

## ABSTRACT

Title of thesis:       NEGOTIATED TASTES: A STUDY OF THE  
                          AMERICANIZATION OF SOUTHERN AND EASTERN  
                          EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS BY SOCIAL WORKERS,  
                          REFORMERS AND NUTRITIONAL SCIENTISTS.

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This thesis aims to prove that the efforts of settlement workers, immigrant aid organization workers, home economists, reformers and nutritional scientists to Americanize the foodways of the southern and eastern European immigrants between the 1890s and the 1920s was not a systematic and homogenous enterprise motivated by a single idea and driven by a single goal, but a far more nuanced and contested process in which social workers with various backgrounds and beliefs mediated between American identity, science and immigrant food culture. Far outnumbered by the new immigrants, the social workers concentrated on alleviating immediate needs of the poor in the industrial centers, focusing on

increasing their buying power and improving the nutritional value of their diets.

Servicing all immigrants as well as Americans, the social workers often adapted their teachings to respect the immigrant food cultures and tastes, some even praising ethnic cuisines over the American diet.

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NUTRITIONAL SCIENTISTS.

by  
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This thesis is dedicated to my parents Jirka and Marie Fronk, making me proud of my Czech immigrant heritage and instilling in me a love and curiosity for food, making every dinner a journey around the world that made me and my brother ask, “Where are we eating today?”

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AICP	Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor
COS	Charity Organization Society
CUNY	Columbia University New York
GRCC	Goddard-Riverside Community Center
LGMH	La Guardia Memorial House
NAC	National Americanization Committee
RBML	Rare Books and Manuscript Library
SCIHC	State Commission of Immigration and Housing of California



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Fear and loathing of the immigrant foodways crescendoed around the turn of the century.<sup>1</sup>

“Not yet Americanized. Still eating Italian,” an unnamed social worker noted in her files in the early 1900s.<sup>2</sup> This quote, and variations on it, is used in several works to illustrate the aversion of social workers, settlement house workers, reformers and dietitians to immigrant foodways. The earliest use of the quote in more recent historiography is in Levenstein’s 2003 seminal work *Revolution at the Table*.<sup>3</sup> Later works in the foodways as well as the immigration history field make note of the quote; David Roediger uses it in his 2005 work *Working Towards Whiteness*. Linda Civitello published it three years later in *Cuisine and Culture*. While Civitello offers no sourcing for the quote, Levenstein traces it back to a work from 1973 by Erik Amfitheatrof titled *Children of Columbus*.<sup>4</sup> Amfitheatrof, a former Time-Life correspondent of mixed Russian-Italian

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<sup>1</sup> Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 123

<sup>2</sup> Civitello, 271; Roediger *Working Towards Whiteness*, 190; Levenstein, *Revolution*, 105; Amfitheatrof, *Children of Columbus*, 240.

<sup>3</sup> Levenstein strangely does address changing attitudes of the social workers and reformers in the 1985 article *The American Response to Italian Food*, although he places the shift post WWI.13-16

<sup>4</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 234

heritage, gave the book the subtitle *An Informal History of the Italians in the New World*, which a reviewer at the time noted as a “properly” selected title, given that Amfitheatrof was not a historian.<sup>5</sup> Roediger traced the quote back further, to Oscar Handlin’s seminal 1951 work *The Uprooted*.<sup>6</sup> Handlin wrote the passage in italics, which according to the author’s acknowledgements indicates that it is paraphrased from primary sources, “not quoted verbatim,” but as Handlin failed to provide any sourcing for his material, the Ur origin of the quote remains a mystery.<sup>7</sup>

In the past three decades, foodways historians such as Donna Gabaccia, Linda Civitello, Hasia Diner and Harvey Levenstein examined the views and reactions of the Americans of Anglo-Saxon heritage toward the new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who landed on America’s shores in droves in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Between 1870 and 1920, 26 million immigrants came to America, most of them from southern and eastern Europe.<sup>8</sup> They originated from countries that experienced a different political and historical reality than the immigrants from the northern and western European countries that preceded them. Many of them were nationless, their lands incorporated into the Austrian-Hungarian and Russian empires, their own national and religious

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<sup>5</sup> Cordasco, “The Children of Columbus,” 297-298.

<sup>6</sup> Roediger, 305.

<sup>7</sup> Handlin, 283, 309.

<sup>8</sup> Civitello, *Cuisine and Culture*, 271.

identities subjugated by the ruling states; others had witnessed decades of war and poverty. Unlike the preceding northern and western Europeans — many of whom emigrated with funds and skills and put down roots as farmers in the East and pioneers in the West — the majority of the new immigrants are poor and unskilled. Settling in the large industrial centers of the nation, crowding the tenement and boarding houses, they sought the comfort and familiarity of their own, creating Little Italys and Little Krakows, alarming and worrying Americans that the concentration of so many “others” would muddle their WASP waters.<sup>9</sup>

Reformers, educators and social workers providing social services through settlement houses and exceedingly professionalized aid organizations assisting the urban poor sought to create “order” through Progressive reform, “working to subordinate the reluctant matter of urban cities – industry, immigrants, poverty, dirt, built environment – into an outward expression of their inner vision, whether that vision was of the ordered industrial society, the ideal city, or the proper American.”<sup>10</sup>

In *Patriotic Pluralism*, Jeffrey Mirel’s treatise of Americanization through the public education system, Mirel groups Americanizers into three categories: assimilationists, cultural pluralists and amalgamationists. Assimilationists demand

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<sup>9</sup> Pillsbury, *No Foreign Food*, 148-149; Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism*, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Jackson, *Lines of Activity*, 11

total integration, insisting immigrants give up their cultural identity and embrace the culture of their new homeland. They have to cease being European in order to become American. If not, America will be ruined. Cultural pluralists and amalgamationists reject the ethnocentric views of the assimilationists and advocate for a more accepting approach to Americanization. Cultural pluralist believe immigrant cultures can coexist alongside and interact with Anglo-Saxon culture. Seeking “substantial preservation of the immigrants’ native culture ‘within the context of American citizenship and political and economic integration into American society,’” cultural pluralist seek respect for immigrant culture within the education system and American society as a whole.<sup>11</sup>

Amalgamationists go even further and introduce the idea of the “melting pot,” believing that “the mixing and remixing of [all] groups in the United States [will] produce an entirely new and more robust nation.”<sup>12</sup> All three however believe that the immigrant can become an American. This was in stark contradiction to ethnic nationalists who sought to put an end to the influx of immigrants. Often aided by xenophobic pseudo-science, they claim that the new immigrants are racially inferior and argue that no amount of education can Americanize these immigrants.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Mirel, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>13</sup> Mirel, 27.

Foodways historiography has largely ignored the nuanced views put forth by Mirel in telling the story of southern and eastern European immigrant food culture in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, creating instead the picture of the intolerant reformer and social worker whose inferior view of the third wave immigrant carries through to the kitchen.<sup>14</sup> Following the ideology of the ethnic nationalists, the social workers believed that in order to become truly Americanized, the immigrants had to denounce their old culture entirely and adopt the American way of life, including the American way of shopping, preparing and consuming food. “Food preferences often became the touchstone of Americanization,” Levenstein writes.<sup>15</sup> Only by changing his food habits could the immigrant become truly American.

Through research of records of settlement houses, reformers, and aid organizations assisting the poor, foodways historians have strengthened the image of the xenophobic reformers, social workers and settlement house workers in the early 1900s, implying a specific and widespread disdain existed toward the southern and eastern European “New Immigrants.” For the most part, they quote primary sources voicing disapproval of Italian, Polish, Slavic and other southern and eastern European groups, either by singling out the specific nationality or

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<sup>14</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 105; Levenstein, *American Response to Italian Food*, 7; Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, 131–134; Civitello, *Cuisine and Culture*, 276.

<sup>15</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 105; The full quotation reads “For assimilationists, food preferences often became the touchstone of Americanization.” The first part was omitted as Levenstein does not focus on the assimilationists in his chapter, only illustrating the hard-lined ethnic nationalists.

ethnicity, or by implying it through the ingredients used citing “acrid smells of garlic and onions,” “highly spiced foods,” and one pot stews combining “meat, cheese, beans and macaroni together.”<sup>16</sup>

This view however, was far from uniform among social workers, home economists and settlement house workers, nor was it just projected onto those of southern and eastern European decent. Wanting to professionalize their field after the turn of the century, social services workers and settlement house workers reorganized relief as a business and looked to science to legitimize their teachings, and grasped onto the emerging field of nutritional science to do so, transforming their work from “charity” to “scientific philanthropy.”<sup>17</sup> Close examination of the same records cited by foodways historians shows many instances of reformers, social services workers and settlement workers adapting their teachings and methods to fit the preferences and tastes of the southern and eastern European immigrant, and stressing the importance of nutritious and economical cooking to all, independent of ethnicity or economic status.

This paper will examine the methods, motivation, goals and beliefs of the settlement workers, immigrant aid organization workers, home economists, reformers and nutritional scientists who sought to Americanize the southern and

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<sup>16</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 103–104; Gabaccia, *We are what we Eat*, 128.

<sup>17</sup> Walkowitz, *Working with Class*, 34-35.

eastern European immigrant foodways.<sup>18</sup> Studying the annual records and case work files of settlement houses and aid organization for the immigrants and poor, as well as articles and books written by them and home economists and nutritional scientists, and a detailed look at articles relating to immigrant reform and immigrant foodways published in the *Journal of Home Economics* from 1909 to 1924, this paper challenges the current historiography that presents the social workers as a united, unchanging front intended on reforming the southern and eastern European immigrant foodways to conform to Anglo-Saxon standards.

This paper argues that the Americanization of the southern and eastern European immigrant foodways was not a homogenous enterprise motivated by a single idea and driven by a single goal, but a far more nuanced and contested process in which social service workers with various backgrounds and beliefs mediated between American identity, science and immigrant food culture. Social workers and those within the Americanization movement were far from homogenous in their ideas, motivation, approach and implementation, debating the virtues of the immigrant food culture as much as they debated its nutritious values. Exposed through their work to cultures different than their own, many believe in cultural pluralism, being tolerant and even accepting of tastes different from their own.

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<sup>18</sup> These groups will be placed under the nomenclature “social workers” throughout much of the paper, unless a more specific distinction is needed. Although the term was not widely used at the time, for the purpose of this paper, the term will mean those working with immigrants in order to improve their conditions.

Social workers, settlement workers and home economists utilize the newfound knowledge uncovered in nutritional science to create better, more economical diets for those at the bottom of the economic ladder, including in their re-education campaigns not only immigrants from the third wave, but also immigrants from the first and second wave and native-born and naturalized Americans. Believing that their job is primarily to assist the poor, many social workers respect the tastes of their clients and adapt their assistance accordingly, seeing it futile and counterproductive to force meals on their charges that will remain uneaten.

The period studied in the thesis runs from the 1890s through to mid-1920s. This is not to say that it is the belief of the author that the effects of Americanization, or even Americanization itself, ended with the passing of the National Origins Act in 1924; Mirel's work argues exhaustively that it continued well after that, and it is the hope that other historians will take a closer look at assimilation practices in the decades following.

This paper is divided into four parts, each examining different aspects of the efforts to influence the southern and eastern European foodways. Chapter 2 examines social work organizations noted in the historiography, analyzing the number of immigrants assisted, putting them into context of the total immigrant



populations in neighborhoods and cities where they operated. By comparing the number of immigrants living in the areas serviced by Americanization- and reform organizations to the number of immigrants serviced, the research will show that those programs seeking to Anglo-Saxonize the immigrant foodways failed to reach them in significant numbers. In addition, looking at the nationalities of those assisted and educated by the organizations and houses, a clearer picture of the ethnic background and naturalization status emerges, one spanning nationalities from all three immigrant waves a lot more equally. By analyzing the economic status of the clientele of reformers and social workers, it becomes apparent that their reach was further limited because their interaction was mainly with those at the very bottom of the economy and ignored those southern and eastern European immigrants who were economically better off.

Home economists and nutritional scientist found the foodways of the immigrants to be dictated by ignorance and customs, not nutritional needs. As home economists and nutritional science teachers swept the nation at the turn of the century with their exact measurements and charts mapping the nutritional values of foods and their impact on the digestive tract, the immigrant diets — with their inexact recipes passed down from mother to daughter — became suspect and thought to contribute to everything from unhealthy cravings to

malnutrition, indigestion and alcoholism.<sup>19</sup> Cooking schools and classes were the main vehicles in the efforts to Americanize the immigrants. Schools across the United States instructed middle-class girls on the proper American diet and taught them how to disperse this knowledge as teachers of cooking and housekeeping classes or as part of the friendly visitor programs in the immigrant rich neighborhoods.<sup>20</sup> Teaching the immigrants how to shop and prepare food the right way became “a profession in its own right,” Levenstein notes, quoting from Jane Addams’ 1910 autobiography to illustrate the weight reformers gave to teaching immigrants to prepare food in the American way. Showing the daughter how to prepare American food would “help the mother connect the entire family with American food and household habits.”<sup>21</sup> Friendly visitors would visit immigrant homes, examine the way the household was kept, how and what kind of food was bought and prepared and make note of any insufficiencies and behaviors that were in need of improvement.<sup>22</sup>

Chapter 3 and 4 examine the motivation behind these programs, arguing that Americanization of the immigrant diet took a back seat in order to teach the poor how to cook a nutritious meal on a limited budget. Building on the findings from Chapter 2, Chapter 3 shows that it was not only the southern and eastern European diet that came under scrutiny; diets of immigrants from the second

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<sup>19</sup> Levenstein, 102; Shapiro, 80.

<sup>20</sup> Levenstein, 103; Levenstein, *American Response*, 9; Gabaccia, 128; Civatello, 271.

<sup>21</sup> Levenstein, *American Response*, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 103; Levenstein, *American Response*, 9; Gabaccia, 128.

wave as well as Americans are found to be lacking in nutritional value, and nutritional scientists and home economists advocate for a wide reaching reform of the American diet. As the newfound knowledge of nutritional science was limited; without full comprehension of the nutritional values of many vitamins and often greatly underestimating vegetables and fruit, they promote diets now known to hold lesser nutritional value, while considering many foods in the diets of southern and eastern European immigrants to be a luxury.

More recent work on Americanization such as Mirel's notes how classes targeting women became a naturalization vehicle, teaching foreign-born women English.<sup>23</sup> Review of primary records from settlement houses and social work organizations solidify this argument in Chapter 4; cooking classes were often used as a vehicle to teach the immigrant women English, teaching them basic coping phrases and skills to break them out of their isolation. Many of the clubs and lecture programs were used as a vehicle to teach the women about American history and government. In the 1920s, political power becomes another motivating force for social workers and reformers. With the passages of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920 and the Cable Act in 1922, immigrant women become a potential independent political power, their political and civic Americanization taking precedence over the Americanization of their food culture.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Mirel, 93.

<sup>24</sup> The Cable Act ends the automatic naturalization of foreign-born women married to an American citizen.

The image of the social workers and nutritional scientists suffers greatly in historiography of immigrant foodways, painting them as a homogenous group adhering to a negative view of the cooking and eating habits of their immigrant clients. The picture that is painted of the social workers in the field is quite damning — their view of the southern and eastern European immigrant is at best is less than favorable, at worst outright racist. This new generation of scientifically trained social workers saw immigrant cooking and eating habits as a problem, viewing their foreign-born pupils as ignorant and uncivilized.<sup>25</sup> Chapter 5 addresses this myth of the prejudiced social worker. As evidence from primary records of social organizations and works written by home economists, nutritionists and other reformers shows, not all who aid the immigrants believe their cooking and eating habits to be in need reform.

In the words of Mirel, “Americanization efforts ... were neither a monolithic enterprise nor a cultural juggernaut. Rather, they were part of a long-running and contested process of cultural change.” The efforts that sought to Americanize the southern and eastern European immigrant kitchens were no different, reflecting a contested process of cultural change involving American identity, developments in nutritional science and immigrant food culture.

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<sup>25</sup> Levenstein, 100; Shapiro 104, 128.

## CHAPTER 2

### BY THE NUMBERS:

#### QUANTIFYING THE REACH OF SOCIAL WORK ORGANIZATIONS INTO THE SOUTHERN AND EASTERN EUROPEAN IMMIGRANT KITCHEN

Settlement houses, charity organizations and social reform movements are -- together with public schools -- a major source for foodways historians. Social workers are seen as the main conduit for the Americanization of the new immigrants coming onto America's shores in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> In larger industrial and immigrant cities such as New York, Chicago and Detroit, the perception is that the clientele are mainly recent immigrants from the third wave.

Unlike their Kitchen predecessors, the new generation of scientific housekeepers were trained to meet the problem of immigrant cooking and eating habits head on. The wave of "New Immigrants" that began in the 1880s and 1890s became a flood after the turn of the century. Most of these people were drawn not to America's farms but to its cities and industrial towns.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 100-101.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 100.

While the influx of third-wave immigrants was certainly large, the influence of the social work organizations on the southern and eastern European immigrants needs to be critically analyzed if trends and conclusions are to be extrapolated out of their records. Third wave immigrants settled and mingled into neighborhoods occupied by second wave immigrants and Americans. This chapter will quantify the new immigrant populations in the large industrial cities in relation to those from earlier waves -- as well as American citizens -- in order to create a more complete picture of the communities where the social work organizations operated.

#### Third immigration wave quantified

By the time the 1920 census rolled around, almost 14 million people -- some 13 percent of those living in the United States -- check "foreign-born" on the census form. More than 40 percent of those hail from southern or eastern Europe. The vast majority of the immigrants settled in the big industrial cities of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit and Cleveland. While the influx of immigrants from the southern and eastern European countries was large and concentrated in the big cities, it was seldom that they dominate these cities. New York city's immigrant population tops 2 million in 1920, making those born elsewhere account for about 36 percent of New York's total population; those coming from southern and eastern Europe accounted for 23 percent of city's total

population and settled into the New York neighborhoods with those immigrants who came to America in the preceding immigrant waves.

Cities with significantly more inhabitants from the new immigrant group include Chicago -- 56 percent of the Windy City's 800,000 non-U.S.-born hailed from southern and eastern Europe but made up only 17 percent of the city's *total* population. A significant percentage of the foreign-born population in Chicago originated from the northern and western European countries and Canada.

Detroit had the highest percentage of third wave immigrants; 49.5 percent of the foreign-born population comes from southern and eastern European countries. While Poland contributed the most new immigrants (56,623) per capita, almost 60,000 immigrants arrived from Canada that same year, more than 30,000 came from Germany and about 31,000 from Great Britain. Cleveland's southern and eastern Europe-born immigrants made up 70 percent of the foreign-born population, but they only accounted for 21 percent of the total population.<sup>28</sup> While it cannot be denied that the influx of the southern and eastern European immigrants was significant, the immigrants who came before them from northern and western European countries lived in the same cities and neighborhoods.

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<sup>28</sup> United States Census Bureau, *Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States, Fourteenth Census of the United States*, Washington, D.C., 1920; United States Census Bureau, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, Bulletin Number 358-359*, Washington, D.C., 1910, last modified October 11, 2013, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab19.html>.

### Little Italy - ethnically homogenous neighborhood or a United Nations?

The recent immigrants moved into the neighborhoods occupied by those who landed on America's shores a few decades prior, creating neighborhoods with a population mix resembling the United Nations, as Swedes, Germans, English and native-born shared their neighborhoods with the new arrivals from Italy, Russia and the territories of the Austrian-Hungarian empire. Inhabitants of the overcrowded and filthy neighborhoods had one thing in common: they lived on the bottom rungs of the economic ladder.

Even in cities with a large immigrant concentration, such as New York City, annual reports from the late 1800s to the early 1920s of the cities two largest charitable aid societies — the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor (AICP) and the Charity Organization Society (COS) — show an ethnically diverse makeup of aid recipients.<sup>29</sup> Although many of the new immigrants sought to live among their fellow countrymen — as their predecessors did — no neighborhood was made up entirely of immigrants from one nation, or entirely of those born outside the United States. The boroughs, districts and neighborhoods where the organizations operated were a mixed bag of new and old immigrants, as well as “native” born Americans. Chicago's Little Italy was 47 percent non-Italian in 1912, the other half being new, old and native.<sup>30</sup> Manhattan

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<sup>29</sup> Annual Reports COS, Box 192—193, V.2, CSS Archives, RBML, CUNY; Annual Reports AICP, Box 71—73, IV.3, CSS Archives, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>30</sup> Roediger, *Working towards Whiteness*, 164-165.



had more than one “Little Italy” during the 1910s and 1920s, according to records from COS and the Friendly Aid Society.<sup>31</sup> Even Haarlem House, which in 1924 served a population of 112,000 — including 70,000 Italians — still noted that there were 26 other nationalities represented in that total.<sup>32</sup> The annual reports of the Friendly Aid Society House — located in Manhattan’s Kips Bay area and founded in 1892 — included various nationalities in their “very cosmopolitan neighborhood,” noting besides the dominant Irish and Italians, also Germans, French, Spanish, Greeks, Finns, English, Swedes, Armenians and Russian and Polish Jews.<sup>33</sup>

Operating in polyglot neighborhoods and basing their assistance on need, rather than nationality, meant that the social work organizations helped people from all nationalities -- those who came to the United States recently and those who lived here 10-20 years or more. Annual reports and case files show settlement and aid organization assisted U.S-born and naturalized Americans, as well as first-, second- and third-wave immigrants. COS case files from 1882-1918 show a mix of clientele from all nationalities and ethnicities, and include U.S.-

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<sup>31</sup> Records of settlement houses and organizations in the CSS Collection show a concentration of Italian families in several Manhattan neighborhoods including Upper East side/South-East Harlem, Upper West side (what is now partially Columbia University campus) as well as the Kips Bay/Gramercy neighborhood, in addition to the area in Lower Manhattan currently identified as Little Italy.

<sup>32</sup> Haarlem House, *Revue of Revues - Annual Benefit Program*, New York, April 26, 1924, folder 2, Box 1, Administration Series I, La Guardia Memorial House Records, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>33</sup> Annual Report Friendly Aid Society, (1911, 28), folder 7, Box 19, Friendly Aid Society, I.4, Goddard-Riverside Community Center Records, RBML, CUNY.

born, naturalized citizens and un-naturalized immigrants. While no nationality dominates the files, clients from southern and eastern European countries are underrepresented and only in the 1910s is a slight increase of Italian families evident. The majority of the cases involve U.S.-born families and Irish immigrants, further undermining the idea that the organizations functioned as a significant Americanizing influence on southern and eastern Europeans immigrants.<sup>34</sup>

Annual reports also demonstrate no predominance of southern and eastern European immigrants. Of all the families that the COS provided assistance to in 1896–1897, almost 17 percent are noted to be “U.S., White.” The majority of assistance was given to families where the head was Irish (23.66 percent), followed by German families (19.11 percent). In 1915-1916, COS provided aid to 3,000 families of 30 nationalities, and while two-thirds of them were headed by a person of foreign birth, the national group that seeks assistance most was American, with 888 families, closely followed by Italians (838 families), and the Irish with a somewhat distant third (438).<sup>35</sup> The 1919-1920 report further weakens the exclusivity of the new immigrant, showing that almost half of the

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<sup>34</sup> COS Casework Files, 1882—1937, Box 239-295, Series VIII, CSS, RBML, CUNY; The COS case files contain a random sampling of the case files from the organizations original collection. For this thesis a sampling of around 20-40 case files per year researched were viewed by pulling two random boxes per year. Each box contained around 15—20 case files.

<sup>35</sup> Annual Report COS, (1915-1916, 7), V.2, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

3,609 heads of families seeking assistance -- 45 percent -- were New York born or had been in the United States more than 20 years, and 31 percent landed on America's shores 10 or more years ago.<sup>36</sup> A 1911 study by the COS noting the nationality of the heads of family shows that 34 percent were American-born, 20 percent Irish and 15 percent Italian, while the rest of the eastern and southern European nationalities came to less than 9 percent altogether.<sup>37</sup> Of the 3,609 families that the COS assists for eight years, almost half (46 percent) were born in New York City or had lived in the United States more than 20 years. And although a third of those who are born outside of New York City came from Italy, an almost equal portion was born in other parts of the United States, while the final third of the aided families came mostly from Ireland and Austria.<sup>38</sup>

### Give me your tired, your poor

Despite evidence that the real problem was not so much cooking methods as economic insecurity, the new generation of social workers, public health workers and dietary reformers continued the assault on the supposedly inferior manner in which food, particularly that of the immigrants, was chosen, prepared and served.<sup>39</sup>

Poverty, not ethnicity, was the common denominator of those assisted by the settlement houses and social work organizations. Annual reports and case files

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<sup>36</sup> Annual Report COS, (1919–1920, 7), V.2, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>37</sup> “Study of 200 Families,” 1911, Box 162, V.1, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>38</sup> Annual Report COS, (1919–1920, 5–7), V.2, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>39</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 103.

show that the majority of the assistance and advice given to immigrants was of monetary nature; social workers gave money for rent and groceries and assisted in finding jobs. Since the target audience was those who found themselves at the bottom of the economic ladder, most of the services provided were not focused on Americanizing the immigrant foodways, but were geared toward lifting the recipients out of poverty. Through programs -- many of them involving home visits -- the organizations assisted in finding employment and better housing; helped families when illness struck by persuading them to seek medical attention; or by arranging household help when the mother was ailing or incapacitated. Of the almost 2,500 instances of services provided in 1919-1920 only a very small number -- 43 -- were "home economics instructions." Financial assistance was given in 700 cases, legal aid was provided in more than 300, employment was found for 265, and 900 people were referred to a medical service.<sup>40</sup>

In the cases where a dietitian was consulted, it was to dispense advice on how to cook more economically, create a household budget or to adapt a diet for medical reasons. The instructions were to relieve a temporary situation, rather than long-term reform of their customs and habits; AICP nutritionists and nurses visited the homes to demonstrate how to cook dietary foods to combat illnesses such as anemia and tuberculosis.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Annual Report COS, (1919-1920, 11), V. 2, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>41</sup> AICP Annual report (1910, 30-31), IV.3, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

The characteristics of the population targeted by the social work organizations -- impoverished, unemployed, sick and elderly living on the economic bottom -- minimized the population pool reached. In addition, the limited number of services that could be characterized as foodways Americanization cast further doubt on how representative and effective these Americanizing efforts were on the southern and eastern European immigrant group as a whole.

Spreading the Americanization gospel, one immigrant family a week.

The educational work that falls in the sphere of cooking and foodways — such as cooking classes, home economics classes and the visiting services assisting in various household duties — made up only a small part of most of the settlement and aid organizations' work.<sup>42</sup> Organizations did not have the funds to employ enough visitors for all the families in their care on a regular basis. In 1913, a charitable organization in Detroit employed one visitor who in eight months managed to visit 133 families; the 1910 census shows Detroit to have 96,503 foreign-born inhabitants, more than 30 percent of its total population. Even for organizations where Friendly Visitors played a large part in the assistance given, the reach was minimal. The COS eight Friendly Visitors — who worked in the Society's Ninth District covering much of what is now known as

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<sup>42</sup> The “visiting” services are programs where an employee or volunteer of the organization visits the home of the family. The programs operated under different names, including Friendly Visitor, Visiting Housekeeper, Visiting Nurse, Visiting Mother, Home Teachers, etc. and the visitor could be either a home economist, a nutritionist, a social worker or volunteer.

the Upper East Side of Manhattan and at the time home to a large part of the city's Italian immigrant families -- only managed to assist 76 families from July 1903 to June 1904.<sup>43</sup> In 1914, the AICP employed four visiting housewives, one sewing teacher and two dietitians — who reached out to 799 families. In the following decade the AICP dietitians dispensed nutritional advice to 560-850 families a year.<sup>44</sup> With a population of 2 million foreign-born living in New York City during that decade, the reach of the two biggest charitable organizations working there cannot even be considered noteworthy. In other cities, only a Chicago-based organization reported to have as many as four visitors; most of the other cities cited only had one.<sup>45</sup>

Retaining the few visitors proved difficult as well. Visiting work was time-consuming and the visitors often had other duties within the charitable organizations. Many of the primary services rendered — assisting the unemployed in finding work and improving the housing situation — fell under the task of the visitor. Not all of the visitor services were meant to teach how to keep house and cook properly.<sup>46</sup> Associated Charities Visiting Housekeepers assisted

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<sup>43</sup> Annual Report COS, (1903—1904, 51), V. 2, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>44</sup> AICP Annual Reports 1918—1925.), IV.3, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>45</sup> Emma A. Winslow, “Excerpts from Annual Reports of Charitable Organizations Societies Showing Development in Visiting Housekeeping,” *The Journal of Home Economics*, VII-4 (1915): 180–184.

<sup>46</sup> Shapiro, 133; Levenstein, *Revolution*, 104.

with cleaning and scrubbing in cases where the mother was incapacitated.<sup>47</sup> The AICP discontinued its visiting service called Homemaker Services in 1922, citing difficulty hiring and retaining homemakers as many found the work to be too strenuous, echoing the problems organizations across the country encountered.<sup>48</sup>

### Conclusion

Given that settlement and aid organizations based their assistance, as well as the content of their programs, on needs mainly created by poverty and illness, the nationalities they served were very mixed. The need-based aid also meant that the people they reached was limited to the lower economic classes and those bordering on poverty, leaving out all the immigrants living above poverty level. Combined with the small numbers relative to total immigrant population in the cities where the organizations operated, it is questionable that records of social work organizations can paint a realistic or complete picture of the Americanization efforts targeting the immigrants from the third wave. By basing much of their research on the activities of social work organizations, foodways historians studying the Americanization of these new immigrants equate the immigrant with the poor, making the poor immigrant representational for the entire immigrant group and ignoring the fact that the impoverished population

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<sup>47</sup> Brooklyn Bureau of Charities, Letter dated 1913, Visiting Housekeeper Folder 67, Box 25, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>48</sup> Papers, Homemaking Services, Box 67, IV.2, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

included Americans and immigrants from previous immigrant waves. As this chapter has shown, immigrants from diverse origins lived in the same neighborhoods, on the same block, in the same tenement houses, complicating the idea that immigrants and the assistance given to them was bifurcated, one for the third wave immigrants and one for those that came before them.



## CHAPTER 3

### AMERICANIZATION OR NUTRITIONAL SCIENCE AND ECONOMIZATION?

The emergence of the fields of nutritional science and home economics coincided with the third wave of immigration of southern and eastern European immigrants in the late 1800s. Food, cooking and baking moved from the home kitchen into the laboratory, positioning nutritional value over the taste and pleasure of food. Published research into anything from the number of chews necessary to assist the stomach in digestion, to the calculation of proteins, calories and carbohydrates; reports of adulterated foods such as milk and bread; the unsanitary and unregulated practices in slaughterhouses and meat packing plants described in Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle*; the passing of the Pure Food and Drug law that same year all seeped into public consciousness in the first decade following the turn of the century.

Social workers eagerly adopted the new knowledge -- writing about their experiences in the many journals that published on the subject of social work, home economics and nutritional science, debating the best methods to teach housewives and young girls how to feed their families an economical yet

nutritious and scientifically-approved diet.<sup>49</sup> “As our foodstuffs are of higher price than heretofore we must know which foods will give us the most energy for the least money and which are the most economical builders,”<sup>50</sup> Emma Jacobs, director of domestic science in the Washington, D.C., public school system, wrote in the *Journal of Home Economics* in 1914. Some nutritionists and home economists working in the field of social work used the people they assisted as subjects in dietary and nutritional studies of the poor and lower income classes, working with scientists such as Wilbur Atwater, an agricultural chemist known for his experiments in nutritional science and in charge of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s nutrition programs.<sup>51</sup> Economic and nutritious, science-based cooking became the mantra of the social worker in the early days of the twentieth century.

### Nutritional Science Lights the Way

Nutritional scientists Atwater and his assistant Charles Langworthy and others examined the American diet and found it to be excessive, consuming expensive cuts of meats, fruits and vegetables when a far superior nutritional value could be obtained from cheaper cuts of meat, cereals and breads. The diets promoted by the

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<sup>49</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 98.

<sup>50</sup> Jacobs, “The Daily Meals and How to Plan Them,” 15.

<sup>51</sup> Biographical Note, Wilbur O. Atwater Papers, National Agricultural Library, USDA; Atwater was director of the USDA’s nutritional programs from 1887-1905, when he was forced to retire due to illness and his assistant Charles Langworthy took over the position.

nutritional scientists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reflected the newfound knowledge of proteins and carbohydrates, as well as their considerable ignorance of many vitamins and minerals. Foods rich in calories and protein such as cereals were considered preferable to fresh vegetables. A working man needed 3,500 calories a day Atwater calculated; a half a pound of sirloin that cost 10 cents yielded only 0.08 pounds of protein and merely 515 calories. The same 10 cents could buy wheat flour, which would yield a housewife 3.33 pounds of cereal with a caloric value of 5,410 and 0.32 pounds of protein. Spend the same money on fresh vegetables, and you would feed your hungry worker man only 460 calories of energy, not nearly enough to sustain him.<sup>52</sup>

“A little knowledge may be a dangerous thing,” as historian Richard Cummings noted in 1941.<sup>53</sup> As staples such as flour and sugar became more and more processed and refined, the nutritional value of cereals and breads diminished severely in the decades directly following the turn of the twentieth century. Unaware of this and lacking the knowledge of the vitamin value of fruits and vegetables — vitamin C and D would not be discovered until 1918 and 1922 respectively — nutritional scientists looked to protein and carbohydrates as the main building blocks for health. The U.S. Department of Agriculture stated in its 1907 yearbook that oranges did not add much value to the diet, apart from their

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<sup>52</sup> Cummings, *The American and his Food*, 127

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 130.

“attractiveness.” Four years later, the department found the merit of fresh vegetables in the diet to be based on antiquated notions; greens and vegetables were nothing more than “a very welcome addition to the winter food and made the food more appetizing.” Nutritional scientists and the government believed in the power of protein and carbohydrates, regarding fruits and vegetables to be little more than a taste enhancer, a luxury people could do without.<sup>54</sup>

Renowned nutritional scientist and home economist Ellen Richards helped spread the gospel of economic and scientific cookery to social workers through conferences, articles, lectures and books, and to the rest of the nation as well. In *Dietaries for Wage-Earners and their Families*, an 1893 study of the spending and food habits of New Jersey working-class families, Richards discussed the nutritious makeup of a working class family’s diet, posing the nutritional value of the foods against their cost.<sup>55</sup> Following the dietary trends of the era, the suggested weekly menu for a working family of five was notably rich in cereals and grains while light on vegetables and fruits.<sup>56</sup> Richards, a graduate of MIT with a degree in science, was on the forefront of the science-based home economics movement, advocating for systematic domestic-science education in schools, including college, so that male and female students would not “leave

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<sup>54</sup> Cummings, *The American and his Food*, 131.

<sup>55</sup> Richards, *Dietary for Wage-Earners*, 5-6.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 8-9.

college disgracefully ignorant of the means needed to keep himself in fair physical condition.”<sup>57</sup>

Helen Stuart Campbell, reformer and a prominent activist in the home economics movement, focused mostly on the study of the poor. Describing the marketing and food habits of the poor in *Prisoners of Poverty*, Campbell argued that a little more knowledge on “how to use to the best advantage the pittance earned” could make their income not only last longer, but also be of greater nutritional value.<sup>58</sup> Interviewing poor working women on New York’s West Side, Campbell noted the ignorance about nutritional values. “In no case save the first one mentioned, where the mother had learned that cabbage-water can form the basis for a nourishing and very palatable soup, was there the faintest gleam of understanding that the same amount of money could furnish a more varied, more savory, and more nourishing regimen.”<sup>59</sup> With a little more knowledge, the poor in America could be better fed. The social and settlement workers were just the ones to teach them.

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<sup>57</sup> Richards, “Home Economics in Higher Education,” 70; Richards was also the founder of the New England Kitchen providing inexpensive and nutritious meals for the immigrant community in Boston, and president of the American Home Economics Association from 1908-1910. She wrote numerous articles and books on the subject of nutrition and travelled the country giving lectures.

<sup>58</sup> Campbell, *Prisoners of Poverty*, 108.

<sup>59</sup> Campbell, *Prisoners of Poverty*, 122-123.

### Fighting Poverty through Nutritional Science

Poverty, not Americanization, is the impetus of many of the food-related programs of the social work organizations. The message of the nutritional scientist and home economists like Atwater, Langworthy, Richards and Campbell was received loud and clear by nutritionists, home economists and social workers. Flour and cereals were the cornerstones of a well-balanced and economical diet. Fruits and vegetables were tolerated, but only to make the diet palatable, and *only* if one's economic situation allowed it. The lack of employment stability and wage increases for the unskilled laborers who made up the majority of the urban lower economic classes meant uncertainty of income for many families, and the teachings of the nutritional scientists were just the answer to that.<sup>60</sup> Targeting the poor and unemployed many of the friendly visitors, social workers, home economists and nutritionists focused on stretching the household money as much as possible, adapting the family's buying habits to accommodate a fluctuating budget. Recipes requiring just a few cheap ingredients were enough to keep the working man's family well fed, nutritiously and economically, and eliminate the wasteful spending on foods considered to be low in nutrition value. "Habit, not necessity calls for grape fruit [*sic*] as well as steak and chops for breakfast."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 103.

<sup>61</sup> Gabaccia, 126; Richards, *The Cost of Living*, v.

Food, healthy and economical, was the foundation for the improvement of the lives of the poor.<sup>62</sup> “To secure ample nourishment at minimum expense,” the domestic science teacher of the Friendly Aid Society wrote in her 1907 report.<sup>63</sup> The AICP considered poor budgetary planning skills one of the main causes of “needy children” in households, finding in a 1905 study that “in many instances the home income was sufficient, but the home management insufficient.”<sup>64</sup> The focus on balancing household and food budgets took precedence at the COS and AICP; AICP case studies, and annual reports from COS are filled with notes from field workers advising the housewife on how to better manage her budget.

In 1917, the AICP made “food, nutrition, and the wise spending of the family income” the main focus of its home economics work. No longer giving families money for food, but food orders — specifying what could be bought — the organization tried to ensure the poor receive the most nutrition for the money. A new method of calculating these food allowances was introduced at the same time, based on Dr. Atwater’s dietary studies mapping out the nutritional value of foods and calories required for each individual. Families who did not receive monetary assistance were asked to keep a record of their spending. The results were evaluated by the social worker and corrected if it was found the family was

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<sup>62</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 72-77; Shapiro, 134-135.

<sup>63</sup> Annual Report Friendly Aid Society, (1906,38), Folder 6, Box 19, I.4, GRCC, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>64</sup> Ira S. Wile, “School Lunches,” (1905, 19), Box 280, VIII, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

not spending their money in the most economically nutritious way.<sup>65</sup> In 1915, COS hired a home economist for its Lowell district to instruct the families in cooking, marketing and housekeeping and to “supervise the [COS] visitors in all work that has to do with the preparation of budgets and other problems of domestic economy.”<sup>66</sup>

Some social work organizations did more than adopt Atwater’s nutritional guidelines — in addition to teaching classes, the domestic science teacher at the AICP also conducted food studies for Atwater himself,<sup>67</sup> examining the buying habits of the AICP pupils, comparing the cost against nutritional value. A Hull House study of Chicago immigrant families from 1896 criticized the propensity of Italian and Jewish families to buy oranges, tomatoes and radishes, even though they furnished “but little actual nutriment for the money expended.” The study with a focus on Italians, French Canadians, “Bohemians” and Russian Jews went on to argue that the cost of the diet could be reduced if families spent less money on fruit. Home economists like Helen Campbell conducted studies on the marketing and food habits of the poorer urban classes, while nutritional scientists such as Ira S. Wile looked at the diet at home to assess the need of children in regard to school lunches.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Nurses House and Nutrition Service, 1906-1945, Growth and Activities of Nutrition Service in AICP and CSS 1906-1945, Vol. 1, Box 68, IV.2, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>66</sup> Annual Report COS, (1915—1916, 14), V. 2, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>67</sup> Annual Report AICP, 1862, Box 72, IV.3, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>68</sup> Campbell, *Prisoners of Poverty*; Wile, “School Lunches,” Box 280, VIII, CSS, RBML, CUNY.



Balancing the household budget and cooking economical yet nutritious meals was also the focus of the cooking and home economics classes and lessons taught in settlement houses and in the homes visited by social workers. Classes taught at the Friendly Aid Society House were practical in nature, teaching the girls (and boys as several cooking classes were given to them as well) how “to secure ample nourishment at a minimum expense, to bring variety to the diet with cleanliness in the preparation and neatness in the serving of the food,” as well as teaching the importance of “proper measuring” and how to get by in the often poorly stocked tenement-house kitchens by using bottles as rolling pins and baking powder tins as biscuit cutters. Teaching mostly to children with the average age of 12 and young women working in the nearby Garment District, the classes were designed to teach the pupils the very basics in shopping and cooking on a budget and preparing meals. “We hope to see more of the food consumed by the family prepared at home and less bought at the grocery store, bakery and delicatessen, and a better knowledge of the cost of food in relation to its nutritive value,” the 1908 annual report of the Friendly Aid Society House noted in the section discussing the cooking classes given.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Annual Report Friendly Aid Society, (1908, 50), Folder 6, Box 19, I.4, GRCC, RBML, CUNY.

### The Dietary Re-education of America

While some of the programs of the social work organizations target the foreign-born population, the economical and nutritional re-education was by no means limited to the new immigrant groups. Reflecting the often cosmopolitan and multinational and multi-ethnic nature of the neighborhoods the organizations operated in, cooking classes were attended by all ethnicities and nationalities, including American. The Friendly Aid Society in the Kips Bay neighborhood organized four cooking classes in 1900, welcoming thirty-eight pupils. While the number of cooking classes grew in later years, the number of pupils never topped 200 a year. The majority of the classes were taught to young boys and girls between the ages of 8 to 12, not the older generation of immigrants. While the neighborhood was predominantly Italian, the nationalities of the pupils were mixed and included a great number of Irish — the second largest immigrant group in the neighborhood — as well as American. Classes taught to older girls — the class of 17-year old factory girls who come once a week to prepare their supper — were mostly made up of Irish girls. Cooking classes for the Mothers' Club was made up of women representing nine nationalities in 1920.<sup>70</sup> Hull House in Chicago held cooking classes for Italian girls, as well as for American children.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Annual Report Friendly Aid Society, (1920), Folder 2, Box 20, I.4, GRCC, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>71</sup> Hull House, *Hull House Maps and Papers*, 223.

A cooking class started in Detroit as part of the Visiting Housekeeping experiment in 1913 enrolls 39 pupils of mixed nationalities.<sup>72</sup>

In 1897 and 1898, the AICP's Hartley House -- at 413 West 46<sup>th</sup> St., where "three of its contiguous blocks contain a population of over ten thousand" -- organized a cooking class almost every night of the week and its visiting housekeepers organized 30 cooking lessons in tenement houses. The report makes no mention of nationalities, simply noting that the classes were meant for "poor girls."<sup>73</sup> AICP's Homekeeping Department reported in 1896 that the "poor girls growing up in the city do not know where the vegetables and milk come from, [or] what is in eggs." At the time of the report, the majority of families assisted by the AICP were American or hailed from second immigration wave nations. Third wave southern and eastern European immigrants made up only 2 percent of AICP's cases.<sup>74</sup> In the year spanning 1922-1923 New York's AICP division managed to reach 5,000 people through nutrition classes for mothers and lectures to working girls, which, given the foreign-born population of the city at the time, was almost negligible.

When the AICP opened up its first food store in 1915 in order "to interest the public in foods which will give them a maximum of nourishment for a minimum

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<sup>72</sup> Bishop-Bothwell, Bessie, "Visiting Housekeeping Work in Detroit," *Publication unknown*, Visiting Housekeeper, Folder 67, Box 25, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>73</sup> Annual Report AICP, (1898, 52-67), Box 72, IV.3, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>74</sup> Annual Report AICP, (1896, 70—72), Box 72, IV.3, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

of expenditure,” it did so in its Yorkville district, where the majority of the families assisted were American or hailed from northern and western European countries.<sup>75</sup> A 1917 report on food demonstrations given by the COS in New York notes that among English and Irish families “a particular need for instructions about meat-substitutes and about various cereals in place of potatoes,” still existed.<sup>76</sup> The Friendly Aid Society’s cooking instructors held about half a dozen cooking classes per week and while the nationality of the attendants was a good mix, the majority of the pupils in the 1923 supper classes were Irish.<sup>77</sup> Two years later, when the society started “malnutrition lunches” for children of working mothers whose children seemed in need of supplemental nutrition, two-thirds of the lunches were served to children from Irish families.<sup>78</sup>

#### Home economics: not just for the poor and the immigrant

As the home economics movement embraced the scientific approach, they did not believe only poor urban dwellers were in need of an Atwater makeover of their diet, and cooking schools targeting girls of the emerging middle-class families sprang up all over the country.<sup>79</sup> The Boston Cooking School, established

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<sup>75</sup> Annual Report AICP, (1916, 16), Box 72, IV.3, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>76</sup> COS, *Food Demonstration Work for Congested City Neighborhoods - Suggestions based on Experiment in Food Education by the Advisory Committee on Home Economics of the Charity Organization Society, April and May 1917*, COS, NYC (August 1917), 17.

<sup>77</sup> Annual Report Friendly Aid Society, 1923, Folder 3, Box 20, I.4, GRCC, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>78</sup> Annual Report Friendly Aid Society, 1926, Folder 4, Box 20, I.4, GRCC, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>79</sup> Grover, *Dining in America 1850-1900*, 75.

in 1879, mainly hoped to attract “young women of humble expectations” who would keep house for their parents or husbands, and “potential cooks and servants for private homes and employed cooks who wanted to improve their skills.” The school’s main priority was the training of domestic help employed by the more affluent ladies of Boston.<sup>80</sup> The New York Cooking School opened its doors in 1896. Founded by Juliet Corson at the urging of her more affluent friends, the school taught pupils from all social classes, with tuition based on financial means. A year after the school’s founding, Corson published the *Cooking School Text Book and Housekeepers’ Guide to Cookery and Kitchen Management*, in which students were taught economical and scientific ways to keep house and prepare meals.<sup>81</sup> Students of cookery at the Teachers’ College at Columbia University — one of the many schools teaching home economics and nutritional science around the country at the turn of the century — were tested on their knowledge of the nutritional values of foods and asked for the most economical cuts of meat.<sup>82</sup> Ellen Richards spent the majority of her life advocating for the introduction of home economics classes throughout the education system, believing “the educated in the community, young college graduates in business, professors and teachers in schools and colleges, clerks, small tradesmen and skilled workmen” to be “rarely

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<sup>80</sup> Shapiro, 55.

<sup>81</sup> Corson, *Cooking School Text Book*.

<sup>82</sup> Barrow, *Principles of Cookery*, 98.

skilled in the use of money,” and most in need of lessons in home economics.<sup>83</sup> It was not only the poor and the immigrant who was believed to have poor housekeeping skills.

When the southern and eastern European immigrants were specifically targeted, it was not because their food choices were considered bad from a cultural standpoint, but mainly because they were no longer economically viable. A 1895 dietary study of several Italian and Jewish families in Chicago showed that many of them did not adapt their food buying habits to their decreased budgets. “No pains have ever been taken to adapt their tastes to the more easily and cheaply secured foods in American cities,” the Hull House study notes.<sup>84</sup>

A decade later, the onset of World War I and the ensuing import restrictions meant that many staple foods of the southern and eastern European immigrant diets rose dramatically in price. Part of the marketing and cooking instructions given by the social workers focused on finding substitutes for these staples, or persuading them to forgo buying certain food items as their budget did not allow

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<sup>83</sup> Richards, *The Cost of Living*, 31.

<sup>84</sup> Hull House - *Dietary Studies in Chicago*, 16; Predating the discovery of vitamins, the 1895 study does not recognize the nutritional value of various fruits and vegetables often purchased by the Jewish and Italian families, noting that the “tomatoes, radishes, and oranges furnished but little actual nutriment for the money expended,” 36. However, forgoing the purchase of food staples was not a universal held belief among social worker and nutritionists, as the discussion of the adaptation to food customs and habits later on will show.

for such an expense.<sup>85</sup> COS food demonstration work in April and May of 1917 -- presented in all of the 14 New York districts the society is active in -- was designed to present economic substitutes for food items that had become too expensive or unavailable as WWI raged on in Europe. "Foreign groups especially are conservative in their dietary habits, and find difficulty in using new or slightly different foods in place of those no longer obtainable," a report on the food demonstrations notes.<sup>86</sup>

Visiting workers tried to adapt the budgetary tips and tools they already shared with Americans and second wave immigrants to women of the third wave. As the women's knowledge of English was often not enough to comprehend the lessons the visitors tried to teach them, the home economists at the AICP developed a system of six envelopes to aid in comprehension. Each envelope was illustrated with a drawing to show the budget item it represented, helping the women to divide their families' weekly income among the household expenses.<sup>87</sup>

### Conclusion

The population of the United States in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century does not know how to properly, nutritiously and economically

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<sup>85</sup> Managing the home budget is noted in much of the annual reports and case files of the various aid agencies and settlement work researched.

<sup>86</sup> COS, *Food Demonstration*. 3.

<sup>87</sup> "Growth and Activities of Nutrition Service in AICP and CSS 1906, Vol. 1," Nurses House and Nutrition Service, Box 68, IV.2, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

feed itself. Whether able to trace their ancestry back to the Mayflower or Ellis Island, the feeding habits of Americans and immigrants, affluent and poor, professor, student and garment factory girl were insufficient according to the nutritional scientists, home economists and social workers. Armed with new -- albeit somewhat limited -- knowledge, social workers, home economists and nutritionists took on the task of educating the American population, immigrant and citizen alike on the scientific way to feed themselves. And while southern and eastern European immigrants were part of those whose diet was considered in need of reform, their food was not considered bad because it was not Anglo-Saxon, but rather because it was uneconomical, lacking in nutrition or both, a fault that nutritional scientists and home economist also found in other parts of American society.

Organizations assisting the urban poor such as AICP and COS in New York, and Hull House in Chicago did not limit their dietary reform outreach to the new wave of immigrants, but rather focused on the poor, whatever ethnic or national background they had, to help them to stretch their small and unstable income not only as far as they can, but as nutritiously as they can. The consumption of fruits and vegetables was not discouraged because it was considered foreign, but because its nutritious value was not considered to equal its cost.



## CHAPTER 4

### COOKING CLASS, ENGLISH AND CIVICS CLASS, OR SOCIAL CIRCLE

Through cooking classes, friendly visits and mothers' clubs, reformers and social workers drove the attempts to Americanize the foodways of the southern and eastern European immigrant, historians note.<sup>88</sup> Friendly visitors went to the homes of the poor and the immigrants, assessing their marketing and cooking habits with Atwater's nutritional guidance in mind, correcting them when needed. Settlement houses organized cooking classes passing out recipe card to factory girls, and told the mothers at the mothers' club gathering to feed their children milk instead of coffee, and cereal instead of rolls.<sup>89</sup> The spread of the Anglo-Saxon cuisine seemed a certainty.

A closer look at the curricula of the cooking classes and mothers' clubs, and articles by social workers organizing the classes and reformers on the forefront of the Americanization movement shows that while the end goal may have been indeed to Americanize the women, it was not always the cooking that the teacher sought to Americanize. Classes and gatherings about subjects of interest to

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<sup>88</sup> Shapiro, 80, 104, 128–133; Gabaccia, 123, 128; Levenstein, *Revolution*, 98–99, 103–104; Levenstein, *American Response*, 6–7.

<sup>89</sup> Shapiro, 133; Gabaccia, 128; Levenstein, *Revolution*, 128–129.

women were used as a way to reach out to the immigrant woman -- often isolated through her lack of English language skills and limited knowledge of the world outside of her immediate neighborhood. This chapter looks closer at the reasons behind the classes and clubs, as well as their ultimate goals, showing that although some did center entirely on nutrition, as the previous chapters have shown, many served an entirely non-food related purpose.

#### The Language of Food: Teaching English through Cooking.

Social work organizations found that reaching immigrant women is hard; their days were often consumed by housekeeping and the care of children. Lacking knowledge of the English language and the world outside of their immediate neighborhood, the women rarely ventured out and the organizations lacked the funds and manpower to reach out to the women at home. “For the foreign woman, much of whose life is engaged in the drudgery of domestic labor and the care of many children, an academic school has no appeal.”<sup>90</sup>

Having little success persuading the women to attend English classes, the organizations found activities that appealed to the women -- “care of the stove, to the care of a baby, from marketing to answering the telephone” and organized cooking, sewing and so-called mothers’ classes as vehicles to introduce

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<sup>90</sup> SCIHC, *Report*, 7.

immigrant women to the English language.<sup>91</sup> A 1917 experiment of the California State Commission of Immigration and Housing, created after the 1915 passage of The Home Teacher Act, found that organizing gatherings for the women based on their interest was a far more successful way of teaching English to immigrant women.<sup>92</sup> “Although the reason for the work this summer was to spread the use of the English language; no mention was made of English in some cases for many weeks.”<sup>93</sup>

Women familiar with the neighborhood and its inhabitants would invite the immigrant women for cooking and sewing classes, in very informal settings, often providing refreshments. Despite the casual setting, the gatherings had a definite lesson plan “well adapted to the everyday lives of the women.” The cooking classes taught the English names for fruits and vegetables, as well as names of weights, money and phrases to use when shopping at a store.<sup>94</sup> The practice of English lessons through cooking, sewing or mothers’ classes was common. “English is the principal subject taught,” a 1902 report on the Americanization of immigrants living in Chicago notes when discussing mothers’ classes.<sup>95</sup> Even the

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<sup>91</sup> Balch, “Housework, English and Immigrants,” 448.

<sup>92</sup> The Home Teacher Act to assist in the Americanization of immigrants, especially immigrant women. The Act reads, in part: “It shall be the duty of the home teachers to work in the homes of the pupils, instructing children and adults in matters relating to school attendance and preparation therefor; as also in sanitation, in the English language, in household duties such as purchase, preparation and use of food and of clothing and in the fundamental principles of the American government and the rights and duties of citizenship.”

<sup>93</sup> SCIHC, *Report*, 10.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>95</sup> Loomis, *Americanization in Chicago*, 22.

federal government advocated the use of “cooking, knitting and similar classes” as a way to teach immigrant women English and “American customs and ideals.”<sup>96</sup>

By teaching the women the English words for items they shopped for and used day-to-day, social workers nationwide hoped to make the immigrant women more independent. “The immigrant housewife is restricted by her ignorance of places and methods of marketing, and so feels the necessity of buying in the immigrant neighborhood,” Breckenridge wrote in *New Homes for the Old*, a 1921 study of immigrant families and their standard of living in Chicago. Breckenridge argued that the disdain for immigrant cooking was not fair, since immigrant families were not given the facilities and knowledge to implement the Americanization changes expected of them and adapt successfully to their new living environment, often vastly different from that of their native country. Without knowledge of English, the immigrant mothers shopped in her immediate neighborhood, where the merchant’s language, background and customs were similar to her own.<sup>97</sup> English classes, whether taught through cooking, sewing,

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<sup>96</sup> Council of National Defense, *Americanization of Aliens*, Bulletin No. 86, February 12, 1918, Council of National Defense - Combatting Illiteracy, File 106, Records of the Office of the Commissioner - Historical Files 1870-1950, Box 7, Office of Education RG 12, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

<sup>97</sup> Breckinridge, “New Homes for Old,” 83, 122.

housekeeping or actual language classes, became the gateway to naturalization of immigrant women.

Honor thy elder.

The education and Americanization of the immigrant mother was also seen by social workers as a necessity “to keep the mother honored by the children.”<sup>98</sup> Immigrant children were Americanized before their parents, learning English through the public education system and becoming acquainted with the American customs through their daily interactions, often leading to a reversal of the parent-child relationship. The child’s language skills and knowledge were called upon to help the parent interact with the parent’s boss, landlord, social worker or grocer, changing the family dynamic. “The father and mother grow accustomed to trusting the child’s version of what ‘they all do in America,’ and gradually find themselves at a great disadvantage in trying to maintain parental control.”<sup>99</sup> Not always is the child’s version of how it’s done in America truthful. “It is difficult for [the parents] to grasp the standards and customs of their adopted country, especially as their children frequently misrepresent things for their own advantage.”<sup>100</sup> Developing a greater knowledge of their new home than his parents, not only creates disincentive for the parent to acquire the coping skills

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<sup>98</sup> SCIHC, *Manual for Home Teachers*, 14.

<sup>99</sup> Breckinridge and Abbott, *The Delinquent Child and the Home*, 66.

<sup>100</sup> Annual Report Friendly Aid Society, (1919, 29), Folder 1, Box 20, I.4, GRCC, RBML, NYCU.

themselves, it also often causes the immigrant child to lose respect for his parents. This breakdown of parental authority could lead to a variety of social ills according to social workers, such as truancy and juvenile delinquency, creating a generation of Americans unproductive and even destructive to American society and ideals. Giving the immigrant mothers the basic skills to cope in her day-to-day life would increase the likelihood that her children would develop into well-adjusted contributing Americans, the thought was. “There must be a distinct effort to keep the mother honored by the children.”<sup>101</sup>

### Political Power

The outreach to and assimilation of immigrant women became more important as their independent political power increased in the latter half of the 1910s. With women’s suffrage passed in a number of states years before the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920, reformers such as Frances Kellor recognized the importance of the education of immigrant women. “They lack not only the social assimilation which makes them fit to vote, but even the technical requirements for citizenship,” Kellor wrote, pointing out that a quarter of the voters in the suffrage states were foreign born. “There are thousands of immigrant women in this country who have not mastered the English language in even a small degree, who have had no opportunity to learn our civic ideals, whose homes are not American

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<sup>101</sup> SCIHC, *Manual*, 14.

homes. ... They are now isolated, forgotten, ignored, and constitute the greatest single backward factor in the progress of citizenship among women.”<sup>102</sup> The idea that women, “however ignorant,” would be casting their vote was one of the reasons cited for the creation of California’s Home Teacher Act.<sup>103</sup> The state granted women’s suffrage in 1911. Wives, granted automatic citizenship by way of their husband’s naturalization, were given the right to vote, but most -- if aware of the right -- had no knowledge about American political systems.

Many of the settlement houses served as a source for Americanization of foreign-born women not only through English classes, but also through lectures and readings on American history, geography, government and “good citizenship,” often assisting with naturalization as Haarlem House noted in their souvenir program for their *Festa di Primavera* celebration in May 1922.<sup>104</sup> The Friendly Aid society — after finding through a 1917 census that only a small percentage of Irish and Italian born inhabitants in its neighborhood had taken out citizenship papers, “even though many have lived twenty or thirty years in the country” — resolved to increase the number with help of the women in their mothers’ club. With their citizenship and their voting rights dependent on their husbands, the society tried to get the women to persuade their husbands to take

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<sup>102</sup> Kellor, *Straight America*, 147-148, 189.

<sup>103</sup> SCIHC, *Manual*, 7.

<sup>104</sup> Haarlem House, “What Goes on at Haarlem House,” *Festa di Primavera Souvenir Program*, (May 1922), folder 2, Box 1, Administration Series I, LGMH, RBML, CUNY.

out naturalization papers, “so that the wives may have a chance to vote and procure better living conditions for their families,” as well as be certain of a pension in case of the death of the spouse.<sup>105</sup>

With the passage of the 1922 Cable Act eliminating automatic citizenship of wives of U.S. citizens, the immigrant woman became an independent political force, one who needed to be educated in her rights and given the tools to be able to participate in the political process. “While large numbers of *unmarried girls* are enrolled in the evening classes, it is difficult to reach the immigrant women in the home,” John W. Lewis, director of Americanization for the Baltimore Public School system, remarked in his 1922 annual report, noting that “the new law ... will demand an increase in this field and will necessitate also day citizenship classes for women.”<sup>106</sup>

#### An escape from the drudgery

Apart from being vehicles for English and civic lessons and after 1922 a first step toward naturalization, many of the classes and clubs geared toward immigrant women served as a place of refuge and rest for the women, “an

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<sup>105</sup> Annual Report Friendly Aid Society, (1917, 20), Folder 1, Box 20, I.4, GRCC, RBML, NYCU.

<sup>106</sup> Lewis, John W., “Report of the Director of Americanization,” (October 3, 1922, 269), School Reports, Box 3, Board of Education, RG31-1, Baltimore City Archives, Baltimore, MD.



opportunity to mothers of this community to lay aside their household burdens and to relieve their monotony by spending an of pleasure every week.”<sup>107</sup>

The 1911-1912 newsletter of the Home Garden Settlement’s mothers’ club shows entertainment in forms of lectures on a variety of subjects -- from childcare to national parks -- as well as performances by magicians.<sup>108</sup> The large number of clubs and classes of the Friendly Aid Society, a settlement house on the east side of Midtown, highlights the society’s role of a community center for the neighborhood, with many of the clubs geared toward the women of the neighborhood by catering directly to them or by easing their burden by catering to their children for a few hours of the week. When the society constructed the Florence Baker house to supplement its settlement, they declared that the new house would take on the women and children’s work of the society.<sup>109</sup>

The Mothers’ Club of the Hudson Guild — a settlement house established in the Chelsea neighborhood of lower Manhattan — initially started as a kindergarten club organized by the mothers but evolved over the years, initiating a vacation home for the mothers and their children, recruiting new dues-paying members and raising funds to enable the vacations.<sup>110</sup> Fundraising and social

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<sup>107</sup> Harlem House, *Revue of Revues Annual Benefit Program*, (April 26, 1924), folder 2, Box 1, Administration Series I, LGMH, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>108</sup> “Home Garden Settlement,” 1911-1912, Various newsletters, 1911-1912, Folder 10, Newsletter Box 5, Series 1, LGMH, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>109</sup> Annual Report Friendly Aid Society, 1921, Folder 2, Box 20, I.4, GRCC, RBML, NYCU.

<sup>110</sup> “Mothers’ Club of Hudson Guild 1897 -1922,” Mothers’ Club, 1922, Folder 41, Hudson Guild Records, Box 22, RBML, CUNY; From 1890s on the population in Chelsea consisted mainly of

circles also seemed to be the main purpose of the Mothers' Club of the Henry Street Settlement.<sup>111</sup> Some of the "fundraising" was in the form of creating supplemental income for the mothers or the house or organization. The mothers' meetings of the Wilson School were used as sewing circles for the pupils to make some extra money.<sup>112</sup>

Sometimes however, the goal of the mothers' club was not to educate or create revenue, but just plain fun. A list denoting "what typical mothers' clubs do," at the Stuyvesant Neighborhood House illustrates the social aspect and lists not only "learn English," "promote child welfare" and "study dressmaking and dietetics" but also "Give jolly parties and picnics."<sup>113</sup>

### Conclusion

While the mothers' clubs and cooking classes were often used to Americanize immigrant women through English and civic classes and sheer social interaction, it is a far leap to attribute the Americanization of eastern and southern European immigrant foodways to them. Many of the cooking classes' main purpose was not to teach the women how to cook the Anglo-Saxon way, but to teach them how to

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Irish and Greek immigrants, but was also home to a number of Italian, German and African-American families.

<sup>111</sup> Clubs, Mothers' Club, Folder 1.16, Box 48, Lillian D. Wald Papers, RBML, Columbia University, New York.

<sup>112</sup> Annual Report Wilson School, 1905, Folder 6, Box 1, I.1, GRCC, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>113</sup> Stuyvesant Neighborhood House, 1919-1959, League of Mothers' Club, Folder 3371, Box 210, Affiliated Organizations, V-1, Educational Alliance Records, YIVO Institute, New York.

speak English and give them skills to be able to cope without the help of their children. This became even more important as women started gaining voting rights in states across the nation. As women gain in political independence and power, coaxing immigrant women out of isolation becomes an important role for many social workers. Teaching women English, educating them about their naturalization status and their rights, instilling in them responsibility for their family, their neighborhood and their new home country were the main drivers behind the clubs and classes geared toward women.

Not all efforts created for the benefit of immigrant women were for educational purposes. Social workers, the vast majority of them women, knew all too well the isolation that housework and motherhood could bring. They sometimes used classes and clubs to give the women a chance to escape, organizing dances, recitals and theater performances to give the women a few hours of refuge from their daily drudgery.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE PREJUDICED SOCIAL WORKER: REALITY OR MYTH?

Despite evidence that the real problem was not so much cooking methods as economic insecurity, the new generation of social workers, public health workers, and dietary reformers continued the assault on the supposedly inferior manner in which food, *particularly that of the immigrants*, was chosen, prepared and served.<sup>114</sup>

The image of the prejudiced and xenophobic social worker, dietitian and nutritionist is prevalent in foodways historiography. However, a closer look at many of the same primary records used in these historiographies paints a far more nuanced picture of these workers. While there certainly were workers who took a less than favorable view of certain ethnic food cultures, those views were by no means universal.

This chapter will show that the views of the social workers and Americanizers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were not as homogenous as the historiography portrays them — even showing instances of acceptance and admiration of food cultures that diverge from their own Anglo-Saxon nature. Not only did some social workers praise the way immigrant women of southern and

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<sup>114</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 103.  
Italics added for emphasis

eastern European descent cooked, some of them also questioned the prejudiced attitudes of their more conservative peers and debated ways to change them. A few of them went even as far as to recommend it *over* their own Anglo-Saxon cuisine.

### Tracing the Origin: The Prejudiced Social Worker in Current Historiography

The philanthropist, the charity worker, the missionaries, and others who made a business of attending to blacks and immigrants thought of them as “foreigners,” inadequately civilized and not yet equipped for the modern world. ... To them, slum dwellers appeared rather like children, clinging willfully to their bad food, slovenly habits, and foolish predilections. In consonance with this prevailing attitude, domestic scientists viewed the poor and the working classes with a mixture of pity and impatience.<sup>115</sup>

Viewing the poor and the immigrants as children in need of correction and education, the social workers and dietitians did not think it enough to improve their housing and working conditions; the only way they could escape their miserable fate was if they were willing to change their eating habits, Shapiro notes. Levenstein agrees, arguing that many of the social workers thought disparagingly about the immigrant diet and worked diligently to Americanize it, “... they sought not to learn from them but to learn how to change them.”<sup>116</sup> The disdain for the southern and eastern European propensity to cook one-pot meals,

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<sup>115</sup> Shapiro, 131.

<sup>116</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution*, 103.

filled with spices that “hindered digestion,” are highlighted in nearly all of the seminal historiography on immigrant foodways, and social workers citing poor eating and cooking habits of Italians and Poles and Slaves are often noted as samples of the social workers’ prejudice against these particular immigrant groups. A closer look at the same sources provides a much more nuanced and contested picture of the social workers and those whose habits they sought so vehemently to change.

#### Economization with respect

A closer study of the records and writings of social workers, home economists and dietitians shows that cooking an economic diet often trumped any racial or ethnic prejudice they may have had. While there is little doubt — and enough evidence — to acknowledge that racial and ethnic prejudice against southern and eastern European immigrants existed within the ranks of the social workers, even those who did not necessarily believe the southern and eastern European immigrant diet to be good acknowledged that it was of little use — and a waste of money — to send immigrants food that would not be eaten. “If the nutritive material in a food order is to accomplish its purpose, it must be eaten and it would seem policy not to waste money on an order for certain food combinations unless one is reasonably certain that they will be eaten by the family,” nutritionist Emma Winslow wrote in a 1915 study on food orders for the poor, recommending that

when composing food orders for Italian families oil is given instead of butter, and “perhaps cheese, especially if macaroni is sent.”<sup>117</sup> Winslow was not alone in her accommodation to foreign tastes.

When World War I restricted the import of much of the staples used in Italian cuisine resulting in unavailability or exorbitant prices, and rationing made economic spending a necessity for all households, COS continued to respect and adapt to the tastes of immigrants. For a series of food demonstrations in 1917 designed to present economic substitutes for food items that had become expensive or unavailable it recommended for the instructor to have “familiarity with the markets and the dietary habits of the locality.”

“Foreign groups especially are conservative in their dietary habits, and find it difficult in using new or slightly different foods in place of those no longer obtainable,” COS informed their social workers, describing lessons learned holding earlier food demonstrations in “congested city neighborhoods.”<sup>118</sup> To help the immigrant families adapt to the new realities of rationing and shortages “the separate recipes selected for demonstrations [have] to harmonize with the national tastes and prejudices.”<sup>119</sup> The COS continued on its path of adaptation after the war and advised social workers in 1919 to take the family’s “present dietary needs and local, racial or religious customs, with reference to the kinds of

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<sup>117</sup> Food Orders Emma Winslow, Studies, Box 162, V.1, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>118</sup> COS, *Food Demonstration*, 3.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 16

foods used and their proportionate consumptions,” into consideration when teaching them to plan a household budget.<sup>120</sup>

The COS was hardly alone. In the chapter *The Neglected Art of Spending*, in which reformer and social scientist Sophonisba Breckinridge debated the spending habits of immigrants, she too advised the social workers who wanted to help immigrants better manage their income and adapt their marketing habits to the availability and pricing realities of the day to become acquainted with the dietary preferences of the immigrants. “Their habits, customs, and preferences must be thoroughly understood.”<sup>121</sup> In the popular *Friendly Visiting Among the Poor - A Handbook for Charity Workers*, Mary Richmond, secretary of the Baltimore branch of the COS, echoed Breckinridge’s sentiment, offering the example of one of Baltimore’s friendly visitors. “She finds that scientific dietaries too often ignore the tastes and prejudices of the poor. It is best to begin by teaching them to prepare well the things that they like.”<sup>122</sup>

#### Respecting, adapting and catering to tastes

Respect for the customs and tastes of the families assisted, and adapting food orders and nutritional teachings to suit the food habits of the immigrants, was

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<sup>120</sup> Committee on Home Economics, “Budget Planning in Social Case Work,” *The C Bulletin*, No.3, September 1919, Friendly Visitors Folder, Box 182, V.1, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>121</sup> Breckinridge, *New Homes for the Old*, 132.

<sup>122</sup> Richmond, *Friendly Visiting*, 67. The excerpt appears in the first printing in 1899 and in each of the consecutive editions.



quite common throughout the reports and articles of social workers, home economists and nutritional scientists working in the poor immigrant communities. In an address before the Home Economics Association of Greater New York in 1909, physician Ira S. Wile stressed the importance of adapting school lunches to the tastes and dietary habits of the pupils.<sup>123</sup> “In arranging the dietaries the schools must consider very carefully as to their general nature. The dominant nationality, the prevailing religion, both bring up food problems.” While Wile thought the introduction of foods seldom or never eaten in the immigrant homes was good “from an educational point of view,” he did note that some level of adherence to customs was preferred. “Italians like thick soup, Irish children prefer thin soup; Italians wish vegetables, Irish want meat; for Catholic children meals without meat must be provided. For Jewish children the laws of Kosher must be observed.”<sup>124</sup> A later report of the New York School Lunch Committee — a program founded by Dr. Wile in his capacity as New York City’s Commissioner of Education — shows the ideas implemented.<sup>125</sup> “In the Italian schools we have

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<sup>123</sup> Ira S. Wile (1877-1943) was a physician and lecturer who went on to serve as the New York City commissioner of education from 1912 - 1918. During his tenure he founded the school lunch program.

<sup>124</sup> Wile, Ira S., “School Lunches,” Address before the Home Economics Association of Greater New York, October 30, 1909, Bureau of Welfare of School Children Committee on Foods and Feeding - 1910, Bound Volumes, XII, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>125</sup> In *Revolution at the Table*, Levenstein argues using source material from the CSS Archives at Columbia University to argue for the non-conformity of school lunches in regards to religious and national preferences, arguing that the school lunch programs were successful in “Americanizing the immigrant diet.” (118) His main sourcing appears to come from an experiment of anemic children at a Boston school, and it is unclear whether he uncovered Mr. Wile’s address in the CSS Archives.

Italian cooks, and the macaroni, dried lima beans and lentils are used, all dishes being cooked in Italian oil and in the Italian way.”<sup>126</sup>

When the COS opened an office in the Jefferson district (Upper East side) in 1912 and hired two Italian speakers to assist the staff, they did so because they wanted to be able to better understand the specific needs of the Italian families that populated the area.<sup>127</sup> A visiting housekeeper working in Boston also remarked how important it was for those in her profession to adapt their curriculum “to the needs of the nationality, traditions, income, prejudices and bodily needs in health or disease.”<sup>128</sup> Describing a nutrition class for mothers, the AICP nutritionist argued that it was best to follow “the line of least resistance,” in cases where the Italian mothers refused to try different foods. “We take the best of the customs and habits [the Italian families] brought with them to this country [and] we encourage them in the use of these and only suggest changes necessary for the health of the children.”<sup>129</sup>

Taking the food customs of the immigrants into consideration was something that the AICP learned the hard way when they opened three food stores within New York City to ensure that the population in the Bronx as well as the Upper East and West sides could purchase “wholesome food at cost and honest weights.” The stores were poorly visited by the neighborhood women not only

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<sup>126</sup> Kittredge, “Report of New York School Lunch Committee,” 486.

<sup>127</sup> Annual Report COS, (1912-1913, 17), V. 2, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>128</sup> Stern, “The Work of the Visiting Housekeeper,” 176.

<sup>129</sup> Harper, “Nutrition Classes for Children,” 478.

because they viewed it as a “Charity Store,” but also because “the stores would not cater to the likes of various racial groups and diets, and were poorly planned as a result,” a review of the stores shows. After four years of floundering, the last of the stores closed in 1920.<sup>130</sup> By then the AICP had made “food, nutrition, and the wise spending of the family income” the main focus of its home economics work and created a Nutrition Bureau. The newly created bureau vowed to adapt its nutritional teachings to “racial customs, likes and dislikes of the family, or of other conditions.”<sup>131</sup> Immigrant pushback and influence over reformists can also be seen in the progression and transformation of the Hull House kitchen and restaurant. Set up in 1893 by the house’s American residents who “hoped to share their own dining practices with misguided neighbors,” the kitchen and restaurant struggled from the very beginning as it failed to cater to the tastes and preferences of its ethnic diverse neighbors. And while the kitchen closed, it made American residents re-evaluate their approach. “The experience . . . taught us not to hold preconceived ideas of what the neighborhood ought to have, but to keep ourselves in readiness to modify and adapt our undertaking as we discovered those things which the neighborhood was ready to accept.”<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Gollet, L.H., “Old-time Food Orders and the AICP Food Stores,” 12, Nurses House Nutrition Service, 1906-1905, Box 68, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>131</sup> Gollet, L.H., “Old-time Food Orders and the AICP Food Stores,” 23, Nurses House Nutrition Service, 1906-1905, Box 68, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>132</sup> Jackson, *Lines of Activity*, 133.

### Praising the immigrant palate

Case files and friendly visiting reports from social workers and home economists going back to the late 1800s indicate that there were more than a few within the organizations who did not believe there to be anything wrong with the foodways of the southern and eastern European immigrants, even encouraging others to try some of the ethnic recipes. “The poorer Slavs who we meet have good trait of character ... the women are willing to cook, making good soup and gulash [sic], and they are fond of vegetables,” a COS case worker notes.<sup>133</sup> The more accepting view of southern and eastern European foodways can be found as early as the late 1870s, much earlier than the WWI-fueled acceptance noted by historians.<sup>134</sup> Domestic scientists even acknowledged the nutritious and economical value of some food items on the immigrant menu, and encouraged others to give them a try as early as 1878.<sup>135</sup> Dietary studies conducted in Chicago by the Hull House settlement workers in 1895 and 1896 noted additional praise on the economical spending patterns of Bohemian families on food. “These results indicate a very wise and prudent expediter for food.”<sup>136</sup>

A two-part article for the *Journal of Home Economics*, titled “The Food of the Immigrant in Relation to Health,” points out various ethnic dishes it considers

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<sup>133</sup> Quote from article draft found in folder, undated, circa 1906, Folder State C – Studies, Box 162, V.I., CSS, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>134</sup> Levenstein, *American Response*, 13-16.

<sup>135</sup> Corson, *Fifteen Cent Dinners for Families of Six*, v-vi.

<sup>136</sup> Atwater and Bryant, *Dietary Studies in Chicago*, 64.

healthful and describes their preparation or their ingredients, even giving the native names of the dishes, and recommending which dishes are good for diets to combat ailments such as constipation and diabetes.<sup>137</sup> And while the article did criticize some aspects of immigrant foodways, noting for instance that Jewish immigrants must be encouraged to eat more vegetables, as “they don’t like them as much as they should,” it found the diet of others exemplary. “The people of northern and central Italy have a very well-balanced diet, with protein from milk, cheese, eggs and meat, carbohydrates from macaroni in its various forms and bread; mineral matter from fruits and vegetables; fat from olive oil.”<sup>138</sup>

The notion that Anglo-Saxon American cuisine was superior, or that immigrants from the earlier immigration waves managed their household and nutrition better, was not a universally held belief among social workers and reformers. Home economists and nutritional scientists advocating the importance of economy within the food budget often praised southern and eastern European immigrants for their cheap and nutritious food choices. “Prices of Italian food have almost doubled, but even now Italians know how to manage better than Americans,” a 1918 COS study noted. “Italian polenta made from cornmeal is very good and nourishing when made right, and Italian soup is a meal in itself.”

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<sup>137</sup> Davis and Woods, “The Food of the Immigrant in Relation to Health, Part 1,” 21.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

Not just Italians received praise. “The Bohemian women are clean and thrifty, economical housekeepers, and very good cooks,” Josef Humpal Zeman wrote. “They know the art of making a little go far, and this enables them to feed large families with comparatively meager sums.”<sup>139</sup>

When critique was leveled, it was not always the southern and eastern European immigrants whose dietary habits were considered faulty. Case records from the AICP and the COS made note of bad nutritional habits of second wave English, German and Irish immigrants, as well as American-born families in need of assistance. A 1917 AICP study even noted the latter group to have some of the poorest nutrition.

When the families were studied with reference to place of birth and nationality, it was found that the best conditions of nutrition were found among the native born children of foreign parents — over half of those studied, and the worst conditions among the native born children of native parents, about one-sixth of the cases. This bad condition among many American families of the second generation in some sections of the city is confirmed by the results found by studies made by the Bureau of Educational Experiment and by Dr. Robert C. Chapin.<sup>140</sup>

The study goes on to note that Italian, Austrian and Russian families were better nourished than American, and were only bested by Germans. Others noticed the well-balanced nutritional habits of many of the new immigrants as well. In her address for the seventh annual meeting of the American Home

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<sup>139</sup> Zeman, “The Bohemian People in Chicago,” 122.

<sup>140</sup> Manny, *Defective Nutrition and the Standards of Living*, Folder 325.2a, Box 50, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

Economics Association in 1914 on the work of the visiting housekeeper in Boston, Frances Stern noted how cheap nutritious food was easily found in neighborhoods with a large “foreign” population, whereas in “crowded districts that do not have a foreign atmosphere the cheaper foods are missing.”<sup>141</sup>

#### Worldly social workers, educated palates

These respectful opinions of immigrant foodways were not created in a vacuum; foodways native to the Hungarians, Russians, Bohemians, Italians and other foreign nations were described in books and journals catering to social workers, home economists and nutritional scientists. More women traveled abroad to Europe and other continents, studying and living abroad among the people, widening their worldviews as well as their palates.

Helen Campbell, a professor of home economics and domestic sciences at the University of Wisconsin and the Kansas State Agricultural College, waxed quite poetically about the Italian cuisine in her 1893 study of foreign cuisines titled *In Foreign Kitchens*. Noting “sweet olive oil,” and “delicious *risottos*,” Campbell admitted that Italian cooking “has as its only fault a freer use of oil than the American palate likes,” and spoke quite disparagingly about the English cuisines with their “bullet-proof” breads and only reluctantly admitted that “good cookery

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<sup>141</sup> Stern, 176.

is possible, and is found now and then,” in England.<sup>142</sup> The *Journal of Home Economics* — one of the main social work publications at the time — published regular articles about foreign cuisines starting with an article on the diet in the Philippines in its third issue in 1909, noting that the nutritional values of the Filipino diet indicated that the Filipino “is well nourished and that in proportion to his size his diet agrees rather closely with the commonly accepted dietary standards.”<sup>143</sup> Articles on Turkish, Italian and Hungarian cuisines followed, all speaking highly of the nutritional as well as taste values of the foods; the very first sentence of the article *The Turk and his Table* read, “Nowhere in the world is there so rich or varied a table as in Turkey.”<sup>144</sup>

Many of the women working in the social services field were educated, graduating from college or having done some graduate work.<sup>145</sup> With education an option, many opted to travel and study abroad. Living for longer stretches of time in foreign lands helped spread acceptance as the women experienced the food culture in a country first hand. In a speech presented before the 1910 American Home Economics Association, Edith Talbots Jackson said the “large amount of women” who have gone to study in Europe “are bringing back with increasing frequency very valuable lessons in household matters acquired not in the universities, but in the hospitable homes which have sheltered them and in the

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<sup>142</sup> Campbell, *In Foreign Kitchens*, 81, 12-135.

<sup>143</sup> Langworthy, “Diet in the Philippines,” 173.

<sup>144</sup> Tashjian, “The Turk and his Table,” 274.

<sup>145</sup> Walkowitz, *Working With Class*, 37.



markets and shops which they have visited and studied.” And while Jackson believed that the American ideas on domestic hygiene were superior, “in matters of economy in the household we can study and adapt with profit many of the ideas and practices prevalent in Europe, especially in France and Italy.”<sup>146</sup>

In *Foods of the Foreign Born in Relation to Health*, dietitian Bertha Woods examined the backgrounds and customs of Mexican, Portuguese, Italian, Hungarian, Polish “and other Slavic peoples,” Armenian, Syrian, Turks, Greeks and Jews, praising their dietary habits and giving several recipes from each group in an effort to educate dietitians and social workers.

There is much that we may learn from these people and, equally much for them to learn from us with profit. If we then study their customs and acquaint ourselves more and more with their foods, we shall not only broaden our own diet by the introduction of new and interesting dishes, but also shall we be better able to help these foreign-born to adjust themselves to new conditions with as few changes as possible.<sup>147</sup>

Social workers working in immigrant-heavy neighborhoods were also more accepting of immigrant food cultures and tastes. Seeing Italian women grow their own vegetables and dry tomato sauce on the roofs of the houses around the Home Garden Settlement in New York, the settlement worker noted the thriftiness of “provident [Italian] housewife.”<sup>148</sup> The LaGuardia Memorial House — founded in 1898 in Harlem a neighborhood that although it housed several dozens of

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<sup>146</sup> Jackson, “Thrift in the Kitchen,” 127.

<sup>147</sup> Woods, *Foods of the Foreign-Born*, 2.

<sup>148</sup> Home Garden Settlement, “Our Neighborhood,” *Home Garden Annual Report, April 1912*, 1-9, 4, G RBML RCC, RBML, CUNY.

different nationalities was predominantly Italian — embraced the cultural heritage of their population, arguing that immigrant colonies such as their Little Italy actually promoted Americanization as it offered “a certain protection, or a feeling of protection, to many immigrants bewildered by their sudden uprooting from familiar environments in the old-world.” The American way should not displace the Italian way, LaGuardia House workers argued, but rather build upon it.<sup>149</sup> The house focused on the basics of Americanization, organizing English classes, lectures on American history and government, and assisting immigrants in getting their first and second papers.<sup>150</sup> With an increase of more prosperous Italians assisting in the financial and organizational work within the LaGuardia Memorial House in the late 1910s and early 1920s, Italian culture was incorporated into the fabric with Italian restaurants advertising in the 1924 *Revue of Revues* benefit program, and the organization of full-on Italian festivals such as the *Festa di Primavera* in 1925.

### Looking inward

Social workers looked not only to learn about the customs and personal prejudices of the immigrants they assisted, but also examined their own biases.

Mary Richmond warned friendly visitors in her 1907 printing of *Friendly Visiting*

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<sup>149</sup> The Italian Colony in Harlem, 1921, Folder 5, Box 1, LGMHC, RBML, CUNY.

<sup>150</sup> First and Second papers indicate phases in the naturalization process at the time. First papers are the “declaration of intent” – the immigrant declares his intent to become an American citizen; Second papers are the actual petitions of naturalization.

*among the Poor* to “be on guard against personal prejudices and a hasty jumping at conclusions.” In *The Good Neighbor in the Modern City* of the same year, Richmond addressed the specific biases that existed toward the Italian immigrant families, pointing out that charities asking for donations for German and English families would receive many, while those requested for Italian families often brought in nothing.<sup>151</sup>

By the mid-1920s social workers started looking inward, examining their own prejudices and ways to combat them. A 1926 report on the training of case workers addressed the need of the workers to get to know their clients and their neighborhoods, to get “a rounded view of the client’s life,” as well as how to battle racism in the chapter titled *Attitudes of Mind*. “Do we display prejudices toward certain racial groups, if so what is the foundations for such an attitude and how can it be overcome?”<sup>152</sup>

### Conclusion

As this chapter shows, “Not yet Americanized. Still eating Italian” was not necessarily considered a bad thing in the decades of the 1890s through 1920s. While there were certainly those who believe that the diets of the Italians, Bohemians and other eastern and southern European nationalities were inferior or

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<sup>151</sup> Richmond, *The Good Neighbor in the Modern City*, 64.

<sup>152</sup> Report on Brooklyn Sub-Committee on Training, April 23, 1926, Folder Casework, Box 100, CSS, RBML, CUNY.

in need of improvement, it is *not* certain that this belief stemmed from a belief in the inferiority of these nationalities and their foodways. Poor immigrants — often living in tenement slums and overcrowded homes and neighborhoods that bore no resemblance to the homes and cities they left behind — clung to the one thing that they were able to replicate: their food.<sup>153</sup> Especially for the Italians and the Eastern European Jews their own food culture was part of their identity and part of their religious practice, and they tend to spend a larger part of their household budget on food than Americans and immigrants from earlier waves. Seeing the disparity, social workers and nutritional scientist attempted to economize the diets of the southern and eastern European immigrants, not because they believed it to be bad, but because they believed that they had a more economical alternative, providing the poor immigrant with more bang for his very limited buck.

Social workers and nutritional scientists did not launch an “assault” on immigrant foodways; some may have indeed “worked diligently” to Americanize the immigrant diets<sup>154</sup>, but there was no overarching concerted effort seeking to rid the United States from anything but Anglo-Saxon foodways. Again, economic circumstances weighed heavy and the friendly visitor would rather bring by a basket of macaroni, olive oil and tomatoes as she knew it would be eaten, than porridge and cereals that she feared would never be touched. Feeding the poor

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<sup>153</sup> Diner, 9.

<sup>154</sup> Shapiro, 131.

immigrant took precedence over Americanizing him, even with those social workers who did not think highly of the way he chose to feed himself.

It seems only logical that settlement and social workers — working and often living among the immigrants, interacting with them and sharing their meals — would cease to view the world in stereotypes and absolutes, enabling them to not just criticize an Italian mother for feeding her children coffee in the morning, but also to admire that same woman for growing her own vegetables and canning her own tomatoes the Old World way by drying them on her roof in the New York summer heat. Festivals, gatherings and parties held in the settlement houses often had a food component; food would be cooked by neighborhood women or provided by local restaurants, as was the case with the festivals at Haarlem House. Given the multicultural makeup of most of the urban neighborhoods, settlement workers and immigrants would have the opportunity to sample dishes from different countries, further expanding their awareness of food cultures.

The records reviewed for this thesis showed far too many instances of acceptance and admiration to cite; and while these records certainly contained their fair share of racial and ethnic prejudices — be it against a special group, or their foodways — the positive examples given here demonstrate that it is impossible to assign the same ideology and reasoning to all social workers, or to believe that their views stayed stagnant throughout the decades. Interacting with the immigrants — often on a daily basis — the social worker was educated as

much as she educated, and in turn sought to educate her colleagues, as well as others in the field of immigrant aid and education, through books and articles. Including her voice and views into the historical narrative will not only recognize the role she played in fostering acceptance of foreign cultures within the United States, it will also acknowledge the two-way cultural exchange and the influence immigrants had.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The American guest had a hard task to believe that their homes were just across the city as they feasted on dishes with queer names and looked at the long beards and quaint dresses of their hosts and hostesses.<sup>155</sup>

My father immigrated to the Netherlands in 1967 from Czechoslovakia, bringing with him a several cookbooks. One of his staple dishes was *lescó*, a traditional Hungarian dish made with onions, peppers, garlic and tomatoes, to which Hungarian Debrecziner sausage, or bacon, or rice, or egg is sometimes added.<sup>156</sup> The *lescó* I grew up with was called *lečo* and consisted of onions, sautéed with a little bit of bacon on bacon fat, sliced smoked paprika sausage and bell peppers, which would be mixed with some cooked rice and finished with chopped garlic and tomatoes just before serving. Not having Hungarian Debrecziner sausage on hand in the Netherlands, my dad substituted for German-made *pfefferoni* he would buy in bulk whenever he visited Germany, claiming that the Dutch-made sausages were too sour. Because the sausages were not as spicy as the ones he would buy in Czechoslovakia, he used to add Indonesian *sambal* to the dish, a chili-garlic paste introduced to the Netherlands by

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<sup>155</sup> SCIHC, *Report*, 12.

<sup>156</sup> Gergely, *Culinaria Hungary*, 62.

immigrants from the former Dutch colony and now sold in every supermarket in the Netherlands. When I make it at home in Baltimore, I use Italian pepperoni I get from the Italian deli, and switch the bacon fat out for olive oil to make the dish healthier. Accustomed to have *sambal* with my *lečo*, I use the Thai chili-garlic paste I buy at the H-mart, an Asian supermarket.

In *Food: The Key Concepts*, Warren Belasco writes that “people decide what to eat based on rough negotiations — a pushing and tugging — between the dictates of identity and convenience, with somewhat lesser guidance from the considerations of responsibility.”<sup>157</sup> The *lečos* my father and I make illustrate these negotiations. We both swapped out ingredients for convenience; getting authentic Debrecziner sausage in 1970s and 1980s Holland was impossible, and although it is available to me through the wonders of the Internet, convenience (and shipping price), make me reach for my Italian substitute. Discoveries about the benefits of vegetable oils instigated the switch from bacon fat to olive oil.

As documented in this paper, the settlement houses and social work organizations assisted those at the bottom rungs of the economic ladder. For those living in economic uncertainty, daily life was a negotiation; the choice between food on the table or a warm house, taking a child to the doctor, or fare for the

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<sup>157</sup> Belasco, *Food*, 8.



trolley car to get to work the next day. Women in this economic scale would have negotiated every day what kind of food they would buy and how large a slice of the budget they would spend on it.

As proven in this paper, nutritional scientist and home economists sought to educate women from all ethnic backgrounds about the nutritional values of foods and the best way to prepare them. Efficient, scientific backed cooking would ensure the health of the family, no matter what their budget or ethnic background was. Cooking classes included those of northern European descent as much, if not more than those of southern and eastern European origin. While the focus of this study was the quantification and qualification of the Americanization efforts of social workers, home economists and reformers, and did not explore how these efforts were received by the immigrant women, material discovered within the primary sources researched for this work indicates a continues negotiation by the immigrant women between their cultural identity, convenience and their responsibility towards their family, especially their children, in the new country. Additional research is needed to explore the true effect the educational efforts had on the immigrant women attending the classes, clubs and demonstrations before any conclusion can be drawn to their impact on the ethnic food identity of those taught.

As this work demonstrates, Americanization of the foodways was not always the goal of those teaching the classes. In some instances, the goal was simply to help the women better utilize the little money they had, teaching them how to increase the nutritional value of the few dollars they had. For others, the classes were a vehicle to reach out to the women on familiar ground, teaching them English and imparting on them some coping skills through cooking classes and lectures, enabling them to better navigate through the new unfamiliar American environment. In some instances, especially as women's suffrage spreads across the country, the end goal was naturalization. As many of the women involved in social work also supported the suffrage movement, it should be of little surprise that some classes and demonstrations were used as ways to educate the women about their rights and privileges. The focus of these programs was not to change the culture of the immigrant women, but to assist them in adapting to American society, helping them and their family to become educated and healthy contributors to the United States.

Although records indicate that many clung to their cultural food identity, expending funds on the staples of their national cuisine, there are indications that some of them were at least open to learning new things that might assist their struggling family and improve their health. Records examined for this paper show that immigrant women attending cooking classes would ask for the teacher to show them particular dishes to prepare, and asked to take recipes of dishes

demonstrated in class home.<sup>158</sup> Presented with “scientific proof” that cereal and milk was better for their children than bakery goods, it is conceivable that the women felt a responsibility to feed their children better, incorporating new foods, dishes and methods of preparation into their daily routine.

Numbers matter, and it is important to examine the statistical makeup of the population reached by any organization one examines the records of and uses to extrapolate a historical narrative. The records of organizations and reformers studied for this paper catered to the poor urban population, a very multi-ethnic and multi-national population. The immigrants represented in those documents were those in need of assistance; whether it was because of unemployment, illness, or due to some moral depravation like drinking and gambling, or abandonment of the family by the breadwinner. Those who arrived in the country with considerable funds of their own, who could do without assistance, or find assistance from their fellow countrymen, were not reached by any of the Americanization or reform attempts of these social workers. Consequently, the conclusions drawn from studying the records cannot be projected onto the entire southern and eastern European immigrant population.

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<sup>158</sup> Annual Report Friendly Aid Society, 1906, Folder 1, Box 20, I.4, GRCC, RBML, NYCU.

Focusing on the settlement houses, social work organizations and the work of home economists ignores and bypasses other institutions who reached and therefore possibly influenced the foodways of the immigrants. Broadening the research to include institutions and organizations targeting immigrants in different socioeconomic spheres will help to create a more comprehensive historical narrative. Some public school systems within the United States included cooking classes in their curriculum. The classes were not part of every public school program — the Friendly Aid House in the Kips Bay area of Manhattan for instance started organizing classes in their district because the local public schools did not offer them — and as the parents had to pay to send their children to school, the classes were not within the economic reality of all immigrant families.<sup>159</sup> A quantitative and qualitative look at these cooking classes is necessary to measure any influence the public school education had in the Americanization of the southern and eastern European immigrant foodways.

Southern and eastern European immigrants also engaged in Americanization efforts through their own newspapers and organizations, as Mirel has shown. A cursory glance at a few Polish, Czech and Italian papers at the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore at the very early stages of this thesis showed that some of these papers included recipes as well as advertisements for American produced food products. Ethnic organizations — often founded at the end of the ninetieth

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<sup>159</sup> Annual Reports Friendly Aid Society, I.4, GRCC, RBML, NYCU.

century, such as Baltimore Sokol — did much to both maintain the ethnic roots of their community, and help its members to assimilate.<sup>160</sup> Further research is needed in order to uncover the scope and depth of the attempts to Americanize the southern and eastern European foodways and to give a voice to the immigrants themselves.

When I started research on this paper I wanted to take a closer look at the forceful methods employed by Americanizers to Anglo-Saxonize the eastern and southern European immigrant foodways. Foodways historiography and narratives in newspapers and popular food magazines all amplified the well-known stories of immigrants clinging to their food identities despite the onslaught of cultural imperialism by their Anglo-Saxon countrymen. But as I sifted through the records of various settlement houses and social work organizations, combed through decades of the *Journal of Home Economics*, and read books by reformers, nutritionists and home economist, it became clear that when it came to educating the southern and eastern European immigrants in the fields of food, nutrition and health, the Americanization movement was not one homogenous and unified front and that those seeking to assist and educate the new immigrants did not all believe that in order to do so the immigrants had to give up their own food culture.

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<sup>160</sup> “Sokol Baltimore ... A Brief History,” last modified in 2013, <http://www.sokolbaltimore.org/#!/history/cujo>.

This paper does not deny that ethnic nationalism existed within the field of social services workers, home economists and nutritional scientists; many examples have been cited in works on immigrant foodways. It contends however that it is an incomplete and far too simplistic picture. There were plenty of voices at the helm of the Americanization and social reform movements, quite a few of them prominent ones, that believed that in order to help a person, one needed to respect him, adapting one's teachings conform, at least to some level, to the tastes and preferences of the person.

As Mirel's work has shown, education played a substantial role in the creation of "a more inclusive, more democratic, and ultimately more pluralistic nation." The work these social services workers, home economists and nutritionists did helped create a more accepting and unified nation. As they navigated between American identity, science and immigrant food culture, they helped introduce southern and eastern immigrant foods to a wider American audience. "... The American woman has learned how to make the delicious polenta of the Italian, and how to provide a satisfying dinner of macaroni cooked with a small allowance of meat, as well as how to manufacture fresh noodles for soup — this in exchange for the knowledge of English which carries the Italian woman toward the goal of American citizenship."<sup>161</sup> Instead of Americanizing the southern and

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<sup>161</sup> Pamphlet, "War Service of the National American Women Suffrage Association - Americanization," n.d., Educational Propaganda Department, Committee on Women's Defense Work, Box 631, Council of National Defense, RG62, NACP.

eastern European immigrant, the southern and eastern European immigrants had enriched the American social workers and laid the first building block for what would become the hyphenated American cuisines.

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