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From Arrival to Incorporation

Migrants to the U.S. in a Global Era

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The Immigrant as Threat to
American Security
A Historical Perspective

Gary Gerstle

For most of its history, America has been remarkably open to immigrants from most parts of the world. So many have come—more than fifty million in the last 120 years alone—that the very history of America is incomprehensible apart from a consideration of who these immigrants were and what manner of life they made in their new home. Oscar Handlin, a pioneer in the field of immigration history, captured this truth in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People*. “Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America,” he wrote in 1951. “Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history.”¹ From the seventeenth-century Pilgrims to the nineteenth-century Germans to the late-twentieth-century Cubans, immigrants and their children have left their mark on virtually every period and aspect of American history: as workers and revolutionaries, entrepreneurs and inventors, scholars and artists, entertainers and politicians, journalists and reformers. Americans have lavished praise on many individual immigrants and their offspring, including the Puritan John Winthrop, the farmer Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, the industrialist Andrew Carnegie, the reformer Lillian Wald, the filmmaker Frank Capra, the labor leaders Walther Reuther and Cesar Chavez, and Chief of Staff and Secretary of State Colin Powell.²

But Americans, at a variety of moments, have also feared immigrants and lashed out at specific groups of newcomers who were thought to imperil the nation’s present or future. Those singled out for attack have included the Irish and Chinese in the nineteenth century, Germans in World

War I, foreign-born radicals and the groups allegedly nourishing them (Jews and Italians) in the 1920s, Mexicans in the 1930s, and Japanese in World War II. Extensive literatures exist on each of these episodes of anti-immigrant agitation, but few attempts have been made, especially in the last twenty years, to compare these episodes with each other and to understand their similarities and differences.³ Little effort has been made as well to explain how, when, and why mild or inchoate anti-immigrant sentiments, which are almost always present, metamorphose into coherent and powerful crusades that seek to deprive immigrants of their civil liberties, personal safety, and sometimes even the right to live in America.⁴ Undertaking this kind of inquiry seems especially important in light of September 11, 2001, and the ongoing fear that current immigrant populations are harboring or supporting terrorists intent on striking against the American people, their leaders, and their institutions. What can history tell us about how Americans of past generations identified subversiveness among immigrants, the legitimacy of such accusations, and the consequences of policies adopted to counter the threats that immigrants were thought to pose? Can previous responses to fears of immigrant subversion illuminate how we will, or should, respond today? This essay will attempt to answer these and related questions.

The essay has three parts. The first attempts to group into four general categories immigrant behaviors and identities that historically Americans have labeled subversive. The second examines several situations in which Americans became obsessed with particular groups of immigrants and took action. And the third attempts to situate the current fear about the threat that immigrants pose into the previously developed historical context.

Threats of Immigrant Subversion: A Typology

While a cumulative list of the specific ways in which immigrants "threatened" America in the past would occupy many pages, it is possible to identify in only a few pages four generic kinds of "subversive" behavior and identities that immigrants were commonly accused of embodying: religious, political, economic, and racial. This typological exercise requires us first to understand not what kind of threat immigrants really posed but how the "protectors" of America constructed that threat in their own minds. It requires us, in other words, to see the immigrants as those whom

historians have labeled "nativists" saw them. Nativists are those who believe that America belongs to its native population (usually meaning its white, native population) and that the country's welfare is threatened by the presence, beliefs, and actions of the foreign born. In some cases, it will be obvious that what past generations of nativists considered threatening and subversive was nothing of the sort; in other cases, we will have to undertake careful analysis to disentangle the real from the perceived threat.

Fear of Religious Subversion

At its origins, and for much of its history, the United States wanted to be a Protestant country. That did not mean only that Protestants of all varieties would be able to worship free of interference from the state (or some state-endorsed religious establishment). It meant as well that the country should do everything in its power to create a society in which Catholicism, and more specifically, papal influence, would have no purchase. This fear of Rome is difficult for twenty-first-century Americans to understand because it is no longer a motive force in our politics or immigration policy. But for most of our history the Catholic Church's theology, liturgy, and rituals, its life-and-death struggle with European Protestants, its sheer international size and power, and the control that it was thought to exercise over rank-and-file Catholics alarmed American Protestants. Catholicism was depicted not only as the enemy of God but as the enemy of republicanism. To Protestant Americans, the church stood for monarchy, aristocracy, and other reactionary forces from which America was seeking to escape. Where the pope "ruled," Protestants charged, "the people" most certainly did not. Thus Catholic influence had to be resisted, even eradicated.⁵

The Catholic group in America that bore the brunt of American Protestant fury were the Irish, who, when they arrived in the 1830s and 1840s, constituted the first mass immigration of Catholics to America. Fleeing an Ireland devastated by colonial rule and famine, these Irish immigrants were largely destitute; they had few skills, little access to good jobs, and not much familiarity with urban living. Many native Protestants viewed them as an urban underclass, cut off from "American" values and traditions, their assimilation to their new land blocked by what these Protestants took to be a fanatical and unholy devotion to the Catholic Church. America's first mass nativist movement, the Know-Nothings, arose in the 1840s and 1850s in reaction to the "Irish peril." The Know-Nothings stirred up

anti-Irish sentiment and sparked vigilante attacks by Protestant gangs on Irish neighborhoods, Catholic schools, and even, in some cases, Catholic churches themselves. In their more "respectable" moments, the Know-Nothings organized politically to end Irish immigration, to remove the children of Irish Catholic immigrants from parochial schools so that they could be educated in a proper Protestant environment, and to bar immigrants from holding public office and, in some cases, from voting.⁶

The politics of sectionalism and the impending Civil War sent the Know-Nothings into eclipse and also provided opportunities for Irish immigrants to demonstrate their loyalty to the Union, to rise in the social order, and to gain more respectability for their Catholic ways. But even so, the religiously motivated discrimination that Irish Catholics had experienced in the antebellum era persisted for another hundred years. As late as 1928, the Republicans defeated the Democratic, Irish Catholic nominee for president, Al Smith, by arousing anxiety about the threat that a Catholic president would pose to the United States. And even in 1960, another Democratic hopeful and Irish Catholic, John F. Kennedy, had to appear before a group of Protestant ministers in Houston to prove to their satisfaction that his election would not make the Vatican the ruler of Washington.⁷

It is easy for us to critique our forebears for their small-minded and intolerant hostility to Catholicism. But before we congratulate ourselves on our current broad-mindedness, we should note that we are once again living in an intensely religious age more akin to the nineteenth century than to the twentieth and that, in this current age, many Americans are once again talking about the threat that a "foreign" religion, in this case Islam, poses to American values, traditions, and security. Thus the early history of Irish Catholics in America may have more relevance than we might at first have imagined to current problems, particularly in terms of how American society as a whole is reacting and will react to the presence of eight million Muslims in its midst.

Fear of Political Subversion

The second kind of threat that immigrants were thought to pose was political. If America wanted to be a Protestant country, it also wanted to be a republic, one in which the people ruled. A republic had to guarantee not only popular sovereignty but also political and economic liberty for its citizens. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, America was virtually unique among the nations of the world in its republicanism, and

its creators feared that this system of politics would not last long, giving way to monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, then pejoratively equated with mob rule. Republicanism, it was believed, depended on citizens who were fierce in defense of their independence and liberty and abundantly endowed with virtue. Citizens had to resist the temptations of excessive wealth and power. Those Americans who saw themselves as the guardians of their country's republican inheritance kept a close eye on immigrants who, especially in the nineteenth century, might not comprehend republicanism's value or fragility. In this respect, the antebellum fear of Irish Catholics was not just religiously grounded but politically grounded as well: Could these immigrants, who owed so deep an allegiance to Rome, be counted on to embrace and defend American republican and libertarian principles? Would not their subservience to the monarchical pope incline them to favor authoritarian forms of secular rule in America?⁸

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the threat to American republicanism was thought to emanate as much from the revolutionary Left, comprising the followers of Marx, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Lenin, as from the Catholic Right. Significant numbers of these leftists had come to the United States as immigrants: from France, Germany, Finland, Russia, the Balkans, Italy, Mexico, Cuba, and elsewhere. Many participated in continent-spanning international networks; some, such as those of the anarchists, were similar to Al-Qaeda in their decentralized character and in their refusal to put allegiance to any nation ahead of their loyalty to their revolutionary cause. Many also were contemptuous of American political principles and the state that embodied them. A few were saboteurs and terrorists. They contributed to the roiling class conflicts of the industrial era and aroused fears that America, as a result of their agency, would soon be gripped by proletarian revolution. To many Americans, such a revolution incarnated the threat that republicans had discerned in democracy in the eighteenth century—mob rule, violence, contempt for individual liberties and private property. Should it occur in the United States, American republicanism would be subverted in the most profound sense, a denouement that helps to explain both the extraordinary hostility of so many Americans to anarchism, socialism, and communism and the large-scale violations of civil liberties that would be justified on the grounds of the need to eliminate those revolutionary movements from American soil.⁹

Sometimes the charge that immigrants posed a political threat was leveled at entire populations of immigrants and not just at the comparatively small groups of agitators who resided within them. This happened in the

1920s, when many native-born Americans argued that Jewish and Italian immigration to America had to be stopped altogether because the communities they formed here bred Bolsheviks and anarchists. It also happened in World War I and World War II, when all immigrants who had come from an enemy's land—Germany in the first instance, Japan in the second—were tarred with the charge of disloyalty. An immigrant group would not always be stigmatized in this way—it happened to Germans in World War I but not in World War II—making it necessary for us to explain the circumstances in which this kind of charge took hold (a topic that will be taken up in a subsequent section of this essay).

Fear of Economic Subversion

The third kind of threat that immigrants were thought to pose was economic. Most immigrants came to America to work. The heaviest immigrations occurred during economic upturns, when labor demands were acute. But immigrant flows could never be perfectly synchronized with the business cycle. It took time for news of economic downturns to reach foreign shores. And even those immigrants who came during boom years might experience a depression a year or two after they arrived; their presence then swelling a labor surplus and no longer filling a labor need. The scarcity of jobs during downturns meant rising unemployment, falling wages, and the inability of wage earners to support their families. It is hardly surprising that, in such circumstances, native-born Americans often accused immigrants of causing unemployment and depressing wages and called on their labor leaders and political representatives to curtail further immigration. Virtually every immigrant group that has come to America has been, at one time or another, the target of these accusations and demands: the Irish in the 1840s and 1850s, the Chinese in the 1870s and 1880s, the "New Immigrants" from eastern and southern Europe in the early decades of the twentieth century, and the Mexicans in the 1930s and 1990s and 2000s.¹⁰

Fear of Racial Subversion

The fourth kind of threat that immigrants were thought to pose was racial: the belief that some immigrants belonged to racially inferior groups unsuitable for American life. Racism, of course, was a defining feature of the American republic from the moment of its creation and remained so

for 150 years. Though the Constitution outlawed slavery in 1865, its Supreme Court interpreters failed to put it squarely on the side of racial equality until the 1950s and 1960s. In 1790, the first Congress passed a law stipulating that to be eligible for naturalization an immigrant had to be both free and white. In 1870, Congress amended this law to permit the naturalization of black immigrants, but the law continued to bar the naturalization of East and South Asian immigrants until it was progressively repealed between 1943 and 1952. From the earliest days of the Republic, many Americans justified their hostility toward immigrants by arguing that certain groups simply did not—and would never—possess the intelligence, character, independence, and regard for republicanism that the country demanded of its citizens. By the 1840s and 1850s groups such as the Irish and the Mexicans (whom the United States was fighting in Texas) were being compared unfavorably to the racially superior "Anglo-Saxons," who had allegedly first brought liberty to England in the Middle Ages and then brought even greater liberty to America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹¹

Nineteenth-century romantic nationalists in England and America invented these Anglo-Saxons as part of their effort to locate the greatness of their nations in the special genius of a people who were thought to form both nations' core. These early romantic nationalists had not yet fully developed the racial implications of their Anglo-Saxonism; that task would be left to their Social Darwinist successors of the late nineteenth century. By that time, the shapers of both educated and popular opinion were attempting to measure the "racial character" of each of the world's peoples and to arrange these peoples in a hierarchy of racial aptitude. Intelligence, honor, virtue, sobriety, and capacity for self-government became traits that were thought to inhere in some groups more than others. Those groups that possessed these traits in abundance—invariably western and northern Europeans who were labeled Anglo-Saxon, Nordic, or Caucasian—ended up on top of racial hierarchies, and those groups thought to lack them—principally blacks, "Orientals," and "brown" peoples such as Indians and Mexicans—ended up on bottom. Diverse groups emanating from eastern and southern Europe—Italians, Poles, Jews, Greeks, and so on—were precariously poised on the middle rungs of these hierarchies, higher than blacks, Asians, and Indians but lower than the Anglo Saxons, whose status, more often than not, was judged to be out of reach. Even the Irish came in for some racial drubbing, especially in popular cartoons that depicted the Irish as gorillas or as black.¹²

In this climate, immigration restrictionists and eugenicists began arguing that it was the obligation of the United States to maximize the number of racially superior immigrants and to minimize the number of racially inferior ones. Without that kind of policy, America as a land of liberty, popular sovereignty, and economic strength would cease to exist. This racially motivated restriction campaign emerged in the 1880s when Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, the first of a series of laws that barred most Chinese from immigrating to the United States for a period of sixty years. It continued in 1907–8 with the Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan, which ended mass Japanese immigration to the United States, and it climaxed in 1924 when, in addition to all East and South Asians, most people from eastern and southern Europe, the Near East, and Africa were barred from entering America. Racism defined American immigration policy, a phenomenon that would not end until the 1960s.

Threats of Immigrant Subversion: Cases

Occasionally, any one of the four kinds of subversive behavior that immigrants were accused of embodying—religious, political, economic, and racial—could generate an anti-immigrant crusade on its own. But more commonly the greatest obsessions with the threats posed by immigrants and the most sustained movements against them occurred in instances where two or more kinds of subversive behavior were believed to be reinforcing each other. Thus the Know-Nothings, who conducted the most determined campaign against the Irish, charged these immigrants with religious *and* political subversion. The campaign against Chinese immigrants arose in the West not just because Chinese workers were thought to be competing with American workers but also because the Chinese were alleged to be racially incapable of striving for decent standards of work and pay.¹³ The indiscriminate attacks on German Americans in World War I for their alleged political subversiveness depended on the transformation of the once-honored German immigrant into the racially feared “Hun.” And the draconian campaigns against eastern and southern Europeans after World War I and against Japanese immigrants and their offspring in World War II rested on the charge that their disloyalty was grounded in a racial character that chronically predisposed these groups to subversion. The greatest civil libertarian peril we face today, in handling the terrorist threat, is probably a similar kind of merger of different kinds of subversive

charges in which the protectors of America construe the threat as residing not simply in terrorist bands that want to destroy America but in Arab or Muslim peoples whose racial or religious character is thought to be antithetical to American cultural values and political principles.

To illuminate these points further, I will discuss three different cases of alleged immigrant subversion and responses to them: the Germans in World War I; eastern and southern Europeans during the Red Scare after World War I; and the Japanese in World War II. Each of these cases of alleged subversion occurred in war or near-war situations; considered together, they offer the best historical framework within which to understand the current “War on Terror.”

Germans in World War I

The Germans form one of the most interesting historical cases of immigrants charged with subversion because of their high status prior to the First World War. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they ranked among the most economically successful of immigrants. They developed a reputation for cultural accomplishment, founding centers for learning and the arts in their communities. Their ethnic communities also drew praise for the family-oriented and wholesome character of their popular culture. German immigrants did not, of course, escape all suspicion. A substantial minority were Catholics, who experienced the general anti-Catholic prejudices of the time. A significant number were socialists who, for a time, dominated radical political organization in the United States. Germans also tended to be avowedly pluralist in their cultural politics, proclaiming that they would cultivate their German language and traditions, newspapers and schools, in the United States. This proud and public display of Germanness generated an undercurrent of anxiety among many native-born Americans who expected all immigrants not to hold themselves apart but to shed their “Old World” habits and to embrace American culture completely.¹⁴

To mobilize a fractious American population for war in 1916 and 1917, Woodrow Wilson's administration first exhorted Americans to rally around the country's ideals of freedom, democracy, and self-determination and to view the war as a crusade to bring these beliefs to the peoples of Europe. But when that effort failed to produce the requisite social harmony and war enthusiasm, the government's campaign for unity turned harsh, now intent on punishing those who were slow to demonstrate their allegiance

and loyalty. In the most far-reaching federal restriction on free speech enacted since 1798, Congress passed the Espionage and Sedition Acts in 1917 and 1918, empowering the government to prosecute aliens and citizens for writing or uttering any statement that could be construed by government attorneys as profaning the flag, the Constitution, or the military.¹⁵

The Germans were especially vulnerable to this government loyalty campaign. On the eve of war, they still constituted the largest immigrant group in America—four million strong. If one were to add to that total the number of immigrants who had come from some part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—Germany's ally—that figure doubled to eight million. Any government would have been worried about those numbers; even if the number of loyalists to the Kaiser or the Austrian emperor among those eight millions was infinitesimally small, they could still have formed a subversive force large enough to harm American security.¹⁶ The government might have made every effort to limit its security campaign to those Germans who could be identified as truly subversive. That would have meant exposing and arresting actual agents of the German government and putting under careful surveillance those who were outspoken in their support of German war aims and the Kaiser. It would have meant, additionally, resisting the temptation to arrest or punish those German immigrants who were simply fond of their Old World culture or who opposed America's entry into war because they believed that a victory by either side would bring no benefit to the working man or woman. And it would have meant refusing to ostracize individuals whose only subversive act was the possession of German ancestry.

Instead of making such distinctions, the government began to regard (and racialize) all Germans as "Huns." This epithet tied modern-day Germans to the barbaric tribes who had emerged from Europe's forests a millennium and a half earlier to devastate European civilization and plunge the continent into the Dark Ages. The latter-day Huns, like their forebears, were depicted as brutish and apelike men who did not understand the meaning of compassion, mercy, restraint, or democracy. The Committee on Public Information, the American government agency charged with arousing popular support for the war, spread images of the "German as beast" in posters it plastered everywhere. It tied the German army's atrocities against the Belgian people to the subhuman character of the German people. It encouraged the public to see anti-German movies, such as *The Prussian Cur* and *The Beast of Berlin*.¹⁷

Unleashing an anti-German hysteria justified the government's cam-

paign to arrest thousands of German and Austrian immigrants whom it suspected of subversion. Congress, meanwhile, passed the Trading with the Enemy Act, which required German-language publications (as well as other foreign-language publications) to submit all war-related stories to post office censors for approval. It also passed the Volstead Act, prohibiting the manufacture and distribution of alcohol, at least in part because of the belief that the German American brewers who controlled substantial sectors of the beer industry would ply loyal Americans with alcohol and thus weaken their will to fight.

At the popular level, and at the level of state and local governments, German Americans became the objects of popular hatred. Boston's city government banned performances of Beethoven's symphonies, and the German-born conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra was forced to resign. Although Americans would not give up the German foods they had grown to love, they would no longer call them by their German names. Sauerkraut was rechristened "liberty cabbage," hamburgers became "liberty sandwiches." Libraries removed works of German literature from their shelves, and politicians urged school districts to prohibit the teaching of the German language. Patriotic school boards in Lima, Ohio, and elsewhere actually burned German-language books in their districts.

German Americans risked being fired from work, losing their businesses, and being assaulted on the street. Even before Prohibition went into effect, German American brewers found it difficult to sell their beer and thus to keep their enterprises afloat. A St. Louis mob lynched an innocent German immigrant whom they suspected of subversion. After only twenty-five minutes of deliberation, a St. Louis jury acquitted the mob leaders, who had brazenly defended their crime as an act of patriotism.

These sorts of experiences devastated the once-proud German American community. Its members began hiding their ethnic identity, changing their names, speaking German only in the privacy of their own homes, and celebrating their holidays out of the public view. While the physical assaults on individual Germans, the violation of their civil liberties, and the racialization of Germans as Huns stopped soon after the Armistice was signed in November 1918, many German Americans would take far longer to recover from the shame and vulnerability they had experienced in 1917 and 1918. Many would never again celebrate their Germanness in public; quite a few abandoned their heritage entirely, choosing to assimilate into a white Protestant culture or, if they were Catholic, into an Irish American culture. It can be argued that this assimilatory process would

have happened anyway, as second- and third-generation German Americans succeeded the immigrants in their communities and saw less reason to maintain Old World language and culture. But had not the war intervened, this process would have unfolded more slowly and unevenly than it did.¹⁸ So thoroughly did Germans assimilate that twenty-five years after World War I ended, important Americans, such as Dwight D. Eisenhower and Walter Reuther, would not be known or thought about as German Americans. They were simply, and 100 percent, American.

It is a measure of the assimilative capacities of American society that members of a group who had been so despised in the 1910s could reach the highest levels of government and labor movement power only a generation later. The fear of Germans subsided so completely that already by 1924, when the United States was putting its immigration restriction system into place, the government gave Germany one of its largest and most coveted quotas. The quickness of this about-face only served to underscore how bizarre and shameful the indiscriminate assaults on the German American population in World War I had been.

The Red Scare and Immigration Restriction, 1919–24

The patriotic emotions whipped up by the government and private patriotic groups during World War I carried over into the postwar period, now focusing primarily on political radicals as the chief threat to American security. Suspicion of political radicals had emerged during the war itself, especially once the principal radical organizations, the Socialist Party and the Industrial Workers of the World, declared themselves to be opponents of the war. This suspicion grew when the Bolsheviks took power in St. Petersburg in November 1917, withdrew Russia from the war, and called on workers everywhere, including those in the United States, to fight capitalist power rather than the armies of the Triple Alliance. The Bolshevik Revolution stirred considerable interest in the United States, not only among radicals, about two-thirds of whom would soon leave the Socialist Party to form two Communist parties, but also among hundreds of thousands of American workers, many of whom had immigrated from Russia or countries proximate to Russia in eastern Europe. Most of these immigrants never became socialists or communists, but they were stirred by the dream, embodied by the Bolshevik Revolution, that workers could successfully revolt against their capitalist masters and thus transform the conditions of their labor.

Labor militancy among American workers had risen during the war itself and intensified once the war ended. In January 1919 a general strike paralyzed the city of Seattle when 60,000 workers walked off their jobs. By August, walkouts had been staged by 400,000 coal miners, 120,000 textile workers, 50,000 garment workers, and 300,000 steel workers. Altogether, four million workers—one-fifth of the nation's manufacturing workforce—went on strike in 1919. This reality of massive labor unrest, combined with the fear that this unrest would enable Bolshevik sympathizers to stage a revolution in the United States, forms the essential background to the Red Scare of 1919.¹⁹

The trigger for the Red Scare occurred on April 28 and 29, 1919, when mail bombs arrived at the office of Mayor Ole Hanson in Seattle and the home of former U.S. Senator Thomas W. Hardwick in Atlanta. The bomb meant for Hanson did not explode, but the one for Hardwick did, blowing off the hands of the maid who opened the bomb package and seriously burning Hardwick's wife. On April 30, a clerk in the New York City Parcel Post Division discovered sixteen more bombs that had been set aside in his office because they contained insufficient postage. Another eighteen bombs already traveling through the mail were then intercepted before they could reach their recipients. Altogether thirty-six mail bombs were identified, targeted either at capitalists, such as John D. Rockefeller and J. P. Morgan, or at government officials who had been deemed "class enemies." Nor was this episode the last to involve explosives: on June 2, 1919, bombs exploded within the same hour at the homes of manufacturers and government officials in eight different cities on the East Coast.

One of these June 2 bombs was meant to destroy Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's home in Washington, D.C., but the device exploded prematurely, blowing up the bomb thrower on the steps leading up to Palmer's abode. Enough of the man's body was recovered to identify him as an Italian immigrant from Philadelphia. That he was an anarchist seemed confirmed by an anarchist pamphlet found near the door to Palmer's house. It contained these words: "There will have to be bloodshed; we will not dodge; there will have to be murder; we will kill . . . there will have to be destruction; we will destroy. . . . We are ready to do anything and everything to suppress the capitalist class. . . . The ANARCHIST FIGHTERS."²⁰

Radicals charged that the June 2 bombings had been executed and the pamphlet planted by those who wanted to discredit the Left and whip the American people into an anti-radical frenzy. To support their case, they pointed to the fact that the government, despite massive manhunts, failed

to arrest or to bring to trial a single person accused of making or planting these bombs. More likely, however, these bombs were the work of anarchists, some of whom espoused violence as the only way to upend capitalist power. The terrorist streak in anarchism had first surfaced in the United States in the late nineteenth century, causing injury and death to Americans—to workers and police involved in the Haymarket protest of 1886; to Henry Clay Frick, Andrew Carnegie's right-hand man, wounded by the anarchist Alexander Berkman in 1892; and to President William McKinley, assassinated by anarchist Leon Czolgosz in 1901. But while many anarchists defended the use of violence as a matter of principle, very few of them engaged in it themselves. The bombings of 1919 were probably the work of a small, clandestine group of anarchist terrorists. Not only were the prominent anarchists of the period, such as Emma Goldman, uninvolved in these acts, but they also probably did not know the identity of the perpetrators. Anarchism was a decentralized movement, its adherents organized into many different cells and groups, often acting independently of each other. Adding further to the complexity of the situation, the two larger and more influential wings of radicalism in 1919, the socialists and the communists, had repudiated assassinations as legitimate techniques of class struggle.²¹

These different attitudes toward violence among the various radical groups and within the anarchist movement itself, however, made little impression on either government authorities or the public at large. The bombings of the spring of 1919, combined with the year's labor unrest, convinced most Americans that a Bolshevik-style revolution was unfolding in the United States and that every measure had to be taken to stop it. Suspicion fell most heavily on communities of immigrants, especially those who had originated in eastern and southern Europe and who were thought to be vulnerable to Bolshevik propaganda. These immigrants, predominately Catholic, Christian Orthodox, and Jewish, had never possessed the social prestige enjoyed by the Germans prior to World War I. In the language of the time, they were "new immigrants," a pejorative shorthand for those newcomers whose religion, politics, customs, personal hygiene, racial fitness, and capacity for self-government did not match the standard expected of American citizens or set by such "old immigrant" groups as the Germans and the Swedes. These new immigrants were easy targets for charges of subversion and treachery.²²

Attorney General Palmer and state law enforcement authorities struck against the new immigrant Reds in November 1919, arresting 750 aliens in

New York and deporting 249 of them a month later. Most of these aliens were immigrants from Russia or other countries in eastern Europe. On January 2, 1920, the authorities struck again, arresting more than four thousand suspected radicals in thirty-three cities spread across twenty-three states. Meant to expose the extent of revolutionary activity, these massive raids netted exactly three pistols, no rifles, no explosives, and no plans for insurrection. Nevertheless, those arrested were jailed for weeks and, in some cases, months without being charged with a crime and often under harsh conditions. Of these, 591 would be deported by the spring of 1920 and the rest would be released.²³

In some respects, the Red Scare of 1919–20 ebbed rather quickly. The cases of those aliens arrested during the scare were largely resolved within six months. Congress refused to give Palmer and his energetic young assistant, J. Edgar Hoover, the peacetime sedition law they needed in order to prosecute native-born radicals.²⁴ Moreover, significant opposition to Attorney General Palmer's methods had already surfaced among federal judges, who began ruling, as early as January 1920, that evidence gathered in illegal seizures of papers could not be used in criminal proceedings. By April, Assistant Secretary of Labor Louis Post, in charge of immigration control, had thrown out hundreds of warrants issued by Palmer and released almost half of those arrested on January 2. Threatened with impeachment by Congress for his "leniency," Post demanded and received a congressional hearing, during which he convinced his accusers that the Attorney General's Office had violated the civil liberties of hundreds of innocent individuals. These hearings diminished Attorney General Palmer's prestige. Palmer then discredited himself altogether when the radical violence he had predicted for May 1, 1920, failed to materialize. By the summer of 1920, the Red Scare had largely subsided.²⁵

The effects of the Red Scare lingered in two ways, however. First, the raids and arrests had decimated the communist Left, reducing its membership from seventy thousand to sixteen thousand in 1920 alone. By 1927, that number stood at eight thousand.²⁶ Reliable figures on anarchist membership do not exist, but there can be little doubt that the arrests and deportations of 1919–20, combined with the seven-year ordeal of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Italian anarchists convicted of murdering a Brockton, Massachusetts, paymaster in 1920 and executed in 1927, damaged the anarchist movement.²⁷ Other radical movements, including the Socialist Party and the Industrial Workers of the World, also would suffer from the calumny that the Red Scare had heaped on all "Red" ideologies.

Second, the Red Scare lingered in the attempt by federal authorities to target entire groups of "new immigrants" for their alleged role in nurturing radicals. Bolshevik sympathy probably was stronger among Jewish immigrants, most of whom had fled the tyranny of czarist Russia and celebrated the czar's fall, than among any other single immigrant group; anarchism drew a disproportionate number of its immigrant supporters from Italians. In both cases, the numbers of Bolsheviks and anarchists constituted only a small percentage of the total immigrant Jewish and Italian populations living in the United States. Most government authorities, however, refused to make this distinction. Increasingly, they treated Italians as constitutionally hot-tempered and prone to criminality and violence, and Jews as parasitic, immoral, yet clever—precisely the qualities that had allegedly allowed a small "Judeo-Bolshevik" clique in Russia to seize power and embark on a program of world revolution. Because these qualities were thought to be inborn, no amount of exposure to the ennobling American environment would erode them. The political subversion of Jews and Italians was now thought to rest on these two groups' racial character.²⁸

Once the problem was defined in this way, the only solution was to bar such groups from coming to the United States, which Congress did, first in emergency legislation in 1921 and then as a permanent measure in 1924. The 1924 legislation established an immigration quota for each of the world's nations pegged at 2 percent of that nation's population present in the United States in 1890. At that date, very few Jewish, Italian, or other "new immigrants" resided in the United States, guaranteeing that those groups' post-1924 quotas would be small. Indeed, those quotas reduced immigration from eastern and southern Europe to a trickle, from a prewar annual average of 738,000 to only 18,439, a 97 percent decrease.²⁹

Racialist language permeated discussions of the 1924 immigration restriction legislation when it was being discussed on the House and Senate floor. For example, Congressman Fred S. Purnell of Indiana (Republican) declared: "There is little or no similarity between the clear-thinking, self-governing stocks that sired the American people and this stream of irresponsible and broken wreckage that is pouring into the lifeblood of America the social and political diseases of the Old World." Ira G. Hershey of Maine (Republican) alleged that all eastern and southern European revolutionaries—"soviets and the socialists and the bolsheviks, the radicals and anarchists"—were "mixed bloods" who would mongrelize America, sapping it of its morality and good sense. America's salvation from the

Bolsheviks, degeneracy, and other evils, declared Congressman R. E. L. Allen of West Virginia (Democrat), lay in "purifying and keeping pure the blood of America."³⁰ The legislation favored by these racial purists passed both houses of Congress by overwhelming margins and kept most eastern and southern European immigrants out of the United States for the next forty years. Among other things, it made the admission of eastern European Jews fleeing the Holocaust virtually impossible. In such ways did the effects of the Red Scare endure.

Japanese in World War II

No group that had voluntarily immigrated to the United States suffered what 120,000 West Coast Japanese Americans experienced for almost three years in the 1940s: incarceration by the government in ten "relocation centers" in California, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and Arkansas. Next to the slavery and the confinement of Native American populations on reservations, this policy arguably constituted the worst violation of civil liberties in American history. On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the removal of people deemed dangerous from "military areas." Though Japanese Americans were not actually named in this order, they were its targets. The general roundup began in March 1942. The government made no distinction between those Japanese Americans who were likely to be subversives and those who were not, or even between those who were immigrant aliens and those who were native-born citizens. Many were advised to sell their homes, businesses, and the possessions that they could not personally carry with them. They were then transported by the U.S. Army to sixteen assembly centers. Across a five-month period, from June through October 1942, they were distributed to the ten camps. These camps were, in fact, federal prisons. Barbed wire surrounded them and armed guards patrolled their perimeter. No one was permitted to leave or enter without permission. Some Japanese Americans who signed loyalty oaths would be allowed to leave camps to work in cities or agricultural regions of the Midwest or to serve in the U.S. military. By early 1945, those who had passed loyalty tests were permitted to return to the West Coast, and many did. But eighteen thousand who failed them were held until 1946. And many others were afraid to leave the camps.³¹

It is not surprising, of course, that Americans feared the Japanese in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. The December 7, 1941, attack was the most

devastating assault by a foreign power on American territory since the War of 1812. Incredulity and fear only mounted in the months after December 7, especially as the Japanese military, sweeping through the Southeast Asian colonies of Great Britain, the Netherlands, France, and the United States, demonstrated that the ease of its victory at Pearl Harbor had been no fluke. Americans began to wonder whether Japanese nationals and their descendants living in Hawaii—158,000 strong—had assisted the Japanese military in its surprise attack. But such concerns did not necessarily lead to the conclusion that all Japanese Americans in Hawaii or on the mainland had to be rounded up. Indeed, no government agency would ever attempt to round up the entire Japanese population in Hawaii; and initially the federal government did not even attempt such a roundup on the mainland. Rather, in the days following Pearl Harbor, the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation deployed the techniques they had developed to deal with the Germans in World War I and the anarchists and communists in 1919: they arrested twelve thousand immigrants from Japan, Germany, and Italy whom they suspected of political subversion. Only two thousand of those arrested were Japanese Americans, signaling that U.S. governmental institutions had not yet singled out the Japanese.³²

By the standards of World War I and the Red Scare (and of the Radical Islamicist Scare of 2001), the arrest of 7,500 to 9,500 people was itself staggering. The FBI, under the command of J. Edgar Hoover, believed that this extensive dragnet had snared most pro-Axis political subversives and thus ensured the internal security of the United States. Continued surveillance netted another 5,500 to 7,500 suspects by October 1943. Of the cumulative 13,000 to 15,000 detained in this way, about 6,000 were interned in U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) camps administered by June 1944; and the rest were released.³³ A roundup of alleged political subversives of this magnitude had never occurred in America before, and the laws and techniques used to accomplish it established precedents for future programs of surveillance and arrest, including the anticommunist campaign of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Only in comparison to the mass evacuation and incarceration of 120,000 West Coast Japanese Americans does the scope and intensity of this roundup of political subversives begin to seem tame.

The program of Japanese incarceration resulted from pressure that politically powerful groups of white Americans in the western states and military authorities stationed there were able to exert on the federal gov-

ernment. Declaring that the sabotage of key military installations and perhaps even a Japanese military invasion on the West Coast were imminent, these groups demanded the immediate and mass evacuation of the area's Japanese American population. For a few weeks, Attorney General Francis Biddle resisted these demands. But by February the evacuation arguments had carried the day, and FDR signed Executive Order 9066 after barely a moment of reflection.

The allegations made by white westerners and the Western Defense Command were grounded not in reality but in fifty years of racist stereotypes about the Japanese. These stereotypes ascribed a variety of negative and threatening qualities to the Japanese race: its members were too clanish to assimilate to American life; they possessed the mentality of a herd, readily submitting to emperors and strongmen and unable either to cultivate their own individualism or to appreciate the importance of self-government; they labored like beasts of burden, working themselves, their wives, and their children to the bone. Not only did such habits of work undermine Japanese family life, but they also subverted the wages, hours, and working conditions that "American" workingmen had fought so hard to attain. Finally, the Japanese were accused of being inscrutable and unknowable, possessing an "Oriental-like" habit of stealth and subversion. The combination of their stealth and hard work, white Americans feared, endowed these people with superhuman qualities that might enable them to conquer the white race militarily and economically. Because these qualities were thought to be racial in origin, they could never be shed. The Japanese could never become true Americans.³⁴

White Americans had expressed their hostility to the Japanese as early as 1905. Their protests soon compelled President Theodore Roosevelt to persuade the Japanese government to halt further emigration of Japanese laborers to the United States. In 1913, California passed an Alien Land Law, prohibiting Japanese and other Asian aliens from owning property in the state. In 1924, the Immigration Act barred almost all Japanese immigrants from coming to the United States.³⁵ The treatment of Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor drew directly on this history of racial stereotyping and exclusion. General John L. DeWitt, the head of the Western Defense Command in 1942, was simply repeating an off-repeated slur of the era when he declared, "A Jap's a Jap." In his report urging internment, DeWitt argued that "the Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second- and third-generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become 'Americanized,' the racial strains

are undiluted.”³⁶ Fears of racial subversion had joined fears of political subversion, with profound consequences both for Japanese Americans and America itself.

Significantly, the government in World War II ordered no mass evacuation or incarceration of the German American or Italian American populations. Of course, it would have been much harder to execute such a policy given that those groups numbered in the millions, not the hundreds of thousands. The Japanese Americans in Hawaii themselves escaped mass incarceration because, at 35 percent of the Hawaiian population, they were simply too vital to the local economy to be locked away in prisons. But the arguments about expediency can only be carried so far. Had the Germans and the Italians numbered in the hundreds of thousands, it is still unlikely that they would have been rounded up en masse.³⁷

This is true even though a good case could have been made, in the 1940s, that Germans posed a greater internal security risk than did the Japanese. Not only was the German American Bund a dangerous pro-Nazi organization that, in size and influence, had no pro-emperor counterpart in the Japanese American population, but the German military possessed an ability to strike the mainland United States that the Japanese military lacked. German submarines regularly prowled the Atlantic coastline of the United States in ways that Japanese subs did not do in the Pacific. The German military actually executed on Long Island what American alarmists on the West Coast falsely charged the Japanese military with planning to do in California: they landed saboteurs to blow up key American army, munitions, and communications facilities.³⁸ Yet despite the evidence pointing to the greater danger to the East Coast posed by the Germans, fears of subversion and sabotage focused almost entirely on the Japanese on the West Coast.

Those fears might have subsided sooner had critical government intelligence been allowed to surface and influence the deliberations of the Supreme Court when it began considering the constitutionality of internment in 1943. The U.S. Solicitor General’s Office had in its possession at that time a detailed report assembled by the Office of Naval Intelligence arguing that the Japanese population on the West Coast posed no loyalty threat to the United States and that its incarceration was therefore not a military necessity. But the solicitor general suppressed the report, making it impossible for any of the Supreme Court justices to view it. We cannot know how that report might have affected the internal deliberations of the Court, but it would have made it possible for those justices, such as Frank

Murphy, who were disturbed by the policy of internment to challenge the stigmatization of the Japanese as an “enemy race” capable of extraordinary treachery.³⁹

The Germans and Italians escaped the worst effects of the government’s antisubversion campaign because they were no longer racially suspect. In their case, fear of political subversion was not compounded by the fear of racial subversion. That U.S. authorities and public opinion no longer construed the German and Italian populations as racially threatening can be interpreted as evidence that egalitarian sentiments had made progress against racist ones since the 1910s and 1920s. Yet the treatment of Japanese Americans reveals how far the United States still had to go in ridding itself of its racist habits.⁴⁰

Using the Past to Illuminate the Present

The historical record instructs us that war or near-war situations often put immigrants at risk, especially if those immigrants have come from a part of the world or belong to a race or religion perceived to be the enemy of the United States. Fears of internal subversion during wartime are probably inevitable. Governments are charged with protecting the nation they represent and the people who comprise it. In wartime, governments will usually demand and receive an authority to pursue subversives that, in republican or democratic polities, they would not be given in peacetime. In most wartime situations, governments will have to discharge their responsibilities to provide security while possessing imperfect information about the sources and likelihood of subversive acts. The lack of adequate information usually leads, not to caution, but to overreaching in the form of indiscriminate violations of civil liberties that would not be tolerated during peacetime. Immigrant groups associated through nationality, race, or religion with America’s enemy have been especially vulnerable to government overreach. Marked as different, they are easily construed as dangerous.

Such groups are commonly accused of wanting to aid our enemies and thus to subvert the political integrity of the United States. But in the first half of the twentieth century, the groups that suffered the most—the Germans in World War I, the southern and eastern Europeans during the Red Scare, and the Japanese in World War II—were those whose political subversion was thought to be grounded in another kind of subversion, most

commonly that of race. Leveling the charge of racial subversion imperiled an entire group, for the tendency to political subversion could now be construed as inhering in any individual born into that group. This joining of political subversion to racial subversion suited the needs of Americans trying to arouse hysteria as well as those of government officials who could now relieve themselves of the difficult task of distinguishing between actual subversives and those who were innocent.

An evaluation of government efforts across the last five years to provide security to America in the ongoing "War on Terror" allows us to say that, in some respects, we have learned from past experiences. While Arabs and/or Muslim terrorists are considered to be the chief threat to American security, no attempt is being made to eradicate from American society all aspects of Islamic or Arab culture, a policy that governments and private citizens pursued against German culture in World War I. To the contrary, public and private organizations have understood the urgency of learning more about Arab and Muslim civilizations, past and present, and have undertaken projects in schools, universities, and interfaith assemblies to do just that. Nor is any attempt being made to round up all Arab or Muslim Americans, as was carried out against the Japanese in World War II. While some Americans have verbally abused or physically attacked individual Arabs and Muslims since September 2001, the highest public authorities have refused to condone such popular prejudice and vigilantism. President George Bush has made it clear in ways that Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt never did that it is simply not acceptable to stigmatize an entire racial or religious group because of the small number of terrorists and enemies who reside in its ranks.

In other respects, however, we may not yet have learned the lessons of the past well enough. The anti-Red campaign of 1919–20 is the episode in American history that most closely resembles the current War on Islamic Terror, and paying close attention to the similarities will reveal the danger America runs of repeating past mistakes. Both campaigns crystallized around terrorist acts—mail bombs sent to the homes of "class enemies" in the first case, airplanes turned into bombs and directed toward buildings (and their inhabitants) that symbolized American power in the second. Both acts were the work of revolutionists who were willing to sacrifice anything, including their lives, to achieve their aims (though the revolutionists of 1919 did not celebrate the killing of innocent civilians in the way that the revolutionists of 2001 did). The terrorists in both instances belonged to small cells that were virtually impossible for outsiders to pene-

trate but that drew on global networks of supporters. Both acts of terrorism occasioned frenzied roundups by U.S. government authorities of thousands of immigrant suspects who were held for a long time, often without access to bail, attorneys, or decent conditions. Both of these roundups yielded remarkably little information about those who had been involved in terrorist acts while spreading fear in America at large about those populations of immigrants with whom the terrorists shared a nationality or religion. In the 1920s, as we have seen, this fear led to the racialized stigmatization of entire groups of immigrants and the decision to bar them from the United States.

This has begun to happen in regard to Arab or Muslim immigrants, not through a blanket immigration restriction act of the sort passed by Congress in the 1920s, but by a series of administrative measures taken by federal authorities. Several months after September 11, 2001, the government asked five thousand men from Middle Eastern and Muslim countries to "volunteer" for interviews with immigration officials; some of these interviews have triggered deportations. About the same time, the INS ordered public and private universities to provide it with information about their Middle Eastern and Muslim students. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of university students from Middle Eastern countries have already dropped out of school and gone home, and applications from prospective new students have plummeted. In February 2003, the INS began registering and fingerprinting forty-four thousand immigrants from specified Arab and Islamic countries. A federal noose has tightened around Muslim and Arab immigration, giving the government the ability to choke it.

Whether the United States cuts off this immigrant stream may well depend on whether the charge of political subversion leveled at Muslim terrorists becomes compounded by the charge of racial or religious subversion. The charge of racial subversion would be leveled at Arabs, who would be depicted as harboring a racial affinity for terror. The charge of religious subversion would be leveled at Muslims, who would be accused of adhering to a faith fundamentally hostile to the political ideals that Americans hold most dear and exercising a grip among its adherents so strong that no one who is exposed to it can escape it. The precedent for religious subversion accusations lies in the charges made against Catholicism in the nineteenth century. Those who charged Catholicism with putting America in mortal danger stressed, as critics of Islam do today, its incompatibility with democracy and its lack of regard for individual rights and liberties. No Muslim figure parallels that of the pope, since Islam is

a decentralized religion and is split between Sunni and Shiites, but the charge that Muslims prefer to live in theocracies, autocratic polities controlled by clerics, is similar to the allegation that American Protestants made against Catholics 150 years ago.

The defense against stigmatizing entire groups as threats to America lies in the willingness of Americans to insist that charges of political subversion be separated from those of racial or religious subversion and that the arrest, prosecution, and deportation of individuals be limited to those whose actions, separated from a consideration of race and religion, can be shown to be subversive. Attorney General Palmer was partially stymied in his anti-Red campaign because judges and government officials had the courage to take a stand against his methods. The postwar Red Scare also brought into being the American Civil Liberties Union, an organization committed to fighting illegal campaigns to strip individual Americans and aliens of their rights. The ACLU still exists and has mounted vigorous protests since 2001 against the indiscriminate surveillance and prosecution of Arab and Muslim populations. Its work draws support from a large number of other groups, ranging from the U.S. Civil Rights Commission to an array of ethnic and racial antidiscrimination organizations larger and more influential than what existed in 1920. But the counterparts of the judges and government officials who, in 1920, did so much to thwart Attorney General Palmer, have taken much longer to surface in post-2001 America than they did after the Red Scare of 1919.⁴¹ And even that robust anti-Palmer opposition, it must be said, did little to stop the campaign for racialized immigration restriction that came on the Red Scare's heels.

In times of war or near-war, it is not easy to resist demands for unity, conformity, and homogeneity. Yet the record of the twentieth century reminds us how important it is for private citizens and public officials to be vigilant in defense of constitutional rights and to resist the temptation to stigmatize entire immigrant groups as threats to the American republic.

NOTES

This essay is a revised and updated version of the article of the same title that appeared in *The Maze of Fear: Security and Migration after 9/11*, ed. John Tirmail (New York: New Press, 2004).

1. Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1951), 3.

2. Lazarus, Powell, and Reuther were the children of immigrants, not immigrants themselves.

3. On the Irish, see Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1865: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941); on the Chinese, see Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), and Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); on the Germans during World War I, see Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974); on eastern and southern Europeans in the 1920s, see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (1955; reprint, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), and Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); on Mexicans in the 1930s, see Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), and Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); on Japanese internment, see Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps USA: Japanese Americans and World War II* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971).

4. One of the oldest and still one of the best efforts of this sort is Higham, *Strangers in the Land*; for a more recent effort, see David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

5. For a history of this country's anti-Catholic origins, see Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 4-7, and Bennett, *Party of Fear*, Part I, passim.

6. Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants*; Bennett, *Party of Fear*; Tyler G. Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1999).

7. Bennett, *Party of Fear*, 233-37, 319-21.

8. On the importance and meaning of republicanism to American political culture in the nineteenth century, see Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of an American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984). On its troubling implications for immigrants and others thought to lack the necessary political independence and virtue, see Gary Gerstle, "Ideas of the American Labor Movement," in *Ideas, Ideologies, and Social Movements: The U.S. Experience since 1800*, ed. Stuart Burchey and Peter Coclanis (Charleston: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 72-89; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

9. Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 54-58. This fear of what radicalism and rev-

olution would do to the American republic can best be grasped by reading what politicians such as Theodore Roosevelt wrote and said in reaction to Haymarket, the strikes of the 1890s, and the assassination of William McKinley. See, for example, Theodore Roosevelt, "American Ideals," in *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt, National Edition*, ed. Hermann Hagedorn (New York, 1926), 13:7; Howard Lawrence Hurwitz, *Theodore Roosevelt and Labor in New York, 1880-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 11, 181, 283.

10. Gary Gerstle, "Immigration and Ethnicity in the American Century," in *Perspectives on Modern America: Making Sense of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Harvard Sitkoff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 275-95.

11. Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 4-5; Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

12. Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955); Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*; Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*; James R. Barrett and David Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality, and the 'New Immigrant' Working Class," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16 (Spring 1997): 3-44.

13. Gyory, *Closing the Gate*; Lee, *At America's Gates*; Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1990).

14. Would the preservation of German traditions include an admiration for the German Kaiser and thus constitute a threat to republicanism? Most German immigrants addressed this problem by insisting that their cultural affection for Germany entailed no political loyalty. To the contrary, they insisted, Germans were committed to American political traditions. They were German only in culture, not in politics. And most Americans believed them—until World War I. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*; Russell A. Kazal, "Becoming 'Old Stock': The Waning of German-American Identity in Philadelphia, 1900-1930" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1998). In the space of three years, 1916-18, Germans went from being one of America's most celebrated and public ethnic groups to one of its most feared and private ones. As the American government prepared itself to fight in 1916, it worried that the American people would not support America's entry into war. A large and diverse antiwar movement had cohered, drawing on large number of progressives, women's peace party activists, Protestant ministers, socialists, and Irish and German immigrants. Moreover, America in the 1910s was a society deeply divided between workers and bosses, immigrants and the native born, city dwellers and farmers. It would not have been easy for any government, no matter how enlightened or skillful, to overcome those divisions and to secure everyone's support for a hard, difficult fight, especially a government that was as small as the American one and so inadequately endowed with administrative capacity.

15. David Kennedy, *Over Here! The First World War and American Society* (New

York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Gerstle, *American Crucible*, ch. 3; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 194-263.

16. The situation of the Germans was made more precarious by the long period of official neutrality—two and a half years (August 1914-April 1917) that preceded America's entry into war. For most of that time, the American government insisted that it would not take sides in the conflict and that it would continue to maintain trade and other kinds of relations with both the Entente and Central Powers. German Americans interpreted this neutrality to be genuine, meaning that they were free to express their neutrality, their belief (if they were socialists) that the working people had nothing to gain from this war, their continued love of German culture, their suspicions of England, and, in some cases, their sympathies with Germany's war aims. But America's neutrality was never as evenhanded as the Germans immigrants interpreted it to be. Owing to a large volume of trade between the United States and England and a common cultural and political inheritance, a majority of Americans felt closer to England than to Germany. In 1915 and 1916, public and official opinion in America moved steadily in the direction of England and the Triple Entente and against Germany and the Central Powers. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*.

17. This paragraph and the ones on the German American experience that follow are largely based on the following sources: *ibid.*; H. C. Peterson, *Propaganda for War: The War against American Neutrality* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939); George Sylvester Viereck, *Spreading Germs of Hate* (New York: H. Liveright, 1930); Christopher Gildemeister, "My Four Years in Germany: Progressivism, Propaganda and American Film in World War I," unpublished seminar paper, Catholic University of America, 1994; Kennedy, *Over Here!*; Ronald Schaeffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Higham, *Strangers in the Land*; Kazal, "Becoming 'Old Stock.'"

18. Kazal, "Becoming 'Old Stock.'"

19. Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955); William Preston Jr., *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963); Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 194-263; Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 81-127; David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor's Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987); Steve Fraser, *Labor Will Rule: Sidney Hillman and the Rise of American Labor* (New York: Free Press, 1991); H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917-1918* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957).

20. R. Murray, *Red Scare*, 79.

21. The best work on the history of anarchism in the United States has been done by Paul Avrich. See, in particular, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University of Press, 1984), and *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).
22. Higham, *Strangers in the Land*; Gerstle, *American Crucible*.
23. R. Murray, *Red Scare*.
24. This refusal made it impossible for federal law enforcement agencies to target citizens and explains why most of those arrested and virtually all of those deported were immigrants, who were vulnerable to the antiseditious provisions of the Alien Act of 1918.
25. R. Murray, *Red Scare*, 239–62; Stanley Coben, *A. Mitchell Palmer: Politician* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).
26. R. Murray, *Red Scare*, 276.
27. Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*.
28. Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 95–104.
29. *Ibid.*, 95–109.
30. *Congressional Record*, March 17, 1924, 4389; April 8, 1924, 5868–69; April 5, 1924, 5693.
31. This account of Japanese internment is based on the following: Daniels, *Concentration Camps, USA*; Roger Daniels, *Prisoners without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993); Peter Irons, ed., *Justice Delayed: The Record of the Japanese Internment Cases* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1989); Jacobus tenBroek, Edward N. Barnhart, and Floyd W. Matson, *Prejudice, War and the Constitution: Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958); Dillon S. Myer, *Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority during World War II* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1971); Gary Y. Okihiro and Joan Myers, *Whispered Silences: Japanese Americans and World War II* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996); Alice Yang Murray, ed., *What Did the Internment of Japanese Americans Mean?* (Boston: Bedford, 2000); Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
32. Alice Yang Murray, "The Internment of Japanese Americans," in A. Murray, *What Did the Internment of Japanese Americans Mean?* 3.
33. Stephen Fox, *The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of Italian Americans during World War II* (Boston: Twayne, 1990), 151, 163–64.
34. In addition to the sources listed above, see John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986).
35. Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1880–1924* (New York: Free Press, 1988); Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 60–62, 109–13.
36. U.S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied: The Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and In-*

ternment of Civilians (Washington, DC: Civil Liberties Public Education Fund, 1997), 66; Lt. Gen. J. L. DeWitt, U.S. Army, *Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), 97.

37. Western Command, under General DeWitt's command, did draw up plans for mass expulsion and internment of West Coast Italians and Germans, but these proposals never attracted the kind of support from Western politicians, Western public opinion, or Washington bureaucrats that Japanese internment did.

38. In 1942, the Germans landed eight soldiers disguised as American civilians on Long Island with instructions to blow up key U.S. military installations. They were captured before they could do any harm and were tried and executed under military law. Louis Fisher, *Nazi Saboteurs on Trial: A Military Tribunal and American Law* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

39. Peter Irons, "Gordon Hirabayashi v. United States: 'A Jap's a Jap,'" in *The Courage of their Convictions*, ed. Peter Irons (New York: Free Press, 1988), 37–62.

40. Though the effects of internment on the Japanese American population are beyond the purview of this essay, it should be said those effects, in terms of loss of wealth, status, freedom, family integrity, and culture, were extreme and would not be overcome for two generations. The disgraceful episode would finally elicit from the U.S. government a formal apology in 1990.

41. It should be said that an additional reason why the Red Scare of 1919–20 declined more quickly than the Radical Islamicist Scare of today lies in the changing foreign policy of the Soviet Union in the early 1920s. It stopped making international revolution its chief priority, choosing instead to consolidate its power within the confines of the nation and empire it had wrested from the czars. This change made other countries fear the Soviet Union and communism less than they had and diminished what these other countries had construed as a campaign of international terror. The Soviet Union had become more of a conventional nation-state and easier to deal with through traditional diplomatic channels. This has not happened, of course, with Al Qaeda.