

THE K. K. K. IN SOCIAL SCIENCE<sup>1</sup>

BY I. M. RUBINOW

THERE is a very significant German word, "tendenziös," for which there seems to be no satisfactory English equivalent in describing literary or scientific efforts. It means the existence of a strong, preconceived notion, an a priori assumption, such as a true scientist or artist should be free from in the beginning of his task. Of course, the existence of a "tendenz" need not necessarily make every piece of scientific investigation worthless. Often, scientific research is undertaken in face of a working hypothesis, which must be supported by additional proof. The danger, however, is obvious—that when this preconceived notion is the starting point, the result may be more or less convincing rationalization.

The very title of Professor Fairchild's most interesting book, we confess, strikes us as very unfortunate indeed. Perhaps this only goes to show that it calls for a battle between his "tendenz" and ours. The book presumes to be a scientific investigation of the effects of immigration upon the American body social and politic. But in its form, it is an argument rather than an investigation, a criticism rather than an analysis, and this attitude is strongly expressed in the title.

"The Melting Pot Mistake." The melting pot means Mr. Zangwill, means a rather mediocre melodrama; may mean Mr. Zangwill's mistake in misinterpreting Ameri-

<sup>1</sup>"The Melting Pot Mistake," by Henry Pratt Fairchild. Little Brown & Company, Boston, 1926. P. p. VI, 266. Price \$2.50.

can actuality; may, in the final analysis, mean an artistic error in selecting an unfortunate metaphor. But, of course, it also may mean a good deal more than that. It may mean Professor Fairchild's point of view, that in allowing the melting pot to boil, America has made a mistake. It may mean, then, a very much more serious error in social policy rather than in literary conception.

Which of the two mistakes has Professor Fairchild in mind? The answer seems to be "both." During the years of violent discussion in Washington as to the effect of trusts upon economic life (some twenty-five years ago) the argument of the "standpatter" ran about as follows: First, there are no trusts. Second, there are good and bad trusts. Third, all trusts are good. Professor Fairchild's philosophy is about as consistent. The metaphor, he insists, is a bad one. "The melting pot did not melt." (page 12). Secondly, the melting pot is not an end in itself. The question remains—what kind of substance are you going to have when the fusion is complete? (Page 120.) Third, the result of a melting pot is "mongrelization." A mongrel population is an almost certain product of free-for-all immigration policy. (Page 125.) With a faint effort at objectivity, Professor Fairchild admits that the mongrel need not necessarily be a less efficient product, but he is not a thoroughbred. And when presented just in that way, the choice of the American people or any true-blooded Anglo-Saxon

need not be questioned. On the very last page the author's point of view is very frankly stated: "Unrestricted immigration was such a force. It was slowly, insidiously, irresistibly eating away the very heart of the United States. What was being melted in the great Melting Pot, losing all form and symmetry, all beauty and character, all nobility and usefulness, was the American nationality itself." In rising to this height of eloquence, Professor Fairchild evidently had forgotten his very definite statement in the beginning of the book, page 12, that "the melting pot did not melt."

This is what may be fairly designated as "tendenziös." It isn't any more a working hypothesis to be verified. It is a very definite foregone conclusion, with which the author has approached his task, and the fact that throughout a good part of the book he very skillfully hides it, thus presenting an attitude of scientific detachment, rather raises a suspicion not only of prejudice but of malice aforethought.

To be sure, there is nothing unexpected in the attitude. Professor Fairchild's point of view as one of the leading opponents of immigration and one of the most persistent advocates of restriction, has been well known for some time. His first comprehensive book from that point of view has been published as long as thirteen years ago. It is not unreasonable to assume that he had taken an active part in the formulation of the provisions of the various recent immigration acts. It might also seem as if the work by this time was a piece of super-erogation. The immigration policy of our country has been settled—"It

may be for years and it may be forever." And there is not even any serious effort to challenge it, except for a few feeble appeals of one or two Congressmen (whose very names, La Guardia or Jacobstein, brand them as part of that insidious canker, which has been eating away the very heart of the United States and whose influence is, therefore, infinitesimal) to admit a few defenseless wives or minor children. One almost wonders as to the need for this particular book, except it be an effort of an apology for a scientific hypothesis.

As such, the book must be judged. One might almost say that the problem has become an academic one. Perhaps the problem of immigration of race and nationality may be studied now, "sine ira et studio." It is not so much the policy for the future that constitutes the field of Professor Fairchild's inquiry, but the result of the past, an appraisal of the immigrant, his function in American life.

Academically, Professor Fairchild and his work cannot be lightly disregarded. He is a mature student of economic and social conditions. He has had a vast experience, both in this country and abroad, in teaching, investigation and propaganda. His range of reading goes far beyond politics and economics, and covers the allied disciplines of biology, sociology, ethnology and history. In addition, he is a brilliant and convincing writer, so convincing in fact that unless the reader is on his guard, he may not notice being carried away from one position to the other, sometimes in a straight line, but more frequently in a riotous zigzag. One illustra-

tion of this has already been given in the introductory lines. But how many are there, after all, who will remember page 12 when carried away by the eloquence of page 261? It is for this reason that the book deserves a most careful analysis and appraisal beyond the possible limits of an ordinary review.

The argument runs about as follows:

Confronted with the multiplicity of social problems, modern society frequently finds an escape in coining telling slogans or symbols, which have the appearance of solutions of those problems. Mr. Zangwill's symbol, "The Melting Pot," served such a purpose in regard to the problem of immigration. It expressed the easy going, tolerant indifference of the American people towards immigration throughout the nineteenth century. Only now are they beginning to find out "that the melting pot did not melt, but we are not entirely sure why."

The central idea of the melting symbol is the idea of unification. Unity is the essential condition of stability and progress of any community. The two bases of such unity are race and nationality. The human family has developed out of one common source. Penetration of the human race into new regions resulted in the early modifications known as races. Racial affiliations are strictly biological. All true racial traits are exclusively hereditary. The obvious differences between races are physical. There probably are definite psychic race differences, but as yet they have not been scientifically determined. The process of race formation stopped long ago. After the human race had

spread all over the earth, there came the period of race contact, race conflict, and also race mixture.

The second great basis of group unity is national. If race is a purely hereditary physical condition, nationality is essentially a social situation. "Race is inherited, nationality is acquired. . . . Every individual is born with no nationality at all. Nationality is largely a result of the social environment during the impressionable plastic years of infancy and early childhood. It is a composite body of ideas and ideals, beliefs, traditions, customs, habits, standards and morals, infused with loyalty, devotion, allegiance and affection."

An ideal society would, therefore, seem to be one of both racial and national unity. That produces intra-group sympathy, while racial and national differences result in inter-group antipathy. "Race prejudice" is an unfair way of describing this perfectly normal and inevitable antipathy. It has little to do with judgment, but is based upon a natural emotional reaction, resulting from a recognition of differences. Moreover, much of what is known as race prejudice is a feeling of national antipathy, based upon differences which are national rather than physical. The recognition of these feelings of racial and national antipathies as the obverse of the feeling of patriotism is a point repeatedly emphasized in the book.

With this sociological foundation an examination of the problem of race and nationality within the boundaries of the United States is undertaken. What are we racially and nationally? The founders of America intended it to be a white

man's country. From a point of view of nationality, the author makes an effort to ascertain the composition on a basis of the census of 1790 and subsequent immigration data. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, according to some census estimates, the white population of the United States was 82% English. If the Scotch, Dutch and German are added, it was 98% Nordic. That was the original nationality of the United States. Of course, the English, Scotch and others were not purely Nordic, but a mixture of the Alpine and Mediterranean elements with the Nordic strain strongly predominant. Immigration for the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century did not very substantially modify the racial composition of the American people, as the bulk came from Great Britain, Germany and Ireland. But beginning with about 1880, a new menace has arisen. This was not so much racial, although at one time or another the problem of Chinese, Hindu or Japanese immigration had to be met. The menace was essentially one of nationality—southern Italy, the Balkans, Slavic Europe and, of course, the Hebrews. This has created a complication of both national and race mixtures. Thus, the elements of an uncontrolled mixture, of a melting pot, have been thrown together. Now, it is the lesson of biology that the uncontrolled purposeless mixing of races among plants and animals produces just one result—the mongrel. When the breeder wants to improve his stock, he sometimes crosses varieties, but under careful control and selection. The melting pot does not offer such conditions. Mongrelization means

loss of specialization. Whether it is "a thing to be desired or a thing to be shunned is a matter partly of judgment, partly of knowledge, partly of taste." But a mistake made can obviously not be corrected. "It is as impossible to unmix races as to unscramble the proverbial egg, and therefore in case of doubt, don't." The danger of the melting pot doctrine lay in the easy way in which it disposed of this menace by bringing forth the hope of assimilation. To this word, the author gives a narrow meaning derived from physiology. It means a total transformation of the new material. It is absorption by the old. Assimilation of an immigration from this point of view is an extremely difficult matter. For the immigrant brings with it all the elements of nationality. "Before assimilation is complete," says Dr. Fairchild, "the immigrant must have lost all trace of suggestion of his foreign origin." The elements of nationality are many. "Language, religion, political ideas, moral standards, economic abilities, dress, recreation, food, ornamentation, family customs, all sorts of habits, beliefs and loyalties." In this process of assimilation, the receiving nationality must undergo no alteration. There is one central standard—the existing national type which is constantly preserved and to which all the different types are made to conform. The real mixing of national types beyond a biological mixture is impossible.

It is in this analysis of the process of assimilation that the most characteristic views of the author are shown. Languages cannot be mixed in the present stage of civilization.

Either one or another language conquers. Religions do not blend. On the contrary, we find a continuous process of religious sub-division. Moral codes "cannot be mixed, combined or blended." The very note of moral standards is that they are absolute. And so down the line, the author fails to see how there can be any process of melting, of mixing. Take so simple a matter as a dietary habit. "The dietary features of the American nationality itself have been very little altered by the immigration of thirty-five million foreigners from dozens of different nationalities." In short, nationalities can't be mixed. An attempt to mix them must result not in a new type of composite nationality, but in the destruction of all nationality. The only thing that can happen is the subjugation of one nationality to another. "There is no give-and-take in assimilation."

In the light of this theory, what has taken place in America? "It is obvious," says Dr. Fairchild, "that assimilation was not taking place. This became doubly obvious as a result of the war, when the allegiance of large groups of foreign-born to the country of origin became manifest." Efforts at Americanization resulted. But these, the author claims, were complete failures. The chapters on "Americanization" and "Enforced Patriotism" are among the most telling in the book. It was mistakenly assumed that Americanization was a problem of education only; that Americanization was a duty. Allegiance to a country is a question of love, and love and duty have nothing to do with each other. The movement for enforced patriotism was, there-

fore, unethical and was, therefore, bound to result in failure. Existing loyalties cannot be forcibly destroyed. The movement for preaching the obligation to acquire citizenship was particularly vicious, as a naturalized foreigner with his old loyalties was doubly dangerous. The whole basis of naturalization upon length of residence was unsatisfactory and dangerous, as it offered no guarantee of a necessary change in loyalties.

If assimilation comes at all, it can come only as a voluntary, almost unconscious process. It is only possible through accumulated effect of contacts between the immigrant and Americans. That may have been possible in the early days of the republic, but is so difficult now as to be almost impossible. Physical existence within the boundaries of the country means nothing. "America is a spiritual reality. It is a body of ideas and ideals, traditions, beliefs, customs, habits, institutions, standards, loyalties, a whole complex of cultural and moral values." Whether one is a true American is not a question of birth, ancestry or race. The present-day foreigner does not live in that spiritual America, and for that reason assimilation is extremely difficult. Nor ought he to be blamed for it. The American who lives in Europe is expected by us to retain his American loyalties. It is not surprising if the immigrant acts accordingly.

The only way to make the immigrant love America is to make America lovable. The very conditions of existence of most immigrants are such that that becomes a very difficult matter. It may be

easier in the case of an individual, but grows in difficulty as the number of immigrants increases. Successful assimilation is, therefore, largely a quantitative problem. The increasing volume of immigration practically made assimilation impossible. The limitation of numbers came just in the nick of time, or it would have destroyed the American nationality. The powers of assimilation are strictly limited. It is extremely difficult even with children of immigrants, and well-nigh impossible with the immigrants themselves. The only way in which we can escape the evils and dangers of non-assimilation is by reducing the problem to so small a compass that it makes little difference whether assimilation is accomplished in the first generation or not. Which means, of course, an unqualified endorsement of the present immigration legislation. Q. E. D.

While this practically completes the coherent argument in favor of restriction or total prohibition of immigration, if such were possible, somewhat gratuitously Professor Fairchild adds the economic argument in the last chapter. America, of course, is the greatest country in the world. It has a unique function to perform in the development of human affairs, that is, the development of true democracy. America is enabled to do that both because of its unusual racial makeup (Anglo-Saxon or Nordic) and its economic resources. These enabled it to create a superior standard of living, which is necessary for the development of democracy. Unrestricted immigration would retard and even definitely lower the

standard of living of the common people, not only in this country but throughout the world. In order to preserve this high product of civilization, it is therefore imperative in the interest of humanity at large to restrict immigration, but not only that, it is equally important in the name of democracy to restrict freedom of criticism of American institutions on the part of aliens. Criticisms of our own citizens are wholesome. Criticisms made by aliens are certain to be malicious and are ignorant and ill-informed. American democracy evidently is a very tender plant which must be carefully protected, not only against the onslaught of immigrants but even against the onslaught of their opinions. All of which is necessary to further the glory not only of this country but of the human race at large.

Thus, the Professor's theory. Step by step from the fundamental theories of biology, he leads the credulous reader to the conclusion so forcefully expressed in the title that immigrants or foreigners in general, are a menace to the American people. The Professor is quite satisfied with his mathematical demonstration, but as no radical change in our present immigration policy is expected by anybody, the effort appears to be entirely gratuitous. Unfortunately for the author, the book tries to prove a good deal more. Whether so intended or not, it must be taken not only as an argument against further immigration but as an appraisal of the effect of past immigration upon American life. In his effort to shut the doors to new, would-be Americans, he strikes violently against

thousands, nay, millions who have come here before, and their children and their grandchildren. Now this is not only a purely scientific problem. Professor Fairchild's book may have an influence, or at least endeavors to have an influence, not only upon immigration policies but also upon group relationships in present-day America. And from that point of view it cannot be disregarded. His theory of race and nationality relationships in America, if it permeates the American psyche, would perhaps destroy that unity for which he so eloquently pleads. Furthermore, as the book is written presumably by a scientist rather than a politician, it is only fair to review its conclusions from a scientific as well as a pragmatic point of view.

The significant thing about this book is that it is not at all necessary to draw upon anthropological, sociological and other literatures in order to show how questionable its conclusions are. It is sufficient to stick to the very text of Professor Fairchild's book and to match up one page with the other.

His first strong point is his plea for racial identity as a basis for national unity. From that point of view, he so strongly approves of measures for exclusion of the non-white races. Yet, it is significant that the one big race problem of this country, the problem of the Negro race, is scarcely touched upon throughout the book. Only four references to the Negro, covering altogether perhaps less than two pages, can be found in the index. That the Negro population has created many serious problems in the history of this country, no

one would deny. But even the extremist Southern gentleman would claim that the 10% of Negroes had been lacking in national unity. Insofar as most of the ten million Negroes in this country are probably of mixed racial origin, there is already a very substantial admixture of non-white blood. It is generally recognized that this admixture has considerably abated during the last few years. It is doubtful whether we may expect complete racial identity of the American people. To be consistent, Professor Fairchild should be advocating the deportation of all these ten million.

The second consideration that forces itself upon the critical reader is the conscious juggling with the term "race." Having admitted that the period of race formation has stopped long ago and race intermixing and fusion has been taking place, it takes a good deal of courage to insist upon hereditary biological differences not only between the great primary divisions of the species—the Yellow, Black, Brown, Red and White race, but the numerous subdivisions of each one of these divisions, particularly the subdivisions of the White race. The terms, Nordic, Mediterranean, Alpine, Semitic, Slavic or other races are easy catch words. One would imagine that the mixing of White races in the United States was the first historic example of this process, while as a matter of fact, the historian need not be told that the process has been going on perhaps for a hundred thousand years, and that even within the last few thousand years, many periods of violent race mixture have been taking

place. Again, one might imagine that within our own times, the situation in the United States is unique. As a matter of fact, it is the inevitable process of the extension of the European culture throughout both Americas, Africa, Australasia. In face of this historic process, it would seem to be rather difficult to advocate the principle of racial purity in colonies when it does not exist even in the mother countries.

As a matter of fact, the whole discussion of race has been brought in by Professor Fairchild only as a heavy artillery to defend his position on nationality problems. The Negro—he has evidently accepted, at least by a silent vote. His attacks upon the Chinese, Japanese and Hindu are of comparatively little practical moment. Not over ten pages in the whole book are devoted to them. It is the white man of foreign nationality—the Italian, the Slav and the Jew, particularly the Jew, whom Professor Fairchild considers so grave a danger to American national unity. It is against them that he directs his two main arguments without even noticing the obvious contradiction between them. On the one hand, that complete assimilation is imperative; on the other hand, that it is so difficult as to be almost impossible.

Now, as to whether complete assimilation by absorption of the newer elements, whether this complete abandonment of the cultural baggage brought by the immigrant is necessary is, of course, an ethical more than a scientific problem. In other words, we are dealing with what we might consider desirable and not only with facts.

And it is evidently very difficult to argue about ideals. As to whether assimilation does take place and what the results of such assimilation are, may be judged on a basis of facts and not only ideals. What are these facts?

To make assimilation complete, argues Professor Fairchild, the immigrant must lose all trace or suggestion of his foreign origin. He must change all elements or qualities of nationality. He enumerates quite a number of them—"language, religion, political ideals, moral standards, economic abilities, dress, recreation, food, ornamentation, family customs, all sorts of habits, traditions, beliefs and loyalties." In this comprehensive list are included not only elements of nationality but all elements of psychic life. Surely, no one would claim that within any nationality, political ideas, moral standards, economic abilities, all sorts of habits, are uniform. What sort of world does Professor Fairchild picture to himself anyway in his "state of national unity"? The economic abilities of a Rockefeller and a Kentucky mountaineer, the political ideas of Judge Gary and Rodger Baldwin—these examples could be continued ad infinitum. Just think of a professor of social science in this country of ours enumerating religion among elements of nationality in a country which was based on the ideal of religious liberty, and which has given the greatest diversity of churches that any nation has ever known. Is this the new sociology brought forward by the Ku Klux Klan or the Tennessee Fundamentalists?

But if uniformity instead of being the nightmare of the artistic

soul, is to be considered a great ideal of modern civilization, there is no great country that shows greater uniformity, at least in the external aspects of life, than does the United States. Even as to language, moral standards, political ideas, all sorts of chewing tobacco or cigarettes, putting on and discarding straw hats on the identical day anywhere from Maine to California. And even beyond the limits of the United States, what is all this talk about Americanization of Europe? One goes to the wilds of Africa and hears American phonographs. Among my treasured possessions is a theatrical program announcing a performance by Charlie Chaplin within the holy limits of Jerusalem. Stupid and uncomfortable as is European dress, at least of the male population, it has become the standard throughout the world. When short skirts are the order, they are worn not only in Paris and New York but also in Irkutsk and Timbuktoo. And no matter how great this degree of external uniformity may become, it has not in the past prevented and may not in the future prevent national groups getting at each other's throats. In 1861 the North and South wore the same clothes, and I dare say that in most of those elements, except language, the French and Germans are not so far apart. Whether for better or worse, the world is becoming more uniform in a great many ways, at least as far as large groups are concerned. Fortunately, some differences still remain between individuals within the smaller subdivisions in the same group, and it is these differences that Professor Fairchild, together with the Ku

Klux Klan, is so anxious to destroy. The primitive hatred of the stranger is thus dished up to us as the latest word in sociology.

And it isn't only uniformity that is demanded. There must also be conformity. All traces or suggestions of foreign origin must be lost. There can be no combination. Even in the less vital factors, we are told: "The dietary features of the American nationality itself have been very little altered by the immigration of thirty-five million foreigners from dozens of different nationalities." One wonders what particular restaurants Professor Fairchild has been in the habit of patronizing. One is tempted to quote *Life* in rejoinder. ("*Life*," with a capital "L," published weekly in New York City for the entertainment of the American mixed nationality.):

"The All-American Menu. Irish stew... chop suey... goulash... chile con carne... ravioli... knackwurst mit sauer-kraut... Yorkshire pudding... Welsh rarebit... bortsch... gefulte-fisch... Spanish omelet... caviar... mayonnaise... antipasto... pflaum-kuchen... English muffins... gryere... Danish pastry... Canadian bacon... curry... hot tamales... wiener-schnitzel... petits pois... spumoni... bouillabaisse... mate... scones... Turkish coffee... minestrone... filet mignon."

As one of the thirty-five million, I am satisfied after reading this quotation that, after all, I have contributed something to the American nationality. This isn't meant facetiously, because Professor Fairchild is in such dreadful earnest. "Soccer, lacrosse and cricket . . . are hardly to be considered as part of

the American nationality." Thus, football evidently is, in Professor Fairchild's opinion, a part of the American nationality. But there are, we are creditably informed, some very good baseball and football teams in other parts of the world as well. What an illusive and mysterious thing American nationality has become. For instance, we are told "it is significant that most of the bootleggers appear to be foreigners." It is true that 100% Americans have not been unknown to deal with bootleggers, but that, Professor Fairchild argues, does not alter the case. "It seems that one of the features of the American nationality is a nice distinction between patronizing a bootlegger and being a bootlegger." One wonders whether the W. C. T. U. or the Anti-Saloon League is going to approve of this characterization of this very convenient elastic conscience as a part of American nationality.

And is this all that the foreigners have contributed? Just the bootleggers? Again, I refer to my authority, "*Life*" itself. Yes, the same number—The 100% American.

The following is a quotation from a recent issue, entitled "100%—No Discount":

"Yes, sir! My favorite songwriter is Irving Berlin and my favorite singer is Eddie Cantor. My favorite play is 'Abie's Irish Rose.' My favorite novelist is Vicente Blasco Ibanez, and my favorite short-story writer is Octavus Roy Cohen. My favorite baseball player, next to Stanley Coveleskie, is Tony Lazzeri. My favorite prizefighter is Benny Leonard and my favorite wrestler is Stanislaus Zbyszko. My favorite cartoonist is

Rube Goldberg and Milt Gross is my favorite humorist. My favorite all-around athlete is Charlie Hoff. Next to Mary Pickford, my favorite movie actress is Vilma Banky, and after Charlie Chaplin, my favorite movie actor is Ramon Navarro. My favorite movie director is Ernst Lubitsch. My favorite law is the Immigration Act and my favorite club is the Herman K. Schloctermeyer Post of the American Legion. Yes, sir! I'm a one-hundred-percent American, I am."

The argument may appear somewhat facetious, but after all, it is not an easy matter to treat Professor Fairchild's line of reasoning too earnestly. For, after all, under the pleasant disguise of a scientific and polite phraseology, there is hidden the grossest form of chauvinism, particularly objectionable because it is conscious and defended as a natural emotion. What sort of a national culture does the author picture as desirable and productive? One that is absolutely rigid and which must suffer deterioration under any pressure from outside cultures? When and where, except in the mythological Far East, did such culture exist? And if it did exist in the past, how does it agree with modern methods of transportation and communication, with the free exchange of material and spiritual goods, upon which all culture in the final analysis must depend? What kind of anthropology, for instance, can justify statements such as these? "The very nature of moral standards is that they are absolute and cannot be mixed, combined or blended." (Page 141.) One is tempted to ask how close are the moral standards

of 1876 and 1926 in the United States. And on the other hand, how far distant the present moral standards of the United States and the United Kingdom, or even France and Russia, for that matter.

Nor is it the reasoning only that is frequently grossly inaccurate and unscientific. What about the factual basis? How can, for instance, Professor Fairchild wax so indignant over the un-American attitude of "the Greek father who regards his ten-year-old son simply as a source of financial gain" in the light of the known economic facts as to Child Labor among the white trash of the Carolinas and Georgia.

The answer is simple. This argument, like many others, is only a smoke screen for the justification of a Ku Klux Klan philosophy of life, for all these fears of foreign influences disappear immediately as soon as the Nordics are considered. "Full and complete assimilation," the author argues on one hand, "is absolutely necessary," and on the other hand, "quite as absolutely impossible for the Italian, Greek or Jew." But, "it does not make a great amount of difference whether the Englishman has finally assimilated or not. Whatever remains of his original nationality will be so much like the American that it is not likely to cause much disturbance." Surely, in religion, political and social ideas, and all sorts of habits, beliefs and loyalties, an Englishman may be much further away from an American than a Frenchman, Russian or even a Jew. At least we were taught to believe that in regard to the other large Nordic group from central Europe. But these considerations

are forgotten under the influence of the Nordic theory.

The Nordic theory—it seems to have become an obsession. It has the great convenience of giving a quasi scientific character to every prejudice, even though all scientific anthropology has discarded it. One wonders at the strength of it in a country such as ours, until at least one underlying subconscious motivation is discovered. It is no coincidence that in the concluding chapter the argument is shifted from that of biology and anthropology to politics and economics. A new and grave objection to the foreigner suddenly appears. Not the real or imaginary difference in his gustatory, esthetic, and recreational or even religious habits, but the danger of his economic and social theories. Even though Professor Fairchild asserts "that each nation develops an immunity to certain ideas," a sudden entrance of new ideas may find the country unprepared to counteract them. And because of that danger, the general democratic principle of free speech must be waived in case of foreigners, particularly "attempts at free speech which take the character of criticism of the form of government or the processes of the governing agencies." It matters not that the economic, political and social conditions in this country are so ideal that there is no room in Professor Fairchild's opinion for any revolutionary propaganda. The danger of contamination still exists. "Da liegt der Hund begraben," but one has to wade through 261 out of the 266 pages to find this potent motive.

Of course, the same danger may be in the foreign press, in the foreign literature, even in the foreign language. One remembers the recent past when the study of German was abandoned in our public schools and even colleges as treason. Professor Fairchild's remedy against *The Melting Pot Mistake* evidently is a new Chinese Wall, an interesting conclusion to be drawn from modern biology, anthropology, sociology and history. One wonders whether this new Chinese Wall is to be built with valves so as to permit the stream to flow at least in an outward direction. Surely, the million Americans or so,

who go to Europe every summer, may present a double danger—that of inculcating American ideas, which may be just as obnoxious to Europeans of Professor Fairchild's bent of mind, and to ourselves as they are exposed to the pernicious ideas of Europe. One rather shudders in considering where a consistent plan of this philosophy may lead us. But perhaps our fears are somewhat exaggerated. For all we know, Professor Fairchild, like so many of his colleagues, may be spending this very month in Europe, imbibing not only the ideas but the spirit (not to say spirits) of that pernicious world.

## THE EPIC OF THE EAST EUROPEAN JEW IN AMERICA

BY CHARLES ZUNSER

TO THE student of social origins, to the historian of Jewish beginnings in America, to the Jewish social worker, the publication of Abraham Cahan's autobiography<sup>1</sup> is an event of significance. The author, who has distinguished himself as a Yiddish journalist, a progenitor of the Jewish labor movement in America, a speaker, a novelist of note in English, a traveler and educator, has here set down the moving panorama of his colorful life.

The first volume portrays, as its name, "In der Alter Heim" implies, a typical small village in Russian Lithuania. Podbreze is the name of the village and it is near Vilna. Here Cahan was born into a respect-

<sup>1</sup>"Blatter von Mein Leben," in three volumes, published by the Forwards Association, New York, 1926.

ed but impoverished orthodox family in 1860. Among his very early recollections is the ruthless suppression of Poland's efforts to free itself from the Russian yoke. He recalls the dangling bodies of several Polish revolutionists swaying from the gallows in the market place. He recalls the first substitution of the kerosene lamp in place of the primitive candle. As the grandson of a rabbi, the youthful Cahan was early (at the age of four and a half) thrust into the mediaeval *Cheder*, his natural love of childish fun and mischief constantly marred by frequent reminders by teacher, parents, relatives and the general population that such behavior was unbecoming a "Rov's an einikel." Then came the removal of the family to Vilna and Cahan paints the approach to the mystical town with