This report is concerned only with immigration - which brings into contact two previously unconnected populations, thereby provoking the most violent disturbance and creating the most serious socio-political obstacles to international migrations.

The report falls into two sections:

1. The apprehensions and fears aroused by a prospective foreign immigration amongst the population of the host country;

2. The adaptation or assimilation of the immigrants in their new environment.

1. Apprehensions and Fears with respect to Immigration

A distinction should be drawn between the feelings aroused by immigration as a phenomenon and those aroused by the immigrants as individuals or groups.

Discrimination

Attitudes of discrimination towards certain peoples exist in every country. They are due either to purely racial and physiological considerations, such as the colour of the skin, the hair, etc., or to differences in manners, customs and education. Generally speaking, peoples geographically furthest apart are most distrustful of one another (though there are exceptions to this rule), and the level of development is always a particularly important factor. Religious or political affinities also constitute an important consideration in the matter of discrimination.

As these phenomena of discrimination are well-known and have often been described, it is perhaps preferable to set them aside, in order to examine the fears aroused by foreign immigration as such, even where the immigrants form a population fairly similar to that of the host country, as with Italian immigration into France or English immigration into the United States of America.
Self-interest and xenophobia

In some cases, foreign workers are called in to fill some obvious and well-defined gap - to discharge some unfulfilled function, as in the case of the foreign miners in France after World War I. But such circumstances are exceptional. As Thacker pointed out as early as 1780, such "gaps" rarely exist as a permanent feature of any society. In most cases, the arrival of foreign workers sets up some sort of disturbance in the social machine.

However this may be, when the population of the host country is not particularly tolerant or indifferent, the expression "influx of foreigners" inevitably conjures up, in the minds of nationals, visions of social disturbance. And this attitude can speedily become unfavourable: foreigners bring change, for good or evil, but the latter variety is uppermost in people's minds. The first unreflecting impression is that these new people coming into the community are going to "take" something. Thus attention is drawn to what the community has least of, rather than to what it possesses in abundance.

If, for instance, housing is scarce, the inevitable impression is that foreigners are going to take the rightful place of nationals. Housing shortages are not absolutely universal, but they nearly always exist in countries which receive immigrants, since these countries are in a period of expansion, and building is never ahead of development.

A tendency towards unemployment is, at least apparently, a permanent feature of capitalist society. Even in expanding economies, the impression is one of a restricted number of jobs, and the fear of not having one. In an economy depending on private initiative, the future is an unknown quantity and is regarded with permanent apprehension, especially in well-developed countries, where people make, or endeavour to make, some provision for it.

This is why organized bodies or professions are not alone in opposing immigration in their sector; a similar attitude is displayed by the population as a whole. Logically, professionals in one sector ought to favour immigration in other sectors, since an increase in the number of consumers is in their interest; but their attitude is too spontaneous and emotional for calculations of this sort to enter into it.

In 1945, a survey conducted among various professional groups in France revealed, in all professions, a large majority hostile to immigration of any kind: 89% in the case of the liberal professions, 79% in the metallurgical industry, 68% in the building industry, etc. And yet, at the same time, public opinion was not disturbed by any possibility of an unemployment crisis within the next five years; that question had elicited 65% of "no", 24% of "yes" and 11% of uncertain replies.

Thus we find the same social attitude prevailing with regard to the protection of employment (and, as a result, the same reactions) as in the case of the protection of markets, with, in addition, a feeling of irritation against people coming from outside and taking a part of what belongs to the community.

This feeling is all the more acute where the people look less forward to development; in many social classes, the prevailing impression is that available employment is strictly limited, and constitutes common property to be shared out; in which case the reaction to immigration is one of violent hostility.
Sometimes the fear appears unrelated to anything so specific as housing or employment. It is then genuine xenophobia, coupled, perhaps, with a measure of racial prejudice.

The subjective nature of such an attitude is well illustrated by the way in which answers to a question change if the question is asked in a different form. Thus in 1949, in a French public opinion poll, the following question was put: "Do you approve, generally, of allowing a certain number of foreigners to settle in France?" For a second identical group, the word "settle" was replaced by the weaker expression "enter". In the first case, 67% were against immigration, and in the second case, 59%; out of 41 not opposed to it, 8 had changed their opinion, or rather their attitude, as a result of the change of wording.

Straightforward xenophobia is mainly a phenomenon of mass psychology. The expression "foreigners" is more likely to produce an unfavourable reaction than "a foreigner", because it suggests an idea of force, or even of invasion.

The emigration of nationals, or even the departure of foreigners previously settled in the country, does not arouse the reverse feeling, i.e. the idea that the common property can now be shared among a smaller number of individuals. On the contrary, in such an event the feeling that the individuals themselves belong to the community comes into play - a feeling which, of course, is accentuated under an authoritarian régime.

Thus the Soviet Union endeavours, sometimes by the use of force, to gather all nationals within its frontiers, and even demands that other countries should deliver up refugees to it, although no real immigration takes place.

2. Assimilation or Adaptation of Migrants

Total assimilation is said to have taken place when the former immigrant or his descendants can no longer be distinguished from nationals and are no longer conscious of their different origin.

But the term "assimilation", so often used, applies only to the last stage of a series of operations which may be interrupted during the process of adaptation.

Here, too, a distinction must be drawn between the individual and the group.

The individual in his new environment

Research carried out in recent years, and surveys undertaken in various countries, have thrown much light on the successive steps in the assimilation of an individual.

The three chief stages are as follows:

Settling, adaptation, and assimilation proper.

(a) Settling is complete when the individual has acquired fixed habits, a fixed abode and permanent employment, or at least the possibility of permanent
employment. Henceforth he is assured of a stable material existence. Immigration authorities and bodies sponsoring immigration endeavour to reduce this first vital stage to a minimum, by providing housing, employment etc. in advance. But it is only material existence that is ensured in this way.

(b) Adaptation to environment has both physical and cultural aspects.

Adaptation to climate is essential; immigrants must learn how to dress, how to heat their homes, and how best to face the various rigours of the climate, by following the nationals' example.

Adaptation to the social environment is first and foremost a matter of language: it takes the immigrant several months at least before he can express himself adequately. Speaking a language to which one is not accustomed is always a strain; pride and timidity hamper the first attempts which, when unsuccessful, are met with smiles or amused contempt from the inhabitants. Whereas the tourist, with his well-filled pocket book, incites his profit seeking hearers to amazingly successful efforts, the foreign worker, on the other hand, calls forth strange inhibitions, generally involuntary but likely to disconcert the unfortunate beginner.

Nowadays, individuals are rarely called upon to adapt their religion; but, where the religion of the immigrant differs from that of his new country, his general adaptation is more difficult, and the Church makes no attempt to facilitate it.

Culinary adaptation is sometimes a very laborious process. The example is quoted of Italians in New York who, after several generations, speak nothing but English and have adopted all the American customs, but whose feeding régime remains that of their ancestors.

The multiple aspects of social life must also be mentioned: entertainments (sport, cinema, concerts etc.), relations of friendship or love, associations (unions, orchestras, sports clubs etc.) can all help to foster individual self respect and hence, to some extent, a certain "proprietary" feeling - resulting in the achievement of mental balance.

Adaptation may be brought about through partial reconstitution of the original environment. The foreigner discovers friends or relatives, who may, indeed, have been instrumental in his entering the new country; he frequents cafés and clubs where he meets his compatriots. A Japanese in the State of Sao Paulo lives in a completely Japanese environment, and need never cross the "frontier" if his occupation is unconnected with trade. Sometimes the immigration itself has taken the form of a mass migration of whole villages, complete with clergy and teachers. In these cases there has been no change in the cultural environment, and it is a question of groups rather than of individuals.

Reconstitution of the environment clearly makes individual adaptation easier, but at the expense of the following stage, i.e. assimilation.

(c) Assimilation cannot of course be achieved in the first generation, from the physical point of view (if a difference existed at the outset), and can only be achieved from the cultural point of view if the immigrant enters the country at a very early age.
Moreover, the attitude and behaviour of the immigrant are influenced by the attitude of the nationals towards him. His accent and pronunciation, his way of dressing and, in a village, his well known foreign origin, are enough to keep the local inhabitants at a distance, and at times to call forth dislike.

Naturalization is merely a legal step, which is not necessarily accompanied by assimilation. However, it sometimes constitutes the legalization and recognition of an advanced stage of assimilation, and may, conversely, put an end to the inferiority and persecution complexes from which the individual has suffered since his entry into his new environment.

The great factors in assimilation are the dispersal of immigrants, the school and the mixed marriage. The school must of course be a "national" one, and have only a small proportion of foreign pupils of similar origin. Children of mixed marriages are easily assimilated, even when the parents are both foreigners, but of different nationality.

One might also speak of the power of the "street" to foster assimilation. In countries where children live in the streets or out of doors, the language of the streets and the accompanying education become factors additional to the mother tongue and the language of the school.

The group: coexistence of two populations

When immigration is by groups of families, bringing their own personnel, we are faced with the case of a whole population being henceforth brought into contact with another - in other words, with the coexistence of two populations.

Setting aside the various "solutions" that can be found to the presence, under one political rule and within the same territory, of two different populations, let us consider only the solutions that are the most peaceful and least painful.

The question of reciprocal relations is more acute than in the case of the individual. Segregation may persist, either as a result of the attitude of the immigrants, or of that of the nationals who, by their severity, their contempt, their mockery etc., may constantly repulse any advances from the group of immigrants.

One can speak of tolerance between two populations when coexistence persists without excessive tensions. This, for example, is the case with the various language groups in Switzerland, the Jews, the Arabs and the Christians in the Middle East, the Chinese and the Malayans in Malaya, etc.

Assimilation may be postponed indecisively, even when there is no obstacle to it. But usually the boundary line of the group of immigrants grows less distinct. This is the important point, which is not always grasped.

Assimilation does not mean that all individual descendants of immigrants become identical with the nationals of the country. Firstly, the national population itself is not homogeneous; but above all, the new population may differ from the original one, for assimilation may be reciprocal. In order to avoid misunderstanding, it is better to speak of fusion.
Firstly let us consider physical characteristics. Take the case of a white population which has received black immigrants (or vice versa): assimilation does not mean that the resulting population will be white, nor even that it will be of any definite colour. It means that between the pure white and the pure black there will be a whole gamut of variations, of graduated shades, so that it will be no longer possible to draw any dividing line. The physical characteristics of the new population will be less well defined than those of the old, but fusion will have taken place.

Physical differences between peoples (skin colour, stature, etc.) are of course the visible ones, and are due to numerous different genes, with the result that mixed marriages produce an infinite variety of intermediate characteristics. The problem would be different if, for example, people could recognize one another (and hence maintain distinctions) from the nature of the blood.

Let us now consider cultural characteristics: there is no question here either of intelligence or of natural aptitude, since the range of variations is so great that there is always a considerable overlap. The most stupid individual of population A is certainly more stupid than the most intelligent of population B. On the other hand, acquired characteristics such as language and religion may be much more distinctive.

It has often happened that an immigrant population, even though in a minority, has imposed its language, or at least obliged the original population to modify its own language (as the Normans did in England). But in modern times the immigrant population is usually in the minority and of an inferior status, and therefore adopts the language of its new country. In these circumstances, there is little or no possibility of an intermediate situation coming about, producing a new language, nor is bilingualism likely to become general. In any case, so long as the immigrants preserve their own language, there is no true assimilation.

The case of religion is different; there being greater tolerance than formerly, an immigrant population can preserve its own religion. Assimilation exists, however, where religion does not play an important part in social life, and especially where, between two extremes (practising, militant and even fanatical followers of two different religions), there is a whole range of non-believers or lukewarm believers. In such circumstances, as in the case of physical characteristics, there is fusion even if differences are very great. The important point is that the dividing line should be really blurred.

Diagram of the general situation

We can now sum up the various possible results of immigration in the form of the following diagram:
This diagram is valid only for the first generation.

Final result

Once assimilation has been achieved, the resulting population may differ from the original population.

Very little is, in fact, known on this subject. Theoretical demonstration is impossible, since it may be led around to any result desired. Experimental demonstration is very difficult too, because of the number of factors involved in national evolution, and the diversity of historical examples.

However, the consequences of the recognition of the problem are significant. Faced with the successful assimilation of a group of immigrants, some people anxiously speak of degeneration. Whether this be justified or not, the existence of this mentality can create a feeling and an attitude of opposition to assimilation. Seen in this light, it becomes a fitting subject for study, and merits investigation.