. Anticipating the later comments from her Corporate Americanist brethren, the reformer Grace Raymond Hebard complained in 1896 that

Today we are receiving the dregs of all nations. America has been well called the dumping ground for all of the old world, and from this steaming heap of refuse population made up of the scum of communities, we see arising hideous disease, debasing crime, drud and drivel of the asylums, degrading pauperism and bloody rebellion, and in place of citizenship, anarchy and socialism.\(^4\)

Corporate Americanists thus interpreted the mere act of immigrants’ attempting to assert some sort of personal agency within the context of American class society as a threat, and claimed for themselves the right to define the meaning of ‘America.’ Attempting to combine with fellow workers on a basis of solidarity and mutual aid for the purposes of improving working conditions was, according to the logic of Corporate Americanism, tantamount to attacking ‘America.’ In this vein the New York Herald blamed the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 on the few union leaders of foreign birth involved, who it claimed were ‘incapable of understanding our ideas and principles.’\(^5\)

\(^4\) Ibid., 137.
Similarly, in 1915 a member of Congress lamented that ‘the more illiterate of the aliens once here quickly absorb the teachings of the radical leader,’ a statement reflecting the tendency of American nationalists to identify an insufficient degree of submission to class rule on the part of foreign-born workers with ignorance of the political correctness of the orthodoxies associated with American nationalism. In both instances xenophobia underwrote the myth of a clear and present threat to a status quo characterised by a class-divided social order where the protection of ‘the minority of the opulent against the majority’ was the highest priority.

The roots of this reaction lay in major changes taking place to the composition of American society in the late nineteenth century, when the sort of pervasive and often violent class conflict that had previously been associated with the Old World began to make an appearance in the new. The Great Railroad Strike (1877), the Haymarket Massacre (1886), the Homestead Strike (1892), which ended in a shootout between strikers and hired Pinkerton detectives, and the Pullman Strike (1894) in which 3000 workers engaged in a wildcat strike against the bosses in the unions as well as those in the workplace brought class conflict to the forefront of the American consciousness. For some, it was a welcome sign that American workers were asserting themselves and fighting for their rights. For others, they saw in such events the seeds of revolutionary changes that had appeared in Europe in 1868 and in the Paris Commune of 1871, and that would emerge later in Russia in 1905 and 1917. Those who were terrified by the spectre of revolution blamed class conflict in American society on the ‘radical alien,’ who brought both his ignorance of American ways and his foreign ideologies into the country, leading native-born workers astray and sowing anarchy as he slowly destroyed ‘America’ from within.


Preston, Aliens and Dissenters, 76.
In fact, the cause of the great changes in the composition of American society that was leading to the social upheavals taking place at the end of the nineteenth century was the rise of corporate power. This factor was paramount to the sharpening of class antagonisms that became the driving force behind the development of the ‘radical alien’ mythology. This was particularly true given the zeal with which big business engaged in class warfare against organised labour. Much of the historical literature on the rise of corporate power treats it as of axiomatic importance to the period that spawned the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ menace, if not to say to the evolution of representative democracy. Alex Carey’s Taking The Risk Out of Democracy (1995), examines the development of the ‘radical alien’ mythology as part of a broader study of corporate propaganda.7 Carey writes that, ‘the twentieth century has been characterised by three developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy.’8 This observation is extremely relevant to the study of ‘radical alien’ mythology because it provides a succinct explanation for the propaganda campaign carried out against it—namely, to provide a scapegoat for the subversion of democracy by of corporate power. With the exception of this book, few historical studies address the relationship between the rise of corporate power and the politics of fear as they were practised in this period. I attempt in this thesis to redress the lack of research in this area and to lay the foundation for further study.

8 Carey, Taking the Risk Out of Democracy, 18.
Thom Hartmann observes that at least one distinct cause of the rise of class conflict during the late nineteenth century was a series of Supreme Court rulings in the latter half of the 1880’s that were used to way to usher in the age of corporate personhood. From its inception the American state had sought political legitimacy and the consent of the governed to make laws by making guarantees to ensure the equal protection under law of all citizens—though in practise rich white males were the only people to ever enjoy such ‘equality.’ The rise of the doctrine of corporate personhood cast a shadow over even these limited guarantees as it pitted individual citizens against private concentrations of power both autocratic in structure and orientated towards the private accumulation of profit. In the bizarre series of events that resulted in the triumph of the doctrine of ‘corporate personhood’ the conflict between the law’s stated function of providing equal protection for all and its domination by rich white males reached its logical conclusions. If previously the laws that enshrined private property gave property owners the equal right to exploit their human resources just as it gave those who possessed none the equal right to sell themselves into what some regarded as wage-slavery, creating the conditions for class conflict in the process, the establishment of the doctrine of corporate personhood merely exacerbated the situation further. American democracy could no more serve both propertied and non-propertied classes any more than it could serve both humans and corporations. Just as capitalist democracy served the propertied classes over the non-propertied classes, so too would it soon begin to serve corporate persons over human persons, imposing further on the already limited individual freedoms of those neither white, nor propertied, nor male and preparing the ground for the social upheavals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

As Hartmann observes, the case of Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad (1886) was treated by the American legal system as if it set the precedent for granting corporations the power to claim equal protection under the law, though in fact there was no part of the ruling that addressed the issue of corporate personhood. In legal notes attached to their ruling, notes that were not in fact part of any legal decision, the Chief Justice of the United States Morrison Waite stated that ‘The Court does not wish to hear
argument of the question whether the provision of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which forbids a state to deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws, applies to these corporations. We are of the opinion that it does. Thus the comments that were taken as a ruling were in fact opinions provided in legal commentary on the case, not part of the decision itself, and the presiding judges even made a point of stating in their ruling that it had no bearing on the personhood status of corporations. Nevertheless, what passed for a Supreme Court decision in this instance made possible the incorporation of corporate personhood into the United States legal system and its recognition under American law with all the rights, though none of the responsibilities, of a flesh and blood human being. The advocates of the doctrine of corporate personhood, having gained a foothold in democratic law, wasted little time setting their victory in stone. Three years later, in Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad Co. v. Beckwith, the Supreme Court ruled a corporation was a “person” for due process and legal protection; a year afterwards, in 1890, Sections 7 and 8 of the Sherman Anti-Trust act defined corporations as persons; and in 1893, Noble v. Union River Logging R. Co. gave corporations claim to the Bill of Rights. Thus the Fourteenth Amendment, which had originally been drafted for the purpose of protecting the constitutional rights of freed slaves, became a device to free corporations from checks on their power.

These events took place during the Progressive period, which was characterised by its enthusiasm for reform, and they did not go unnoticed. In Changing the World; American Progressives in War and Revolution, Alan Dawley looks at the reactions from American progressives to the rise of corporate power. He writes that the Progressive movement took particular note of ‘the unwanted consequences of the unregulated market,’ consequences only exacerbated by the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of ‘robber barons,’ and that it then proceeded to champion the anti-trust movement. If it were true, as many Progressives believed, that ‘giving free reign to the

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9 Hartmann, Unequal Protection, 104.
10 Ibid., Part 2: ‘From the Birth of American Democracy Through the Birth of Corporate Personhood,’ 45-156.
11 Ibid., 105.
market was precisely what had caused the conditions that cried out for reform,’ the same appeared to be even truer of corporations and their concentrations of unaccountable, autocratic power. The elevation of corporations to legal personhood had paved the way for an ‘oligarchy of wealth and privilege unprecedented in American history,’ based upon ‘that base spirit of gain and greed which recognises in commercialism the be-all and end-all of national life,’ as Roosevelt phrased it. In hopes of avoiding such a catastrophe, Dawley notes, Progressives put regulatory measures in place in the early decades of the twentieth century to address ‘a morally and socially undesirable distribution of wealth,’ with ‘Jefferson’s attacks on special privilege’ and ‘the dangers of a corrupt alliance between business and government’ foremost in their minds. Such concerns were keenly felt in working class quarters, one pamphlet asking, ‘can we really hope for ... action on the political field [in support of workers’ rights] when all the means by which public opinion is formed and moulded, the press, the pulpit and news agency . . . when the very means of existence of the voters themselves are firmly in the hands of those against whom we should legislate?’

In lieu of responding to these concerns, those who benefited from ‘a corrupt alliance between business and government’ took advantage of pre-existing nativist sentiments in the United States to scapegoat one of the most vulnerable segments of American society for problem far beyond their control. The historical literature on nativism in the United States offers much evidence in this regard. Higham, for example, points out that the mythology

13 Ibid., 42-68.
14 Industrial Workers of the World, Giant Industry and the IWW: Against the Concentrated Power of Modern Big Business Put the Concentrated Power of Workers (Chicago: IWW, 1925), 12.
of the ‘radical alien’ menace had been made possible by the racialising of American democracy in the nineteenth century as it came to be identified as a specifically Anglo-Saxon achievement. This racialised interpretation of American democracy, he notes, had served much the same function as a support mechanism for xenophobic reaction at the beginning of the twentieth century as it had in the nineteenth. The vanguard of the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ menace, he argues, had been the inheritors of a preoccupation with foreign subversion built on a ‘conflict-ridden’ Anglo-Saxonist interpretation of American citizenship and nationality that, during the previous century, had seen in the spread of Catholicism the hand of the Papal Empire and its hatred of the freedom of the individual. In a response that set the tone for the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ peril, and that mirrored its own internal contradictions, American nativists, fearing Irish Catholics as potential threats to their way of life, cracked down on them, running roughshod over their individual freedoms in the name of defending individual freedoms as such.\textsuperscript{16}

As Higham points out, racialised interpretations of American democracy were the meat and potatoes of the reaction to the ‘radical alien.’ Fears of the ‘radical alien’ had grown out of an outbreak of xenophobia that arose in reaction to a massive influx of ‘new’ immigrants entering the United States in the years after 1880. This influx was comprised mostly of Jews and Catholics from Southern and Eastern Europe—38,071 entering the United States in 1880, a figure that reached 717,391 by 1905, with a cumulative total of 9,306,370 between 1873 and 1910.\textsuperscript{17} Frank Van Nuys quotes one writer lamenting ‘a distinct deterioration’ in American society, attributing this deterioration to the fact that the new immigration ‘is not related to us in race or language, but has habits of thought and behaviour radically different to those which have so far prevailed in the United States.’\textsuperscript{18} In slightly more dramatic fashion, another spokesman of xenophobic American nativism, Edward Cubberly, Dean of Education at Stanford University, perceived ‘a serious case of racial indigestion,’ the new immigrants in his eyes being ‘largely illiterate, docile, lacking in initiative and almost wholly without the

\textsuperscript{16} Higham, \textit{Strangers in the Land}, 37.
\textsuperscript{17} Hartman, \textit{The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant}, 13-4.
\textsuperscript{18} Van Nuys, \textit{Americanizing the West}, 16.
Anglo-Saxon conceptions of righteousness, liberty, law, order, public decency and government."¹⁹ Francis A. Walker, President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, envisaged ‘great cities threatened with darkness, riot and pillage,’ holding the ‘insolence and savagery’ of ‘beaten men from beaten races, representing the worst failures in the struggle for existence’ responsible. ²⁰

Lending weight to the notion that the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ peril was a campaign of nativist-inspired scapegoating, Higham and Hartmann point out that the xenophobic reaction against the influx of ‘new immigration’ had made a natural ally of industrialist and nativist, and that the corporate paternalism inherent to the idea that industrialists were the ‘conservators of the ‘best interests’ of their communities’ was already accommodated by the fact that among progressives, racist ideology was not expressed as overt hatred but rather as paternalism. ²¹ The combination of corporate paternalism with the nativist variety gave impetus to the former, they add, sharpening it and bringing it into closer accord with nativist Anglo-Saxonism. Corporate America’s fear and hatred of those who they regarded as a threat to their privileges and power combined thusly with the hatred of American nativists for the unassimilated foreigner to produce the myth that challenges to entrenched power and privilege was an irrational conspiracy of unassimilated subversives and not spontaneous responses to indigenous injustice and inequality.

The work of Frank Van Nuys finds particular value in relation to the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace, in particular his observation that the racial paternalism fuelling the reaction to it found a stalwart supporter in the notion that the history of civilisation was tantamount to the ‘Westward march of the Aryan race, the story of the pioneers and the toilers who from time immemorial have hearkened to the call of the west,’ as the Governor of Minnesota explained in a 1909 magazine article. ²² Van Nuys argues that with the closing of the frontier and impending loss of economic opportunity, the

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¹⁹ Ibid., 17.
²⁰ Higham, Strangers in the Land, 142-3.
²¹ Hartmann, Unequal Protection, 91; Dawley, Changing the World, p 81.
²² Van Nuys, Americanizing the West, 11.
United States was rapidly being deprived of its ‘great national safety valve,’ its mechanism for dampening down the class conflict that had plagued Europe over the course of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{23} He notes, however that, as the rise of corporate monopolies exacerbated class cleavages in American society, American elites found a new escape route in the notion of the ‘racial frontier,’ the colour line separating ‘whiteness’ from ‘otherness’ running deep within the American collective unconscious—or in other words, ‘the idea of the frontier not just as a historical model explaining American development, but as a palpable physical and ideological barrier between American civilisation and foreign influence,’ ‘others’ against whom a negative, racially purist notion of American national identity could be constructed.\textsuperscript{24}

‘Californians are vividly conscious of their position as the warders of the Western mark,’ Van Nuys quotes one American nationalist as saying. ‘They hold not merely a political and geographic, but a racial frontier—the border between the white man’s world and the brown man’s world.’\textsuperscript{25} Those who were to be instrumental in orchestrating ‘the new structure of class rule,’ he writes, were not slow to associate the racial paternalism of corporate-sponsored American nationalism or Americanism with the logic of nativist xenophobia, the new ‘great national safety valve.’

In an important article better illustrating the importance of the ‘great national safety valve,’ Cheryl Harris writes that racism was a natural corollary of the exclusivity inherent to class privilege—particularly where those privileges were sanctioned ideologically as they were through Corporate Americanism, which equated the self-interest of Corporate America with the national interest of the United States as a whole. ‘The material benefits of racial exclusion function, in the labour context, to stifle class tensions among whites,’ she writes; in other words, as long as a regime of racial privilege could be established and kept in place, white workers could be encouraged to believe ‘that they had more in common with the bourgeoisie than with fellow workers,’ since ‘even when the white working class did not collect increased pay as a part of white privilege, there were real advantages not paid in direct income: whiteness still yielded what Du Bois termed a

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 18-19.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 18-19.
“public and psychological wage” vital to white workers.”²⁶ Thus ‘racial status and privilege could ameliorate and assist in ‘evading rather than confronting class exploitation.”²⁷ This fact reflected the fundamental reality, as Matthew Frye Jacobson writes in *Whiteness of a Different Colour*, that ‘racial categories themselves reflect competing notions of history, peoplehood, and collective destiny by which power has been organized and contested on the American scene.’²⁸ David Roediger provides further insight into the question of whiteness and its relationship to the white worker in *The Wages of Whiteness*, illustrating the power of whiteness to divert attention from class antagonisms. One way that whiteness allowed white workers, he writes, to feel that they were ameliorating their condition without challenging the power of the ruling class was to feed them the illusion that they could rise above the supposedly ‘embarrassing’ similarities between chattel slavery and wage labour—one kind of slave being owned, the other rented—by identifying primary as white. Identifying as white rather than as working class was encouraged by ‘a society that offered the opportunity for white workers to measure their situations not only against the dream of a republic of small producers but also against the nightmare of chattel slavery,’ however illusory the comparison might have ultimately been.²⁹

Hartmann in particular is notable for describing the way in which Corporate America utilised the ‘great national safety valve’ of whiteness, taking hold of racial paternalism with both hands and initiating an ‘Americanisation’ crusade. He shows how, from the birth of the North American Civic League for Immigrants (NACLI) in 1907, the Americanisation movement functioned largely as a mouthpiece of its sponsors in industry, reflecting the paternalism of the rising corporate power. Initially it lacked mass support, he observes, confined mostly to nativists and white supremacist Anglo-Saxonists who, though they had been part of mainstream American politics long before the appearance either of business-inspired anti-unionism or the xenophobia born in reaction to the new immigration, did not

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²⁷ Ibid., 1742.
in themselves constitute a mass base but nevertheless represented a growing tendency within a broader, more amorphous American nationalism. As Howard Zinn demonstrates, the desire to exercise racial paternalism was not altogether at odds with the spirit of reform that characterised the Progressive Era. In *A People’s History of the United States*, Zinn takes note of the class character of Progressivism, ‘a conscious and successful effort to guide and control the economic and social policies of federal, state and municipal governments by various business groupings in their own long-range interest,’ while attempting to stave off Socialism by making concessions in the form of social reforms that stabilised the capitalist system by repairing its worst defects—in the words of a Progressive reformer, to ‘fight it intelligently and seek to remedy the abuses and conditions on which it thrives.’\(^{30}\) Within the context of Progressive Era reforms the exercise of racial paternalism through the Americanisation movement represented ‘a growing maturity and sophistication on the part of many large corporation leaders who had come to understand . . . that social reform was truly conservative.’\(^{31}\)

Hartmann fails to draw deeper conclusions about the significance of the relationship between the Americanisation movement and the rise of Corporate America—namely, that the former provided ideological cover for the latter. However, his work lays the foundation for the demonstration I intend to make in this thesis of the way in which the Americanisation crusade sought to circumvent the questions of class exploitation and the legitimacy of corporate power in a free society by making scapegoats of immigrant workers and inculcating them with the values and mindset of their masters in industry. I show how the Americanisers sought to disseminate a Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxy that identified unquestioning obedience to the captains of industry with loyalty to the nation, and the self-interest of Corporate America with the interests of the country as a whole. The supposed threat of foreign subversives hellbent on the destruction of America was to be remedied then by rousing a feeling in foreign-born workers of loyalty to ‘America’ that simultaneously reinforced their willingness to submit to the


\(^{31}\) Ibid., 345.
paternalistic custodianship of their masters in industry. The effects of the Americanisation crusade were not to be insignificant; as Ronald Takiki shows in *A Different Mirror*, immigrant workers in New York City who actively pursued their own Americanisation were too busy trying to imitate the ruling class to challenge their power at the point of production; while some Jewish workers in the garment industry were organising unions and fighting for better wages and conditions, others busied themselves making themselves more socially mobile. As the thesis will demonstrate, it was with no small amount of enthusiasm for the salutary effects of patriotism and consumerism that the National Association of Manufacturers, one of the pre-eminent political representatives of Corporate America, proclaimed that ‘Americanism must rule America.’

Chapter 1 examines the *Educational Literature* of the National Association of Manufacturers, a series of 27 pamphlets issued by the NAM in 1912. The exact circulation of these pamphlets is unknown, but some idea of their significance may be garnered in the fact that the propaganda efforts of the NAM in the years before the First World War were so widespread and so disturbing to many as to prompt a Congressional investigation. This material is of vital importance to the question of the relationship between the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ menace and the individual freedoms said to be defended by the vanguard of Corporate Americanism; to all intent and purposes it appears that the spokesmen for Corporate America admitted no rights for American workers other than those that could be gained within the marketplace. I argue that the readiness of the NAM to engage in fear-mongering and to invoke patriotic submission to corporate power in defence of individual freedom (1) reflected a profound conflict between means and ends that speaks directly to the basic contention of this thesis—namely, that a negative relationship existed between radical alien mythology and the regard for individual freedoms said to be the basis of American democracy because the former was being used to dismantle what little there was of the latter—and (2) formed the basis for the marriage of Corporate America’s anti-

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33 NAM, National Association of Manufacturers, ‘Let Us Send the Whole Boy to School’ (*Educational Literature* #7, New York; NAM, 1912).
radicalism with nativist xenophobia to produce the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace.

Chapter 2 looks at the reaction of industrialists and other elites (such as the National Association of Wool Manufacturers and the Boston Chamber of Commerce, whose president and vice-president were also leaders of the NACLI), to the successful Industrial Workers of the World-led strike of foreign-born workers against the Textile trust at Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912, and argues that this was a precipitous moment in the development of the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ menace and the concomitant evolution of Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxies and the movement to Americanize the immigrant. I examine how industrialists and others linked to growing corporatism came to dominate the movement for the Americanisation of the immigrant via the corporate-staffed and sponsored NACLI and the relationship of this movement to the fears and tensions dominating the period of Americanisation. I argue that the Lawrence strike was an expression of the frustrations of those who had heretofore been largely powerless in the face of the power of the textile trust controlling the Lawrence mills, and that the arbitrary factor of the foreign birth of the Lawrence strikers, coupled with the fact that they struck under the guidance of the Industrial Workers of the World, hated and feared for its willingness to openly challenge the power and privileges of American industrial elites, provided the basis for the ‘radical alien’ mythology. I further argue that this in turn provided political cover for Corporate America as it pursued its campaign of class warfare against organized labour, as well as a convenient pretext for breaking foreign-born workers into a hierarchical industrial order without question.

Chapter 3 looks at the experiment in Industrial Americanisation in Detroit in 1915, with particular reference to the ‘benevolent paternalism’ of Henry Ford, as an attempt to better understand how Corporate Americanists applied their paternalistic and xenophobic interpretation of individual freedom in practice. I examine the Detroit experiment in Industrial Americanisation in the context of the ‘benevolent paternalism’ of the Ford School in particular and argue that this experiment and the movement it inspired functioned to neutralise working class and progressive political
movements dedicated to challenging the rise of autocratic corporate power. This chapter takes particular note of the document *Americanizing a City: The Campaign for the Detroit Night Schools Conducted in Co-operation with the Detroit Board of Commerce and Board of Education August-September 1915*, published by the National Americanisation Committee. Prepared for an audience composed primarily of others engaged in Industrial Americanisation work, *Americanizing a City* details the work carried out at the Ford factory. It is particularly significant in terms of the research question given the fact that the experiment in Industrial Americanisation became a testing ground and eventually a model for the Industrial Americanisation movement across the country.

In terms of the methodology I have followed in this thesis, I have relied predominantly on primary sources consisting of printed material from the American business community, digitized copies of which I found on internet archives such as the Digital Book Index and Archive.org. I have used these sources primarily because they were the best source for information on the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ scare; as anti-racists never tire of pointing out, white racism is a white problem, not the problem of those who are perceived to be of a lower racial stature, and as the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ exhibited all the hallmarks of racism and xenophobia it only made sense to look closely at those shouting the loudest about the ‘radical alien’ peril, not the so-called ‘radical alien’ as a means of gaining a better understanding of the reaction itself as a historical phenomenon. I also used secondary materials written on subjects as diverse as European immigration, labour history, American nativism, whiteness and corporations, many of which I found as footnotes in Alex Carey’s classic study of corporate propaganda, *Taking the Risk Out of Democracy*. These materials, including most notable John Higham’s *Strangers in the Land* and E.G. Hartmann’s *The Movement to Americanise the Immigrant*, were invaluable in terms of putting the panic surrounding the ‘radical alien’ in historical context and helping to explain why foreign-born workers became the scapegoat *de jure* at that moment in history.

I have used E. G. Hartman’s *The Movement to Americanise the Immigrant* as the starting point for this thesis. Although this book focuses mainly on the
Americanisation crusade, as the title suggests, it is also the starting point for anyone wanting to study the development of the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace, given the wealth of background information Hartman has collected. The main problem with The Movement to Americanise the Immigrant, however, is that being a product of its time it tends to endorse the Americanisation crusade, its racist paternalism included. In part this may be put down to a lack of information available to Hartman about the period that he was studying, in particular what we now know about the propaganda activities of big business in America, which has only really come to the fore since the publication in 1995 of Alex Carey’s classic work on corporate propaganda, Taking the Risk Out of Democracy. Either way, the material that we now have on corporate propaganda in particular and the activities of corporations more generally—their role in undermining the doctrine of equality before the law in particular—provides us with new avenues of understanding with regard to the meaning of the Americanisation crusade, and thereby of course the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ menace. In this thesis I focus in particular on the use of the fear of the ‘radical alien’ as a weapon of social control.

On this point, the historical significance of the research question, the relationship between popular interpretations of democratic freedom and citizenship in the United States in the early decades of the twentieth century and the emergence of the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace, derives primarily from the parallels that may be drawn between the discourse surrounding the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ peril in the years immediately preceding the First World War, and the political discourse surrounding terrorism today. The Red Scare of 1919-1920 was noteworthy for the draconian measures (such as the Espionage Act of 1917, the Sedition Act of 1918 and the Palmer Raids) enacted ostensibly as defensive measures against the threat of the ‘radical alien,’ but in fact as a means of cracking down on union organisers. So too today is the Terror Scare that began in 2001 noteworthy for the draconian measures (eg. the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001) enacted ostensibly against the threat of terrorism but that also function as a means of cracking down on political dissent. The Terror Scare features a discourse based on half-truths and hatred and fear of a largely unknown Evil
and a morally absolutist Corporate Americanism based on the credo of ‘with America or against it’ that has likewise served vested interests, functioning both as a means of compelling ideological conformity to the imperialistic agenda of moneyed elites and of providing ideological cover for their wars of aggression.

Given this parallel, it seems feasible to argue that the basis of the First Red Scare in ‘radical alien’ mythology and Corporate Americanist ideology played a crucial role in determining the future direction taken not only in the United States but in all the parts of the world subject to the power and influence of both the American state and American corporations. It heralded a narrower interpretation of democratic freedom and citizenship that excluded opponents of the emerging corporate oligarchy and enshrined submission to corporate paternalism as a basic feature of the life of the American citizen, as it would also do for numerous people across the globe in later years. In fact, the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace was to speak directly to the fear of the unknown that had spawned reactionary mythologies surrounding witches, blasphemers and heretics in the past and that would spawn those surrounding, for example, Communists, petit-bourgeois wreckers, Jews and Muslims in the future, a recurring pattern alluded to by Arthur Miller in his play The Crucible, written at the height of fifties McCarthyism. If the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace thus provides a few threads of the historical roots of the Terror Scare, if not to say the sort of historical parallels alluded to by The Crucible, examining the former in closer detail will hopefully yield some insight into the latter.
Chapter 1
The Seeds of the Radical Alien Mythology

On Tuesday morning, 2 January 1895, a convention of industrialists met in Cincinnati, Ohio to organise an association of manufacturers for the purpose of promoting trade with Mexico and South America. Many within the manufacturing industry at the time saw foreign trade as a potential solution to the economic depression the United States was experiencing in the early 1890’s. The association thus formed became known as the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), and for the first six years or so of its existence at least concerned itself solely with the promotion of trade and commerce. Between 1895 and 1903 the NAM worked to negotiate trade treaties with foreign countries, especially those in Latin America, lobbied the government for the development of a merchant marine, promoted American products overseas, championed tariff protection for American industry and supported the development of technical education for American workers. At the turn of the century, it emerged as a ‘responsible and mature organisation,’ and was destined to grow exponentially; by 1907, its membership would number 2,742 with an operating budget of US$167,031.53.

In the early years of the new century the apolitical stance of the NAM vanished as the patriotic passions brought about by the Spanish-American war of 1898 began to fade, the dissolution of nationalist fervour accompanied by an increase in strikes and other manifestations of class antagonism. Faced with the spectre of organised labour, the NAM became concerned at once with, in its own words, promoting ‘the industrial interests of the United States, the betterment of the relations between employer and employee, the education of the public in the principles of individual liberty and the ownership of property, the support of legislation in furtherance of these

principles and opposition to legislation in derogation thereof.\(^{37}\) In practice, the politicisation of the NAM and the appearance of its campaign to defend its ‘industrial interests’ involved the adoption of a hardline stance against organised labour, or what it described as ‘the un-American institution of trades-unionism’ and in favour of what Philip Foner describes as ‘the unrestricted supremacy of employers in the conditions of work.\(^{38}\) Some indication of why the NAM adopted this tack may be gathered from Gable’s observation of the fact that ‘the record indicates that it was not until the NAM became the standard bearer for vigorous anti-unionism that it assumed a commanding position among economic interest groups in terms of number of members, amount of income, and scope of activities.\(^{39}\)

The 1903 convention of the NAM adopted a revised Declaration of Principles that borrowed set a vigorous anti-unionism in stone, declaring ‘unalterable antagonism to the closed shop’ and stating that ‘employers must be free to employ their work people at wages mutually satisfactory, without interference or dictation on the part of individuals or organisations not directly parties to such contracts.\(^{40}\) The extreme anti-unionism of the convention disquieted at least one delegate enough to precipitate the comment that ‘it seems to me that it is something in the nature of a declaration of war.’\(^{41}\) An atmosphere of aggressive and hostile class hatred of organised labour is strongly suggested by a statement also in 1903 by then-NAM President, David M. Parry, who claimed that

Organized labor knows but one law, and that is the law of physical forces—the law of the Huns and Vandals, the law of the savage. All its purposes are accomplished either by physical force or by the threat of force. It does not place its reliance in reason and justice, but in strikes, boycotts and coercion. It is, in all essential features, a mob-power knowing no master except its own will, and is continually condemning or defying the constituted authorities. The stronger it grows the great a

\(^{39}\) Gable, ‘Birth of an Employers’ Association,’ 545.
menace it becomes to the continuance of free government, in which all the people have a voice. It is, in fact, a despotism springing into being in the midst of a liberty-loving people...  

In the Declaration of 1903 this virtual avowal of class war was ‘expanded to a degree undreamed of by even the most optimistic of the original members.’ President Parry, realising what every NAM member must have at least suspected and of what the leading students of democracy of the day were only too well aware, that ‘the public had become increasingly important’ and antidotes to muckraking journalism and union publications were required, defined the chief role of the NAM as ‘an educational one—the moulding of public opinion.’ To that end the NAM launched its own journal, *American Industries*, which reached a circulation of 20,000 by the end of the decade, and instigated a propaganda campaign consisting of the mass dissemination of lectures by NAM presidents and other prominent figures associated with the organisation. ‘Go into Politics!’ a box containing large type on the front page of every issue of *American Industries* exclaimed:

Employers must fight labor class legislation, and must fight it now. The battle is for good government for capital and labor alike, for personal liberty for every man in the community, of every station and occupation, and for honest, stalwart, clean-handed Americanism. Go into Politics!

The NAM did this, as Foner puts it, ‘with a vengeance.’ Lobbying in Washington became a priority as the NAM sought to block any legislation aiding organized labour. It established a permanent office in the capitol, which carefully examined all pending labour legislation and ensured that appointments to the Congressional committees that considered such legislation were politically favourable; in its own words, the NAM ‘has always sought, and often managed to secure, control of the committees of labor and judiciary of both the Senate and the House of Representatives.’

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42 Gable, ‘Birth of an Employers’ Association,’ 542.
44 Ibid., 36.
Stalker notes that particularly effective methods for influencing legislation utilized by the NAM included waiting until committee hearings on labour legislation were being held, whereupon the Washington office would notify members who would then testify on pending bills, and flooding the capitol with letters and telegrams from across the country when legislation unfavourable to the interests it represented made it to the floor of Congress.\textsuperscript{46} Other efforts on the part of the NAM to combat the great menace of the closed shop during this period included the use of labour spies, refusing to confer with union representatives, secretly plotting to substitute nonunion for union men, bribery of union officials and the enlisting of clergymen.\textsuperscript{47}

By the turn of the decade the campaign was in full swing. Some idea of the dimensions of the NAM’s efforts in this respect may be gathered by the fact that, on 29 June 1913, the United States Congress established a House Committee to investigate the political effects of corporate lobbying, which included the mass dissemination of propaganda by the NAM. The findings of the House Committee, not released until 1919, described the NAM as ‘an organization having purposes and aspirations along industrial, commercial, political, education and other lines, so vast and far-reaching as to excite at once admiration and fear—admiration for the genius that conceived them and fear for the effects which the successful accomplishment of all these ambitions might have in a government such as ours.’\textsuperscript{48} The House Committee found that the methods employed by the NAM in pursuit of their purposes and aspirations were ‘secretive, reprehensible and disreputable,’ and that ‘the deliberate creation of a charged public opinion and a consequent “coercion through propaganda” were an important means by which the new lobby operated.’\textsuperscript{49}

Some indication of these ‘secretive, reprehensible and disreputable’ methods, or the way in which the NAM sought ‘the deliberate creation of a charged public opinion,’ and the scope and scale of NAM propaganda in the

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 337; Stalker, ‘Americanism,’ 37.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 338; Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 20.
early decades of the twentieth century, can be found in a series of 27 pamphlets published in or around 1912. This *Educational Literature* published by the NAM runs to some 888 pages (circulation figures are unavailable, but considering the resources available to the NAM and its ambitions, there is little doubt they were high), and articulates, in the context of a reaction to the menace of the closed shop to ‘American’ liberties, a corporate interpretation of American nationalism or Corporate Americanism that defended the power and privileges of Corporate America and demonised organised labour. Pamphlet titles such as ‘The Disadvantages of Labor Unionism,’ and ‘The Goal of the Labor Trust’ and ‘Cruel Unionism’ reflected the deeply emotive character of NAM propaganda, and left no doubt as to the lengths to which the NAM and the interests it represented were willing to go to demonise and destroy anyone or anything who presented a challenge to the power and privileges it represented.

Others such as ‘Let Us Send the Whole Boy to School’ and ‘Industrial Education as an Essential Factor in Our National Prosperity’ revealed the importance NAM spokesmen placed on early intervention both as protection against ideological heresy and as a pathway to the development of correct thinking and patriotic orthodoxy in the American worker. Titles such as ‘The Doom of the Boycott,’ ‘The Open Door,’ ‘Closed Shop Unionism,’ and ‘Industrial Freedom—Its Friends and Enemies’ demonstrated the absolute supremacy of corporate power as the foundation and core of Corporate Americanism. The *pièce de résistance* of the NAM’s *Educational Literature*, ‘Americanism—the True Solution of the Labor Problem,’ exposed Corporate Americanism as the creature of the vested interests represented by the NAM and spelt out the NAM’s anti-union and ultra-nationalistic agenda, an agenda that would in time dovetail with nativist xenophobia to produce the mythology of a ‘radical alien’ menace to ‘American’ freedoms.

Class Distinction

Though the representatives of the NAM were themselves highly class conscious and strongly motivated by class interests, they rallied in their
*Educational Literature* against class consciousness in workers and posited it against an interpretation of political freedom that stressed national unity, which strongly favoured the privileges and increasingly autocratic power of American industrialists insofar as the principle of class collaboration was inbuilt into the notion of national unity, a principle that demanded unquestioning submission to corporate power from the American worker. The first pamphlet in the series, “Where Do You Stand,” defined the labour question as the one ‘that is uppermost in our minds today and that has been uppermost in our minds.’\(^5^0\) John Kirby, Jr., President of the NAM and author of the 1909 speech on which the pamphlet was based, wasted no time pursuing ‘the deliberate creation of a charged public opinion,’ polemising against ‘typical labor demagogues,’ who in being ‘industry’s worst enemies’ and ‘the greatest danger we have to face,’ forced all ‘patriotic, fair-minded, intelligent citizens’ to choose between the Constitution and ‘Gomperism,’ Americanism and ‘class distinction.’ The latter beast in particular was so deadly that it had ‘seven heads and ten horns,’ and could be found ‘stalking up and down the earth, demanding that no man should work, buy or sell, save that he had the name or mark of the beast upon his right hand or in his forehead.’\(^5^1\)

For Kirby, ‘class distinction’ was a matter of ideological perspective rather than of empirical fact, and he sought not to deny that class divisions existed in American society but rather that workers recognised them and acted on their class interests, though doing so was acceptable for the industrial interests he represented. Besides the obvious double standard, part of which included blindness towards the disastrous effects of corporate monopolism on the doctrine of equal protection, Kirby’s polemics reflected a propensity to associate any challenge to the economic privileges of the dominant class with class hatred. ‘The one great question before the people of this country,’ he claimed, invoking Social Darwinism in the defence of democracy and equality, ‘is, which shall finally prove to be the survival of the fittest, its Constitution, or Socialism and Gomperism; the Constitution which guarantees the right of equal opportunity to all men, and the courts

\(^5^1\) Ibid., 3-5.
constituting a bulwark of defence of that right, or a class-consciousness which

\[52\] Courts dominated by class whims were only a problem when it

was the wrong class being favoured, or so it seemed.

‘The Labour Trust’

Class-consciousness in workers was problematic because it led to the
development of organised labour, which Kirby objected to on the basis that it represented all the coercive characteristic of a ‘labour trust.’ He explained that the ‘unrighteous control’ of labour unions would, without putting too fine a point on it, ‘compromise principles and truths that are as fixed in the moral codes of enlightened humanity as are the stars in the constellations.’\[53\] Labour unions arrogant enough to challenge the prerogatives of ‘those at the top in intelligence, energy, perseverance and ambition,’ were not only ‘WRONG,’ but were also engaging in ‘futile’ behaviour, their challenge to corporate interests tantamount to a schizophrenic impulse to rearrange the constellations of stars in the sky.\[54\] Such error could only lead to the acceptance of ‘wicked,’ ‘lawless’ and ‘un-American methods’ whose fruit would be ‘the building up of a machine for constructing a labor monopoly of the most despotic kind’ and ‘class courts dominated by class whims and class prejudices,’ unlike capitalist courts.\[55\]

So grievous was this error, argued Kirby, that the U.S. Government should prohibit trade unions, and despite his devotion to ‘American institutions’—code language for corporations—he quoted approvingly a Dr. Eliot who followed this line of argument on the basis that unions were ‘opposed to democracy’ because they were ‘monopolistic in tendencies.’\[56\] Despite their inherent monopolism and autocracy, fundamental

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\[52\] Ibid., 5.
\[54\] Ibid., 3-4. Emphasis in the original.
\[55\] Ibid., 5.
\[56\] Ibid., 8. On Kirby’s devotion to ‘American institutions’ (namely, corporate monopoly), see ibid., 10.
characteristics that fuelled a profound antipathy towards ‘democracy,’ unions were also a threat to ‘good government’ because they were simultaneously prone to ‘foster anarchy.’ The evidence Kirby supplied to explain this seeming impasse in logic was that ‘the thing in the eye of God is wrong, and to attempt to clothe it in the livery of Heaven only adds to its wickedness,’ the only solution to the ‘dark and disgraceful error’ of coercive unionism and its ‘militant tabernacle’ being ‘PATRIOTISM,’ a tool he would use to ‘drive it out of existence.’

In ‘The Goal of the Labour Trust,’ Kirby repeated the claim that, unlike Corporate America, unions were a threat to democracy on the basis of their monopolistic tendencies, manifesting again the double standard that was a dominant characteristic of the NAM’s Educational Literature. Though he felt it was ‘hardly necessary to state that the social and business status of the employer is fixed by . . . self-interest,’ Kirby denounced ‘the outbursts of anarchism’ of that noted radical, Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, and of other ‘loud-mouthed agitator[s] and preacher[s] of discontent,’ whose ‘ideas of free speech would set no limit on its reckless expression.’ These men so lacked ‘the instincts and sentiments of a patriot,’ Kirby complained, that they dared not only to express discontent with the system of class rule that formed the foundation for the economic privileges of the ruling class, but also to make such outlandish statements as ‘the courts of this country are controlled by the rich to oppress the poor.’ Such wanton disdain for constituted authority by ‘labor demagogues’ informed the dream of a day when ‘labour becomes its own master’—when, though the closed-shop, organised labour reigned ‘supreme in the matter of dictating wages, hours of labor, quality and quantity of product, and in all other matters pertaining to the employment of labor,’ asserting a ‘power to control things which it has neither the legal nor the moral right to control.’ Failing to explain why, or to provide evidence to support his claim, Kirby opted instead

57 Ibid., 10.
58 Ibid., 39.
59 Ibid., 10. Emphasis in the original.
60 Ibid., 37.
62 Ibid., 15.
for a series of *ad hominems*, attacking the closed shop as the product of ‘an improperly-balanced mind,’\(^63\) the dream of ‘the vampires of society who work while you sleep to suck your blood,’\(^64\) and ‘a disgrace to . . . American manhood.’\(^65\)

Walter Drew, pursuing ‘the deliberate creation of a charged public opinion,’ argued that the vampirism and the disgrace to American manhood inherent in the notion that labour should be its own master derived from the coercive nature of the closed shop. In ‘Closed Shop Unionism,’ he stated that ‘force and coercion are absolutely essential to the establishment and maintenance of the closed shop and will always be its most prominent characteristic.’\(^66\) The reason for this was ‘very plain.’ Despite the fact that the union movement represented ‘only a very small percentage of the ranks of labor,’ the closed shop was ‘a monopoly in favour of the particular members of the union which is a party to the closed-shop agreement.’\(^67\) The injustice of the labour monopoly could be found in the fact that outside the ranks of organised labour could be found ‘a large supply of labor seeking employment,’ and organised labour could ‘maintain its monopoly only by preventing this potential supply from reaching its natural market and coming in contact with the correlative [sic] demand of the employer,’ whose own monopoly, by contrast, did not depend on any form of force or coercion for its own existence but was by a remarkable yet fortuitous coincidence the product of natural law.\(^68\) The willingness of organised labour to flout the laws of nature in the name of a ‘sense of power coming from the long possession of a monopoly’ through the tyranny of the closed shop gave rise to ‘a total disregard for the interests of the employer,’ who had to console himself with his class privileges, and ‘being a trust economically,’ naturally developed ‘into an oligarchy socially.’\(^69\) He made no mention of the oligarchy of American industrialists.

\(^63\) Ibid., 15.
\(^64\) Ibid., 11.
\(^65\) Ibid., 37.
\(^67\) Ibid., 4.
\(^68\) Ibid., 4.
\(^69\) Ibid., 9.
Anticipating the Americanization campaign of the next decade, Dr. F. W. Gunsaulus found a solution to the oligarchy of organized labour in education, and he defined the main task of education as developing a personality geared towards the needs of private enterprise and steeped in the attitudes and value systems of American ultra-nationalism. In ‘The Next Step in Education,’ Gunsaulus humbly placed himself amongst ‘the best men of our own country’ and ‘the most conscientious thinkers of all the world’ in describing the first step in the crusade against the vampires of society as ‘the re-discovery of the American.’ China, Japan, Russia, France, Germany all demanded the American, he claimed; if English history had ‘any voice whatsoever,’ it was one ‘crying for the American’—for a ‘sure-footed, level-headed, right-hearted’ Americanism based on ‘the achievement in all our life of radiant, conquering personalities’ such as that of Columbus, the man who had ‘discovered America.’ ‘The American’ was ‘the incarnation of the sacredness and vision of personality;’ ‘never a man came here in the time of the creating of the American spirit,’ Gunsaulus claimed, ‘who left his personality or pooled it in some kind of Socialistic organisation.’

This interpretation of the ‘American Personality’ lauded the merits of self-interestedness directed towards the accumulation of private wealth. ‘The herd’ which sought solidarity and mutual aid was to be despised, except when it followed the drum beat of conformity to the ideological orthodoxies of corporate America, as was ‘the dull totality, the mediocrity and the stupidity that perpetually organised itself with the idea of the suppression of personality and the death of individual initiative.’ ‘What would we have done with the Socialistic programme?’ Gunsaulus argued,

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71 Ibid., 4-7.
72 Ibid., 7-10.
73 Ibid., 12.
Can you conceive for a single moment these men gathering together and proposing to put into the hands of an illusion called government their separate personalities, abrogating in every case, trimming down, every man of them, any extraordinary ability that he had, any large possessions that he might have acquired, in order that the deficient might not be embarrassed in the presence of the efficient; in order that mediocrity might feel good in the presence of talent, and talent not be ashamed in the presence of genius.\textsuperscript{74}

The monopolisation of social resources being the fruit of genius and any challenge to corporate prerogatives being by definition the result of a deficient and mediocre personality that sought to stymie the individual, it followed that a George Washington or a Thomas Jefferson might be considered ‘a very embarrassing individual in the programme of giving people equality in any such sense as is proposed today,’ insofar as they had ‘such a monopoly of brain and vision’ and might be considered ‘a monopolist.’\textsuperscript{75} Not falling prey to mediocre or deficient errors of judgement, then, the education system was to draw out of the child ‘the blossom that lies hidden there,’ and in the kindergarten could be found ‘the means of beginning the education of the industrial American.’\textsuperscript{76} Such an education would train the industrial American to see, with Gunsaulus, ‘nothing, nothing, between me and the throne of God but the Cross of Christ and the flag of my country.’\textsuperscript{77}

World Domination

The function of industrial education, according to the spokesmen for the NAM, was not only to provide an antidote to the tyranny of organised labour; it was also to provide the foundation for the domination of world markets by the United States—a completely natural, worthy and morally justifiable goal. In ‘Let Us Send the Whole Boy to School,’ James W. Van

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 11-12.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 12-13.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 16-19.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 23.
Cleave cited Germany as the main competitor of the United States in the struggle for the domination of world markets—and considering he was doing so two years before the outbreak of World War I, seemingly with ominous portent.\(^\text{78}\) He noted that ‘that country has made far greater advances in the past third of a century than has any other European nation,’ but felt that ‘if we take intelligent advantage of our opportunities, we can make still larger advances.’ He cited with satisfaction the ‘average American worker,’ who despite the apparently grave faults in the American education system ‘has more initiative, versatility and self-confidence than the German,’ and would still, despite the calamities and misfortunes that had befallen him, with the proper injection of patriotic enthusiasm and know-how, ‘be able to leave Germany and every other industrial country a long way behind in the race for a dominant position in the markets of the world.’\(^\text{79}\)

Concerns for the common welfare were not inconsistent with the desire for world domination, and so it was appropriate to support the demand for industrial education with the metaphor of imperial conquest. ‘The boy who saws and chisels out his first toy boat which he launches on a millpond or stream,’ Van Cleave claimed, ‘feels something of the exaltation that Columbus felt when he sighted America.’\(^\text{80}\) He became

an explorer and conquistador like that long dread and forgotten path-breaker of Spain’s great days. He feels a little of the exhilaration which thrilled the first man of the white race who, standing upon the crest of the backbone of the American continent, looked out upon the Pacific. By putting tools in his hands when he enters the primary school . . . a whole world of effort, of achievement, of peaceful and honorable conquest opens itself before him.\(^\text{81}\)

So that the boy might ‘advance his country’s moral and intellectual leadership among the nations of the Earth,’ it was necessary then that

\(^{78}\) National Association of Manufacturers, ‘Let Us Send the Whole Boy to School,’ \textit{Educational Literature} #7 (New York; NAM, 1912), 2.

\(^{79}\) Ibid., 9-10.

\(^{80}\) Ibid., 10.

\(^{81}\) Ibid., 11.
‘Americanism must rule America.’ Before Americanism could rule America, however, the oligarchy of the trade union movement had first to be overcome so that Corporate America could pursue its benevolent project of world domination untrammelled by autocratic labour tyranny.

‘Personal Liberty’

The Hon. Jesse Holden, Judge of the Superior Court of Chicago, expanded on the theme of world domination as expression of individual liberty, redefining freedom to mean ‘the right of the dominant class to do whatever it wants regardless of the consequences for anyone else.’ While conceding in the ‘Legal and Historical Progress of Trade Unions’ that ‘trade unions have been of great benefit in improving the conditions of the industrial classes and raising them higher in the social scale,’ he also argued that they had merit only insofar as they were ‘recognised by the employer, the State and the Nation’ and acted ‘within the scope of a lawful purpose’—despite the fact that, as we have already seen, the law was the product of the class whims of the poor designed to oppress the rich. In his eyes, organised labour was ‘a grand army for uplifting good when acting within normal conditions,’ the right to define the meaning of ‘normal’ that of the self-elected corporate men of ‘personality’ whose genius would otherwise go unacknowledged by the mediocre and inefficient. The latter, ‘individually or by combination,’ believed they had ‘the right directly or indirectly to interfere or disturb another in his lawful business or occupation or to threaten to do so, in the name of compelling him to do some act which in his judgement his own interest does not require.’

To Holden this was reason enough to condemn practises such as the boycott, which in the language of the Anthracite Coal Commission represented ‘a form of coercion by which a combination of many persons seek to work their will upon a single person’—such notably hapless victims, for

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82 Ibid., 11.
84 Ibid., 5-6.
example, as CEO’s of large corporations—an ‘immoral and anti-social’ crime that made victims out of the men of personality, inspiring fear in even ‘a reasonably brave man.’

‘Let us remember,’ preached Holden, while failing to mention who was to be considered ‘persons’ in this Corporate Americanist definition of freedom, ‘that the inherent right of personal liberty is to be free in the enjoyment of all one’s faculties.’

James Emery defined ‘the inherent right of personal liberties’ in terms that explicitly favoured industrial interests, and just as explicitly excluded working-class Americans. He insisted that ‘it is practically impossible to think of personal liberty without thinking of personal property.’

‘For the moment a man begins to exercise his mental faculties and physical energies,’ he claimed,

their application results in some reward to him, and whether it be little of great, the fruit of his activity is property. And the right to thus exercise human faculties the Supreme Court of the United States declared in the Adair case to be a right of property. Thus, the right of a man to sell his labor or to withhold it, and to discharge or employ copreviously [sic] if he will, are fundamental personal and property rights. A great decision, in terse, vigorous and illuminating language, vindicated in the most striking manner these original and inalienable natural rights which are the first possession of each individual.

Somewhat ironically perhaps, these original and inalienable natural rights of each individual were now the sole domain of corporate persons and formed the basic foundation for their ability to undermine and subvert the individual rights of American workers, who were now unpersons under Corporate Americanism, even despite the lip service it paid to the property rights of workers and the fact that the NAM spoke about rights to the fruit of

85 Ibid., 7.
86 Ibid., 13.
88 Ibid., 16.
one’s activity without acknowledging the fact that the wage system deprived
the worker of control over the fruits of her or his labour.

Such concerns did not aid ‘the deliberate creation of a charged public
opinion,’ however, and therefore they were ignored. Emery chose instead to
claim that ‘every combination or conspiracy attempting to restrain or obstruct
interstate commerce . . . must equally answer to that law before which they
equally stand,’ for ‘in the great charter of your government, the fathers wrote
the moral truths of the Creator with the pen of truth’ which constituted ‘the
invincible sentinels of your liberties, secure and certain, while the Supreme
Court sits at Washington and God Almighty rules.’ If the tendency of the
Godless unpeople was to promote ‘the desire of a class’ or ‘the wishes of a
few,’ by contrast, emotional attachment and a willingness to destroy
individual freedom in the name of defending it were the hallmarks of
American liberty insofar as ‘only those who cling loyally to true principles
compel others to respect them.’ That being the case, being in the
advantageous position of ‘knowing you are right,’ there could be ‘neither
compromise nor surrender’ to the proponents of class legislation.
Furthermore, ‘truth, at times, moves slowly, but if, like justice, “it hath
sometimes a leaden heel, it strikes no less certainly with an iron hand.”’
Wielding this iron hand of Truth

the business man of America announces to the leaders of both parties
that he is the creature of neither, and if forced by competitive bidding
to the suffrages of a mob, he will pay the last full price of his devotion
to the principles that he knows can alone . . . cloud the air with the
smoke of productive factories.

Here Emery summarised in a nutshell the reaction of the National
Association of Manufacturers to the deadly beast with seven heads and ten
horns. Sole repository of the wisdom required for a correct interpretation of
American democracy was the businessman of America. He alone could

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89 Ibid., 17-26.
90 Ibid., 26.
91 Ibid., 26-27.
92 Ibid., 28.
guarantee the ‘promotion of the industrial interests of the United States’ by identifying the self-interest of Corporate America with the economic interests of all, and in so doing abrogating to himself and those of his class the status of ‘individual,’ ‘man’ and ‘citizen’—everyone else relegated to the status of ‘unpeople.’

‘Honest Americanism’

The foundation the personhood of the ‘men of personality’ and the driving force for ‘the inherent right of personal liberty’ was to be, not logic and reason based on empirical evidence, but rather the emotive power of patriotism. The spokesmen for the NAM demonstrated throughout the Educational Literature that the emotive power of patriotism and ‘the deliberate creation of a charged public opinion’ were to play a central part in the production of opinion favourable to the NAM and the interests it represented. Van Cleeve revealed as much by invoking patriotism in the claim that the ‘true solution to the problem of ‘labour tyranny’ was ‘Americanism.’

Although he considerately conceded that it was only 5 percent of union members who were causing problems, and that the other 95 percent were ‘good, law-abiding citizens,’ Van Cleeve also claimed that the leaders of the troublemaking minority ruled ‘for selfish gain and personal aggrandisement, the large body of the members with an iron hand.’ Despite being forced to acknowledge the obvious facts that ‘the rich are rapidly getting richer’ and ‘wealth here [in the United States] is flaunted in a more vulgar and barbaric shape than it is in any other country in the world,’ Van Cleave blamed social discord and industrial strife on the Socialist, the Anarchist and ‘the labor union leader, with his demands for privileges for a chosen few.’ All three were instigators of ‘class divisions and the teachers of class hatred,’ and as such were responsible for a ‘general denial of responsibility’ insofar as ‘the labor leader blames the Socialist, the Socialist passes it on to the Anarchist, and the Anarchist,’ in the kind of diabolical act one would expect from an

94 Ibid., 7.
industrially inefficient moral reprobate, ‘... holds the social and industrial conditions of the country responsible.’ Corporate America, by contrast, was a mere victim of circumstance, and portraying itself as such implied little or nothing in the way of a ‘general denial of responsibility.’

The rhetoric of the NAM thus tended to absolve it of any responsibility for class conflict. In a notable change of tack that appeared designed to preempt suggestions of hypocrisy in his polemics against ‘labour tyranny,’ Van Cleave granted that ‘the instigators of class divisions and the teachers of class hatred’ had ‘not only the right, but it is a laudable undertaking to bring the workers together into societies ... for combating autocracy and oppression when found in combinations of capitalists and employers,’ even despite their moral handicaps. Nevertheless, he insisted that the right of workers to form unions was on an ethical par with the right of ‘the great leagues of capital’ to form the United States Steel Corporation or the railroad cartels, and demanded ‘the right of free competition, whether among manufacturers, railroads or laborers’—the autocracy of the great leagues of capital justifiable by the collective character of the labour leagues developed to combat them.96 ‘We do not make these conditions,’ Van Cleave claimed, absolving the NAM and the industrial interests it represented of any responsibility for class antagonism between capital and labour, ‘but as the conditions are here we must face them promptly and fearlessly, and we must battle for ... personal liberty for every man in the community of every station and occupation, and for honest, stalwart, even-handed Americanism.’97

The ‘Radical Alien’

The campaign of the NAM to defend its ‘industrial interests’ through ‘the deliberate creation of a charged public opinion’ would in time come to reflect ominous warnings by the day’s ‘leading students of democracy’ that ‘popular election ‘may work fairly well as long as those questions are not raised which cause the holders of wealth and power’ to make full use of their

95 Ibid., 5.
96 Ibid., 5.
97 Ibid., 19.
resources,’ and that, ‘should they do so, “there is much skill to be bought, and the art of using skill for production of emotion and opinion has so advanced that the whole condition of political contests would be changed for the future.”’\(^98\) As this chapter illustrates, the NAM was in the vanguard of advancing the art of using skill for the production of emotion and opinion, both to pursue its campaign of class warfare against organised labour, to justify its campaign of class warfare ideologically, and at the same time to absolve itself of responsibility for class antagonisms between capital and labour. That they desired to make full use of their resources, to engage in ‘the deliberate creation of a charged public opinion’ and ‘coercion through propaganda,’ is without question. When the opportunity presented itself, as it would in the Lawrence Strike of 1912, this desire was to become the basis for development of the ‘radical alien’ mythology, the ideological pretext for an expansion of Corporate America’s anti-union crusade.

Chapter 2
The Crucible: The Lawrence Strike of 1912 and its Aftermath

If the anti-union propaganda of NAM represented a relatively clumsy attempt to demonise militant workers and to polarise public opinion through ‘the deliberate creation of a charged public opinion’, such efforts took on a new level of sophistication in the development of ‘radical alien’ mythology. By combining their crusade against organised labour with the widespread xenophobia that had appeared in reaction to the influx of immigrants arriving from Southern and Eastern Europe in the years after 1880, the political representatives of Corporate America succeeded in enhancing the fear and loathing attached to both. The marriage of Corporate America’s anti-unionism with nativist antipathy towards the immigrant in the paternalistic movement to ‘Americanise’ immigrant workers broadened the appeal of the campaign against the unionism that American big business perceived as such a threat, and it also resulted in a more systematised and streamlined ideology and a practical programme of action with the kind of focused and clearly articulated goals it had previously lacked. It also provided the pretext for the co-option and transformation of the Americanisation movement, a movement that had begun as a relatively benign attempt to acculturate the immigrant, into a tool for stifling labour militancy and encouraging a culture of submissiveness amongst immigrant workers.

The impetus for these innovations in the class war came about as a result of a strike launched by textile workers at the cotton mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts on 11 January 1912, at roughly the same time as the NAM was carrying out the propaganda campaign discussed in the previous chapter. The Lawrence textile strike, also known as the ‘Bread and Roses’ strike, began as destitution wages, crowded slums, and living conditions where one in six children died before their first birthday drove 25,000 almost entirely foreign-
born workers to ‘open rebellion’ against the American Woolen Company. The Lawrence strike was notable for the fact that the workforce was predominantly foreign born; the workers in the Lawrence textile mills were Portuguese, French-Canadian, English, Irish, Russian, Italian, Syrian, Lithuanian, German, Polish and Belgian. They lived in ‘crowded, flammable wooden tenements’ and received the grand average wage of $8.76 per week; 36 out of every 100 mill workers died before or by the time they were 25 years old. Controversially for the industrial interests, these predominantly foreign-born workers carried out their strike under the leadership of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a labour union formed in Chicago in 1905 on the basis of the idea, stated in its preamble, that ‘the working class and the employing class have nothing in common’ and that ‘between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organise as a class, take possession of the Earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system’ (significantly, the IWW preamble also made specific mention of the growth of corporate power, stating that ‘we find that the centring of management of the industries into fewer and few hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class,’ proposing to remedy the situation by organising industrial unions instead, and thereby to resist the growth of corporate autocracy according to the principle that ‘an injury to one is an injury to all’).

The fact that the Lawrence strike was lead by the IWW was of pivotal significance to the evolution of the offensive spearheaded by the NAM. After an often violent nine and a half weeks, the Lawrence strikers, using anarcho-syndicalist tactics advocated by the IWW, gained what Alex Carey describes as ‘one of the few unequivocal victories in the history of American labour to that date.’ Worse still, the revolt of the textile workers in Lawrence had been the spark that ignited a firestorm that Iron Age called in April 1913 an “epidemic of strikes.”’ David Montgomery notes that ‘Although there are no federal strike statistics for this period, P. K. Edwards’s careful calculations

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99 Alex Carey, Taking the Risk Out of Democracy, 42.
100 Howard Zinn, A People’s History of the United States, p. 327.
101 One Big Union of the IWW, (Chicago: IWW, n.d.) 36.
have suggested that the ratio of strike participants to the total labor force was higher between 1912 and 1915 than it had ever been before.\textsuperscript{103} For the industrialists of Massachusetts, the victory of organised labour at Lawrence was an unmistakable sign of things to come, and their reaction would define the parameters of the ‘radical alien’ mythology in the years to follow.

In this chapter I build on the work of E. G. Hartmann by examining this reaction in detail, with particular emphasis on the relationship between the hostility of Massachusetts industrialists to the IWW. I focus on the use of ‘radical alien’ mythology firstly as a way to blame the Lawrence strikers in particular (arguably the victims) for injustices perpetrated by, in this instance, the American Woolen Company at Lawrence, and secondly, as a way of scapegoating foreign-born workers in general for injustices being perpetrated by corporations in American society more broadly.

The Lawrence Strike

Through thick and thin the IWW had ‘stubbornly and defiantly maintained its original revolutionary zeal,’ even though its propensity to challenge the prerogatives of Corporate America, the legitimacy of the class privileges of American elites and the kinds of open declarations of class warfare made by organisations such as the NAM had made it ‘the easiest and most noticeable scapegoat for the anti-labour and anti-radical passions of the country.’ Epitomising these passions, one particularly hostile observer remarked of the Lawrence strikers that ‘hanging is too good for them and they would be much better dead, for they are absolutely useless in the human economy . . . they are the waste material of creation and should be drained off into the sewer of oblivion, there to rot in cold obstruction like any other excrement.’\textsuperscript{104} Congressman John J. Burnett concocted the spectre of ‘the educated blackhander’ out of the strike actions of the mostly foreign-born Lawrence textile workers, an evil fiend who ‘led the long procession and stirred them to frenzy and to crime, but behind him was the horde of

\textsuperscript{103} David Montgomery, \textit{The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 240.

\textsuperscript{104} William Preston, Jr., \textit{Aliens and Dissenters}, 52.
illiterates with a bomb in one hand and a banner on the other on which was inscribed, “No God, No Law, No Master.”\textsuperscript{105} Burnett’s comments reflected the growing tendency of enemies of strike action and political dissent to combine their anti-unionism and authoritarianism with nativist xenophobia and thereby to conjure out of the legitimate strike action of immigrant workers a nefarious plot by foreign enemies of ‘America’ to engage in wanton destructive and criminal behaviour.

This tendency was as apparent anywhere as in the reaction of the Lawrence textile interests, whose loathing for the IWW and its tendency to encourage workers to assert themselves and to fight for their rights was matched only by its willingness to embrace the idea that foreign workers, particularly those expressing dissent and asserting their agency through strike action, were a clear and present threat to ‘national security’—an ideologically loaded term insofar as the interests of ‘the nation’ were deliberately confused with the vested interests of the propertied classes in general and Corporate America in particular. In a publication articulating the attitude of employers towards the strike most notable for its tendency to marry anti-unionism, political authoritarianism and nativist xenophobia, John Bruce McPherson, speaking on behalf of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers of Boston, was almost as quick to point out the rapid increase of illiterate immigrants in Lawrence as he was to lament the appearance in the east of ‘leaders of the most recent propaganda amongst labor men—syndicalism or the industrial union . . . introducing methods both novel and spectacular’—and that, problematically for the interests he represented, enabled the workers of Lawrence to organise effectively.\textsuperscript{106}

McPherson clearly regarded the success of the Lawrence strike as a product of the high percentage of foreign-born workers amongst the town’s

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 76.
\textsuperscript{106} John Bruce McPherson, \textit{The Lawrence Strike of 1912} (Boston; National Association of Wool Manufacturers, 1912) 2. The McPherson pamphlet was the only one that I could find on the Lawrence Strike from the perspective of the companies, and it was a miracle that it fell into my hands at that. I nowhere argue that this pamphlet was the sole instigator of the reaction to the ‘radical alien,’ but it provides the best example under the circumstances of the type of material that the bosses were putting out. More to the point it gives us some idea of what they were thinking, which is where its primary value resides in my opinion.
population, and he put much emphasis on the foreign birth of the working population of Lawrence in his discussion of the appeal of the IWW, while ignoring other, less arbitrary and more banal reasons why it might have been able to influence the working population of Lawrence (eg. because it reflected their interests as workers, because it was relevant to their needs, etc). Prior to 1895, McPherson argued, ‘the population of Lawrence, originally almost exclusively native-born or Irish, was largely increased by immigration from England, Germany and French Canada.’

In 1905 the city contained 70,000 people, of whom 32,000 were foreign-born. Five years later the population had been increased by more than fifteen thousand, the foreign-born then numbering 41,000. The full significance of this increase of nine thousand in the foreign-born population is not disclosed by the figures themselves. It lies in the fact that the inpouring [sic] hosts no longer came from Teutonic stock in the countries of northern and western Europe, but chiefly from the countries of southwestern Europe and from Asia Minor.\(^\text{107}\)

Problematic for public order in Lawrence, according to this spokesman of the Lawrence textile interests, was the fact that ‘this polyglot population increased too rapidly for the city properly to care for and assimilate it.’\(^\text{108}\) The presence of immigrant workers in Lawrence was the product of a ‘violent and volcanic dislocation . . . a lava flow of population cast forth from Europe’—the fear-laden association of immigration with havoc and danger impossible to miss.\(^\text{109}\) Being ‘unmarried’ or having ‘left their families in their old homes,’ as well as ‘chiefly rural’ and ‘illiterate,’ they had ‘come with no purpose to settle in the country and become American citizens,’ but were rather preoccupied with their chief aim of earning ‘the largest amount under existing conditions, live upon the basis of minimum cheapness, and save the largest possible sum from their wages, with which to return to their native shores and establish themselves either in business or as land owners.’\(^\text{110}\)

\(^{107}\) Ibid., 1-2.

\(^{108}\) Ibid., 2.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., 2.

\(^{110}\) Ibid., 2.
All this was taken for granted to be true without a shred of evidence or direct comment from immigrants themselves; McPherson’s xenophobic stereotyping of the immigrant did not require substantiation but in a fashion typical of the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ menace was rather presented as self-evidently true. Uninterested in ‘America,’ McPherson continued, and having no higher motive for being in America than material self-interest (in contrast to the renowned hostility of American industrialists towards base materialism), these foreigners, though ‘unable to read or speak the English language,’ were nevertheless—and in spite of their supposed desire to become businessmen and landowners upon their return to their countries of origin—‘great consumers of European revolutionary literature.’ In sum, McPherson claimed, the immigrant workers who had struck at Lawrence had done so not because of injustices experienced in the workplace or because of inequalities that might have otherwise been considered characteristic of the economic system under which they were toiling, but rather because they were

Unacquainted with our customs; possessing ideals and views radically different from ours; of a highly excitable temperament; natives of countries where no representative government exists, and where revolutionary intrigue is a daily operation, they furnished a fine field of operations by a bold, able and commanding set of revolutionary leaders. Given a cause and leadership, and [sic] there was sure to be an explosion of no mean dimension among these heterogeneous people.

Given the subversive potentialities offered up by lack of respect for cultural and ethnic homogeneity, it was seemingly inevitable that a spark of independent thought would soon fall onto the heterogeneous powderkeg at Lawrence. Sure enough, one soon appeared in the form of Joseph J. Ettor, a member of the Executive Board of the IWW, who had travelled to Lawrence to take charge of the strike shortly after it began. Quietly alluding to the racial characteristics of the lower orders supposedly driving the strike, McPherson claimed that Ettor spoke ‘with the cunning of the Syrian and the eloquence of the Italian,’ and was moreover ‘steeped in the literature of revolutionary

111 Ibid., 3.
112 Ibid., 3.
socialism and anarchism’—ideological heresy typical of the racially inferior.113
The heterogenous spark Ettor ‘swayed the undisciplined mob’ with words that went ‘unquestioned,’ in this manner organising ‘these thousands of heterogenous, heretofore unsympathetic and jealous nationalities into a militant body of class-conscious workers.’114

If the heterogeneity and ethnic diversity of the working population of Lawrence was problematic insofar as it was the primary factor contributing to the appearance of worker militancy and the power of the IWW at Lawrence, the background of the IWW itself reflected the foreignness and un-American nature of worker militancy. McPherson charged that the IWW had originated ‘some sixteen years ago in France’ and had been ‘transplanted in this country, where until last January its chief activities were in the West,’ though this was demonstratably untrue.115 In fact the IWW had been formed seven years beforehand in Chicago; its French counterpart was the Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labour), or CGT. Though the formation of the CGT in 1895 had inspired American workers to establish their own indigenous union based on anarcho-syndicalist principles in response to indigenous inequality and injustice, the suggestion that the CGT was transplanted into the United States was a transparent distortion and played straight into the mythology founded on half-truths McPherson and prominent sectors of the American ruling class were attempting to construct of a ‘radical alien’ menace.116

If the lie that the IWW was a foreign transplantation fed the suspicion that McPherson’s claim of a foreign ‘radical alien’ menace was taking on the dimensions of a conspiracy theory, such suspicions were not allayed by his suggestion that holding ‘such views and engaged in such a propaganda, it is not surprising that the leaders, after many bitter struggles in the West, should have planned to organise the illiterate immigrants in the textile industries,

113 Ibid., 9.
114 Ibid., 9.
115 Ibid., 11.
116 For more on the relationship between the CGT and the IWW see Frederick F. Ridley, Revolutionary Syndicalism in France (Cambridge: University Press, 1970).
and to inculcate their principles amongst them.”\textsuperscript{117} If the IWW sought to organise the textile workers at Lawrence, so this statement seemed to imply, it was not because it was a union whose business was the organisation of workers for the defence of their economic and social interests, nor that textile workers were a particularly disadvantaged group who happened to be immigrants, or even that immigrants were more heavily exploited because of the vulnerability imposed on them by virtue of their circumstances, but rather because such actions reflected the sinister designs of the IWW, which was both radical and alien—its alien and radical goal, ‘abolition of the wage system and the elimination of all capitalists.’\textsuperscript{118} Here, however, McPherson referred neither to any evidence in IWW literature to support the claim that it advocated the physical destruction of the capitalist class, nor did he bother to examine the reasons why the IWW advocated the abolition of the wage system, though the latter were readily available.\textsuperscript{119}

Against unions that were supposedly a foreign import, McPherson advocates unions that would respect the basic tenet of Corporate Americanism, that what was good for the self-interest of the ruling class was good for the country as a whole. If the connection that McPherson claimed existed between radicals and immigrant workers was a revolving door where immigrant workers brought alien ideas with them from Europe, and domestic radicals under the sway of alien ideologies sought out immigrant workers as a natural constituency, then part of the responsibility for the vicious cycle that had allowed foreign ideologies to ferment amongst the workers of Lawrence and had resulted in the successful Lawrence strike must ‘be borne by the United Textile Workers, who may not have exerted themselves to the fullest extent to organise all the textile workers into affiliated unions; and partly by the manufacturers, who did not encourage . . . the organisation of regular [sic] trade unions, one of the organised conservative forces in the country at the present time.’\textsuperscript{120} The problem for the owners of the Lawrence mills, then, was

\textsuperscript{117} McPherson, \textit{The Lawrence Strike of 1912}, 12-13.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{120} McPherson, \textit{The Lawrence Strike of 1912}, 32.
not necessarily that the immigrant workers in the Lawrence textile mills were organised, but that the organisation they chose to organise under reflected their own needs and desires instead of those of the owners of the mills.

The most appealing aspect of ‘regular trade unions’ for the interests McPherson represented was that they accepted the basic legitimacy of corporate power in particular and class rule more generally and curtailed their demands accordingly. Unions such as the IWW, by contrast, were a threat to both—especially if the unions prepared to compromise with the industrialists of Lawrence and to reconcile themselves with class society held relatively little sway. McPherson lamented the lack of influence of unions friendly to the local business interests in Lawrence, making a particular point of playing the xenophobia card as he noted that ‘at a time when the tide was running strongly with the organisation whose leaders were in command of the strikers, it was next to impossible to make much progress, especially amongst the foreign element, whose allegiance to the revolutionary body was hard to shake.’

In his concluding remarks McPherson reiterated the arbitrary connection between radicalism and immigrant workers in terms that reflected the basis consensus shared by Corporate Americanists. According to the prescription of the Lawrence textile interests, to ensure the future cooperation of one of the most organised conservative forces in the country with the propertied classes of Lawrence, ‘the operative must be taught the advantages to be gained by upholding, not destroying trade unions, and the folly of accepting leaders more concerned for the overthrow of the social structure than for the present good of their followers’—McPherson’s pretences to knowing what that was again reflecting the paternalistic mentality of the American industrialist. More importantly, ‘the public must take heed that the gates admitting these foreign millions to the privileges of the land are more closely guarded, for with more carefully selected immigrants there would have been no Lawrence upheaval, and much less extreme radicalism imported from Europe.’

121 Ibid., 32.
122 Ibid., 45.
The Reaction Spreads

Big business did not take its defeat at Lawrence lying down. The foreword to the *Annual Report* for 1911-1912 of the North American Civic League for Immigrants illustrates both the seriousness with which it treated the threat of immigrant worker militancy and the zeal with which it devoted itself to preventing a repeat of the catastrophe that had occurred in the textile mills. Enthusiastically invoking the ‘radical alien’ mythology and stoking fears of an immanent threat to national security, the NACLI claimed that ‘industrial disorders in the North Atlantic states during the early party of 1912 show the reason for the League’s creation better than argument,’ adding for those who needed the situation spelt out to them that ‘the presence of a great foreign population, knowing nothing of self-government . . . meant ruin’ and lamenting that ‘less than nothing was being done to meet the peril.’

The NACLI went on to describe what it claimed were the factors exacerbating the ‘radical alien’ peril: lax naturalisation laws, a respect for law decreasing in ratio with the increased participation of labour in lawmaking, criticism of local authorities, growth of that type of socialism ‘which is synonymous with treason,’ and encouragement of free speech ‘which ignores legal restraints.’ In all instances it failed to provide supporting evidence. Describing the Lawrence ‘upheaval’ and ‘many other minor disturbances’ indicative of ‘vicious tendencies’ in terms of a ‘threatened conflagration,’ the NACLI noted that such a conflagration had been checked but was determined to remain vigilant, concerning itself to know ‘if the fire is all out.’ It remained troubled that ‘a smouldering blaze in the dry thatch, which is screened by the tall grass, may do endless damage,’ and was anxious ‘for the public not only to learn of its peril through recent experiences but also to stamp out any errant flames which are feeding out of sight.’

Despite the pretences of the NACLI to the contrary, the drive ‘to stamp out errant flames’ was not part of a spontaneous response. Two years

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124 Ibid., 5.
beforehand, in 1910, the NACLI had arranged a meeting on March 19 at the Hotel Vendrome in Boston, the purpose of which being to recruit ‘gentlemen who were . . . identified with the great manufacturing interests of New England’ to the work of stamping out errant flames of worker dissent. Present were Charles Nagel, the Federal Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Judge Charles de Courcey of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, Lucius Tuttle, president of the Boston and Maine Railroad, Bernard J. Rothwell, president of the Boston Chamber of Commerce and Samuel B. Capen, prominent New England Industrialist, amongst others.'

Class warfare was top of the agenda. The NACLI took delight in noting that, at the meeting, ‘there was unanimous appreciation of the fact that the protection and education work of the League should not only be supported as self-preservative, but that it could be made of present economic value to every industrial section in which it operated.’

At another meeting of New England industrialists on December 1, ‘great interest was manifested in the problem of Americanising the immigrant, much appreciation of the work of the League was expressed, and considerable enthusiasm was aroused over the possibility of cooperation between the League and industrial interests in bringing the immigrants into the ‘right relations’ with the American people and with ‘American institutions’—the meaning of ‘right relations’ and ‘American institutions having been defined in advance by and in the interests of those attending the meetings.

These meetings became the impetus for the establishment of a New England Industrial Committee consisting of fifteen New England industrialists, which set about its work quickly, developing a campaign to rally industrial opinion in New England to the League’s cause. It earmarked a district along the Merrimac River Valley including Lawrence, Lowell, Haverhill and Manchester as a test area for reforms and business-sponsored agitation, choosing these locations in particular because they had all experienced ‘unrest, friction between labour and capital, economic conditions

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126 Ibid., 36-7.
different from what the agitators, rational and irrational, were calling for,’ and most significantly because they contained ‘crowded colonies full of un-Americanised foreigners.\textsuperscript{128} Recent IWW organising efforts in the Merrimac Valley had aroused fears of the appeal of left-wing ideas to immigrant communities; an investigation into industrial conditions in the area not long after ‘confirmed the worst fears of the Committee in regard to the increasing radicalism of the immigrant workers, so much so that a special call was sent forth for financial aid to meet what the Committee considered the serious conditions in New England.’\textsuperscript{129}

Having recruited local industrialists to the work of stamping out errant flames, in the spring of 1912, mere months after the conclusion of Lawrence, the NACLI instituted a campaign ‘to awaken the various chambers of commerce and boards of trade to a realisation of their duties as conservators of the best interests of their several communities,’\textsuperscript{130} in conformity with its belief that the industrial future of the country depended largely upon the education of the adult alien worker in industry, and having reserved to themselves the right to determine what the best interests of their communities actually were. It received immediate responses from the business organisations of Portland, Me., Hartford, Springfield, Willmantic, Peabody, Haverhill, Worcester, Providence, Cleveland and, significantly, Detroit, for reasons that would become clear later in the decade. The corporate-sponsored Americanisers had thus ‘succeeded in arousing an interest in their campaign among the various commercial and industrial bodies of the New England area; they had inaugurated a movement which was to spread to the Middle Atlantic States and the middle west until practically every chamber of commerce or similar organisation of every municipality of significance containing an alien population had a special immigration committee taking a vigorous and active part on behalf of the Americanisation of the immigrant.’\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{129} Hartmann, \textit{The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant}, 91.
\textsuperscript{130} NACLI, \textit{Annual Report, 1910-1911}, 42.
\textsuperscript{131} Hartmann, \textit{The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant}, 92.
Americanisation Policy Develops

Early in 1914 the New York branch of the NACLI, led by Frances Kellor, broke off from its parent organisation and changed its name to the Committee for Immigrants in America (CIA), which Higham describes as being a ‘practical clearing house for information, literature, plans, standards, methods, experts and aid of all sorts relating to the Americanisation of the immigrant.’\(^{132}\) The CIA, driving to extend the Americanisation programme to the entire nation, sought both a national policy and a federal bureau to lead the way and pursued a policy of state-supported social welfare, while the parent League devoted itself to sending agents into foreign communities to act as industrial spies and leaders of anti-strike movements.\(^{133}\) While differing on tactical issues, however, both organisations remained committed to the same core ideology of Corporate Americanism. Both were indistinguishable in terms of the fact that their raison d’etre was derived from the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace, which was itself the product of Corporate America’s class war—a fact made dramatically clear as Kellor published her vision of a national domestic policy for the Americanisation of the immigrant in a new quarterly, *The Immigrants in America Review*, in March 1915.

In this seven-point programme, encompassing transportation, employment, standard of living, savings and investments, education, naturalisation and public charges, Kellor appealed to the combined efforts of government, industry and philanthropy to formulate a national Americanisation policy—American labour notable for its absence. Kellor took particular pains to beseech Corporate America to ‘assume promptly and willingly their share in working out this policy’ so as to mitigate ‘the industrial problems associated with immigration,’ the assumption that industrial problems were the result of immigration a subtle nod to the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace.\(^{134}\) Demonstrating in no uncertain terms which side of the class war the NAC was on, Kellor wrote that however

\(^{132}\) Ibid., 97.
\(^{133}\) Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 141.
well government, business and philanthropy could conceive and launch a national policy, its ultimate success depended on the ‘average American citizen,’ who ‘is the natural foe of the “IWW” and of the destructive forces that seek to direct unwisely the expression of the immigrant in the new country’—“wisdom” in this instance being defined as any philosophy that served the interests of the financial backers of the CIA, who included, amongst others, Frank Trimbull, railroad president and Felix Warburg, banker and brother of Paul Warbug, draftee of the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 which, in violation of the Constitution, put control over the money supply in the hands of a private banking cartel. Furthermore, upon the shoulders of the loyal patriot who was a natural foe of the IWW rested ‘the hope and defence of this country’s ideals and institutions’—not to mention the power and privileges of Corporate America. In assuming an explicit connection between its own hostility to worker militancy and the national interest the policy reflected the class interests of the sponsors of the CIA and revealed it to be loyal to the basic ideological assumptions of Corporate Americanism.

Kellor’s policy document played up to fears of the ‘radical alien’ and otherwise sought to rationalise the paternalistic interference of the Americanisers in immigrant affairs. It sought rather to instruct them in the ways and means of freedom by subjecting them to a paternalism that regarded them not as adults capable of thinking and acting for themselves, and capable of exercising agency, but rather as children who required protection from bad apples who would lead them astray. ‘When the immigrant is admitted at the port of entry, he is an alien in fact as well as by law,’ Kellor wrote, he had behind him ‘all that vast and complicated system of society, civilisation and history which constitute the Old World . . . he brings social and national characteristics acquired through centuries of struggle and experience, and customs approved by generation upon generation of ancestors,’ all of which, she claimed, rendered him wholly unprepared for the exercise of his individual freedoms through the institutions of American

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democracy. The entire issue of class oppression and corporate power was, as far as Kellor appeared to be concerned, completely invisible; either they did not exist or they benign nature was taken for granted and did not require further examination. In fact, not only was the existence of corporate power not to be acknowledged, let alone criticised, no evidence was required to substantiate her basic assumption that unassimilated immigrants were wholly to blame for social discord; such assumptions were presented as self-evidently true.

Kellor’s lack of empirical rigour regarding the exact nature of the radical alien menace and the precise conditions under which immigrants entered the United States made it difficult for her at times to keep her story straight; while presenting a clear and present menace to American institutions by virtue of his susceptibility to the ideas and values of those who had a propensity to rebel against the status quo, the unassimilated immigrant was also ‘credulous and obedient to authority, following the traditions of peasant life and military government.’ The susceptibility of unassimilated immigrant workers to unionism and left-wing political ideas, made possible by their natural conservatism, was exacerbated by their economic and social vulnerability. Bereft of the paternalistic protection of the Americanisers and left to their own devices they could fall prey to ‘toughs’ and ‘unscrupulous hotel runners’ who could, with apparent ease, destroy the faith of the immigrant in his adopted country. Such neglect would help to breed ‘the anarchist’ and ‘the loafer’ and ‘prepare the newcomer’s mind for “IWW” doctrine.’ In Kellor’s mind the labour militancy of the immigrant worker was the outcome of ideological temptation by the IWW and not a spontaneous response to, for example, the encroachment of corporate power on the individual freedoms of the American worker, another possible cause of the immigrant’s loss of faith in the government of his adopted country.

The basic outlines of the policy prepared, the CIA, in its efforts to expand the Americanisation movement nationally, attempted to involve the federal government; both Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane and

137 Ibid., 10.
138 Ibid., 12.
Commissioner of Education Claxton were deeply sympathetic; Claxton had attended a two-day conference on the education of the immigrant convened by the New York branch of the NACLI in New York City on May 16 and 17, 1913, and had been so impressed with its success that he recommended that the twenty-eight papers from the conference be incorporated into one of the Federal Bureau of Education’s official bulletins for general distribution throughout the country, resulting in detailed discussions about the various phases of the immigrant education programme by authorities from all parts of the United States.\(^{139}\)

The CIA proposed that the Federal Bureau of Education should sponsor its Americanisation programme, not only as a first step to extending its programme nationwide but to give it the official tick of approval.’ It was undaunted when funds proved lacking; its own wealthy backers put up the funds, and the CIA provided the staff. In April 1914 the Division of Immigrant Education was born within the Bureau of Education, ‘the subsidised creature of Miss Kellor’s private pressure group.’\(^{140}\) Late in 1913 the Federal Bureau of Naturalisation had also taken an interest in the problem of the unassimilated alien, conferencing with the Secretary of Labour, school principals, government officials and ‘of course business organisations’ about a ‘nation-wide plan for citizenship preparedness through the Americanisation of the resident alien body,’ a plan that was to be extended to ‘every hamlet’ as part of publicly-funded citizenship classes.\(^{141}\) In April 1914 a programme was initiated and ‘citizenship classes’ formed in many of the larger cities containing large immigrant populations to teach unassimilated immigrants English using lessons designed to simultaneously indoctrinate them with the idea that what was good for big business was good for everyone.

Preparing for Industrial Americanisation

The National Americanization Committee (NAC), the offspring of a successful campaign to have 4 July 1915 made into ‘Americanisation Day,’

\(^{139}\) Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant*, 99.
\(^{140}\) Ibid., 97-100; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 242.
launched an “America First” campaign in New York City on 15 October 1915. This campaign combined English lessons for immigrant workers with education in national consciousness—a process of education that more resembled indoctrination insofar as it sought, not to teach immigrants how to think and act for themselves as empowered individuals, but rather ‘national unity and feeling, our pride in American citizenship [and] our faith in and devotion to American ideals of freedom, justice, humanity and good will,’ the notion that freedom, justice, humanity and good will were unique attributes of the American state put forward without any supporting evidence.142 Some idea of the tone of the America First movement may be gathered by membership cards issued in Colorado, which stated that ‘the object of this Society is to oppose to the enemies of liberty and justice everywhere a solid front of one hundred million Americans, united in loyalty to one Language, one Country, one Flag.’143 Reflecting the increasingly authoritarian and ultranationalist pitch of the Americanisation movement during the Preparedness period, these cards articulated in no uncertain terms that ‘He who is not for America is against America.’144

On the basis of this principle, the NAC also instituted an ‘English First’ campaign to make corporate propaganda understandable to all, a ‘Conservation First’ campaign to safeguard the labour supply and an ‘American Standard of Living’ campaign to give the immigrant worker regarded ‘assimilable’ (those considered white enough) a greater economic stake in the status quo.145 Upon launching the America First campaign, upon which the success of the others stood or fell given that ‘it was only too apparent that the Committee was making a strong bid to have its Americanisation program made a part of the general preparedness campaign which had seized the country as the result of America’s increasing diplomatic difficulties with Germany,’ the NAC prepared and issued a national Americanisation syllabus for public and night schools that was printed by the Federal Bureau of Education.146 It also initiated what John Higham calls ‘an

143 Van Nuys, Americanizing the West, 106.
144 Ibid., 106.
145 Hartmann, The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant, 125-6.
146 Ibid., 127.
adventure in high-pressure salesmanship’—an experiment in Industrial Americanisation amongst the workers of Detroit that combined the growing reaction to the perceived ‘radical alien’ menace with the ‘benevolent paternalism’ of figures such as Henry Ford to produce ‘a programme against radicalism amongst immigrant workers’ that ‘industrial leaders of the movement had long sought.’

Having sprung from the Lawrence Strike of 1912, and developed into the crusade to Americanise the immigrant worker, the corporate-driven reaction to the unionising efforts of foreign-born workers had begun the work of stamping out the errant flames of disobedience and assertiveness in its foreign-born workforce. At the same moment as it sought to contain desire of foreign-born workers to exercise agency as workers, it also sought to make scapegoats out of them for the injustices of American capitalism in general and the class conflict being exacerbated by the rise of corporations in particular. In Detroit the vanguard of Corporate Americanism would perfect the ways and means of subduing its immigrant workforce; through Industrial Americanisation the calculated reaction to the panic surrounding the ‘radical alien’ peril consciously engineered through corporate propaganda would reach its highest point.

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Chapter 3  
The Experiment: Corporate Americanisation in Detroit

Building on the Americanisation campaigns of previous years in an industrial context, the Corporate Americanisation experiment in Detroit in 1915 sought to assimilate the immigrant workforce into the autocratic hierarchies of American corporate capitalism by imposing on them the factory discipline necessary for its day-to-day functioning, a process the sponsors of Corporate Americanism rationalised as a response to the ‘radical alien’ menace. This thesis follows the work of Stephen Meyer in arguing that Americanisation constituted a uniquely American response to the problem of imposing work-discipline on, and breaking new workers into, the factory environment. The application of Corporate Americanist ideology to an industrial setting in Detroit brought renewed energy to the Americanisation crusade, giving it focus and direction and setting the stage for its next great leap forward. In the Ford plant, the Corporate Americanisation programme ‘touched the lives of tens of thousands of Ford workers in its efforts to influence those institutions which shaped working-class culture—the home, the neighbourhood and the factory.’ As a large-scale project of social engineering, and as the means by which the sponsors of Corporate Americanism sought to neutralise challenges to their privileges and power from immigrant workers, they also ‘indirectly captured the American imagination in the pre-war years.’ The Corporate Americanisation programme adopted by Henry Ford was to become the citywide model for Detroit, and the Detroit model was to become the building block of Corporate Americanisation across the United States.

Frank Cody, the Detroit Assistant Superintendent of Schools, acknowledged the obvious when he couched the significance of the Corporate Americanisation movement in terms of the economic and political clout of the

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149 Ibid., 77.
immigrant worker, of which the class-conscious Corporate Americanisers were only too well aware following their humiliating defeat at Lawrence. Motivated not so much by the desire to acculturate and integrate immigrant workers, as had been the original goal of the Americanisation movement, but to assimilate them into an autocratic economic structure orientated towards the economic and political self-interest of the industrial elite, the apostles of Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxy recruited in pursuit of their goal all the combined forces of industrial, social and what Cody described as ‘political wisdom.’ Emphasising the value placed on orthodox thinking and class collaborationism that was to protect the economic and social privileges of the wealthy from the perils of unionism, he wrote

In the Detroit experiment, imperfect and far from consummated as it is, there is exemplified that unified co-operation of forces which can alone weld the many peoples of any community into one body politic and create throughout the nation the unity and power that come from common ideas, a common language, and a common interpretation of citizenship.¹⁵⁰

Thus the project of Corporate Americanisation as it was birthed at Detroit in 1915 sought not only to assimilate the immigrant but additionally and just as significantly to impose on immigrants in particular and public discourse more generally an interpretation of American citizenship particular to the ideology of Corporate Americanism—one in which political virtue as a citizen, rejection of unionism and submission to corporate power were considered identical. The Detroit Americanization Committee (DAC), which grew out of the education committee of the Detroit Board of Commerce in 1915, was notable for the fact that six of its eleven members were representatives of Detroit’s big corporations; like Cody, who was one of the remaining five, the DAC sought not only to provide English lessons and acculturation but ideological indoctrination in patriotism, submission to class rule and Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxies under the guise of education for citizenship. The DAC described its official purpose in the

¹⁵⁰ Cody, ‘Americanization Courses in the Public Schools,’ The English Journal (Vol. 7 No. 10, December 1918).
following terms, using ‘American institutions’ as code for ‘ruling class institutions’ and ‘citizen’ as code for ‘orthodox thinker’ as per the standard formula:

To promote and inculcate in both native and foreign-born residents of the metropolitan district including and surrounding the city of Detroit, the principles of American institutions and good citizenship, to the end of encouraging and assisting immigrants to learn the English language, the history, laws and government of the United States, the rights and duties of citizenship, and in becoming intelligent Americans.\(^{151}\)

The project of cultural homogenisation and assimilation of the immigrant worker into class society required immediate consideration of the problem of naturalisation, or cleansing of the immigrant’s Otherness, a problem Cody regarded as the ‘essential step which must be taken by the foreign-born to become an American in fact, and it goes hand in hand with the educational process by which he becomes an American in sentiment and conviction.’ The English schools were on the one hand to ‘incite’ in the alien student the desire to conform in thought and action to Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxies, and on the other to help him fulfil that desire. Training immigrant workers what to think, though not necessarily how to think, was a defining feature of Corporate Americanisation in Detroit, and thus, innovating on and refining the NAM campaign of two years earlier, it prescribed ‘English lessons and patriotism,’ the one inseparable from the other.\(^{152}\)

A pamphlet prepared for the Federal Bureau of Education by the NAC and the Committee for Immigrants in America illustrated the connection between English lessons and the development of patriotic, anti-union and pro-corporate, ruling class sentiment amongst immigrant workers. Using terminology alluding not only to the industrial character of the Corporate Americanisation campaign but also to the attitude taken towards its


\(^{152}\) Cody, ‘Americanization Courses in the Public Schools,’ 620.
participants, it described the night classes in which the immigrant population of every city and town in the United States could learn English and the first principles of American citizenship as the ‘machinery for Americanisation,’ noting that ‘while Americanisation means much more than the English language and civics, English is the indispensable key.’ Now, as before, the NAC identified the self-interest of the industrial elite with the national interest of the United States, interpreting the problems of ‘America’ in these terms and lamenting its own moral shortcomings in a way that took on the appearance of self-criticism but that nevertheless helped to sew fear of the ‘radical alien’ bogeyman. Having previously ‘not thought it our responsibility to provide the ways and means’ of Americanisation,’ it surveyed the array of catastrophes for national security and the public good it claimed to be the result—‘the headlines of the last six months, the history of strikes among foreign-born colonies in munition factories and elsewhere, the catalogue of newly-formed “leagues” and “societies,” the racial meetings, programs and resolutions,’ dire evils to the last that signified a profound crisis for “America” and provided a justification for a Corporate Americanist crusade. ‘We have left so long to chance and to the principle of the survival of the fittest the Americanisation of our great foreign-born population,’ it said, ‘that we cannot now by any single measure deal adequately with the situation we have now created.’

What America is facing now is not simply the economic problem of giving the immigrant a chance as a piece of benevolent paternalism; in the large number of unassimilated groups in our factories and towns, we are facing a vast social problem involving our national unity, the preservation of a uniform ideal of citizenship, the maintenance of industrial peace, and the conservation of a social ideal based on the use of the English language, a regard for American citizenship and American standards of living.

153 National Americanization Committee, Americanising a City: The Campaign for the Detroit Night Schools Conducted in Cooperation with the Detroit Board of Commerce and Board of Education, August-September 1915 (New York; NAC, 1915) 3.
154 Ibid., 3.
155 Ibid., 3.
Detroit represented then the starting point for Corporate America to correct its mistake and to actively exercise its benevolent paternalism in pursuit of a solution to the problem of national unity. In a style typical of the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ menace, the NAC treated class conflict as the result of foreign subversion and not as a natural consequence of a society marked by class divisions and gross inequalities in wealth distribution. Being a ‘typical immigration laboratory’ by virtue of the volume of its immigrant population and its recognised status as a hub of American industrialism, and thus an appropriate place for the experiment in Corporate Americanisation, ‘the destiny of America has precipitated itself into Detroit,’ the NAC announced. Harking back to a past it claimed was characterised by a unified provincialism and conservative French-American traditions, the NAC appealed directly to the fears of the unknown fuelling the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ menace, decrying the ‘deflection’ of the ‘small town current’ by the development of the automobile industry that produced as a side-effect an explosion in the immigrant population, whose unconsciousness of the moral superiority of the Anglo-Saxon state and associated propensity to engage in union activity threatened the unity on which Detroit had purportedly prospered.

To emphasise the precise nature of the threat, the NAC quoted figures stating that the population of Detroit had grown from 465,766 in 1910, when 33% of the population was foreign-born and 74% was either foreign-born or born to foreign-born parents, to approximately 700,000 in 1915. ‘While proud of its industrial significance, proud of the swiftly flowing life within it, of its rapid passage to distinction in the eyes of America and of the world,’ Detroit was ‘nevertheless dazed at being thus overtaken’ and had not ‘yet accepted or found itself.’ Helping Detroit to recover a lost sense of identity meant in practise creating a sense of ultra-nationalist unity on the basis of Corporate Americanist ideology. This was the work of industry, the public education system, municipal government and private social organisations combined, for to make Detroit ‘the most American of all our cities’ required ‘a work of assimilation so stupendous that every constructive force in the city will be

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156 Ibid., 5.
157 Ibid., 5.
taxed to its utmost to accomplish it.\textsuperscript{158} The ‘English First’ campaign, being ‘the first rational step in Americanisation,’ would be carried out through the cooperation of Detroit’s education, civil and corporate sectors, if not in a way that nurtured the autonomy and agency of the immigrant population of Detroit, then in a way that promoted a culture of submission and obedience; the combined effort of these institutions and organisations would be required to make this stupendous feat of assimilation possible.\textsuperscript{159}

The Movement Gathers Steam

In the spring of 1914, the Detroit Board of Education had secured an appropriation for 1915-16 double that of previous years. Americanisation work had been carried out previous to 1915, but in 1914, for example, only 2,838 immigrant workers were enrolled in night schools. Now, night schools could be opened four nights a week instead of three and the season could cover 100 nights instead of 70. Wishing to fill the night schools, the Detroit Board of Education turned to the Detroit Board of Commerce, believing that employers of immigrant labour could direct non-English-speaking workers to the schools ‘in a manner not open to the Board of Education’—namely, they had the power to compel them to attend.\textsuperscript{160} The Board of Commerce had already initiated an Americanisation programme of its own the previous year; an in-house study taken of the workers passing through its unemployment bureau had found the perfect pretext for the ideological assimilation of foreign workers: 61\% of the unemployed could not speak English, and that while unemployment was high local employers took on workers who could speak English; the non-English speaking men were the first to be laid off and the last to be taken on.

Pretext in hand, the Board of Commerce sought the cooperation of the CIA in making an immigrant survey of Detroit, and as a result of its recommendations appointed a special committee devoted to the establishment of a City Immigrant Bureau. Following the request from the

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 6.
Board of Education, this Committee devoted itself to the English First campaign. As an initial step, it sent a letter, not of course to representatives of immigrant communities as one might expect of people genuinely interested in helping immigrants to help themselves, but rather to every company in Detroit employing over 100 men, requesting cooperation in the Americanisation campaign. It immediately received very favourable replies from employers, who apparently recognised a commonality of class interests and an invaluable method of extending control over their immigrant workforce. The Education Committee of the Board of Commerce invited representatives of these large firms to a series of lunches where ‘employers told of the conditions existing within their own plants, and suggested the exact ways in which they would find it most feasible to urge night school attendance upon their men.’

As a result of these discussions the Detroit Board of Commerce came up with a plan for Americanisation in the factories and plants of Detroit—one clearly reflecting the benevolent paternalism of Corporate Americanism and its identification of the self-interest of Corporate America with the national interest. The plan drafted by the Detroit Board of Commerce stressed the need for some executive officer of the company to ‘take a personal interest in the work and follow its progress among the employees of his company.’ It suggested some intelligent person within the company be assigned to the work; he would report personally to the chief executive officer and would question all immigrants applying for work regarding their civic credentials—the amount of time they had spent in America and Detroit, if they could speak, read and write English, if they had ever been to night school and for how long, if they would join at once if not, if they had taken out first citizenship papers, when, and if they would show them if so, if they had taken out final papers or if they were qualified to do so, and if they would do so immediately if they had not already done so. To drive the point home, and reflecting a clear connection in the minds of the Board of Commerce between the value immigrant workers possessed as ‘human resources’ and their worth as citizens, following his questioning the interviewee was to be informed that

161 Ibid., 6-7.
‘there is no place in our factory, in Detroit, or in this country, for men who are not trying to learn our language, and become good, useful citizens.’

Demonstrating that compulsion and the notion that the ends justified the means was to be a dominant theme in Corporate Americanisation, superintendents and foremen were authorised under the plan ‘to use all possible pressure to get their men to enrol and attend regularly.’ Thus the Detroit Board of Commerce plan took advantage of the fact that Detroit companies had a captive audience in their workforce, suggesting that Detroit industrialists gather their immigrant employees together on Wednesday, 9 September 1915, talk to them about the night school, and explain ‘the advantages that will accrue to them if they attend’—the disadvantages that would accrue to them if they were absent not needing to be spelt out. The connection between the willingness of the immigrant worker to submit to his own exploitation as a human resource under the Corporate Americanist interpretation of freedom and citizenship was further established with the suggestion that

In the event that you have to lay off any workmen, give preference, whenever possible, to men who are attending night schools, and otherwise conscientiously endeavouring to increase their value as workmen and citizens and tell them why. Let the man who is being laid off understand that he would have stood a better chance of being retained by the company if he were doing something to learn English and become an American citizen.

The response of Detroit companies to the plan indicated their enthusiasm for the Americanisation experiment and at times loudly echoed the willingness of the Detroit Chamber of Commerce to use compulsion to achieve the ends of Corporate Americanisation. Dodge Brothers wished the Board of Commerce ‘may rest assured that we will do everything we possibly can do induce our workers to attend the night school.’ The Saxon Motor Company was ‘thoroughly in accord with the efforts you are making’ and

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162 Ibid., 7.
163 Ibid., 8.
164 Ibid., 8.
would make it ‘imperative for all members of our force who do not speak English to attend the night schools this winter.’ The Saxon Company made night school attendance compulsory. As if to demonstrate what the Detroit Board of Education meant when it said that the ‘employer of immigrant labour could direct non-English-speaking workmen to the schools in a manner not open to the Board of Education,’ the Northway Company ‘established a factory class and then gave its non-English speaking men a threefold choice: (1) to attend the factory class; (2) to attend the public night school; (3) to be laid off.’ Attendance at the Ford English School, the most significant of them all, was mandatory for all non-English-speaking employees.

The Ford Motor Company

At the Ford plant, as elsewhere, Corporate Americanisation ‘constituted a uniquely, and distinctly, American method for the resolution of a key industrial problem—the problem of work-discipline and of the adjustment of new workers to . . . a new industrial environment and to American urban and industrial conditions, not just to American society in the abstract.’ Born and bred in pre-industrial cultures and generally unaccustomed to factory discipline, the immigrant workers employed at the Ford Motor Company were as typical of any in America insofar as they were easily antagonised by management’s demands for uniform and highly regulated habits and a ‘frenzied’ pace of work in the name of the maximisation of ‘efficiency,’ demands that led to recurring tension and conflict. Not only was the importation of pre-industrial personal, social and work habits not compatible with factory discipline and the industrial ethos, but the changes to the composition of the American working class by the introduction of successive waves of immigrants continually renewed the tensions between pre-industrial and industrial habits and values and recreated the ‘pre-industrial’ patterns of

collective behaviour associated with the early phases of industrialisation. Rather than having a stable workforce that had been successfully assimilated into the corporate system, American industrialists were faced with the annoying problem of having to recontest battles with the class enemy previously fought and won. 169

The uniqueness of Corporate Americanisation at the Ford company derived then from its basic character as a ruling class industrial ethos, imposed from above by Henry Ford, the great industrial patriarch of American capitalism. Stephen Meyer notes that while the Corporate Americanisation programme at Ford was unique in some of its elements, at the same time it was also typical of experiences of many other American manufacturers and industrialists during the Americanisation period, not least because it was inspired by the terror widespread amongst American elites that immigrant communities were susceptible to the sort of social philosophies that challenged their privileges by favouring both a redistribution of wealth and an introduction of democratic decision-making processes to an otherwise autocratic economic sphere. 170 Ford’s Five Dollar Day, announced in January 1914 and part of his policy of welfare capitalism, reflected a deeply paternalistic attitude towards his workforce—namely, that ‘these men of many nations must be taught the American ways, the English language, and the right way to live,’ Ford having reserved for himself the right to define the meaning of ‘American ways’ and ‘the right way to live.’ 171

Under the scheme, designed to induce Ford workers to accept factory discipline and to adopt the habits and attitudes of submission required for mass production, the company divided its employee’s income into two roughly equal parts—wages and profit. The wages the Ford worker received as normal, but he received his share of the profits only when he met specific standards of efficiency at work and specific standards of moral propriety—namely, ‘thrift, honesty, sobriety, better housing and better living’—at home. The Ford Company increased its surveillance over the private lives of its employees by establishing its very own Holy Office, the Ford Sociological

169 Meyer, “Adapting the Immigrant to the Line,” 68.
170 Ibid., 68.
171 Ibid., 70.
Department, later renamed the Ford Educational Department, through which it investigated each worker, interviewing friends and family and neighbours to ascertain whether or not he was exhibiting an appropriate level of deference to Ford’s paternalism. If the worker conformed to whatever arbitrary definition of ‘better living’ was imposed on him or if he was already honest and sober he received the Five Dollar Day. If not, his share of the product of his own labour was withheld and a staffer in the Sociological Department advised him on how better to conform to the ‘American’ values that also served the self-interest of industrial elites; if after six months he failed to satisfy the Ford Sociological Department he was fired.\footnote{Ibid., 70.}

If the Ford plan, ‘old fashioned industrial autocracy tempered by faith in human nature’ in the words of labour historian John R. Commons, reflected Henry Ford’s benevolent paternalism, increasing in popularity with the growth of corporate power, it also encapsulated the basic conflict between means and ends at the core of Corporate Americanisation. While it sought in theory to defend the freedoms said to be the basis of capitalist democracy, the Ford plan encouraged narrow, orthodox thinking and pursued its goal through coercive and manipulative means.\footnote{Ibid., 70.} The Ford English School, established especially for the immigrants employed by Ford, was comprised of five compulsory courses; as mentioned above, employees were required to attend under pain of dismissal. Immigrant workers learnt English (the first English lesson at the Ford School taught the immigrant worker how to say ‘I am a good American’) as well as courses on ‘industry and efficiency,’ ‘thrift and economy,’ ‘domestic relations,’ ‘community relations,’ and, of course, ‘industrial relations’—taught from a company perspective, naturally, though all for the greater good of “America.”

Designed by Peter Roberts, the educator responsible for the YMCA Americanisation programmes at the beginning of the century, the compulsory civics programme at the Ford school taught ‘positive virtues’ that represented ‘the Ford, and generally the American middle class, ideal for remaking former European peasants into reliable and efficient factory workers’ who would

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demonstrate a proper respect for Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxies, a properly submissive attitude towards authority and a properly unquestioning attitude towards the status quo. To that end, the ‘Domestic Series’ provided ‘specific English lessons for the immigrant worker in his role as the patriarch of an ‘American” family unit,’ providing the impetus for him to recreate in microcosm the authoritarian discipline of the factory in the home and to further develop the kind of social attitudes and behaviours amenable to factory discipline. The ‘Commercial Series’ gave the immigrant worker ‘the vocabulary to serve in his role as a consumer,’ consumerist attitudes and the desire for material goods and debt-slavery all-important parts of a well-rounded citizen, and the ‘Industrial Series’ addressed ‘the immigrant worker’s needs as a producer in the factory.’ Though we are given no sense of what this actually means we can be fairly sure that the Ford worker was not encouraged to think and act for himself or attempt to exercise some sort of agency, for this would have brought him into conflict with the benevolent paternalism of Henry Ford, much less to say the civic orthodoxies associated with Corporate Americanism.

Meyer reiterates that while these lessons provided a helpful and useful information, they also served to normalise the norms and values of American elites, a process smiled upon by S.S. Marquis, head of the Ford Sociological Department, who referred in no uncertain terms to ‘the human product we seek to turn out.’ Making the production line a metaphor for the Ford educational programme, Marquis remarked that ‘as we adapt the machinery in the shop to turning out the kind of automobile we have in mind, so we have constructed our educational system with a view to producing the human product in kind.’ If the notion of a ‘human product’ appeared at odds with the spirit and core values of a free society inasmuch as it reduced the immigrant worker to a cog in a machine, to a passive object with no independent mind or will, this fact appeared lost on Oliver J. Abell, an industrial journalist who, in praise of Ford’s benevolent paternalism, wrote that ‘the greater must care for the less,’ and that ‘we provide schools for the child.

174 Ibid., 75.
175 Ibid., 74.
Instruction and discipline are compulsory, and it is well. But we forget that measured in the great scale of knowledge, there are always children and grownups, pupils and teachers, and age is nothing. 176

As Mayer points out, this captured not only the essence of Ford’s paternalism but also the relationship, based on the principle of whiteness, separating dominant and subordinate groups in American society. 177 ‘Superiors considered their inferiors—blacks, servants, women and even workers—as no more than children . . . Indeed, the Ford immigrant worker was no more than a child to be socialised, in this case, Americanised, to the reigning social and cultural norms of American society’—as defined by the emerging corporate oligarchy and its political representatives in the Detroit Board of Commerce and Detroit Board of Education. 178

A book by Roberts, ‘Civics for Coming Americans,’ gives us some idea of what this socialisation looked like. 179 Naturalisation, said Roberts, was for men of good moral character, who believed in organised government and who were willing to obey the laws of the country, those sanctifying private property and granting corporations the rights of human beings especially. ‘No criminal or immoral person can become a citizen of the United States,’ Roberts said, noting in the same breath, the obvious import being that they were the same thing, that the door to the United States was also ‘closed against men who do not believe in organised government.’ 180 No explanation was given for why this was so; the notion that someone might favour forms of social organisation other than the statist hierarchies whose primary function was to perpetuate elite privilege and ‘protect the minority of the opulent from the majority’ was so beyond the pale of all heretofore recognised forms of civilised behaviour as to be considered self-evidently insane.

176 Ibid., 76.
177 For more on whiteness see David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness.
178 Meyer, “Adapting the Immigrant to the Line,” 76.
179 Peter Roberts, Civics for Coming Americans (New York; Association Press, 1914).
180 Ibid., 6.
This collapse of faith in—or, better yet, abandonment of—the virtues of freedom was significant. The virtues of freedom dictated that immigrant workers had the right to err, because reason would eventually prevail and in the fullness of time they would come to see the error of their ways, assuming of course that their ways were erroneous. This was not to be, however, and the process of naturalisation placed an injunction on immigrants with heretical attitudes towards institutionalised authority—and who, perhaps more significantly, would quite likely have been vocal opponents of capitalist democracy and quick to point out the impasses in logic associated with it, such as the fact that the doctrine of equality before the law was fine as long as you ignored the fact that the laws were designed by and for the rich. More intolerably, they might also have been active opponents of corporate tyranny through the hated IWW, the union that had caused so much trouble at Lawrence and whose efforts had led to the experiment in industrial Americanisation in Detroit the first place. Socialisation for immigrant workers under the Corporate Americanisation programme thus began with a lesson that the libertarian socialist heresy was verboten. Furthermore, one could not be loyal to the nation and be critical of the state that protected the privileges of the wealthy; loyalty to the nation was to be expressed through submission to class rule.

Having placed an injunction against the libertarian socialist heresy, Roberts continued with his elucidation of Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxy for immigrant workers. The constitution naturally protected the liberties of the citizen, all citizens being equal before the law with rights to due process, and outlined the rights of the citizen, life, liberty, and—most importantly—property.181 The government had no right to right to ‘deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law or deny to any person the equal protection of the laws,’ (he failed to comment on the fact that the laws favoured the dominant economic class), and ‘the federal government may not suspend the privilege of habeas corpus except when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety requires.’182 It was important for immigrant workers to be aware of such matters, particularly if the

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181 Ibid., 13.
182 Ibid., 16.
injunction against the prevailing heresy of the day didn’t do its job and too many workers ever became disillusioned with the concept of equality before the law. The implication that American state would perhaps establish some sort of Committee of Public Safety, after the fashion of the French around about 1793, to oversee the restoration of ‘order,’ carried with it an implicit threat of state violence that would compel the submission of the immigrant worker if all other avenues failed.

Fordwide to Citywide

As we have seen, the city-wide experiment in Americanisation was initiated in the autumn of 1915 by the Detroit Board of Education, which, envisioning a threat to public safety in the fact that the local population consisted of approximately 75% foreign-born, alerted the Detroit Board of Commerce; with the help of the NAC, the pair joined forces to sponsor an “English First” movement. The Board of Commerce then initiated a massive civic campaign to entice non-English speakers into the night schools, enlisting the support of all local employers of immigrant labour, including but not limited to the Detroit Stove Works, Dodge Brothers, Detroit City Gas Company, Detroit Can Company, General Aluminium & Brass Mfg. Co., A. Harvey’s Son’s Manufacturing Co., Michigan Nut & Bolt Works, Michigan Stove Company, Morgan & Wright, Northern Engineering Words, Northway Motor & Mfg. Co., Packard Motor Car Company, The Peninsular Stove Company, Paige-Detroit, Regal Motor Car Company, Saxon Motor Company, and of course, the Ford Motor Company, all of whom enlisted their workforce in the Corporate Americanisation experiment.

Also sought and received in mobilising the foreign-born population of Detroit was the aid of all agencies working with the immigrant throughout the city, again including the YMCA, the Railroad YMCA, the Babies’ Milk

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183 Hartmann, The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant, 128-33; Higham, Strangers in the Land, 244-5; Esther Everett Lape, ‘The English-First Movement in Detroit,’ The Immigrants in America Review (Vol. 1 No. 3, Sept. 1915) 46; NAC, Americanising a City, 9-10.

184 NAC, Americanising a City, 9-10.
Fund, The Michigan Children’s Home Society, The Provident Loan Association, The Women’s Hospital and Infant’s home, the Children’s Aid Society, the Girl’s Protective League, the Harper Hospital, the Society for the Study and Protection of Tuberculosis, St. Mary’s Hospital, the Visiting Nurse Association, the Children’s Free Hospital, the Florence Crittenton Home, the Salvation Army, the Neighbourhood House, the Chase Street Settlement, the Neighbourhood Committee, the Associated Charities, The Solvay Lodge, the Volunteers of America, McGregor Institute, Grace Hospital and the United Hebrew Charities. Involved in directing unemployed immigrants who could not be reached through the workplace were the Employer’s Association Bureau, the Michigan Free State Employment Bureau and the Federal Employment Bureau. As in the Ford example, in many workplaces attendance at the night schools was made compulsory, and as a result registration was over 153% of that of the previous year. This result emboldened the NAC and demonstrated to them the pivotal role of industry to the Corporate Americanisation drive; the Detroit experiment revealed to them that effective assimilation of the immigrant meant actively working through the medium of the industrial plants of America, ‘for here in this important economic area seemed to lie the real “melting pot.”’

A report from Esther Everett Lape in the CIA’s Immigrants in America Review examined the achievements of the English First campaign. This article is significant in terms of what has been written previously on the Americanisation crusade because it aids in demonstrating the class character of the English First campaign, or the fact that it was a creature of big business, and the fact that the English lessons offered through the campaign also promoted a ruling class interpretation of freedom and citizenship. Lape claimed that the appropriation for the Detroit night schools had been ‘virtually doubled’ for the winter of 1916, that seventy-five percent of the population of Detroit that year had been ‘either foreign-born or of foreign parentage,’ and that ‘many thousands’ of these newcomers did not ‘speak

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186 Ibid., 48.
187 Hartmann, The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant, 130.
188 Ibid., 131.
English at all,’ nor did they use it ‘either at work or at home.’ The cooperation between the Board of Education and the Board of Commerce was vital to the Detroit experiment; the ability of Detroit employers to compel the attendance of immigrant workers at night schools where they would be indoctrinated with Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxies was not mentioned. In fact, Lape framed her description in terms suggesting an atmosphere of voluntary participation. Where evidence from foreign-born workers in the form of direct quotes might have lent support to the idea that the Americanisation work was aiding the development of immigrant agency (rather than trying to suppress it), none were supplied.\(^{190}\) Perhaps unsurprisingly, Lape reported that the enthusiasm of Detroit industrialists for the campaign was considerable, and that they chose a variety of different methods for bringing the night schools to the attention of their employees. Where some put the matter in charge of a Safety First Committee, others appointed a special executive officer to take charge of Americanisation work.

The willingness of immigrant workers to submit to indoctrination was linked explicitly to their prospects of future employment. As Lape noted, ‘on Wednesday, September 8\(^{th}\), the men were assembled in many factories at noon, and given a talk on the relation of night-school work to their chances of getting and keeping a job.’ In ‘practically every factory and shop in Detroit’ were displayed ‘large posters furnished by the National Americanisation Committee and showing, in three colours, Uncle Sam welcoming the immigrant and directing him to the public school, the road to the English Language and American citizenship.’ Notices were placed in pay envelopes and handbills were distributed to ram the message home. Demonstrating the zeal with which the Detroit experiment was undertaken, interpreters were also hired to approach the immigrant worker individually and ascertain whether or not he would attend the night school, and what his general attitude was towards it, a number of firms making ‘a careful canvass’ of their plants and keeping records of the returns on the night school issue. The first of these records reported that of 81 immigrant workers in a particular plant, 78 ‘promised or pledged themselves to go to night school—very willingly,’

\(^{190}\) Ibid., 46.
but neglected to mention whether or not this was because they would lose their jobs if they didn’t.¹⁹¹

The willingness of the ‘human product’ of Detroit to participate in Americanisation activities could be attributed at least in part to a suggestion by the local Board of Commerce that Detroit employers not limit themselves to passing on information from the local Board of Education to the foreign-born in their employ. Rather, the Board of Commerce argued, they take a more active, hands-on approach and give it continued support by policing their attendance and progress. Lape noted that a number of industries not only adopted the suggestion but declared that they would do ‘much more’; “We will make it imperative for our men to attend the night school,’ said ‘one of the large automobile factories’—in other words, under pain of dismissal. Lape describes this attitude as ‘typical’ of many employers.”¹⁹² The announcement of one Detroit factory which, as noted above, ‘definitely announced that all non-English-speaking men in its employ must (1) attend the night school, or (2) the class conducted within the factory, or (3) be laid off,’ had brought into striking relief the compulsive character of the industrial Americanisation experiment in Detroit. Less overtly autocratic and dictatorial attitudes indicated that they would prefer their immigrant workforce to attend night school and make a sustained effort to learn English through the schools that would at the same time teach them the Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxies that would facilitate their assimilation into corporate life. Whether the English First campaign of the Corporate Americanisers was overtly compulsive or indicated as a clear preference on the part of the employers of immigrant labour appeared negligible to the outcome; the atmosphere was such that Lape felt confident enough to comment that ‘it is not too much to say that the employers of Detroit are using their strategic position to make Detroit a city of English-speaking workmen within one or two years’¹⁹³—a city of English-speaking workmen, moreover, who had been purged of perilous heterodoxy.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 46.
¹⁹² Ibid., 47.
¹⁹³ Ibid., 47.
The way that the employers of Detroit used their ‘strategic position’ to promote the English First campaign and its Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxies was further suggested by the publicity organised by the Board of Commerce, which ‘worked through many other agencies besides employers and had significant support in its work.’ The Ford Motor Company had a department devoted to the production of movies, and it made ‘a moving picture of the line at the Employer’s Association Bureau, showing the turning away of the man that cannot speak English, and thus bringing out again how indispensable English is to getting work,’ which was shown around Detroit and ‘elsewhere.’ Further support came from one of the ‘large moving picture exchanges,’ which distributed a slide featuring the NAC poster displayed in Detroit factories to theatres around the city, and the foreign language newspapers whose ‘editors came personally to the Board of Commerce upon invitation, giving their suggestions and accepting others.’

It also came from the pastors of citywide churches catering to the immigrant population, said to number ‘about fifty,’ which ‘were asked to make special announcement of the night schools on the two Sundays immediately preceding the opening on the thirteenth,’ and from several of the priests who lent ‘their influence to urge night school attendance in a more personal way.’ If benevolent paternalism was good enough for industrialists it was good enough for priests as well.

If the involvement of priests didn’t suggest this already, Lape reported that ‘probably every agency in Detroit that has any approach to foreign-speaking men and women has contributed some aid to the present campaign.’ The Detroit public library displayed the NAC-designed Americanisation poster and, it being ‘well-recognised that the immigrant child is one of the best ways of getting a message home to the parents,’ recruited the children of immigrant workers to the Industrial Americanisation campaign by initiating a distribution system by which a folded card issued by the Detroit Board of Commerce was put into books issued to immigrant children. It read, ‘Do your Mother and Father speak English? Take this card home. It will tell them where to go to learn.’ Inside the card was a sentence in the various languages of the immigrant populations of Detroit ‘addressed to the parents and telling them where to register for night school work.’ In addition to the library

194 Ibid., 47.
distribution system, staffers of the City Recreation Committee gave five thousand more cards to the children of foreign-born workers at playgrounds and swimming pools.\footnote{Ibid., 47.}  

A significant glitch arose within the campaign to get everyone thinking the Corporate Americanist way when the Americanisers realised that the propaganda distributed in the factories was failing to reach immigrant women. Lape wrote that the Associated Charities of Detroit, which ‘acted as a clearing house for all the social agencies of the city in the campaign,’ lent workers to the movement, one of whom was detailed to an immigrant area outside the city limits for the purpose of interesting immigrant women in registering with the night schools, who had lamentably been neglected as ‘in this particular section the men are largely employed by the Ford plant and go the Ford English School, but the women have had to leave the Americanisation of the family to be worked out by the men at Ford’s and by the children in the day schools.’ Lape wrote that this gap in the campaign had been recognised, and that a proposal had been made to conduct afternoon classes in Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxy for immigrant women in the public schools, a plan that at the time of the article’s publication had been approved by the Detroit Board of Education.\footnote{Ibid., 48.}  

The local Health Board was recruited to the Americanisation drive, its 60 visiting nurses instructed ‘to carry around the handbills and make definite appeals to each family that both men and women go to night school,’ as was the Poor Commission, which in the name of freedom adopted a policy of compulsion, ‘making it clear to the non-English speaking men and women that came there for assistance that they were expected to learn the English language and that taking advantage of the night schools was for them a practical obligation.’  

To further impress on them the importance of the Americanisation drive—with a not-so-subtle allusion as to what might become of them if they failed to demonstrate the appropriate level of submissiveness—Detroit’s employment agencies recruited police officers whose job was to give handbills to non-English speakers applying for work. One agency marked
attendance at the Americanisation classes on the record of job-hunters and sermonised them on the importance of attending the classes as a prerequisite of getting a job. Between the day that the Detroit employers called their employees together for a lunchtime meeting to encourage attendance at the Americanisation classes and the Sunday before the opening of the night schools, Boy Scouts distributed one hundred thousand handbills to the immigrant areas of the city. In addition to this massive effort the largest advertising company in Detroit put 500 NAC Americanisation posters on its billboards throughout the city free of charge. Another 800 went into saloons with the cooperation of the President of the Detroit Federation of Labor, who was most willing to help the crusade.

When the immigrant workers made it to the night schools for English lessons, there they received lessons in English and Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxy, though this fact was invisible in the torrent of propaganda preceding the opening of the night schools. Its basics were written into a ‘citizenship manual’ prepared by the Detroit Board of Commerce, which explained ‘in a complete, explicit, though simple way all the requirements for naturalisation,’ contained ‘a series of lessons calculated to enable a man to fulfil the requirements in civics,’ and gave ‘all important facts about Detroit, its agencies and institutions.’ The citizenship manual was intended to not only help immigrant workers read English but to instruct them in the fundamentals of Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxy. In Lape’s words the manual was intended to ‘make the man that is just learning English understand fully the principles behind various American institutions and understand also exactly how to make use of them.’\textsuperscript{197} With systematic cooperation between the educational authorities, local business groups and civic agencies, upon whom the success of the Americanisation campaign was ‘absolutely dependent,’ Lape regarded the Americanisers’ goal of, within a year, making Detroit a city of English-speakers as ‘not visionary’,\textsuperscript{198} even if the English-speakers would not be using their newfound skills to say or do anything that would make the industrial interests feel that their power or privileges were under threat.

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 50.
Lessons

The National Association of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce were quickly alerted to the lessons gleaned from the Detroit experiment by the NAC. Primary amongst these were the need for employers to take more direct responsibility for the indoctrination of their workforce, not only where the night school campaign was concerned but particularly with the establishment of ‘English and patriotism’ classes in separate industries. The NAC noted with satisfaction an increased interest by the Board of Education in cooperating with business groups in the Corporate Americanism campaign and an increased interest in the night schools, with particular regard to citizenship, though it failed to make any distinction between the type of interest commanded spontaneously by virtue of the inherent relevance of the project to immigrant workers and that aroused when dismissal was the only other option on the table.

Having established a consensus amongst the politically orthodox of Detroit regarding ‘the social value of assimilating the foreign population,’ both in the attitude of social agencies as well as the general public, the Detroit Board of Education likewise took satisfaction in noting an increased level of cooperation on the parts of various agencies on the basis of that consensus and, much more significantly, that it had also led to a greater acceptance of the notion that the assimilation of the immigrant into the political body corporate commanded by Corporate America was no mere welfare work but rather ‘a fundamental civic necessity,’ civic virtues in this instance defined as that which served the self-interest of Corporate America as per the standard formula. The NAC noted an increase in registration for the night schools amongst young mechanics of 100 per cent over the previous year, statistics that reflected the use of coercion as the standard modus operandi of the experiment in Industrial Americanisation in Detroit.

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199 NAC, *Americanising a City*, 22.

200 Ibid., 22.
The institution of this new regime of benevolent paternalism, the NAC was pleased to report, had achieved for the first time what it had sought since the ‘radical alien’ menace reared its ugly head at Lawrence, ‘the reinforcement of industrial peace,’ which was said to have provided ‘an increased self-respect among immigrant workmen’ and ‘a better understanding between employers and workmen.’ It provided no evidence in the form of testimonials from satisfied workers to support its claims and it made no comment as to whether the ‘reinforcement of industrial peace’ provided foreign-born workers with a greater sense of their own agency, though this was theoretically the paramount concern of Americanisers. Nevertheless, ‘the reinforcement of industrial peace’ in turn provided a better basis for what it euphemistically referred to as ‘industrial adjustments.’ The experiment was deemed a success; the result was the successful transplantation of Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxies onto the community of Detroit through the campaign of coerced indoctrination, the identification of good citizenship with submission to corporate power, and in the words of the NAC, ‘an invigorated understanding of the whole question of American citizenship throughout the city and the state—the first step in a concerted movement toward Americanisation in the fullest sense of the word.’

Perhaps ironically, although the experiment in compulsory indoctrination in Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxies spurred by the experiment in Detroit was adopted broadly across the United States, a 1924 report would later lament that, under the compulsory Americanisation law adopted by the state of Utah, ‘many Americanisation teachers patronised their adult students and force-fed lessons on subjects that constituted mysteries to many native-born citizens and had little relevance on immigrants’ lives,’ and was adjudged to create ‘an attitude of mind not conducive to learning.’

War Americanisation

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201 Ibid., 23.
202 Ibid., 23.
203 Van Nuys, Americanizing the West, 179.
The entry of the United States into WW1 in April 1917 followed hot
on the heels of the nationwide adoption of the industrial Americanisation
movement developed in Detroit in 1915. War inflamed ultranationalist
sentiment throughout the country and precipitated the adoption nationally of
the principle of One Hundred Percent Americanism, a move that carried
much further the shift in American politics towards what Higham describes
as a ‘jealous nationalism’ that had characterised the preparedness period. This
‘jealous nationalism’ was characterised by an insistence on ‘a conformist
loyalty intolerant of any values not functional to it; the demand for a high
sense of duty towards the nation; the faith in a drumfire of exhortation and
propaganda to accomplish desired social objectives, and the ultimate reliance
on coercion and punishment.’

Insofar as it shared in common the primary characteristic of ‘radical
alien’ mythology—a corruption of the virtues of freedom manifest as a
legitimisation of authoritarianism paradoxically in the name of defending
‘freedom’ from xenophobic spectres of ‘evil’—One Hundred Percent
Americanism represented the fulfilment of the logic of Corporate
Americanism. Wartime xenophobia surrounding the spectre of the ‘Hun’
upped the ante on the already widespread xenophobia surrounding the
spectre of the ‘radical alien,’ opening a little wider the ‘great national safety
valve’ from which Corporate Americanism derived its emotional power and
buttressing the vested interests it served against challenge from below. So far
was the ‘great national safety valve’ opened that even academics fell prey to
ultranationalist jingoism. ‘There is no such thing as an American-
German,’ Grace Hebard of the University of Wyoming announced, articulating in an
unusually succinct manner the tone of the period. ‘Either they are for us or
against, and they cannot be both German and American.’

The subversion and corruption of the virtues of freedom under
Corporate Americanist ideology manifested before the war as a tendency to
embrace the myth that defeating threats to ‘freedom’ from ‘evil’ required

204 Higham, Strangers in the Land, 247.
205 Van Nuys, Americanizing the West, 50-51.
embracing authoritarian measures. Between 1912 and 1917, under the influence of a steady stream of corporate propaganda, Congress had ‘abandoned the conviction that radicalism could be a home-grown phenomenon and cut down the procedural safeguards protecting aliens and radicals.’ Manifesting the paradox of the progressive era, that repressive measures were often carried out in the name of safeguarding ‘freedom’, it ‘tried to eliminate discontent by repressing speech and belief with methods alien to democratic judicial traditions,’ something that only became more pronounced with the onset of war.206 This was all too evident in a comment made by Council of National Defence member Frederick Lewis Allen, who wrote in 1917 that ‘the only way to fight Prussianism is with Prussian tools.’207

The use of ‘Prussian tools’ to do battle with evil had been visible at work throughout the decade in reaction to the spectre of the ‘radical alien,’ most notably through the notion that in order to defeat threats to freedom from spectres of evil one had to embrace tyranny. As war drew nearer, this mentality engendered an arbitrariness that was reflected in draconian legislation that sought not to punish harmful acts of American citizens against the freedom and rights of others, but to discriminate against them on the basis of their political beliefs. The 1917 Immigration Act, for example, limited set out provisions to prohibit entry to ‘anarchists, or persons who believe in or advocate the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States,’ anarchism being by definition a foreign import by those who had no direct experience themselves of the superior virtues of capitalist democracy. The 1917 Espionage Act authorised stiff fines and prison terms of up to 20 years for anyone encouraging ‘disloyalty’ to the United States government. The 1918 Sedition Act forbade Americans to use ‘disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language’ with regard to the United States government, flag, or armed forces during wartime and allowing the Postmaster General to deny mail delivery to critics of state policy. The 1917 Immigration act in particular was understood to be a direct attack on the IWW whose membership was in large part foreign born; the legislative crackdown on dissent was matched by the utilisation of deportation as a way of denying due process to foreign-born

206 Preston, Aliens and Dissenters, 75
207 Van Nuys, Americanizing the West, 60
pro-union workers and thus of denying them the guarantees of American citizens under the Bill of Rights.

‘Prussian tools’ were thus as much the basis of war fever and One Hundred Percent Americanism as they had been of the NAM’s campaign earlier in the decade to defend its ‘industrial interests,’ if not rather more so. Being of the same mentality, they both served much the same function—namely, scaring the people into conformity with the status quo and providing political cover for the vested interests of the rich and powerful. As such, they inspired Randolph Bourne’s observation in 1918 that ‘war is the health of the state,’ though he may have well also pointed out that war was the health of the dominant class, for One Hundred Percent Americanism provided grist to the mill of war against the working class as much as it did war against Germany. C.J. Ernst, an official with the Chicago railroad claimed that

When our country is at war, no matter with whom, every one of us belongs and can only belong to one of two classes. We are today either loyal citizens of this our native or adopted land, or else we are traitors. The neutral or “half-baked” citizen, in time of war, is an impossible conception.208

Patriotic endeavours

The climate of patriotic jingoism engendered by the war provided the Americanisers of the NAC and CIA with a ‘golden opportunity for pushing their crusade to the limit’—of which the use of ‘Prussian tools’ and the subversion of the virtues of freedom were, as usual, a central feature.209 On 12 October 1917, the CIA and NAC, after ‘proper analysis and deliberation’ presented a joint Memorandum to the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense (CND) concerning a ‘war policy for aliens.’ The two Committees submitted as reasons for their presentation a ten point preamble, which included points invoking the spectre of the ‘radical alien’—namely,

208 Ibid., 55.
209 Hartman, The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant, 163-4
‘the presence of 13,000,000 foreign-born in America, of whom 3,000,000 do not speak English,’ ‘the certainty that the IWW are making active propaganda and headway among aliens friendly to America’ and ‘the prevalence of industrial unrest, sabotage, strikes, riots and other labour disturbances, not only in war industries but throughout the country.’

Something had to be done. Early in 1918 the CND lent its support to the Americanisation movement, and thus was born War Americanisation. In War Americanisation the CIA and NAC achieved a long-sought objective of their respective industrial leaderships—the adoption as official policy of the campaign to impose Corporate American civic orthodoxies on immigrant workers and to enact benevolent paternalism in the name of combating the spectre of the ‘radical alien.’ The adoption by the American state of the Americanisation movement gave the official stamp of approval in fact to what had previously been essentially a private-backed lobby group, an innovation that had several immediate effects. Firstly, the corporate sponsors of Americanism received an enormous increase in their powers of persuasion. Secondly, the official approval of the CND meant a complete identification of business interests with patriotic endeavour. Thirdly, until this point in time the primary role of state councils of defence had been to register and perform surveillance on the foreign-born and to prevent ‘sedition.’ War Americanisation now demanded they integrate ‘preparation for citizenship with promotion of patriotic support for the war and surveillance of the foreign-born.’

If business interests had become patriotic, criticism of them had become unpatriotic and, according to the war fever-inspired One Hundred Percent Americanism, synonymous with disloyalty, if not treason. Under the proposals submitted to the CND the purge of treasonous critical and independent thought and questioning attitudes from the immigrant workforce would be carried out by the federal government in the name of

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211 Hartman, The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant, 163-4
212 Carey, Taking the Risk Out of Democracy, 59
patriotism and ‘wartime security.’\footnote{Ibid., 56.} The endless emphasis on the threat to the war effort from “un-American” influences among immigrant workers,\footnote{Ibid., 56-7.} coupled with the conformist loyalty of One Hundred Percent Americanism ‘intolerant of any values not functional to it,’ had made it possible for the business leaders behind the dominant nativist wing of the Americanisation movement to advocate and, indeed, to succeed in having instituted, an officially-recognised ‘programme for the Americanisation of the immigrant workforce’ that brought with it a new consensus between big business and government, despite the objection from the class enemy that ‘business was taking advantage of wartime conditions to promote partisan political and ideological interests at public expense.’\footnote{Ibid., 56-7.}

Advertising America

With a business-friendly War Americanisation in full swing and the war machine committed to an even more business-friendly One Hundred Percent Americanism, on 13 April 1918 Woodrow Wilson established the Committee on Public Information (CPI), appointing George Creel as its chairman. The CPI represented the first incursions of the United States government into the world of political propaganda; its purpose was to mobilise public sentiment around support for the war by preaching the ‘gospel of Americanism,’ tasks it undertook with a spectacular zeal. With the advent of One Hundred Percent Americanism, dissent could be construed as disloyal, a fact contemplated by Creel himself in his account of the CPI, \textit{How We Advertised America}, a title that reflects in no small sense the basic mentality of American ultranationalists committed to the doctrine of One Hundred Percent Americanism. ‘When I think of the many voices that were heard before the war and are still heard, interpreting America from a class or sectional or selfish standpoint,’ wrote Creel, ‘I am not sure that, if the war had to come, it did not come at the right time for the preservation and
reinterpretation of American ideals.\textsuperscript{215} The war presented an opportune moment to impose the new business consensus, to preserve the ideals favourable to the rising corporate power and to reinterpret those hostile to it out of existence, all which would be achieved of course through ‘the deliberate creation of a charged public opinion’ which required the use of ‘Prussian tools’ and enabled the subversion and corruption of the virtues of freedom.

To that end, the Division of Civic and Educational Cooperation, later renamed the Division of Educational Publications, published the Red White and Blue and War Information series, selling millions of copies that were also translated and distributed throughout the world (circulation of the ninety-plus publications produced by this division were estimated to be ‘more than seventy-five million’\textsuperscript{216}) and published a school bulletin, the *National School Service*, distributed to public schools the width and breadth of the United States.\textsuperscript{217} The Division of News published the country’s first government daily, the *Official Bulletin*, and the Foreign Language Newspaper Division influenced the hundreds of foreign-language newspapers throughout the United States, translating CPI materials into foreign languages and monitoring them for disloyal statements pertaining to the conduct of the United States government in the war.\textsuperscript{218} The Division of Syndicated Features produced feature articles for Sunday newspapers with weekly circulations that ran as high as seven million. The Division of Work Among the Foreign-Born continued Americanisation work in addition to the continued efforts of the Bureau of Naturalisation and others.

Some held reservations, as did Walter Lippmann, that the mobilisation of public opinion around support for the war presented a danger to democratic government insofar as ‘such an effort would require a newspaper campaign of manufactured hatred that would poison American society,’ negating the effort of waging war to save democracy by becoming what it

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\item \textsuperscript{215} George Creel, *How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information that Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe* (New York; Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1920) 105
\item \textsuperscript{216} Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 42
\item \textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 27-8.
\item \textsuperscript{218} Ibid., 30; 201.
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claimed to oppose, or that military censorship demanded ‘a democracy renounce its ideals when it declared war,’ offsetting any military advantage by ‘systematic falsification of Public Opinion.’ Such concerns, however, came a distant second amongst proponents of One Hundred Percent Americanism to Creel’s hope that ‘every printed bullet might reach its mark,’ his demand for ‘a no mere surface unity, but a passionate belief in the justice of America’s cause that should weld the people of the United states into one white-hot mass instinct with fraternity, devotion, courage and deathless determination,’ and his belief that ‘the war-will, the will to win, of a democracy can concentrate and consecrate body and soul in the supreme effort of service and sacrifice.’

To promote ‘the supreme effort of service and sacrifice,’ public speakers—the “Four Minute Men”—were recruited to reach those who could not or would not read. During the war ‘nearly a million public speeches were given to perhaps 400 million people.’ Speakers were selected not only for their social standing—businessmen and professionals were more likely to be chosen—but for their willingness to ‘obey instructions from national headquarters.’ Obedience and discipline were important qualities; as the war progressed the Speaking Division to the Four Minute Men to appeal to fear, ‘an important element to be bred into the civilian population.’ The reason for breeding fear in the civilian population was simple: ‘It is difficult to unite people by talking only on the highest ethical plane. To fight for an ideal, perhaps, must be coupled with thoughts of self-preservation.’ To Arthur E. Bestor, head of the Speaking Division, breeding fear in the name of One Hundred Percent Americanism was perfectly natural; ‘In a democracy like ours, steeped in a laissez faire individualism,’ he argued, ‘it necessitates a complete reorganisation of our life and putting aside some ideals and many controversies which have always seemed to us supremely important.’

219 Ibid., 5-9; Robert K. Murray, Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria 1919-1920 (New York; McGraw Hill, 1965) 12; Creel, How We Advertised America, 5
220 Vaughn, Holding Fast the Inner Lines, 117.
221 Ibid., 126.
222 Ibid., 127.
In practise, the ‘reinterpretation of American ideals,’ ‘the complete reorganisation of our life’ and ‘putting aside some ideals and many controversies which have always seemed to us supremely important’ meant embracing the notion that the ends justified the means, especially if such ends involved maintaining one’s power and privileges. Comments by Charles Dana Gibson of the Advertising Division appeared to reflect this view. ‘One cannot create enthusiasm for war on the basis of practical appeal,’ Gibson argued. ‘The spirit that will lead a man to put away the things of his accustomed life and go forth to all the hardships of war is not kindled by showing him the facts.’

One Hundred Percent Americanism and the war had to be sold to the American public; the marriage of advertising and American nationalism was the work of the Divisions of Advertising and Pictorial Publicity, which sought the support of businessmen with messages that ‘usually stressed material gain from supporting the war’ over appeals to democratic idealism. In its first large campaign, to raise 250,000 shipyard workers, the Advertising Division went to some pains to avoid mention of fact. This campaign was based on a poster entitled *U.S. Shipyard Volunteers*; its designer, C.T. Adams, attempted ‘to reduce the entire proposition to the simplest and most easily understood terms,’ and appealed then to ‘patriotism, sentiment, desire for gain, safety of life and limb, and other more or less emotional appeals.’ The *U.S. Shipyard Volunteers* poster had a circulation of approximately eight million.

The advertising of the war according to the precepts of One Hundred Percent Americanism, based around the new business consensus, generally involved appeals to emotion that demonised the enemy and tainted anyone who opposed the war with the mark of disloyalty and treason, practices entirely consistent with the ‘reinterpretation of American ideals,’ ‘the complete reorganisation of our life’ and ‘putting aside some ideals and many controversies which have always seemed to us supremely important.’ *Spies and Lies* requested citizens to report to the Department of Justice the name of any person ‘who spreads pessimistic stories, divulges—or seeks—confidential military information, cries for peace, or belittles our effort to win the war,’

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223 Ibid., 150.
224 Ibid., 154.
225 Ibid., 152-3.
pacifism the mark of a traitor.\textsuperscript{226} A drawing that eventually appeared on a
Fourth Liberty Loan poster entitled \textit{This Is Kultur} featured a street scene in
which brutal German officers were chopping off the hands of a boy, and in the
background another group of officers choking a woman. The text of the
poster threw fuel on the fire of fear and hatred of the demonic Hun, reading:
‘Kultur in Belgium . . . is a tale so terrible that never yet has one dared more
than whisper fragments of it . . . yet the wrongs of Belgium, as a State
outraged, pale beside the wrongs inflicted in savage, bestial revenge upon its
defenceless women and children.’ It left little room for the reader to make up
their own mind, concluding ‘such a civilisation is not fit to live,’ and
bellowing that the war against Germany was ‘a Crusade, not merely to re-win
the tomb of Christ, but to bring back to Earth the rule of right, the peace, good
will to men and gentleness He taught.’\textsuperscript{227}

Desirable traits of citizens

By the end of the War Americans had become fully immersed in the
ideological assumptions of One Hundred Percent Americanism, including the
mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace, through a colossal propaganda
campaign that had zealously pursued the ‘reinterpretation of American
ideals,’ ‘the complete reorganisation of our life’ and ‘putting aside some ideals
and many controversies which have always seemed to us supremely
important’ in favour of a new pro-corporate consensus. The government had
‘conscripted public opinion,’ wrote Frank Cobb, editor of the \textit{New York World},
as they conscripted men and money and materials. Having conscripted
it, they dealt with it as they dealt with other raw materials. They
mobilized it. They put it in charge of drill sergeants. They goose-
stepped it. They taught it to stand at attention and salute.\textsuperscript{228}

Under the goose-stepping of public opinion the free exchange of ideas
had all but ceased to exist, a fact reflected in the effect of the CPI’s crusade on

\textsuperscript{226} Ibid., 155.
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid., 157-8.
\textsuperscript{228} Murray, \textit{Red Scare}, 12.
public opinion theory; before the war, ‘theorists held that one should inform the public,’ whereas afterwards, ‘they were more inclined to manipulate opinion.’

This ideological shift was also reflected in the notion of citizenship itself. During the war, One Hundred Percent Americanism had reduced the qualities of the good citizen to the ‘willingness to make immediate sacrifices,’ but after the Armistice, instead of being jettisoned as the crisis of war abated, these qualities ‘became more explicit, becoming the desirable traits of citizens.’

The ultranationalism and high-pitched xenophobia that had characterised the war continued on in a similar fashion after 1918, the habit of attacking the character and reputation of individuals and groups threatening to the power and privileges of the dominant class welded into the national consciousness. Immediately following the end of the war, many of the prosecutions carried out under the Espionage and Sedition Acts were coming before the courts, and they ‘served to remind the nation of the existence of disloyalty,’ demonstrating that ‘animosity to nonconformity was still very much the vogue.’ Murray writes that ‘to the 1919 public, the German was still a barbarian capable of committing any atrocity, while those who had sympathised with him or who had even slightly opposed the war were equally depraved.’

Having been deluged with Corporate Americanist propaganda throughout the war, the American public still thought ‘with the mind of a people at war.’ The stage was set for the Red Scare of 1919-1920.

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229 Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 235
231 Ibid., 13-14.
Conclusion

The mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace, which arose in reaction to the legitimate strike action of foreign-born workers at Lawrence in 1912, had a generally destructive effect on popular interpretations of citizenship and democratic freedom in the United States. By whipping up fears about ‘radical aliens’ who were coming to destroy ‘America,’ and identifying challenges to their class privileges with threats to the nation, the business interests who were responsible for starting the panic in the first place were able to exploit the fear and loathing created amongst the American public at large to hijack and manipulate mainstream political discourse, and in so doing to defend their class privileges against challenges from organised labour. Foreign-born workers became the political scapegoat for the injustices of American capitalism—one that provided American business interests with the rationale they needed for their attacks on organised labour, and for their attempts to indoctrinate foreign-born workers with a business-friendly patriotism in the name of teaching them English and civics. Through the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace, American business interests were able to reconstruct their own conduct as defensive instead of aggressive, displace or diffuse responsibility by invoking the name of the entire country in the defense of the vested interests of their class, disregard or misrepresent the injurious consequences of their actions by identifying their class interests with the interests of the nation as a whole (to make it seem like they were acting in the common interest rather than their own vested ones), and blame the victim by making it seem as if foreign-born workers had committed some kind of sin by standing up for their rights. Such behaviour robbed the very notion of ‘freedom’ of substance as those fearful of the ‘radical alien’ and supportive of Corporate Americanism subverted and corrupted the virtues of freedom by becoming what they claimed to oppose.

This was as evident anywhere as it was in the morally absolutist logic of Corporate Americanism, through which notions such as ‘freedom’ and ‘citizenship’ were interpreted in black and white terms, sanitising them of
heterodoxy and notions that might threaten the self-interests of American big business in the process. The most significant example of this sanitising was in the concepts of ‘freedom,’ which under Corporate Americanisms became a euphemism for the freedom of unchecked corporate power to do whatever it wanted regardless of the consequences for anyone else. Similarly, the centerpiece of Corporate Americanism, ‘national unity,’ was merely a euphemism for ‘class dominance’ or perhaps ‘corporate dominance.’ The moral absolutes driving the logic of ‘radical alien’ mythology defined the status quo which consecrated class dominance a priori as an absolute moral Good, so absolute that questioning it was unthinkable.

According to this logic, since organised labour—the IWW in particular—represented a threat to a corporate-friendly status quo predicated on the notion of national unity, it was by definition ‘Evil.’ The absolute ‘Good’ of American nationalism was not open to comment, question or challenge, and it was inconceivable to George Creel and other peddlers of fear that a challenge to the status quo could come from real ‘American’ workers, who could only be considered loyal insofar as they showed the proper level of submissiveness to their industrial superiors. Any comment, question or challenge directed by foreign-born workers in America against the status quo then could only be the result of a profound ignorance of the moral superiority of the ideological tenets of Corporate Americanism, and not the result of dissatisfaction with an unjust economic and social order.

The other side of this assumption, which likewise sought exonerative social comparison, was the propensity of Corporate Americanists to make favourable comparisons between prevailing conditions in the United States in the period under study and prevailing conditions in the countries of origin of the ‘radical alien’ menace. As we saw in Chapter 2 the spokesman for the National Association of Wool Manufacturers, John McPherson, claimed that the Lawrence strikers came from countries that were unfamiliar with the freedoms he claimed prevailed in the United States—a claim again reflecting the uncritical attitude adopted by spokesmen for Corporate Americanism towards the status quo. McPherson’s description of the new immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe as a ‘violent and volcanic dislocation’
made good use of the ‘great national safety valve,’ and in so doing contributed to the subversion and corruption of the virtues of freedom.

The mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace further corrupted the virtues of freedom through displacement of responsibility. As we saw in the first chapter, the NAM in particular was adamant that it had no responsibility at all for the class antagonisms between the corporate interests it represented and organized labour that had dominated the last decades of the nineteenth century, even despite its own virtual declaration of class war in 1903. As we saw in Chapter 1, in its Educational Literature, the NAM’s President, James Van Cleeve, hypocritically accused the Socialist, the Anarchist and the labour union leader, ‘with his demands for privileges for a chosen few,’ of a general denial of responsibility for class antagonisms, simultaneously portraying the NAM and the interests it represented as mere victims of circumstance. ‘We do not make these conditions,’ Van Cleave further claimed, a comment that again dramatically highlighted the inability or unwillingness of the vanguard of Corporate Americanism to question the status quo or otherwise to subject it to the inconveniences of empirical logic.232

conducive to learning." By disregarding and minimising the injurious effects of industrial Americanisation, Cody, as a spokesman for the industrial Americanisation experiment in Detroit that became the model for many states that, unlike Utah, did not review their actions later, contributed to the subversion and corruption of the virtues of freedom.

The mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace attributed blame to and dehumanising those who were victimised. By pursuing a campaign of class warfare against organised labour on the basis of the credo that ‘he who is not for America is against America’ at the same time as they were peddling the spectre of a ‘radical alien menace,’ Corporate Americanists equated resistance to their class war campaign or even simply challenges to the status quo in the form of strike action with support for the hated and feared Other, the mythological figure—not well understood in any sort of empirical sense, but hated and feared—of the ‘radical alien.’ In this way, Corporate Americanists were able to demonise anyone who resisted their campaign of class warfare or who otherwise represented a threat to their power and privileges as a threat to ‘the nation.’ They made it unmistakably clear that the worker who was unwilling to submit to corporate tyranny was to blame for wanting to have control over the course of his or her own destiny, a notion which also reflected an abrogation of responsibility. In this way American business contributed further to the subversion and corruption of the virtues of freedom.

The mythology surrounding the spectre of the ‘radical alien’ menace facilitated the campaign of class war being waged by the NAM, the vanguard of Corporate Americanism, against American workers, both foreign born and otherwise. It was rooted fundamentally in a desire to scapegoat foreign-born workers for problems not of their making, to scapegoat them for systemic flaws within capitalist democracy that permitted the rise of corporate tyranny, and otherwise to undermine the legitimate strike action of American workers, both foreign-born and native born, by demonising them either indirectly, on the basis of the doctrine of guilt by association, on the basis that

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233 Van Nuys, Americanizing the West, 179; Frank Cody, ‘Americanization Courses in the Public Schools,’ The English Journal (Vol. 7 No. 10, December 1918).
234 Van Nuys, Americanizing the West, 106.
they were associated with ‘radical aliens,’ or directly, on the basis of arbitrary and superficial differences, in this instance those based on ethnicity and country of origin. Those who sought to counter the supposed threat of the ‘radical alien’ menace to American freedom often perpetrated the sort of violence against the individual freedoms they claimed to be defending by employing arbitrary and coercive means and adopting paternalistic attitudes in the name of their defence. Ultimately this was not particularly surprising, insofar as the vanguard of Corporate Americanism had vested interests in defending ‘national unity.’ Defending ‘national unity’ had the function of providing political cover for American business as it pursued a vigorous campaign of class warfare against organised labour, in pursuit both of the submission of organised labour to a polarised political discourse that equated their own self-interest with the interest of all, and (2) thwarting strike action undertaken by American workers, both foreign-born and native-born.

The solution found to the perceived ‘radical alien’ menace—the corporate-sponsored movement to ‘Americanise’ the immigrant, or the movement to indoctrinate the foreign-born with Corporate Americanist civic orthodoxies based on the credo that ‘one is either for America or against it’—merely served to perpetuate class-based injustices and to provide political cover for Corporate America as it imposed its racist regime of benevolent paternalism on its foreign-born population as part of a wider campaign of class warfare. Ultimately the reaction to the ‘radical alien’ menace—like that surrounding witches, communists, terrorists, the petit-bourgeoisie, blasphemers, heretics, Jews, Catholics, infidels, Satan and the other bogeymen of history—was born of the desire of the rich and powerful to eradicate what they regarded as threats to their power and privileges. The mythology of the ‘radical alien’ threat was a manifestation of what Josef Goebbels would infamously refer to later in the century as a ‘Big Lie’—but one skilfully based, as all the best lies are, on a long series of half-truths. The Big Lie was apparent in the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ spectre, just as it was in the mythology of a clear and present Red threat that formed the foundation for the Second Red Scare of the 1950’s, just as it is in the mythology of an all-pervasive terrorist organisation headed by an evil mastermind that forms the basis for the Terror Scare of our time. On all occasions a moral panic based in fear of
the unknown overwhelmed (and does overwhelm) logic and reason, and precipitated (and does precipitate) subversion of the culture of freedom while further entrenching the power of vested interests by persecuting both independent thought and dissent while promoting conformity to a status quo that serves the vested interests of elites.

Ultimately, the half-truths upon which the discourse surrounding the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ menace as well as of Corporate Americanism were built were born of the uncritical acceptance of an interpretation of American democracy that not only tied the concepts of political freedom in the United States to the self-interest of Corporate America, but did so according to the prescriptions of an arrogant and inflexible patriotism that viewed the world wholly in black and white terms. The NAM’s *Educational Literature* in particular interpreted American democracy as the extension of a seemingly apocalyptic crusade, as the continuation of an eternal struggle between the forces of absolute Good, represented by the NAM and the interests it represented, and the forces of absolute Evil, represented by organised labour and the rabble of Socialist and Anarchist agitators gravitating around it. To this way of thinking there could be no shades of grey, no room for asking questions or criticism, and certainly no room for compromise. If the United States of 1913 was riven by class strife, then the National Association of Manufacturers in particular and Corporate America more generally had, to their own way of thinking, no case to answer; all of the blame was to be directed towards organised labour and any others who dared challenge their power and privileges or dared resist their power. From the point of view of the NAM-inspired patriot and the mentality that uncritically accepted the legitimacy of the black and white moral absolutisms of Corporate Americanism, then, daring to resist the NAM’s class war was organised labour’s original sin.

It was the ultimate irony of the mythology of the ‘radical alien’ threat to American society that it polarised public opinion and imposed absolutist interpretations of ‘freedom’ and ‘citizenship’ on public discourse, and its own tyranny in fact, in the name of freedom. The fact that the vanguard of Corporate Americanism resorted to the politics of fear, to the demonisation of
its enemies and to the morally absolutist language of Good and Evil in the pursuit of its campaign of class warfare, attested to a bad conscience on the part of those articulating its unique interpretation of American patriotism. It attested to a corruption of the virtues of freedom, to a corruption of the fact that freedom as an end could only be achieved through freedom as a means. The means with which those who responded to the ‘radical alien’ revealed their true ends, which were to scapegoat foreign-born workers for class antagonisms in the United States for which the rising corporate class were in no small part responsible, and otherwise to use fear as a tool to impose the type of political discourse that would provide political cover for their own campaign of class warfare. This corruption of the virtues of freedom signalled the rise of a corporate aristocracy feared by Thomas Jefferson while at the same time setting a precedent for the Terror Scare.
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