

# **THE RUSSIAN IMMIGRANT**

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The Russian immigrant by Jerome Davis

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**JEROME DAVIS**

**THE RUSSIAN  
IMMIGRANT**



*The*  
RUSSIAN IMMIGRANT

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To the Russian workingmen whose unstinted toil helps to maintain the basic industrial mechanism of America, but who for the most part are by this very service kept out of reach of the warm, friendly heart of our people.





## PREFACE

SOCIOLOGY must begin its investigations with observation. As Dr. Giddings says of it, "Description and history will keep well in advance of explanation."<sup>1</sup> Of such a study as *The Russian Immigrant*, this is especially true. Moreover, this subject does not readily lend itself to adequate statistical treatment—the data thus far collected by our Federal Government are too meager, and to attempt an independent investigation would involve large resources and an extensive organization. The present monograph is an attempt to describe only the main social forces impinging on the Russian in America, and their inevitable effect on his mind.

Of many shortcomings in this treatise, the writer is very much aware. At best it can be but an approximation of conditions among the majority of Russians in this country. The reader must bear in mind that the research was made during a period when the Russian's attitude was affected by the great social upheaval in his native land, and must remember that in America one result of the war spirit was a series of repressive measures against aliens, especially Russians.

<sup>1</sup> Giddings, F. H., *The Principles of Sociology* (New York, 1916), p. 54.

Since the bulk of the Russian immigration to the United States is made up of the peasant and working classes, it is with them that we are chiefly concerned. By Russian, as used here, is meant the Great Russian, inhabiting Central Russia; the White Russian, living between Poland and Russia; and the Little Russian, from what was formerly South Russia. It does not include the Jews, Poles, Finns, Letts, Lithuanians, Ruthenians from Galicia, or other Slavic races. Throughout this study we shall refer to the Russian group defined above as Russians or Russian Slavs interchangeably.

The method employed has been as follows: First, the printed matter available on the Russians in America was analyzed. A partial list of books, pamphlets, and government reports used is to be found in the appendix.<sup>2</sup> Second, unpublished materials, the result of surveys made by others, were utilized. Among these were researches by Mr. Cole of Chicago, by the Russian Division of the Foreign

<sup>2</sup> The only book which the author found dealing exclusively with immigrants from the Russian empire was a paper-bound volume entitled *The Russians in America*, which dealt with Jews and Poles as well as the Russian Slavs and was available only in the Russian language. The author, Mr. Vilchur, was formerly editor of *The Russkoye Slovo*, a Russian newspaper printed in New York. His book is more in the nature of a popular historical sketch than of an analysis of the relationship of the Russian to our American society. In addition to this, there was a pamphlet in Russian, *On the Question of the Organization of the Russian Colony*, the result of a study made by E. I. Omeltchenko, a member of the Extraordinary Russian Mission sent to the United States by Kerensky in 1917. This contains the results of personal visits to the various Russian colonies, and the conclusions reached are important.

Language Governmental Information Bureau, by the Carnegie Foundation, by the Inter-Racial Council, and by Mr. Sack of the Russian Information Bureau. Third, a personal investigation of Russian groups in the United States was made. The writer was particularly fortunate in having had the background of two years and a half in Russia and a knowledge of the Russian language, without which this study would have been impossible. He personally visited the following cities, each one being the headquarters of a district of the Russian Greek Orthodox Church in America: New York, including Brooklyn; Bridgeport and Hartford, Conn.; Boston, Philadelphia, Scranton, Olyphant, Coaldale, Pittsburgh, Donora, in Pennsylvania; Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis. Others he visited were Ansonia, Waterbury, Seymour, and New Haven, Conn.; Braddock and McKees Rocks, Pa.; Akron, Ohio; and Denver. Among Russians in the states of North Dakota, Washington, and California, special investigations were made on a uniform basis, and the detailed reports were incorporated with those gained by personal investigation. In each of the communities the leaders of the various Russian groups were interviewed. These included any or all of the following: (a) the Russian priests, (b) the Russian consul, (c) the editors of Russian papers, (d) Russian professional men, (e) Russian workmen or farmers. Where possible, visits were made to observe: (a) workmen's clubs,