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# Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration — June 30, 1920. [excerpts]

by A. Caminetti

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United State Department of Labor,  
Bureau of Immigration,  
Washington, June 30, 1920.

Sir:

At the time of submitting the bureau's annual report for 1919, nearly 8 months after the armistice which was supposed to be the prelude to the close of the World War, it was not expected that the end of another fiscal year would witness a state of war still existing between the United States and the Central Powers, and war in active operation between Poland and Soviet Russia and neighboring states. So that in presenting the report for 1920 the effects of war conditions on immigration can not escape consideration.

The year has been an extremely busy one — in fact, the busiest of any since the inauguration of the immigration service. Among the leading causes of activity were the effort to deport alien anarchists, communists, and kindred classes, and the resumption of foreign immigration, with indications that the old stride will be outdistanced, unless affected by laws of this or other countries.

Immigration increased from 141,132 in 1919 to 430,001 immigrant aliens coming for permanent residence in 1920. The movement of non-immigrant and non-emigrant aliens for the latter year was, inwardly, 191,575; outwardly, 139,747.

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It is well to emphasize at the very outset of this report the expansion of the work as well as the growth of responsibility; the necessity to labor beyond the eight-hour day and six-day week in some branches of the service, and likewise the disproportion between

this exaction and the compensation allowed, measured according to value of work performed in comparison with like labor in private industry and in state and municipal administration, as well as in some federal divisions.. This disproportion was so great that many times the breaking down point was avoided by an extremely narrow margin, especially on the Canadian and Mexican borders. The members of the service who have undergone the vicissitudes of the World War and remained in the ranks under the circumstances deserve the gratitude of the people for their devotion, as there was not a month of the whole period in which they could not have entered other employment that would have brought greater salary returns than have been possible in the Immigration Service; and the bureau regrets that while so much was due these faithful employees so little, comparatively, could be given them in the form of promotions in recognitions of their services to the country in time of need.

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## Admissions and Rejections.

The statistics representing the admission and exclusion of aliens summarize the results of the past year's work in the field of governmental activity over which the immigration service has the primary jurisdiction, viz, the examination of aliens arriving at our ports and applying for admission to the country. The total number of such alien applicants received at the various gateways from foreign lands, on the seacoasts, and land borders was 633,371, as compared with 245,647 in the previous fiscal year, an increase in ar-

rivals of 387,724, or 158 percent.

Of the total arrivals 621,576 were admitted, and 11,795 rejected and returned to the countries whence they came. Of those admitted 430,001 were immigrant aliens, i.e., those coming here for permanent residence and constituting the real immigration, properly so-called, while 191,575 were non-immigrant aliens (either permanent residents of this country returning from temporary visits abroad, or permanent residents of other countries making a temporary visit here). The admissions for the previous year were 237,021, consisting of 141,132 immigrant and 95,889 non-immigrant aliens, the increase for this class for the present year being 384,555, or 162 percent.

Against the total admissions of aliens, the records for the year show the departure of 428,062 to other countries, 288,315 of these being classed as emigrant aliens (leaving the United States for permanent residence), and 139,747 as non-emigrant aliens (leaving this country for temporary absence or returning to their homes abroad after temporary sojourn here). On comparing the totals of arrivals and departures, it will be seen that the net increase in population resulting from immigration and emigration was 193,514, or an increase of 172,724 over the corresponding figure for the last year (20,790). However, as till further reduction in the foreign-born population was made by the departure for permanent residence of 8,010 naturalized citizens of the United States, making the absolute net increase in population 185,504, as compared with 17,216 for the fiscal year 1919.

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As to causes of rejection, the greatest number of aliens (5,297) were excluded as persons likely to become a public charge, the next largest number (1,639) having been rejected under the illiteracy test. Other causes were: Stowaways, 1,241; contract laborers, 1,164; loathsome or dangerous contagious diseases, 541; criminals, 355; physical defects affecting ability to earn a living, 353; insanity and other mental defects, 216; prostitutes and other immoral aliens, 185; children under 16, unaccompanied by parents, 291. There were excluded under the laws regulating the admission of Chinese 60 aliens, while 56 coming from Japan without proper passports and 27 natives of the barred Asiatic zone were refused admission....

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### **Deportations of Aliens After Entry.**

The number of deportations accomplished during the past year under departmental process was 2,762, as compared with 3,086 in 1919. This does not include deportations under the Chinese-exclusion laws by order of courts or commissioners, amounting to 15 as compared with 34 last year.

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While the total number of those returned after arrest on departmental warrants was smaller than the corresponding number last year, nevertheless as regards some of the more important causes for deportation substantial increases are shown. Thus, of the criminal class 229 were deported, as compared with 175 in 1919; of the insane and mentally defective classes, 388, as compared with 158; and of the anarchist and kindred classes, 314, as compared with 37 in the previous year; these gains in the classes named offsetting to some degree the diminution in the gross number of deportations effected in comparison with the fiscal year 1919.

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There have been no deportations by the consent of the alien involved, either in 1919 or 1920, hence no reference is found to this class in the statistics for the year. It will be recalled that Congress in enacting the present immigration law extended the time from one to three years after landing within which aliens who fall into distress here or need public aid from causes arising subsequent to their arrival may be deported at government expense.

During the past year the deportation work of the bureau has been systematized and coordinated by the organization of a deportation and transportation section, of which Inspector Leo B. Russell is chief, having entire control of the movement of parties of aliens from interior points to the seaboard for embarkation to the countries to which their deportation has been ordered, resulting in a marked degree of efficiency and economy....

The service to which this has succeeded made trips only from San Francisco and Seattle to the Ellis Island Station, New York Harbor, while the present system covers the entire country, not only for coast-to-coast trips but also for those from the Mississippi River section to New York, and from eastern and northern points to the Mexican border. The train service is

in charge of E.M. Kline as deporting officer....

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**Anarchist, Communist,  
and Kindred Classes.**

The activities for the last 12 months [July 1, 1919-June 30, 1920] in this line of work have been greater than all previous efforts in this direction. The passage of the act of October 16, 1918, making more effective the then existing law, followed violations thereof by anarchistic elements in various parts of the country. Congress in its desire to curb this element granted special appropriations to the Department of Justice, while the Department of Labor, empowered by law to take up the question of arrest and deportation of such as were found to be aliens, continued its work under such authority notwithstanding the financial limitations under which it was laboring. The work previously initiated continued with increased interest and, under special organization, made effective progress.

At the beginning of the fiscal year conferences were held with the Department of Justice, at which plans for cooperating in the respective duties of the two departments were agreed upon, as shown by the record. Arrests followed in the months of November and December, principally of members of the Union of Russian Workers, against whom some 600 warrants had been issued, from and after November 5 last [1919], 452 being taken into custody and accorded hearings. Of these, orders for the deportation to Russia of 246 were entered.

A new difficulty presented itself in the inability to deport to Soviet Russia, as the United States had not accorded recognition to that country. After much effort, encouraged to some extent by the fact that an alleged representative of that government [Ludwig Martens] had given publicity to the statement that certain aliens of these classes who were under proceedings of deportation would be welcomed, arrangements were made for the deportation to Russia of such as could be assembled on the Army transport *U.S.S. Buford*, furnished through the cooperation of the Department of State and the Transportation Service of the United States Army. This first party deported consisted

of 199 members of said Union of Russian Workers, to which were added 43 other Russian aliens whose deportation had already been directed on anarchistic and kindred charges, including the notorious Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, making 242 against whom proceedings under the anarchist laws had been initiated. These, with 7 other Russian aliens likewise under order of deportation on other charges under the immigration laws, constituted the party of 249 which embarked on the *Buford*, sailing from New York on the morning of December 21, 1919, arriving at Hango, Finland, January 17, 1920, on which date the aliens were transferred to the care of the American Vice Consul at that port, whence they were conveyed under escort furnished by the military authorities of Finland to the frontier of Soviet Russia, over which they passed on January 19. The party was in charge of F.W. Berkshire, supervising inspector in charge of the Immigration Service on the Mexican border, and appropriate steps were taken to provide for the comfort of the aliens thus returned, including the furnishing of proper clothing for those in need thereof, suitable food on the way, and a supply of 5 days' rations after arrival at their destination.

While these events were in progress, the Communist and Communist Labor Parties became active. In the neighborhood of 5,000 warrants of arrest, based on the act of October 16, 1918, were issued from and after December 29, 1919. Service of approximately 3,000 such warrants was effected and hearings held by officers of the Immigration Service at Boston, Mass.; Hartford, Conn.; Ellis Island, Buffalo, and Rochester, NY; Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pa.; Cleveland, Youngstown, and Toledo, Ohio; Baltimore, Md.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Chicago, Ill.; Detroit, Mich.; Milwaukee, Wis.; Minneapolis, Minn.; and in smaller numbers at practically all of the remaining cities on the mainland at which immigration officers are stationed. The question arising whether membership in the Communist Party of America constituted a violation of Section 1 of said act, the matter was submitted to the Secretary [William B. Wilson], who, after due consideration, ruled on January 25, 1920, that such membership came within the purview of said section. On the other hand, the Communist Labor Party was found by the ruling of the Secretary of May 5, 1920, not to be such an organization as to bring it within

the scope of the act, for the reason that force or violence as a means of attaining its ends was not shown to be advocated by its platform and labor program. Of the total number arrested about 300 belonged to the latter party, and warrants of arrest in these cases in due course have been cancelled.

As a result of the proceedings mentioned, the department has directed the deportation of 556 aliens, a large majority of whom are Russians, while warrants of arrest in such proceedings have been cancelled in 2,202 cases.

Since January 1 [1920] warrants of deportation have likewise been issued by the department with respect to 37 other aliens (in addition to those already referred to as having been ordered deported in December last) held under anarchistic or related charges, some of which cases were pending from the previous fiscal year. On that date of this report there are outstanding warrants of deportation for 591 aliens, practically all, as heretofore stated, to Soviet Russia.

The bureau has made consistent and persistent efforts extending over many months to bring about arrangements for the transportation to Soviet Russia of the aliens whose deportation thither has been directed. Negotiations are now in progress along several different lines looking to the solution of this question, the existence of which is due to the disorganized political conditions in Soviet Russia and in the newly organized states lying between it and the western nations. Of course, the nonrecognition of Soviet Russia continues to be the stumbling block to deportation, and, unlike the first effort, no signs of encouragement have been visible, but information supposedly authoritative indicated the futility of attempting to transport to the borders of Soviet Russia under great expense aliens ordered deported there, as above set forth. Deportations of this class to other countries have progressed from time to time, so that including the number deported to Soviet Russia on the *U.S.S. Buford*, 314 have been removed from the country during the year, 33 of whom were of the communist class. The necessity of detaining the large number of aliens taken into custody of December of last year [1919] and January and succeeding months of this until released under adequate bonds, together with the vast amount of clerical and administrative work involved in the bureau and in the field, placed an unusual and extensive

volume of labor as well as great responsibility on an already overtaxed service. Congress came to the aid of the department by granting a substantial special appropriation to meet the extraordinary expenses incident to this work.

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### Review of World Immigration.

Although nearly 20 months have passed since the signing of the armistice, the close of the fiscal year 1920 finds the immigration lanes from a great part of Europe closed almost as effectively as they were during the war. It is true that the resumption of peacetime traffic on the ocean and the return of fairly normal conditions in Great Britain, France, and other western European nations have brought about a considerable immigration and emigration movement between those countries and the United States. It is true also that the movement to and from Italy and Greece has reached considerable proportions, but Austria, Hungary, Russia, the Balkans, Germany, and the war-born states of Finland, Czechoslovakia, and Poland — territory which sent nearly 600,000 immigrants to the United States in 1914 alone — sent less than 6,300 in 1920. Therefore, what will undoubtedly be our greatest postwar immigration problem is still a matter of the future, but even a casual observation of the trend of events in central and eastern Europe is enough to warrant the conviction that at any time and without warning this problem may become an immediate and very pressing one.

The central and eastern Europe situation and its probable relation to future immigration was discussed at some length in a review of world immigration which appeared in the bureau's annual report for 1919. It was pointed out in this connection that while immigration from western Europe long ago passed the crest and probably would never again attain its old-time volume, the movement from the southern and eastern countries was still considerably below the anticipated flood stage when the World War began. The bureau at that time predicted that immigration from western Europe would soon resume its normal prewar status, and that very probably there would be a somewhat increased movement in the case of some countries, and

the experience in 1920 has only strengthened that belief. It predicted, also, that immigration from eastern Europe would almost certainly resume prewar importance whenever this became physically possible. It went further than this, and pointed out the possibility and even the probability that when this region finally emerged from the maelstrom into which the world War had plunged it the overseas exodus would not only reach its prewar status but would increase beyond anything that was ever dreamed of in the past.

As already suggested, the experience of the fiscal year just ended has seemingly justified the bureau's prophesy concerning immigration from western Europe, for, as pointed out in the discussion of immigration statistics elsewhere in this report, the movements from and to most of the countries have already resumed something like their prewar proportions, and in the case of some countries the westbound tide is even higher than in the years immediately preceding the war.

The year brought very little change in immigration from central and eastern Europe, however, and at its close those regions are still so involved in the aftermath of the World War that immigration from them is negligible. Developments of the year, however, have been such as to strengthen the bureau's belief that when real peace finally comes to that part of the world and free communication with other countries is again resumed, the volume of immigration will be limited only by the lack of ocean transportation or the effectiveness of possible barriers which the various countries themselves may erect against the emigration of their people, or which the United States and other nations may erect to wholly or in part prevent their admission.

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With the exception of the so-called Great Russians, who may be briefly described as that part of the Russian population now included in Soviet Russia, all of the principal peoples of eastern Europe have furnished large contributions to our immigration and in most cases the numbers coming were increasing when the war began, with the prospect that under ordinary circumstances such increase would have continued for years to come.

Many of these peoples, as a result of war, have come under changed political sovereignty and as a rule have ceased to be subject peoples. Naturally this would have at least a temporary effect of restraining emigration, but it can not be supposed that it will do so permanently, especially under present economic conditions, which according to all available estimates are destined to be the lot of practically the entire region under consideration for a long period, even after fighting ceases and stable and permanent governments are established. This being the case, it can not but be expected that as in the past the surplus population will seek relief in emigration.

An important question — perhaps the most important one which arises out of the turmoil of eastern Europe — is to what extent will the people of Great Russia become a part of future immigration. For many years after other peoples of what was then Russia, notably the Poles, Hebrews, Lithuanians, and Finns, had become large factors in our immigration it was commonly predicted that the Russians themselves would never follow their example to any great extent. The contrary proved to be true, however, for in the few years next preceding the beginning of the war they began to come to the United States in rapidly increasing numbers.

The following figures showing the number of immigrants of each of the peoples named who came from Russia in 1910-1914 will illustrate the point:

|            | <b>1910</b> | <b>1911</b> | <b>1912</b> | <b>1913</b> | <b>1914</b> |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Hebrew     | 59,824      | 65,472      | 58,389      | 74,033      | 102,638     |
| Polish     | 63,635      | 40,193      | 51,244      | 112,345     | 66,278      |
| Lithuanian | 21,676      | 16,210      | 13,576      | 23,873      | 20,808      |
| Finnish    | 14,999      | 8,942       | 5,708       | 11,156      | 10,968      |
| Russian    | 14,768      | 17,581      | 21,101      | 48,472      | 40,241      |

With the exception of the Russians the peoples enumerated came from western and southwestern Russia, the most of which territory is either definitely separated from the former empire, as in the case of Finland and Poland, or which, for the present at least, is outside the jurisdiction of the so-called Soviet government. Accordingly, the only immigrants who in the past have come in any numbers from what is now Soviet Russia are the real Russian people, mentioned in the table, and some immigrants of German blood who came from the old-time German settlements on the

Volga River.

Leaving out of consideration the various peoples of Asiatic origin who inhabit the eastern part of the country, the population of the present Soviet Russia is very largely made up of the real Russian people already referred to, and the extent of their future immigration to the United States can only be conjectured. But it is safe to say that much will depend upon economic, and perhaps political, conditions in Russia when normal intercourse with other countries is resumed. The rapid increase which, as the above table shows, occurred just preceding the World War was thoughtfully considered by the bureau, and the conclusion was reached that, unless artificially restricted, these Russians would soon become one of the largest, if not the largest, racial groups among our immigrants.

At that time it was believed that unfavorable economic conditions resulting largely from overpopulation of land available for the peasants in large sections of central Russia were chiefly responsible for the beginning and rapid growth of the movement to this country. In earlier years this population pressure had been somewhat relieved by an enormous immigration of peasants to Siberia, but for various reasons this decreased, and the increased movement to the United States, and also to Canada, almost immediately followed.

The World War, of course, abruptly stopped this movement, as it did all immigration from eastern Europe, and the isolation of Russia since the war ended has been equally effective in that respect. Whether the political upheaval in that country will result in removing what seemed to be the chief cause of peasant migration to Siberia and emigration overseas remains to be seen.

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### **Personnel and Appropriations.**

The great outstanding fact made prominent throughout the year, of which those in authority in the department and the Immigration Service were con-

stantly reminded, was inadequacy of force and insufficiency of appropriations to properly officer the service and furnish the supplies necessary for the efficient enforcement and administration of the laws.

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The bureau estimates, after careful study and consideration, that \$6 million will be necessary in order to provide a reasonably adequate service for the coming year, and believes that unless an appropriation for the next fiscal year reaching or approximating that amount is secured it will be impossible to properly enforce the immigration laws and meet all requirements of administration. This estimate is based upon actual conditions and necessities.

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A material increase is now unavoidable and it is estimated that a personnel of 2,500 will be required. In connection with the increase in personnel there must be considered an increase in pay. The difficulty in securing and keeping good officers when other public services, as well as private industries, offer greater pay for practically like qualifications, has been one of the drawbacks to efficient administration for some years past. During this year it has become accentuated to such an extent that it has caused the loss of many experienced officers from the service, and inability to induce qualified persons to accept employment by reason of the conditions described has at time brought some branches to the breaking point. Not only must provision be made for greater compensations, but the service must be made as inviting as that established in private industry and promotions for meritorious application to duty provided for at proper intervals....

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The present immigration force consists of about 1,700 officers and employees. The 800 increase proposed is intended to supply aid in the various grades of the inspectorial, clerical, and sub-clerical work throughout the jurisdiction already called for by pressing requests on file and to provide the eight-hour day and six-day week for all branches of the service.

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*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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