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“Assembly Line Americanization:” Henry Ford’s Progressive Politics

Henry Ford is often credited as the father of modern industry. His assembly line innovations not only increased productivity for the Ford Motor Company (FMC) but also for American manufacturing in all sectors. However, in addition to mass-producing cars, Ford was also very interested in helping his workers. He created the Five Dollar Day—a new wage program that promised workers a living wage that would enable them to participate in the new consumer culture. Still, workers did not automatically qualify for this program; they first needed to pass an inspection by the Ford Sociological investigators. The Sociological Department, created in 1913, was center of cultural change in the Ford plants.¹ Because many of the immigrant workers did not automatically qualify, Ford created the Ford English School, a free program organized within the Sociological Department for immigrants that instructed them in the English language and American values.² Henry Ford designed the school to turn out Americans in the same way he mass-produced cars. Ford believed that by instilling certain values, such as English language, thrift, and citizenship, immigrant workers could be reformed into proper Americans and could create a solid, moral foundation for America’s new working class. While Ford’s methods may have helped workers, such programs also embodied deeply paternalistic ideals that were supported by the Progressive Era ideals of the time.

Between 1900 and 1910 the promise of a living wage attracted waves of Eastern and Southern European immigrants to settle in Detroit and to take unskilled jobs at the Ford Motor Company.³ Immigrants entered the automobile industry in such great numbers that by 1914,

¹ Stephen Meyer III, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company 1908-1921* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 123.

² Steven Watts, *The People’s Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 205-206.

³ Meyer, *Five Dollar Day*, 76.

almost three quarters of the Ford employees were foreign born.⁴ Plant coordination was difficult due to the multiplicity of the workers' ethnicities; there was no common language for directions, and in the new assembly line system, communication and coordination were crucial. This was especially problematic because the assembly line required increased coordination between workers. This new form of labor was a stark contrast from the agrarian cultures that many immigrant workers had left in their old countries. They were not accustomed to the detailed level of work discipline necessary of the new industrial work place.⁵ Thus, the discontent that workers felt toward the menial labor of the assembly line was reflected in the incredibly high rate of turnover. In 1913, the rate of turnover was 370%.⁶ In order to keep the factories operating, it required extensive work of the Ford staff to continually hire and train new workers.

To rectify his immigrant problem, Ford sought to Americanize his foreign workforce through the Ford English School, which began in 1914. Taught by native-born American workers, the English School was mandatory for foreign-born employees. Samuel Marquis, head of the Ford Sociological Department, stated in a speech that workers who did not make an effort to go to school would be discharged.⁷ While the explicit purpose of the English School was to teach foreign workers English and how to spend their wages, the English School had a much further reaching impact. Ford said, "These men of many nations must be taught American ways, the English language, and the right way to live."⁸ The "right way to live" according to Ford was a life of middle class, bourgeois values that favored consumerism. Ford foreign workers were educated to be a consummate working class—complete with knowledge of important middle

⁴ Meyer, *Five Dollar Day*, 77.

⁵ Stephen Meyer, "Adapting to the Immigrant Line: Americanization in the Ford Factory 1914-1921," *Journal of Social History* 14, no. 1 (Autumn, 1980): 69.

⁶ Meyer, "Adapting to the Immigrant Line", 69.

⁷ "Lecture by Dr. Marquis, Delivered Before the Convention of the Conference of National Charities YMCA, May 17, 1916", in acc 63, Folder 1, FMCA.

⁸ As quoted in Watts, 215.

class traits. Under this view of social classes, immigrants would form a stable working class, grounded in middle-class values that resembled the genteel traditions of self-restraint and hard work emblematic of the bourgeois class since the 1830s.⁹ His middle class ideals had Protestant undertones, which explains Ford's choice of Marquis, a clergyman, to head the Sociological Department.¹⁰ The lessons of the Ford English School were meant to make workers more disciplined, socially responsible, and family oriented, which to Ford meant a sole male breadwinner who was moral, sober and able to raise responsible children.¹¹ Ford warned that children who played on the streets would not grow up to become moral, and that it was a parent's responsibility to raise productive adults. A pamphlet distributed to employees stated, "THE EXAMPLE PARENTS SET THEIR CHILDREN GOES A LONG WAY IN FORMING THEIR HABITS. A GOOD EXAMPLE IS THE BEST SERMON."¹² The English School was meant to be more pervasive than solely educating one worker, as he was supposed to take these lessons home to teach his children.

Ford manufactured cars by sending parts down an assembly line while workers each added a part until a final product was reached. He approached Americanization in the same way: a step-by-step process that, like the assembly line, produced identical products. Marquis, in a speech to a group of educators, stated, "This is the human product we seek to turn out, and as we adapt the machinery in the shop to turning out the kind of automobile we have in mind, so we have construed out educational system with a view to producing the human product in mind."¹³ Workers were not seen as individuals, but rather as a group of immigrants that could be

⁹ Watts, 206.

¹⁰ The Sociological Department, along with Ford, crafted the lessons of the Ford English School

¹¹ Single men and some women were also hired, but Ford emphasized the importance of families, and single men and women were paid less; *The people's tycoon*, 207

¹² *Helpful Hints and Advice to Employes: To Help Them Grasp the Opportunities Which are Presented to Them by the Ford Profit Sharing Plan* (1915), Acc. 951, box 23, in FMCA, 15.; Caps in original

¹³ As quoted in Meyer, *Five Dollar Day*, 157.

transformed into “Americans”. The Ford English School produced Americans by “Seventy-two lessons...taught in thirty-six weeks, two lessons a week, each covering a period of an hour and a half.”¹⁴ By continually adding knowledge of American values to the raw product of the immigrant, they could eventually be turned out as the finished product as Americans. Therefore, because it was almost compulsory for immigrants to attend the English School, Ford could be promised a constant stream of new Americans. An article in the *Ford Times* exclaimed, “By treating employees as Men and making possible for themselves and their families to live respectably, it has become possible—*yes, easy* [my emphasis]—for these thousands of foreign born workers to be refashioned and woven into the warp and woof of greater Americanism.”¹⁵ The FMC believed that this was an “easy” process that could be easily implemented on any immigrant to make them American. Americanization became a sudden and immediate transformation.

For the process to work, immigrant workers had to embrace the Ford English School values. In Ford’s eyes, ethnicity was zero-sum: Americanism stood in opposition to their previous nationality and there was not room for multiple nationalities. The *Ford Times* boasted, “ask anyone of [the graduates] what nationality he is, and the reply will come quickly, ‘American!’ ‘Polish-American?’ you might ask. ‘No, American,’ would be the answer. For they are taught in the Ford English School that the hyphen is a minus sign.”¹⁶ The English School taught immigrants to suppress any customs, behaviors, and ideas from their previous nations and instead to embody the high-culture American values taught in the school. Ford had such confidence in this system because he assumed that all of his immigrant workers were passive

¹⁴ “Better Workmen and Citizens,” *Ford Times*, February 1917, 315-316.

¹⁵ “From Codfish to Motor Cars,” *Ford Times*, August 1915, 31.

¹⁶ “The Making of New Americans,” *Ford Times*, November 1916, 152.

individuals anxious to learn how to become American.¹⁷ This system favored Americanization by force, rather than consent, insisting that immigrants shed their old nationalities as soon as possible. This system closely mirrored President Theodore Roosevelt's ideas of Americanism. In a speech to the Knights of Columbus, President Roosevelt said, "There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism... The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of its continuing to be a nation at all, would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities... each at heart feeling more sympathy with Europeans of that nationality, than with the other citizens of the American Republic."¹⁸ Immigrants shed their hyphen to become one race, Americans, and newly naturalized citizens were intended to share a communal feeling of brotherhood. In Ford's mind it was inconceivable that they would resist this change.¹⁹

The article in the *Ford Times* entitled "The Making of New Americans" speaks to this. It begins by telling the story of an immigrant who enrolled in the Ford English School and after completion of the course, was elected president of his class and was currently serving in the Educational Department at the Ford plant at the time the article was written. The immigrant has changed his name from Haralambos Yannaki to Harry Yannaki and the "Ford English School is making his dreams in the land of liberty come true."²⁰ Beginning with the title, this article demonstrates how, if immigrants fully embrace the values set by the English School, they will become successful Americans. The change from a very ethnic name to a common American name demonstrates one way this particular immigrant embraced American values, and how he has succeeded. The article explains that he is talking to the third graduating class of Ford

¹⁷ Dorothee Schneider, *Crossing Borders: Migration and Citizenship in the Twentieth Century United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 159.

¹⁸ "Roosevelt Bars the Hyphen," *New York Times*, October 13, 1915, 1.

¹⁹ "The Making of New Americans," 152.

²⁰ "The Making of New Americans", 151.

employees, a role model for the other immigrants at the plant. If they engage in the same process that he did, they will be successful as well.²¹

The English language was one trait that was most important to the middle class, and therefore crucially important at the English School. Not only was English necessary for factory communications, it was also a key aspect of a “normal” American life. Ford considered “normal” life to be that of the bourgeois, middle class. Foreign languages were constant reminders that immigrants had come from “other” countries, while English represented a type of “cultural nationalism” that focused on Protestant, Anglo-Saxon traditions that were steeped in an ethnic and linguistic heritage.²² President Theodore Roosevelt felt that learning English was the first step toward Americanization.²³ In their monthly newspaper to Ford customers and workers, the FMC boasts, “Pupils were delighted to learn English and become as other Americans.”²⁴ Immigrants could now speak “our” language, and it would rid them of their foreign influences.²⁵ The English School taught immigrants lessons in English to help them in every day life, such as how to read newspapers and advertisements.²⁶ More importantly, by teaching immigrants English, the working class would not radically alter the social structure of the United States as they continued to live in America. As the working class constituted the largest portion of the United States, if immigrants were left to speak their own language then the importance of English might have diminished.²⁷ Teaching them English drew immigrants into the greater American culture, enabling immigrants to leave their ethnic enclaves, buy food and clothing from non-ethnic stores, and meet other types of people. This promoted a greater “American

²¹ “The Making of New Americans,” 151.

²² Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in the War and Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 113.

²³ Allan Nevins, *Ford: the Times, the Man, the Company*, (New York: Scribner, 1954), 558.

²⁴ “Assimilation through Education,” *Ford Times*, June 1915, 411.

²⁵ Dawley, 113.

²⁶ Nevins, 558.

²⁷ Dawley, 113.

race”, rather than fragmented ethnic groups. When immigrants spoke English, the nation was less threatened by their foreign ways.

Additionally, thriftiness and the ability to save were extremely important lessons at the Ford English School. Henry Ford believed that because workers were receiving such high wages, they needed to learn how to spend their money correctly. Ford approved of spending that would contribute to the greater consumer culture, rather than to the underground world of vice. Alcohol and other abusable commodities not only interfered with work, but also affected the lives of the families of workers. It was important to Ford that workers were not selfish, and did not purposefully force their families to live in slums with boarders in order that the male breadwinner could spend his earnings on alcohol. Workers were taught how to save their money, how to open a bank account, and what best to spend it on. A booklet published by FMC to its employees, stated that workers should save part of their earnings to avoidant becoming dependent on others when they are in hard times and to foster self-control.²⁸ The Ford School taught immigrants that they should save their profits in order to move into better housing conditions. Most immigrants in the time were living in tenement slums. Ford, in an effort to uplift his workers, required them to live in good housing conditions in order to qualify for the Five Dollar Day. Before the implementation of the Five Dollar Day program, 46% of workers’ homes qualified as good; by 1917, that number rose to 88%.²⁹ These poor homes were cramped, housed too many people, and were unsanitary.³⁰ FMC expected immigrants to improve their living conditions, and the English School helped teach workers how to save their money for this. By eliminating tenement slums, immigrants were able to live a better, more wholesome life.

²⁸ *Helpful Hints and Advice to Ford Employes*, 17.

²⁹ “Home Report,” Acc 572, box 31, in FMCA.

³⁰ *Helpful Hints and Advice to Ford Employes*, 13

By teaching thrift, the Ford English School taught the principles of capitalism, a very American value. Because socialism and communism were most likely to be associated with the lower classes, it was especially important to inculcate in them a sense of capitalism if they were to be Americanized. Leftists at the time realized the harm that Ford's Americanization program would bring to their cause. Journalist Gerald Stanley Lee, in an issue of *Harper's Weekly*, pointed out that if industrialists tried to improve the lives of their workers rather than saving every cent, radicalism would likely disappear, while also helping the industrialist.³¹ According to many in the upper class, radicalism was un-American at its core. Matthew Jacobson, a historian, writes that, "The principles of socialism were at war with the Constitution."³² Any successful Americanization program must remove any traces of radicalism from its subjects. Socialism grew out of industrial America.³³ Its proponents of equality of wealth sought radical wealth redistribution, which would gravely harm the middle and upper classes. Therefore, a focus on capitalism was key for forming American identity. The implications of preaching the importance of capitalism at the Ford English School sought to solidify in the working class complacency with the current system. If immigrants believed in American values, and therefore democracy, they would not be looking to redistribute wealth from their employers, but rather work hard to achieve their own wealth, better known as the American Dream. This would leave the current wealth structure intact—in which the lower classes would be working to achieve the same ranks as the upper and middle classes. However, until the time when the poor achieved wealth of their own, the two classes would be separate.

³¹ As quoted in Watts, 197.

³² Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: the United States Encounters Foreign Peoples At Home And Abroad, 1876-1917*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 94.

³³ Meyer, "Adapting to the Immigrant Line", 69.

Citizenship was also an important lesson taught in the Ford English School. The *Ford Times* stated that the goal of the English School was always working toward citizenship.³⁴ A diploma from the English School was accepted in the place of the “first papers” for naturalization.³⁵ In addition to the importance of becoming American citizens, English School students were educated on the principles needed to become *good* citizens. Nationally, good citizenship was seen as having certain values attached to it. The Committee for Immigrants in America stated, “Is [the immigrant] not a good citizen when he promotes the welfare of his community and habitually lives for the good of our American society? This means that he will take an active part in good politics... that he will be an honest workman, while taking good care of his family, and that he will...obey the laws.”³⁶ In addition to the other values taught at the English School, good citizens also valued cleanliness and a disciplined work ethic. A Ford pamphlet advised employees, “Employees should use plenty of soap and water in the home, and upon their children bathing frequently...Notice that the most advanced people are the cleanest.”³⁷ With the assumption that immigrants were unclean, most likely derived from their abhorrent living conditions, the Ford School emphasized the importance Americans placed on cleanliness.

Hard work was another mark of good citizenship. Peter Roberts, a major contributor to the English School curriculum, stated, “Good citizenship, means each one in his sphere keeping busy, doing honest work, and contributing to the sum total wealth for the support of the nation.”³⁸ By mentioning that each person occupies a sphere, Roberts alludes to the separation of

³⁴ “Assimilation through Education,” 411.

³⁵ “A Motto Wrought into Education,” *Ford Times*, April 1916, 406.

³⁶ Committee for Immigrants in America, *Citizenship Syllabus*, (New York: New York State Department of Education, 1916), 2.

³⁷ *Helpful Hints to Ford Employes*, 15.

³⁸ As quoted in Meyer, *Five Dollar Day*, 152.

classes in America. As long as each class worked hard, they would be good citizens as long as they contributed to the growth of the nation. Immigrant workers produced a product highly valued in America, which contributed to the advancement of the nation. The English School curriculum reinforced the self esteem of the workers by assuring that, even though they may not have the money of the middle class, they were still good citizens. This subtly hinted that even though immigrants were learning the values and ethics of the middle class, they still remained separate. The English School only turned out Americans, not middle-class Americans. It was not meant to redefine social classes, but rather uplift the lowest class so that their work could support the middle and upper classes. An Americanized lower class provided a stable base for America; it would accept existing beliefs rather than implement their own. The belief in capitalism reinforced the American Dream, and the knowledge of English allowed immigrants to interact and function in the greater society. But nowhere in the English School curriculum did it advocate that the lower immigrant class join the pre-existing middle class.

The American-ness of the newly Americanized immigrants was celebrated with a spectacular pageant. In this ceremony, Ford celebrated how the diversity of immigrants had blended together to form one homogenized race. The ceremony, labeled Ford's "Melting Pot," was a grand pageant. As described in an article in the *Ford Times*, students walked a ramp that appeared to be a gangplank into what looked like the hull of a ship dressed in their traditional clothing. The ceremony is described:

Into the gaping pot they went. Then six instructors of the Ford school, with long ladles, started stirring. 'Stir! Stir!' urged the superintendent of the school. The six bent to greater efforts. From the pot fluttered a flag, held high, then the first of the finished product of the pot appeared, waving his hat. The crowd cheered as he mounted the edge and came down the steps on the side. Many others followed him, gathering in two groups on each side of the cauldron. In contrast to the shabby rags they wore when they were unloaded from the ship, all wore neat suits. They were American in looks.³⁹

³⁹ "The Making of New Americans," 151.

This pageant was meant to demonstrate that graduate of the Ford English School were American. By graduating from the school, they had shed their native identities in favor of an American one.

While the English School and the implementation of these lessons by the Sociological Department may have objectively helped workers, it calls into question the right that Ford had to intrude into the lives of his workers. Ford, raised on traditional Victorian values, believed them to be necessary for creating the best citizens. However, that does not mean that these values were the best, nor does it mean that immigrant workers wanted to learn them. Henry Ford's Americanization programs represented an intrusion of wealthy, corporate power into the lives of the working class. In retrospect, these programs were deeply paternalistic; on the one hand they were attempting to better the lives of workers, but they simultaneously tried to fit the worker into a preconceived mold of a better life,⁴⁰ although Henry Ford at the time did not think so.

Ford's vision for the Sociological Department and the English School resembled the rhetoric of progressive reformers of the time, many of whom were the greatest supporters of his efforts. Like many progressives, Ford believed that the root cause of many of the social ills was due to the home life of the working class. By instilling the values of the Ford English School, they could be corrected and workers would live better lives as good citizens.⁴¹ Ford explained:

We want to make men in this factory as well as automobiles. This company has outlived its usefulness as a money making concern, unless we can do some good with that money. I do not believe in charity, but I do believe in regenerating power of work in men's lives...I believe the only charity worthwhile is the kind that helps a man to help himself...I want the whole organization dominated by a just, generous, and humane policy.⁴²

The English School taught workers the correct way to spend their money, and therefore workers did not need to receive charity. The English School taught workers how to stand on their own

⁴⁰ Meyer, "Adapting to the Immigrant Line", 69.

⁴¹ Watts, 207.

⁴² As quoted in Watts, 207-208

feet. At the time, Ford and his staff believed that workers welcomed and wanted these programs, and those who did not were workers who wanted to continue to lead a life of vice. The rest of the workers welcomed the chance to change their ways and adapt to a better life, and FMC was helping them do that in a friendly way. S. S. Marquis explained to critics that the system was fraternal, rather than paternal.⁴³ Ford saw his programs as a strictly beneficial, friendly way to help his workers, and states that, “nothing paternal was intended.”⁴⁴

The English School and Ford’s other Americanization programs found support outside of the company. Progressives throughout the nation were arguing for more services to help the poor, including lessons in English and improving housing conditions.⁴⁵ The principles that Ford was espousing fit well with their reformist rhetoric. Ford’s moralistic, Christian ideals echoed much of the reformist sentiment, like prohibition and temperance.⁴⁶

One progressive, Ida Tarbell, gave Ford’s plant enthusiastic support. She not only supported the increased pay for workers during the Five Dollar Day, but also the efforts of the Sociological Department and the Ford English School. She was especially impressed with Ford’s efforts at cleanliness and sobriety for his immigrant students, noting that workers came to tell her how it felt good to be “clean” for the first time in their lives.⁴⁷ As noted earlier in a pamphlet distributed by FMC, immigrants were thought to be unclean, and were instructed on how to maintain proper hygiene. Additionally, she lauded Ford for his implementation of sobriety, and Ford’s effort to reform workers. She spoke with one worker who explained to her that he is happy now that he is sober, remarking that he wishes that someone had helped him years

⁴³ Watts, 219.

⁴⁴ Henry Ford, *My Life and Work*, (Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1922), 130.

⁴⁵ Steven Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans in the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 201.

⁴⁶ Lewis Gould, *America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1914*, (Harlow: Longman, 2005).

⁴⁷ Ida Tarbell, *All in a Day’s Work: An Autobiography* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1939), 291.

before.⁴⁸ She sums her experience by saying, “[FMC was] taking men and women, individuals, families, and with patience and sense of humor and determination were putting them on their feet, giving them interest and direction in managing their lives. This was Henry Ford of 1916.⁴⁹ Her literature on the subject illustrates her respect for Henry Ford’s work.

The city of Detroit also lauded Ford’s Americanization programs. Ford’s programs became the model for the Americanization programs for the city of Detroit. Detroit’s “English-First” campaign was designed to teach all of the immigrants living within the city how to speak English, as well as prepare them for the citizenship examine. Few changes were made to Ford’s idea, except that it was less pervasive into the lives of immigrants because it was not possible to enforce in the same way that Ford was able to. The Detroit Board of Commerce asked employers to display posters depicting, “Uncle Sam welcoming the immigrant and directing him to the public school, the road to the English language and to American citizenship.”⁵⁰ Like Ford, the Detroit system also emphasized the dual need of English and citizenship. Others businesses in Detroit responded to this enthusiastically, some taking the example of FMC and making attendance at Detroit’s night schools compulsory. It was proudly reported that, “with co-operation of this kind the campaign to make Detroit a city of English-speaking factories within a year seems not visionary.”⁵¹ The programs of Detroit, in turn, were used as a model for the National Americanization Committee.⁵² Henry Ford’s Americanization programs therefore, served a national purpose, Americanizing immigrants throughout the nation.

Not all agreed with Ford’s programs. The investigators, sent to determine whether or not immigrants were embracing the values taught in the English School, pried into the intimate

⁴⁸ Ida Tarbell, *New Ideals in Business*, (New York: MacMillan Company, 1917), 128.

⁴⁹ Tarbell, *All in a Day’s Work*, 291.

⁵⁰ Esther Everett Lape, “The English First Movement in Detroit,” *Immigrants in America Review* 1 (Sept. 1915), 46.

⁵¹ Lape, 50.

⁵² Meyer, “Adapting to the Immigrant Line,” 76.

details of workers' personal lives, which many saw as a form of tyranny. Many critics questioned the right of Ford to regulate the personal lives of workers because he was paying them good wages. Workers were forced to face brutal humiliation in order to earn a decent wage; something that more skilled workers did not have to face.⁵³ One journal stated, "[The workers] want to live their own lives in their own way, advancing to a higher social status, if that is what it is, by process of evolution, certainly not by processes of proscription."⁵⁴ These critics argued that workers deserved the freedom to spend their paychecks however they wanted, even if their wants were not based in strong moral values. It was their duty to work hard for Ford, but Ford's responsibility for them ended when they left the factory.

While the aims of the English School were benevolent, they were achieved by highly manipulative means. Workers were treated in a paternalistic manner, and Ford regarded the immigrants like children. John Reed, a leftist journalist, denounced Ford's programs; stating, "This action, makes one seriously doubt whether, after all, men should not be treated like slaves or children."⁵⁵ Even in the lessons taught at the English School, workers learned by repeating after the teacher like young school children.⁵⁶ Although workers may have appreciated some of the benefits from the Ford English School, they did not appreciate having to let investigators enter their private lives. Some workers did not want to attend the English School, and in 1919, thirty-eight workers were dismissed for refusing to attend.⁵⁷ Ironically, while Ford was trying to teach his workers the benefits of living in a free state, he pried into their lives like a totalitarian dictator.

⁵³ Meyer, 147.

⁵⁴ As quoted in Watts, 220.

⁵⁵ As quoted in Watts, 221.

⁵⁶ "Assimilation through Education," 410.

⁵⁷ Little information was left by the workers, and due to time constraints, the only available information has been found in this book. There most likely were more cases of workers rebelling against the Ford system; Watts, 221

Thus, the Ford English School taught thousands of workers how to become proper Americans, but only through condescending and paternal means. In his autobiography, Ford writes, “[Americanization] tended toward paternalism. Paternalism has no place in the industry.”⁵⁸ By 1920, the Americanization experiment ended. Workers may have been able to achieve a high standard of life, but only by losing their freedom and submitting to Ford’s total authority. However, the Americanization debate did not end with the end of the Ford English School. As large numbers of immigrants continue to enter America today, the debate between acceptance and assimilation continues on. In light of the current immigration situation, politicians can look back on our immigrant past for lessons on how to treat immigrations.

⁵⁸ Ford, 130.

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*Note—FMCA stands for Ford Motor Company Archives

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