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Jeffrey E. Mirel

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#2341615 in Books Harvard University Press 2010-04-30 2010-03-15 Original language: English PDF # 1
9.51 x 1.35 x 6.451, 1.55 #File Name: 0674046382378 pages | File size: 48.Mb

Jeffrey E. Mirel : Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended. By Jari Nikkola One of the classics in the field. Highly recommended.

In this book, leading historian of education Jeffrey E. Mirel retells a story we think we know, in which public schools forced a draconian Americanization on the great waves of immigration of a century ago. Ranging from the 1890s through the World War II years, Mirel argues that Americanization was a far more nuanced and negotiated process from the start, much shaped by immigrants themselves. Drawing from detailed descriptions of Americanization programs for both schoolchildren and adults in three cities (Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit) and from extensive analysis of foreign-language newspapers, Mirel shows how immigrants confronted different kinds of Americanization. When native-born citizens contemptuously tried to force them to forsake their home religions, languages, or histories, immigrants pushed back strongly. While they passionately embraced key aspects of Americanization—the English language, American history, democratic political ideas, and citizenship—they also found in American democracy a defense of their cultural differences. In seeing no conflict between their sense of themselves as Italians, or Germans, or Poles, and Americans, they helped to create a new and inclusive vision of this country. Mirel vividly retells the epic story of one of the great achievements of American education, which has profound implications for the Americanization of immigrants today.

This is a bold, intriguing, and timely book—the first truly novel interpretation of Americanization in the past two or three decades. It provides the only reliable account of adult education for immigrants and takes the story all the way up to the Second World War. Most impressively, it puts immigrants themselves at the heart of the narrative. Newcomers to America emerge from these pages not as passive victims, but as actors—indeed, as Americanizers—in their own right. (Jonathan Zimmerman, New York University) *Patriotic Pluralism* shows that Americanization through education helped transform white immigrants from southern and central Europe into citizens partly because the immigrant communities used their newspapers, churches, synagogues, and their own schools, to change America's image of itself. America became a nation of immigrants, dedicated to the ideals of inclusion and democracy, as it faced twentieth century totalitarianism abroad. It's an impressive book and a wonderfully told story. (William Reese, University of Wisconsin-Madison) Drawing on extensive collections of foreign language newspapers, Mirel offers a refreshing, persuasive reinterpretation of efforts to Americanize European immigrants during the first half of the 20th century. This volume represents a major contribution to the history of U.S. education, and will be of interest to students of immigration, American identity, and the origins of later 20th-century multiculturalism. (A. D. Mullen Choice 2010-11-01) About the Author Jeffrey E. Mirel is David L. Angus Collegiate Professor of Education and Professor of History at the University of Michigan.