

# Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot

## A Study of American Nationality\*

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### Part I

It was, I think, an eminent lawyer who, backed by a ripe experience of inequalities before the law, pronounced our Declaration of Independence to be a collection of “glittering generalities.” Yet it cannot be that the implied slur was deserved. There is hardly room to doubt that the equally eminent gentleman over whose signatures this orotund synthesis of the social and political philosophy of the eighteenth century appears conceived that they were subscribing to anything but the dull and sober truth when they underwrote the doctrine that God had created all men equal and had endowed them with certain inalienable rights, among these being life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That this doctrine did not describe a condition, that it even contradicted conditions, that many of the signatories owned other men and bought and sold them, that many were eminent by birth, many by wealth, and only a few by merit - all this is acknowledged. Indeed, they were aware of these inequalities; they would probably have fought their abolition. But they did not regard them as incompatible with the Declaration of Independence. For to them the Declaration was neither a pronouncement of abstract principles nor an exercise in formal logic. It was an instrument in a political and economic conflict, a weapon of offense and defense. The doctrine of “natural rights” which is its essence was formulated to shield social orders against the aggrandizement of persons acting under the doctrine of “divine right”: its function was to afford sanction for refusing customary obedience to traditional superiority. Such also was the function of the Declaration. Across the water, in England, certain powers had laid claim to the acknowledgment of their traditional superiority to the colonists in America. Whereupon the colonists, through their representatives, the signatories to the Declaration, replied that they were quite as good as their traditional betters, and that no one should take from them certain possessions which were theirs.

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Today the descendants of the colonists are reformulating a declaration of independence. Again, as in 1776, Americans of British ancestry find that certain possessions of theirs, which may be lumped under the word “Americanism,” are in jeopardy. This is the situation which Mr. Ross’s book, in common with many others, describes. The danger comes, once more, from a force across the water, but the force is this time regarded as superior, but as inferior. The relationships of 1776 are, consequently, reversed. To conserve the inalienable rights of the colonists of 1776, it was necessary to declare all men equal; to conserve the inalienable rights of their descendants in 1914, it becomes necessary to declare all men unequal. In 1776 all men were as good as their betters; in 1914 men are permanently worse than their betters. “A nation may reason,” writes Mr. Ross, “why burden ourselves with the rearing of children? Let them perish unborn in the womb of time. The immigrants will keep up the population. A people that has no more respect for its ancestors and no more pride of race than this deserves the extinction that surely awaits it.”

### I.

Respect for ancestors, pride of race! Time was when these would have been repudiated as the enemies of democracy, as the antithesis of the fundamentals of our republic, with its belief that “a man’s a man for a’ that.” And now they are being invoked in defence of democracy, against the “melting pot,” by a sociological protagonist of the “democratic idea”! How conscious their invocation is cannot be said. But that they have unconsciously colored much of the social and political thinking of this country from the days of the Cincinnati on, seems to me unquestionable, and even more unquestionable that this apparently sudden and explicit conscious expression of them is the effect of an actual, felt menace. Mr. Ross, in a word, is no voice crying in a wilderness. He simply utters aloud and in his own peculiar manner what is felt and spoken wherever Americans of British ancestry congregate thoughtfully. He is the most recent phase of the operation of these forces in the social and economic history of the United States; a voice and instrument of theirs. Being so, he has neither taken account of them nor observed

them, but has reacted in terms of them to the social situation which constitutes the theme of his book. The reaction is secondary, the situation is secondary. The standards alone are really primary and, perhaps, ultimate. Fully to understand the place and function of "the old world in the new," and the attitude of the "new world" towards the old, demands an appreciation of the influence of these primary and ultimate standards upon all the peoples who are citizens of the country.

## II.

In 1776 the mass of white men in the colonies were actually, with respect to one another, rather free and rather equal. I refer, not so much to the absence of great differences in wealth, as to the fact that the whites were *like-minded*. They were possessed of ethnic and cultural unity; they were homogenous with respect to ancestry and ideals. Their century-and-a-half-old tradition as Americans was continuous with their immemorially older tradition as Britons. They did not, until the economic-political quarrel with the mother country arose, regard themselves as other than Englishmen, sharing England's dangers and England's glories. When the quarrel came they remembered how they had left the mother country in search of religious liberty for themselves; how they had left Holland, where they had found this liberty, for fear of losing their ethnic and cultural identity, and what hardships they had borne for the sake of conserving both the liberty and the identity. Upon these they grafted that political liberty the love of which was innate, perhaps, but the expression of which was occasioned by the economic warfare with the merchants of England. This grafting was not, of course, conscious. The continuity established itself rather as a mood than as an articulate idea. The economic situation was only an occasion, and not a cause. The cause lay in the homogeneity of the people, their like-mindedness, and in their self-consciousness.

Now, it happens that the preservation and development of any given type of civilization rests upon these two conditions—like-mindedness and self-consciousness. Without them art, literature—culture in any of its nobler forms—is impossible: and colonial America had a culture - chiefly New England—but representative enough of the whole British-American life of the period. Within the area of what we now call the United States this life was not, however, the only life. Similarly animated groups of Frenchmen and Germans, in Louisiana and Pennsylvania, regarded themselves as the cultural peers of the British, and because of their own common ancestry, their like-mindedness and self-consciousness, they have retained a large measure of their individuality and spiritual autonomy to this day, after generations of

unrestricted and mobile contact and a century of political union with the dominant British populations.

In the course of time the state, which began to be with the Declaration of Independence, became possessed of all the United States. French and Germans in Louisiana and Pennsylvania remained at home; but the descendants of the British colonists trekked across the continent, leaving tiny self-conscious nuclei of population in their wake, and so established ethnic and cultural standards for the whole country. Had the increase of these settlements borne the same proportion to the unit of population that it bore between 1810 and 1820, the Americans of British stock would have numbered today over 100,000,000. The inhabitants of the country do number over 100,000,000; but they are not the children of the colonists and the pioneers; they are immigrants and the children of immigrants, and they are not British, but of all the other European stocks.

First came the Irish, integral to the polity of Great Britain, but ethnically different, Catholic in religion, fleeing from economic and political oppression, and—self-conscious and rebellious. They came seeking food and freedom, and revenge against the oppressors on the other side. Their area of settlement is chiefly the East. There they were not met with open arms. Historically only semi-alien, their appearance aroused, none the less, both fear and active opposition. Their diversity in religion was outstanding, their gregarious politics disturbing. Opposition, organized, religious, political, and social, stimulated their natural gregariousness into action. They organized, in their turn, religiously and politically. Slowly they made their way, slowly they came to power, establishing themselves in many modes as potent forces in the life of America. Mr. Ross thinks that they have their virtue still to prove; how he does not say. To the common sense of the country they constitute an approved ethnic unity of the white American population.

Behind the Irish came the great mass of the Germans, quite diverse in speech and customs, culturally and economically far better off than the Irish, and self-conscious, as well through oppression and political aspiration as for these other reasons. They settled inland, over a stretch of relatively continuous territory extending from western New York to the Mississippi, from Buffalo to Minneapolis, and from Minneapolis to St. Louis. Spiritually, these Germans were more akin to the American settlers than the Irish, and, indeed, although social misprision pursued them also, they were less coldly received and with less difficulty tolerated. As they made their way, greater and greater numbers of the peasant stock joined them in the Western nuclei of population, so that between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Valley they constitute the dominant ethnic type. Beyond them, in Minnesota, their near

neighbors, the Scandinavians, prevail, and beyond these, in the mountain and mining regions, the central and eastern and southern Europeans—Slavs of various stocks, Magyars, Finns, Italians. Beyond the Rockies, cut off from the rest of the country by this natural barrier, a stratum of Americans of British ancestry balances the thinnish stratum on the Atlantic sea coast; flanked on the south by Latins and scattering groups of Asiatics, and on the north by Scandinavians. The distribution of the population upon the two coasts is not dissimilar; that upon the Atlantic littoral is only less homogenous. There French-Canadians, Irish, Italians, Slavs, and Jews alternate with the American population and each other, while in the West the Americans lie between and surround the Italians, Asiatics, Germans, and Scandinavians.

Now, of all these immigrant peoples the greater part are peasants, vastly illiterate, living their lives at fighting weight, with a minimum of food and a maximum of toil. Mr. Ross thinks that their coming to America was determined by no spiritual urge; only the urge of steamship agencies and economic need or greed. However generally true this opinion may be, he ignores, curiously enough, three significant and one notable exception to it. The significant exceptions are the Poles, the Finns, the Bohemians—the subjugated Slavic nationalities generally. Political and religious and cultural persecution plays no small role in the movement of the masses of them. The notable exception is the Jews. The Jews come far more with the attitude of the earliest settlers than any of the other peoples; for they more than any other present-day immigrant group are in flight from persecution and disaster; in search of economic opportunity, liberty of conscience, civic rights. They have settled chiefly in the Northeast, with New York City as the center of greatest concentration. Among them, as among the Puritans, the Pennsylvania Germans, the French of Louisiana, self-consciousness and like-mindedness are intense and articulate. But they differ from the subjugated Slavic peoples in that the latter look backward and forward to actual, even if enslaved homelands; the Jews, in the mass, have thus far looked to America as their home land.

In sum, when we consider that portion of our population which has taken root, we see that it has not stippled the country in small units of diverse ethnic groups. It forms rather a series of stripes or layers of varying sizes, moving east to west along the central axis of settlement, where towns are thickest; i.e. from New York and Philadelphia, through Chicago and St. Louis, to San Francisco and Seattle. Stippling is absent even in the towns, where the variety of population is generally greater. Probably 90 percent of that population is either foreign-born or of foreign stock; yet even so, the towns are aggregations, not units.

Broadly divided into the sections inhabited by the poor, this economic division does not abolish, it only crosses, the ethnic one. There are rich and poor little Italys, Irelands, Hungarys, Germanys, and rich and poor little Ghettoes. The *common* city life, which depends upon like-mindedness, is not inward, corporate, and inevitable, but external, inarticulate, and incidental, a reaction to the need of amusement and the need of protection, not the expression of a unity of heritage, mentality and interest. Politics and education in our cities thus present the phenomenon of ethnic compromises not unknown in Austria-Hungary; concessions and appeals to “the Irish vote,” “the Jewish vote,” “the German vote”; compromise school committees where members represent each ethnic faction, until, as in Boston, one group grows strong enough to dominate the entire situation.

South of Mason and Dixon’s line the cities exhibit a greater homogeneity. Outside of certain regions in Texas the descendants of the native white stock, often degenerate and backward, prevail among the whites, but the whites as a whole constitute a relatively weaker proportion of the population. They live among nine million negroes, whose own mode of living tends, by its mere massiveness, to standardize the “mind” of the proletarian South in speech, manner, and the other values of social organization.

### III.

All the immigrants and their offspring are in the way of becoming “Americanized,” if they remain in one place in the country long enough - say, six or seven years. The general notion, “Americanization,” appears to denote the adoption of English speech, of American clothes and manners, of the American attitude in politics. It connotes the fusion of the various bloods, and a transmutation by “the miracle of assimilation” of Jews, Slavs, Poles, Frenchmen, Germans, Hindus, Scandinavians into beings similar in background, tradition, outlook, and spirit to the descendants of the British colonists, the Anglo-Saxon stock. Broadly speaking, the elements of Americanism are somewhat external, the effect of environment; largely internal, the effect of heredity. Our economic individualism, our traditional *laissez-faire* policy, is largely the effect of environment: where nature offers more than enough wealth to go round, there is no immediate need for regulating distribution. What poverty and unemployment exist among us is the result of unskilled and wasteful social housekeeping, not of any actual natural barrenness. And until the disparity between our economic resources and our population becomes equalized, so that the country shall attain an approximate economic equilibrium, this will always be the case. With our individualism go our optimism and our other “pioneer” virtues: they are purely reactions to our unexploited natu-

ral wealth, and, as such, moods which characterize all societies in which the relation between population and resource is similar. The predominance of the “new freedom” over the “new nationalism” is a potent political expression of this relationship, and the overwhelming concern of both novelties with the economic situation rather than with the cultural or spiritual is a still stronger one. That these last alone justify or condemn this or that economic condition or program is a commonplace: “by their fruits shall ye know the soils and the roots.”

The fruits in this case are those of New England. Eliminate from our roster Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Hawthorne, Emerson, Howells, and what have we left? Outstanding are Poe and Whitman, and the necromantic mysticism of the former is only a sick-minded version of the naturalistic mysticism of the latter, while the general mood of both is that of Emerson, who in his way expresses the culmination of that movement in mysticism from the agonized conscience of colonial and Puritan New England—to which Hawthorne gives voice—to serene and optimistic assurance. In religion this spirit of Puritan New England non-conformity culminates similarly: in Christian Science when it is superstitious and magical; in Unitarianism when it is rationalistic; in both cases, over against the personal individualism, there is the cosmic unity. For New England, religious, political, and literary interests remained coordinate and indivisible; and New England gave the tone to and established the standards for the rest of the American state. Save for the very early political writers, the “solid South” remains unexpressed, while the march of the pioneer across the continent is permanently marked by Mark Twain for the Middle West, and by Bret Harte for the Pacific slope. Both these men carry something of the tone and spirit of New England, and with the “great tradition” of America, the America of the “Anglo-Saxon,” comes to an end. There remains nothing large or significant that is unexpressed, and no unmentioned writer who is so completely representative.

The background, tradition, spirit, and outlook of the whole of the America of the “Anglo-Saxon,” then, find their spiritual expression in the New England school, Poe, Whitman, Mark Twain, Bret Harte. They realize an individual who has passed from the agonized to the optimistic conscience, a person of the solid and homely virtues tempered by mystic certainty of his destiny, his election, hence always ready to take risks, and always willing to face dangers. From the agony of Arthur Dimmesdale to the smug industrial and social rise of Silas Lapham, from the irresponsible kindness of Huck Finn to the “Luck of Roaring Cam;,” the movement is the same, though on different social levels. In regions supernal its coordinate is the movement from the God of Jonathan

Edwards to the Oversoul of Emerson and the Divinity of Mrs. Eddy. It is summed up in the contemporary representative “average” American of British stock—an individualist, English-speaking, interested in getting on, kind, neighborly, not too scrupulous in business, indulgent to his women, optimistically devoted to laissez-faire in economics and politics, very respectable in private life, tending to liberalism and mysticism in religion, and moved, where his economic interests are unaffected, by formulas rather than ideas. He typifies the aristocracy of America. From among his fellows are recruited her foremost protagonists in politics, religion, art and learning. He constitutes, by virtue of being heir of the oldest *rooted* economic settlement and spiritual tradition of the white man in America, the measure and the standard of Americanism that the newcomer is to attain.

Other things being equal, a democratic society which should be a realization of the assumptions of the Declaration of Independence, supposing them to be true, would be a levelling society such that all persons become alike, either on the lowest or the highest plane. The outcome of free social contacts should, according to the laws of imitation, establish “equality” on the highest plane; for the imitation is the higher by the lower, so that the cut of a Paris gown at \$1000 becomes imitated in department stores at \$17.50, and the play of the rich becomes the vice of the poor. This process of leveling up through imitation is facilitated by the so-called “standardization” of externals. In these days of ready-made clothes, factory-made goods, refrigerating plants, it is almost impossible that the mass of the inhabitants of this country should wear other than uniform clothes, use other than uniform furniture or utensils, or eat anything but the same kind of food. In these days of rapid transit and industrial mobility it must seem impossible that any stratification of population should be permanent. Hardly anybody seems to have been born where he lives, or to live where he has been born. The teetering of demand and supply in industry and commerce keeps large masses of population constantly mobile; so that many people no longer can be said to have homes. This mobility reinforces the use of English—for a *lingua franca*, intelligible everywhere, becomes indispensable—by immigrants. And ideals that are felt to belong with the language tend to become “standardized,” widespread, uniform, through the devices of the telegraph and the telephone, the syndication of “literature,” the cheap newspaper and the cheap novel, the vaudeville circuit, the “movie,” and the star system. Even more significantly, mobility leads to the propinquity of the different stocks, thus promoting intermarriage and pointing to the coming of a new “American race”—a blend of at least all the European stocks (for there

seems to be some difference of opinion as to whether negroes should constitute an element in this blend) into a newer and better being whose qualities and ideals shall be the qualities and ideals of the contemporary American of British ancestry. Apart from the unintentional impulsion towards this end, of the conditions I have just enumerated, there exists the instrument especially devised for this purpose which we call the public school - and to some extent there is the State university. That the end has been and is being attained, we have the biographical testimony of Jacob Riis, of Steiner, and of Mary Antin—a Dane and two Jews, intermarried, assimilated even in religion, and more excessively self-consciously American than the Americans. And another Jew, Mr. Isreal Zangwill, of London, profitably promulgates it as a principle and an aspiration, to the admiring approval of American audiences, under the device, “the melting pot.”

#### IV.

All is not, however, fact, because it is hope; nor is the biography of an individual, particularly of a literary individual, the history of a group. The Riises and the Steiners and Antins protest too much, they are too self-conscious and self-centered, their “Americanization” appears too much like an achievement, a *tour de force*, too little like a growth. As for Zangwill, at best he is the obverse of Dickens, at worst he is a Jew making a special plea. It is the work of the Americanized writers that is really significant, and in that one senses, underneath the excellent writing, a dualism and the strain to overcome it. The same dualism is apparent in different form among the Americans, and the strain to overcome it seems even stronger. These appear to have been most explicit at the high-water marks of periods of immigration: the Know-Nothing party was one early expression of it; the organization, in the '80s, of the patriotic societies—The Sons and the Daughters of the American Revolution, later on of the Colonial Dames, and so on - another. Since the Spanish War it has shown itself in the continual, if uneven, growth of the political conscience, first as a muckraking magazine propoganda, than as a nation-wide attack on the corruption of politics by plutocracy, finally as the altogether respectable and evangelical progressive party, with its slogan of “Human rights against property rights.”

In this process, however, the non-British American or Continental immigrant has not been a fundamental protagonist. He has been an occasion rather than a force. What has been causal has been “American.” Consider the personnel and history of the Progressive party by way of demonstration: it is composed largely of the professional groups and of the “solid” and “upper” middle class; as a spirit it has survived in Kansas, which by an historic accident happens to

be the one Middle Western State predominately Yankee; as a victorious party it has survived in California, one of the few States outstandingly “American” in population. What is significant in it, as in every other form of the political conscience, is the fact that it is a response to a feeling of “something out of gear,” and naturally the attention seeks the cause, first of all, outside of the self, not within. Hence the interest in economic-political reconstruction. But the maladjustment in that region is really external. And the political conscience is seeking by a mere change in outward condition to abolish an inward disparity. “Human rights versus property rights” is merely the modern version of the Declaration of independence, still assuming that men are men merely, as like as marbles and destined under uniformity of conditions to uniformity of spirit. The course of our economic history since the Civil War shows aptly enough how shrewd were, other things being equal, Marx’s generalizations concerning the tendencies of capital towards concentration in the hands of a few. Attention consequently has fixed itself more and more upon the equalization of the distribution of wealth—not socialistically, of course. And this would really abolish the dualism if the economic dualism of rich and poor were the fundamental one. It happens merely that it isn’t.

The Anglo-Saxon American, constituting as he does the economic upper class, would hardly have reacted to economic disparity as he has if that had been the only disparity. In point of fact it is the ethnic disparity that troubles him. His activity as entrepreneur has crowded our cities with progressively cheaper laborers of Continental stock, all consecrated to the industrial machine, and towns like Gary, Lawrence, Chicago, Pittsburgh, have become industrial camps of foreign mercenaries. His undertakings have brought into being the terrible autocracies of Pullman and of Lead, North Dakota. They have created a mass of casual laborers numbering 5,000,000, and work-children to the number of 1,500,000 (the latter chiefly in the South, where the purely “American” white predominates). They have done all this because the greed of the entrepreneur has displaced high-demanding labor by cheaper labor, and has brought into being the unnecessary problem of unemployment. In all things greed has set the standard, so that the working ideal of the people is to get rich, to live, and to think as the rich, to subordinate government to the service of wealth, making the actual government “invisible.” *Per contra* it has generated “labor unrest,” the I.W.W., the civil war in Colorado.

Because the great mass of the laborers happen to be of Continental and not British ancestry, and because they are late-comers, Mr. Ross blames them for this perversion of our public life and social ideals. Ig-

noring the degenerate farming stock of New England, the “poor whites” of the South, the negroes, he fears the anthropological as well as the economic effects of the “fusion” of these Continental Europeans, Slavs, and Italians and Jews, with the native stock, and grows anxious over the fate of American institutions at their hands. Nothing could better illustrate the fact that the dualism is primarily ethnic and not economic. Under the laissez-faire policy, the economic process would have been the same, of whatever race the rich, and whatever race the poor. Only race prejudice, primitive, spontaneous, and unconscious, could have caused a trained economist to ignore the so obvious fact that in a capitalist industrial society labor is useless and helpless without capital; that hence the external dangers of immigration are in the greed of the capitalist and the indifference of the Government. The restriction of immigration can naturally succeed only with the restriction of the entrepreneur’s greed, which is its cause. But the abolition of immigration and the restoration of the supremacy of “human rights” over “property rights” will not abolish the fundamental ethnic dualism; it may aggravate it.

The reason is obvious. That like-mindedness in virtue of which men are as nearly as is possible in fact “free and equal” is not primarily the result of a constant set of external conditions. Its pre-potent cause is an intrinsic similarity which, for America, has its roots in that ethnic and cultural unity of which our fundamental institutions are the most durable expression. Similar environments, similar occupations, do, of course, generate similarities: “American” is an adjective of similarity applied to Anglo-Saxons, Irish, Jews, Germans, Italians, and so on. But the similarity is one of place and institution, acquired, not inherited, and hence not transmitted. Each generation has, in fact, to become “Americanized” afresh, and, withal, inherited nature has a way of redirecting nurture, of which our public schools give only too much evidence. If the inhabitants of the United States are stratified economically as “rich” and “poor,” they are stratified ethnically as Germans, Scandinavians, Jews, Irish, and although the two stratifications cross more frequently than they are coincident, they interfere with each other far less than is hopefully supposed. The history of the “International” in recent years, the present *debacle* in Europe, are indications of how little “class-consciousness” modifies national consciousness. To the dominant nationality in American nationality, in the European sense, has had no meaning; for it had set the country’s standards and had been assimilating others to itself. Now that the process seems to be slowing down, it finds itself confronted with the problem of nationality, just as do the Irish, the Poles, the Bohemians, the Czechs, and the other oppressed nationalities in Europe. “We are

submerged,” writes a great American man of letters, who has better than any one I know interpreted the American spirit to the world, “we are submerged beneath a conquest so complete that the very name of us means something not ourselves. . . I feel as I should think an Indian might feel, in the face of ourselves that were.”

The fact is that similarity of class rests upon no inevitable external condition, while similarity of nationality is inevitably intrinsic. Hence the poor of two different peoples tend to be less like-minded than the poor and the rich of the same peoples. At his core no human being, even in a “state of nature,” is a mere mathematical unit of action like the “economic man.” Behind him in time and tremendously in him in quality are his ancestors; around him in space are his relatives and kin, looking back with him to a remoter common ancestry. In all these he lives and moves and has his being. They constitute his, literally, *natio*, and in Europe every inch of his non-human environment wears the effects of their action upon it and breathes their spirit. The America he comes to, beside Europe, is nature virgin and inviolate; it does not guide him with ancestral blazings; externally he is cut off from the past. Not so internally: whatever else he changes, he cannot change his grandfather. Moreover, he comes rarely alone; he comes companioned with his fellow-nationals; and he comes to no strangers, but to kin and friend who have gone before. If he is able to excel, he soon achieves a local habitation. There he encounters the native American to whom he is a Dutchman, a Frenchy, a Mick, a wop, a dago, a hunky, or a sheeny, and he encounters these others who are unlike him, dealing with him as a lower and outlandish creature. Then, be he even the rudest and most primeval peasant, heretofore totally unconscious of his nationality, of his categorical difference from other men, he must inevitably become conscious of it. Thus, in our industrial and congested towns where there are real and large contacts between immigrant nationalities the first effect appears to be an intensification of spiritual dissimilarities, always to the disadvantage of the dissimilarities.

The second generation, consequently, devotes itself feverishly to the attainment of similarity. The older social tradition is lost by attrition or thrown off for advantage. The merest externals of the new one are acquired—via the public school. But as the public school imparts it, or as the settlement imparts it, it is not really a *life*, it is an abstraction, an arrangement of words: as an historic fact, a democratic ideal of life, it is not realized at all. At best and at worst—now that the captains of industry are becoming disturbed by the mess they have made, and “vocational training” is becoming part of the educational program—the prospective American learns

a trade, acquiring at his most impressionable age the habit of being a cog in the industrial machine. And this he learns, moreover, from the sons and daughters of earlier immigrants, themselves essentially uneducated and nearly illiterate, with what spontaneity and teaching power they have squeezed out in the “normal” schools by the application of that Pecksniffian “efficiency”-press called pedagogy.

But life, the expression of emotion and realization of desire, the prospective American learns from the yellow press, which has set itself explicitly the task of appealing to his capacities. He learns of the wealth, the luxuries, the extravagances, and the immoralities of specific rich persons. He learns to want to be like them. As that is impossible in the mass, their amusements become his crimes or vices. Or suppose him strong enough to emerge from the proletariat into the middle class, to achieve economic competence and social respectability. He remains still the Slav, the Jew, the German, or the Irish citizen of the American commonwealth. Again, in the mass, neither he nor his children nor his children’s children lose their ethnic individuality. For marriage is determined by sexual selection and by propinquity, and the larger the town, the lesser the likelihood of mixed marriage. Although the gross number of such marriages is greater than it was fifty years ago, the relative proportions, in terms of variant units of population, tends, I think, to be significantly less. As the stratification of the towns echoes ad stresses the stratification of the country as a whole, the likelihood of a new “American” race is remote enough, and the fear of it unnecessary. But equally remote also is the possibility of a universalization of the inwardness of the old American life. Only the externals succeed in passing over.

It took over two hundred years of settled life in one place for the New England school to emerge, and it emerged in a community in which like-mindedness was very strong, and in which the whole ethnic group performed all the tasks, economic and social, which the community required. How when ethnic and industrial groups are coincident? For there is a marked tendency in this country for the industrial and social stratification to follow ethnic lines. The first comers in the land constitute its aristocracy, are its chief protagonists of the pride of blood as well as of the pride of self, its formers and leaders of opinion, the standardizers of its culture. Primacy in time has given them primacy in status, like all “first-born,” so that what we call the tradition and spirit of America is theirs. The non-British elements of the population are practically voiceless, but they are massive, “barbarian hordes,” if you will, and the effect, the unconscious and spontaneous effect of their pressure, has been the throwing back of the Anglo-American upon his ancestry and ancestral

ideals. This has taken two forms: (1) the “patriotic” societies—not, of course, the Cincinnati or the Artillery company, but those that have arisen with the great migrations, the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution, the Colonial Dames; and (2) the specific clan or tribal organizations consisting of families looking back to the same colonial ancestry—the societies of the descendants of John Alden, etc., etc. The ancient hatred for England is completely gone. Wherever possible, the ancestral line is traced across the water to England; old ancestral homes are bought; and those of the forebears of national heroes like John Harvard or George Washington become converted into shrines. More and more public emphasis has been placed upon the unity of the English and American stock—the common interests of the “Anglo-Saxon” nations, and of “Anglo-Saxon” civilization, the unity of the political, literary, and social tradition. If all that is not ethnic nationality returned to consciousness, what is it?

Next in general estimation comes the Germans and Irish, with the Jews a close third, although the position of the last involves some abnormalities. Then come the Slavs and Italians and other central and south Europeans; finally the Asiatics. The Germans, as Mr. Ross points out, have largely a monopoly of brewing and baking and cabinet-making. The Irish shine in no particular industries unless it be those carried on by municipalities and public-service corporations. The Jews mass in the garment-making industries, tobacco manufacture, and in the “learned professions.” The Scandinavians appear to be on the same level as the Jews in the general estimation, and going up. They are farmers, mostly, and outdoor men. The Slavs are miners, metal-workers, and packers. The Italians tend to fall with the Negroes into the “pick and shovel brigade.” Such a country-wide and urban industrial and social stratification is no more likely than the geographical and sectional stratification to facilitate the coming of the “American race”! And as our political and “reforming” action is directed upon symptoms rather than fundamental causes, the stratification, as the country moves towards the inevitable equilibrium between wealth and population, will tend to grow more rigid rather than less. Thus far the pressure of immigration alone has kept the strata from hardening. Eliminate that, and we may be headed for a caste system based on ethnic diversity and mitigated to only a negligible degree by economic differences.

## PART II

### V.

The array of forces for and against that like-mindedness which is the stuff and essence of nationality aligns itself as follows: For it make social imitation of the upper by the lower classes, the fa-

cility of communications, the national pastimes of baseball and motion-picture, the mobility of population, the cheapness of printing, and the public schools. Against it make the primary ethnic differences with which the population starts, its stratification over an enormous extent of country, its industrial and economic stratification. We are an English-speaking country, but in no intimate and inevitable way, as is New Zealand and Australia, or even Canada. English is to us what Latin was to the Roman provinces and to the Middle Ages—the language of the upper and dominant class, the vehicle and symbol of culture: for the masses of our population it is a sort of Esperanto or Ido, a *lingua franca* necessary less in the spiritual than the economic contacts of the daily life. This mass is composed of elements, peasants—Mr. Ross speaks of them menacing American life with “peasantism”—the proletarian foundation material of all forms of civilization. Their self-consciousness as groups is comparatively weak. This is a factor that favors their “assimilation,” for the more cultivated a group is, the more it is aware of its individuality, and the less willing it is to surrender that individuality. One need think only of the Puritans themselves, leaving Holland for fear of absorption into the Dutch population; of the Creoles and Pennsylvania Germans of this country, or of the Jews, anywhere. In his judgment of the assimilability of various stocks Mr. Ross neglects this important point altogether, probably because his attention is fixed on existing contrasts rather than potential similarities. Peasants, however, having nothing much to surrender in taking over a new culture, feel no necessary break, and find the transition easy. It is the shock of confrontation with other ethnic groups and the feeling of alienity that generates in them an intenser self-consciousness, which then militates against Americanization in spirit by reinforcing the two factors to which the spiritual expression of the proletarian has been largely confined. These factors are language and religion. Religion is, of course, no more a universal than language. The history of Christianity makes evident enough how religion is modified, even inverted, by race, place, and time. It becomes a principle of separation, often the sole repository of the national spirit, almost always the conservator of the national language and of the tradition that is passed on with the language to succeeding generations. Among immigrants, hence, religion and language tend to be coordinate: a single expression of the spontaneous and instinctive mental life of the masses, and the primary inward factors making against assimilation. Mr. Ross, I note, tends to grow shrill over the competition of the parochial school with the public school, at the same time that he belittles the fact “that on Sundays Norwegian is preached in more churches in America than in Norway.”

And Mr. Ross’s anxiety would, I think, be more justified were it not that religion in these cases always does more than it intends. For it conserves the inward aspect of nationality rather than mere religion, and tends to become the center of exfoliation of a higher type of personality among the peasants in the natural terms of their own *natio*. This *natio*, reaching consciousness first in a reaction against America, then as an effect of the competition with Americanization, assumes spiritual forms other than religious: the parochial school, to hold its own with the public school, gets secularized while remaining national. *Natio* is what underlies the vehemence of the “Americanized” and the spiritual and political unrest of the Americans. It is the fundamental fact of American life today, and in the light of it Mr. Wilson’s resentment of the “hyphenated” American is both righteous and pathetic. But a hyphen attaches, in things of the spirit, also to the “pure” English American. His cultural mastery tends to be retrospective rather than prospective. At the present time there is no dominant American mind. Our spirit is inarticulate, not a voice, but a chorus of many voices each singing a rather different tune. How to get order out of this cacophony is the question for all those who are concerned about those things which alone justify wealth and power, concerned about justice, the arts, literature, philosophy, science. What must, what *shall* this cacophony become—a unison or a harmony?

For decidedly the older America, whose voice and whose spirit was New England, is gone beyond recall. Americans still are the artists and thinkers of the land, but they work, each for himself, without common vision or ideals. The older tradition has passed from a life into a memory, and the newer one, so far as it has an Anglo-Saxon base, is holding its own beside more formidable rivals, the expression in appropriate form of the national inheritances of the various populations concentrated in the various States of the Union, populations of whom their national self-consciousness is perhaps the chief spiritual asset. Think of the Creoles in the South and the French-Canadians in the North, clinging to French for so many generations and maintaining, however weakly, spiritual and social contacts with the mother-country; of the Germans, with their *Deutschthum*, their *Mannerchore*, *Turnvereine*, and *Schutzenfeste*; of the universally separate Jews; of the intensely nationalistic Irish; of the Pennsylvania Germans; of the indomitable Poles, and even more indomitable Bohemians; of the 30,000 Belgians in Wisconsin, with their “Belgian” language, a mixture of Walloon and Flemish welded by reaction to a strange social environment. Except in such cases as the town of Lead, South Dakota, the great ethnic groups of proletarians, thrown upon themselves in a new environment, gen-

erate from among themselves the other social classes which Mr. Ross misses so sadly among them: their shopkeepers, their physicians, their attorneys, their journalists, and their national and political leaders, who form the links between them and the greater American society. They develop their own literature, or become conscious of that of the mother-country. As they grow more prosperous and "Americanized," as they become free from the stigma of "foreigner," they develop group self-respect: the "wop" changes into a proud Italian, the "hunky" into an intensely nationalist Slav. They learn, or they recall, the spiritual heritage of their nationality. Their cultural abjectness gives way to cultural pride and the public schools, the libraries, and the clubs become beset with demands for texts in the national language and literature.

The Poles are an instance worth dwelling upon. Mr. Ross's summary of them is as striking as it is premonitory. There are over a million of them in the country, a backward people, prolific, brutal, priest-ridden - a menace to American institutions. Yet the urge that carries them in such numbers to America is not unlike that which carried the Pilgrim Fathers. Next to the Jews, whom their brethren in their Polish home are hounding to death, the unhappiest people in Europe, exploited by both their own upper classes and the Russian conqueror, they have resisted extinction at a great cost. They have clung to their religion because it was a mark of difference between them and their conquerors; because they love liberty, they have made their language of literary importance in Europe. Their aspiration, impersonal, disinterested, as it must be in America, to free Poland, to conserve the Polish spirit, is the most hopeful and American thing about them—the one thing that stands actually between them and brutalization through complete economic degradation. It lifts them higher than anything that, in fact, America offers them. The same thing is true for the Bohemians, 17,000 of them, workingmen in Chicago, paying a proportion of their wage to maintain schools in the Bohemian tongue and free thought; the same thing is true of many other groups.

How true it is may be observed from a comparison of the vernacular dailies and weeklies with the yellow American press which is concocted expressly for the great American masses. The content of the former, when the local news is deducted, is a mass of information, political, social, scientific; often translations into the vernacular of standard English writing, often original work of high literary quality. The latter, when the news is deducted, consists of the sporting page and the editorial page. Both pander rather than awaken, so that it is no wonder that in fact the intellectual and spiritual pabulum of the great masses consists of the vernacular papers in the na-

tional tongue. With them go also the vernacular drama, and the thousand and one other phenomena which make a distinctive culture, the outward expression of that fundamental like-mindedness wherein men are truly "free and equal." This, beginning for the dumb peasant masses in language and religion, emerges in the other forms of life and art and tends to make smaller or larger ethnic groups autonomous, self-sufficient, and reacting as spiritual units to the residuum of America.

What is the cultural outcome likely to be, under these conditions? Surely not the melting pot. Rather something that has become more and more distinct in the changing State and city life of the last two decades, and which is most articulate and apparent among just those peoples whom Mr. Ross praises most—the Scandinavians, the Germans, the Irish, the Jews.

It is in the area where Scandinavians are most concentrated that Norwegian is preached on Sunday in more churches than in Norway. That area is Minnesota, not unlike Scandinavia in climate and character. There, if the newspapers are to be trusted, the "foreign language" taught in an increasingly larger number of high schools is Scandinavian. The Constitution of the State resembles in many respects the famous Norwegian Constitution of 1813. The largest city has been chosen as the "spiritual capital," if I may say so, the seat of the Scandinavian "house of life," which the Scandinavian Society in America is reported to be planning to build as a center from which there is to spread through the land Scandinavian culture and ideals.

The eastern neighbor of Minnesota is Wisconsin, a region of great concentration of Germans. It is merely a political accident that the centralization of State authority and control has been possible there to a degree heretofore unknown in this country? That the Socialist organization is the most powerful in the land, able under ordinary conditions to have elected the Mayor of a large city and a Congressman, and kept out of power only by the coalition of other parties? That German is the overwhelmingly predominant "foreign language" in the public schools and in the university? Or that the fragrance of *Deutschthum* pervades the life of the whole State? The earliest German immigrants to America were group conscious to a high degree. They brought with them a cultural tradition and political aspiration. They wanted to found a State. If a State is to be regarded as a mode of life of the mind, they have succeeded. Their language is the predominant "foreign" one throughout the Middle West. The teaching of it is required by law in many places, southern Ohio and Indianapolis, for example. Their national institutions, even to cooking, are as widespread as they are. They are organized into a great national

society, the German-American Alliance, which is dedicated to the advancement of German culture and ideals. They encourage and make possible a close and more intimate contact with the fatherland. They endow Germanic museums, they encourage and provide for exchange professorships, erect monuments to German heroes, and disseminate translations of the German classics. And there are, of course, the very excellent German vernacular press, the German theater, the German club, the German organization of life.

Similar are the Irish, living in strength in Massachusetts and New York. When they began to come to this country they were far less well off and far more passionately self-conscious than the Germans. For numbers of them America was and has remained just a center from which to plot for the freedom of Ireland. For most it was an opportunity to escape both exploitation and starvation. The way they made was made against both race and religious prejudice: In the course of it they lost much that was attractive as well as much that was unpleasant. But Americanization brought the mass of them also spiritual self-respect, and their growing prosperity both here and in Ireland is what lies behind the more inward phases of Irish Nationalism—the Gaelic movement, the Irish theater, the Irish Art Society. I omit consideration of such organized bodies as the Ancient Order of Hibernians. All these movements alike indicate the conversion of the negative nationalism of the hatred of England to the positive nationalism of the loving care and development of the cultural values of the Celtic spirit. A significant phase of it is the voting of Irish history into the curriculum of the high schools of Boston. In sum, once the Irish body had been fed and erected, the Irish mind demanded and generated its own peculiar form of self-realization and satisfaction.

And, finally, the Jews. Their attitude towards America is different in a fundamental respect from that of other immigrant nationalities. They do not come to the United States from truly native lands, lands of their proper *natio* and culture. They come from lands of sojourn, where they have been for ages treated as foreigners, at most as semi-citizens, subject to disabilities and persecutions. They come with no political aspirations against the peace of other states such as move the Irish, the Poles, the Bohemians. They come with the intention to be completely incorporated into the body-politic of the state. They alone, as Mr. H.G. Wells notes, of all the immigrant peoples have made spontaneously conscious and organized efforts to prepare themselves and their brethren for the responsibilities of American citizenship. There is hardly a considerable municipality in the land, where Jews inhabit, that has not its Hebrew Institute, or its Educational Alliance, or its

Young Men's Hebrew Association, or its Community House, especially dedicated to the task. They show the highest percentage of naturalization, according to Mr. Ross's tables, and he concedes that they have benefitted politics. Yet of all self-conscious peoples they are the most self-conscious. Of all immigrants they have the oldest civilized tradition, they are longest accustomed to living under law, and are at the outset the most eager and the most successful in eliminating the external differences between themselves and their social environment. Even their religion is flexible and accomodating, as that of the Christian sectories is not, for change involves no change in doctrine, only in mode of life.

Yet, once the wolf is driven from the door and the Jewish immigrant takes his place in our society a free man and an American, he tends to become all the more a Jew. The cultural unity of his race, history and background is only continued by the new life under the new conditions. Mr. H.G. Wells calls the Jewish quarter in New York a city within a city, and with more justice than other quarters because, although it is far more in tune with Americanism than the other quarters, it is also far more autonomous in spirit and self-conscious in culture. It has its sectaries, its radicals, its artists, its literati; its press, its literature, its theater, its Yiddish and its Hebrew, its Talmudical colleges and its Hebrew schools, its charities and its vanities, and its coordinating organization, the Kehilla, all more or less duplicated wherever Jews congregate in mass. Here not religion alone, but the whole world of radical thinking, carries the mother-tongue and the father-tongue, with all that they imply. Unlike the parochial schools, their separate schools, being national, do not displace the public schools; they supplement the public schools. The Jewish ardor for pure learning is notorious. And, again, as was the case with the Scandinavians, the Germans, the Irish, democracy applied to education has given the Jews their will that Hebrew shall be coordinate with French and German in the regent's examination. On a national scale of organization there is the American Jewish committee, the Jewish Historical Society, the Jewish Publication Society. Rurally, there is the model Association of Jewish Farmers, with their cooperative organization for agriculture and for agricultural education. In sum, the most eagerly American of the immigrant groups are also the most autonomous and self-conscious in spirit and culture.

## VI.

Immigrants appear to pass through four phases in the course of being Americanized. In the first phase they exhibit economic eagerness, the greed of the unfed. Since external differences are a handicap in the economic struggle, they "assimilate," seeking thus to

facilitate the attainment of economic independence. Once the proletarian level of such independence is reached, the process of assimilation slows down and tends to come to a stop. The immigrant group is still a national group, modified, sometimes improved, by environmental influences, but otherwise a solitary spiritual unit, which is seeking to find its way out on its own social level. This search brings to light permanent group distinctions, and the immigrant, like the Anglo-Saxon American, is thrown back upon himself and his ancestry. Then a process of dissimilation begins. The arts, life, and ideals of the nationality become central and paramount; ethnic and national differences change in status from disadvantages to distinctions. All the while the immigrant has been using the English language and behaving like an American in matters economic and political, and continues to do so. The institutions of the Republic have become the liberating cause and the background for the rise of the cultural consciousness and social autonomy of the immigrant Irishman, German, Scandinavian, Jew, Pole, or Bohemian. On the whole, Americanization has not repressed nationality. Americanization has liberated nationality.

Hence, what troubles Mr. Ross and so many other Anglo-Saxon Americans is not really inequality; what troubles them is *difference*. Only things that are alike in fact and not abstractly, and only men that are alike in origin and in spirit and not abstractly, can be truly “equal” and maintain that inward unanimity of action and outlook which make a national life. The writers of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution were not confronted by the practical fact of ethnic dissimilarity among the whites of the country. Their descendants are confronted with it. Its existence, acceptance, and development provide one of the inevitable consequences of the democratic principle on which our theory of government is based, and the result at the present writing is to many worthies very unpleasant. Democratism and the Federal principle have worked together with economic greed and ethnic snobbishness to people the land with all the nationalities of Europe, and to convert the early American nation into the present American state. For in effect we are in the process of becoming a true federal state, such a state as men hope for as the outcome of the European war, a great republic consisting of a federation or commonwealth of nationalities.

Given, in the economic order, the principle of laissez-faire applied to a capitalistic society, in contrast with the manorial and guild systems of the past and the Socialist utopians of the future, the economic consequences are the same, whether in America, full of all Europe, or in England, full of the English, Scotch, and Welsh. Given, in the political order, the principle that all men are equal and

that each, consequently, under the law at least, shall have the opportunity to make the most of himself, the control of the machinery of government by the plutocracy is a foregone conclusion. Laissez-faire and unprecedently bountiful natural resources have turned the mind of the state to wealth alone, and in the haste to accumulate wealth considerations of human quality have been neglected and forgotten, the action of government has been remedial rather than constructive, and Mr. Ross’s “peasantism,” i.e. the growth of an expropriated, degraded industrial class, dependent on the factory rather than on land, has been rapid and vexatious.

The problems which these conditions give rise to are important, but not primarily important. Although they have occupied the minds of all our political theorists, they are problems of means, of instruments, not of ends. They concern the conditions of life, not the *kind of life*, and there appears to have been a general assumption that only one kind of human life is possible in America. But the same democracy which underlies the evils of the economic order underlies also the evils—and the promise—of the ethnic order. Because no individual is merely an individual, the political autonomy of the individual has meant and is beginning to realize in these United States the spiritual autonomy of the group. The process is as yet far from fruition. We are, in fact, at the parting of the ways. A genuine social alternative is before us, either of which parts we may realize if we will. In social construction the will is father to the fact, for the fact is nothing more than the concord or conflict of wills. What do we *will* to make of the United States—a unison, singing the old Anglo-Saxon theme “America,” the America of the New England school, or a harmony, in which that theme shall be dominant, perhaps, among others, but one among many, not the only one?

The mind reverts helplessly to the historic attempts at unison in Europe - the heroic failure of the pan-Hellenists, of the Romans, the disintegration and the diversification of the Christian Church, for a time the most successful unison in history; the present-day failures of Germany and of Russia. Here, however, the whole social situation is favorable, as it has never been at any time elsewhere—everything is favorable but the basic law of America itself, and the spirit of American institutions. To achieve unison—it can be achieved—would be to violate these. For the end determines the means, and this end would involve no other means than those used by Germany in Poland, in Schleswig-Holstein, and Alsace-Lorraine; by Russia in the Pale, in Poland, in Finland. Fundamentally it would require the complete nationalization of education, the abolition of every form of parochial and private school, the abolition of instruction in other tongues than English, and the concentration of the

teaching of history and literature upon the English tradition. The other institutions of society would require treatment analogous to that administered by Germany to her European acquisitions. And all of this, even if meeting with no resistance, would not completely guarantee the survival as a unison of the older Americanism. For the program would be applied to diverse ethnic types, and the reconstruction that, with the best will, they might spontaneously make of the tradition would more likely than not be a far cry from the original. It is, already.

The notion that the program might be realized by radical and even enforced miscegenation, by the creation of the melting-pot by law, and thus the development of the new "American race," is, as Mr. Ross points out, as mystically optimistic as it is ignorant. In historic times, so far as we know, no new ethnic types have originated, and what we know of breeding gives us no assurance of the disappearance of the old types in favor of the new, only the addition of a new type, if it succeeds in surviving, to the already existing older ones. Biologically, life does not unify; biologically, life diversifies; and it is sheer ignorance to apply social analogies to biological processes. In any event, we know what the qualities and capacities of existing types are; we know how by education to do something towards the repression of what is evil in them and the conservation of what is good. The "American race" is a totally unknown thing; to presume that it will be better because (if we like to persist in the illusion that it is coming) it will be later, is no different from imagining that, because contemporary, Russia is better than ancient Greece. There is nothing more to be said to the pious stupidity that identifies recency with goodness. The unison to be achieved cannot be a unison of ethnic types. It must be, if it is to be at all, a unison of social and historic interests, established by the complete cutting-off of the ancestral memories of our populations, the enforced, exclusive use of the English language and English and American history in the schools and in the daily life.

The attainment of the other alternative, a harmony, also requires concerted public action. But the action would do no violence to our fundamental law and the spirit of our institutions, nor to the qualities of men. It would seek simply to eliminate the waste and the stupidity of our social organization, by way of freeing and strengthening the strong forces already in operation. Starting with our existing ethnic and cultural groups, it would seek to provide conditions under which each may attain the perfection that is proper to its kind. The provision of such conditions is the primary intent of our fundamental law and the function of our institutions. And the various nationalities which compose our commonwealth must first of all learn this fact, which

is perhaps, to most minds, the outstanding ideal content of "Americanism" - that democracy means self-realization through self-control, self-government, and that one is impossible without the other. For the application of this principle, which is realized in a harmony of societies, there are European analogies also. I omit Austria and Turkey, for the union of nationalities is there based more on inadequate force than on consent, and the form of their organization is alien to ours. I think of England and of Switzerland. England is a state of four nationalities—the English, Welsh, Scotch, and Irish (if one considers the Empire, of many more), and while English history is not unmarred by attempts at unison, both the home policy and the imperial policy have, since the Boer War, been realized more and more upon the voluntary and autonomous cooperation of the component nationalities. Switzerland is a state of three nationalities, a republic as the United States is, far more democratically governed, concentrated in an area not much different in size, I suspect, from New York city, with a population not far from it in total. Yet Switzerland has the most loyal citizens in Europe. Their language, literary and spiritual traditions are on the one side German, on another Italian, on a third side French. And in terms of social organization, of economic prosperity, of public education, of the general level of culture, Switzerland is the most successful democracy in the world. It conserves and encourages individuality.

The reason lies, I think, in the fact that in Switzerland the conception of "natural rights" operates, consciously or unconsciously, as a generalization from the unalterable data of human nature. What is inalienable in the life of mankind is its intrinsic positive quality - its psychophysical inheritance. Men may change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent: they cannot change their grandfathers. Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons, would have to cease to be. The selfhood which is inalienable in them, and for the realization of which they require "inalienable" liberty, is ancestrally determined, and the happiness which they pursue has its form implied in ancestral endowment. This is what, actually, democracy in operation assumes. There are human capacities which it is the function of the state to liberate and to protect; and the failure of the state as a government means its abolition. Government, the state, under the democratic conception, is merely an instrument, not an end. That it is often an abused instrument, that it is often seized by the powers that prey, that it makes frequent mistakes and considers only secondary ends, surface needs, which vary from moment to moment, is, of course, obvious; hence our social and political chaos. But that it is an instrument, flexibly adjustable to changing life, changing opin-

ion, and needs, our whole electoral organization and party system declare. And as intelligence and wisdom prevail over “politics” and special interests, as the steady and continuous pressure of the inalienable qualities and purposes of human groups more and more dominate the confusion of our common life, the outlines of a possible great and truly democratic commonwealth become discernible.

Its form is that of the Federal republic; its substance a democracy of nationalities, cooperating voluntarily and autonomously in the enterprise of self-realization through the perfection of men according to their kind. The common language of the commonwealth, the language of its great political tradition, is English, but each nationality expresses its emotional and voluntary life in its own language, in its own inevitable aesthetic and intellectual forms. The common life of the commonwealth is politico-economic, and serves as the foundation and background for the realization of the distinctive individuality of each *natio* that composes it. Thus “American civilization” may come to mean the perfection of the cooperative harmonies of “European civilization,” the waste, the squalor, and the distress of Europe being eliminated—a multiplicity in a unity, an orchestration of mankind. As in an orchestra, every type of instrument has its specific timbre and tonality, founded in its substance and form; as every type has its appropriate theme and melody in the whole symphony, so in society each ethnic group is the natural instrument, its spirit and culture are its theme and melody, and the harmony and dissonances and discords of them all make the symphony of civilization, with this difference: a musical symphony is written before it is played; in the symphony of civilization the playing is the writing, so that there is nothing so fixed and inevitable about its progressions as in music, so that within the limits set by nature they may vary at will, and the range and variety of the harmonies may become wider and richer and more beautiful.

But the question is, do the dominant classes in America want such a society?