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The Woman Without a Country

# Americanization as War Service

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THESE are three questions every suffragist will ask to have answered before she enlists under Americanization:

First: Is it important?

Second: Can I really help?

Third: What is the practical working plan to be adopted?

The answer to the first question is that Americanization as a war measure is not only important, it is also imperative. U-boats, Zeppelins, armed men and the entire equipment of modern warfare will not win the war for a nation torn with dissensions, plots and counterplots. Our national defense must come from within as well as from without. War breeds caste feeling and race prejudice, and today, when the nations of the world are staggering under crushing burdens, America has one problem which no other country has had to face. England is a nation of English, with a scattering of foreigners; Italy is composed of Italians, with a small population of aliens; Russia is made up of Russians; the same is true of France, of Sweden, of all other nations, but America has eight million aliens, many of whom are living under their own traditions as they did in their own countries, ignorant of our history and of the ideals for which our democracy came into existence.

We have wronged the immigrant in the past. We have allowed our steamship agents to entice him to our shores, and then we have allowed him to be robbed, maltreated and neglected. This must be so no longer. The time has come when native born and foreigner must be drawn together in common love for the democracy for which we are fighting. The horrors of war are coming nearer and the time is all too short for gathering together into a common family those who are to work and fight and sacrifice for our common safety.

Therefore, answering the first question, the woman who teaches one foreign man or woman English, who wins her way to friendly acquaintance with one immigrant family, who is the means of converting one alien to become a loyal American citizen, such a woman is in the fighting line as truly as the man who goes to the front.

"Can I really help?" Yes, if you are sufficiently in earnest to apply the Golden Rule and to put yourself in the place of the immigrant. Without imagination and the ability to take yourself out of your own narrow environment into the greater world, you will not be successful in Americanization work. Have you power for the time being to fancy yourself the immigrant who is as yet not an immigrant, but a peasant living in a small village in Italy? Can you picture the day when the

agent of the steamship company finds the way to this hamlet and lures the Italian field hand to America, painting our country as the land of golden opportunity, where there is no poverty, where every one is rich, prosperous and happy? Can you picture the preparations for leaving home, the heartrending separations, the breaking of ties of blood and of friendship, and the departure from the old home, and the homesickness of the days on shipboard? How many of us know what happens when a great ocean liner brings a lot of immigrants into what is called a "port of entry"? In the first place, these newcomers, largely country bred, are ushered into great cities like New York or Boston without knowing a word of English.

Have you ever experienced the feeling of utter helplessness at finding yourself in a foreign city without an interpreter? My sympathy with the immigrant was greatly increased one day en route to Moscow from Berlin. We had to change cars and go to another railway station at Warsaw, and Warsaw is the only place I happen to have been anywhere in the world which seems to have no provision for directing foreigners. Porters tried to snatch our bags from us, cabmen almost kidnapped us bodily, everybody gesticulated, and we were deafened by the bombardment of strange sounding words which were hurled at us, not one of which we could understand. Fifteen minutes passed, and our situation had not bettered itself. Half an hour, and we became panic-stricken for fear we should lose our connection with the Moscow train. I am perfectly sure that if any wily agent on the outlook for foreign victims had offered personally to start us on our way we would have given him any extortionate sum of money without a moment's hesitation. Fortunately, a woman, a Muscovite returning from England, discovered us and became our good angel. She spoke English as well as we did, and she put us in a cab, saw that the cabman did not cheat us in making change for his fare, bought our tickets, and saw us safely on the right train. I sometimes feel we might still be in Moscow if it had not been for our chance benefactor.

Frances Kellor, who has done and is doing as much as any one in this country for our foreign immigrants, says that "they must run the gauntlet of runners, porters, expressmen, cabmen and exploiters who collect at the Barge Office and forcibly take their belongings, put them into cabs and get their money. Some fifty such "toughs" used to infest the New York port, and some of them have boasted that they have cleaned up \$1,000 a week in good times. Unscrupulous hotel runners adopt every means to get the immigrant temporarily into their hotels for a high-priced meal or

room. It seems unnecessary to picture the destroyed faith of the immigrant, his disillusionment in the country that promised to protect his property, and his outraged sense of justice when he finds that he has lost his savings and has been deceived and mistreated. Such first contacts breed the anarchist, the loafer, and the "men who don't care," and prepare the newcomer's mind for I. W. W. doctrine.

The full program for Americanization should follow the immigrant from the ship to his destination in this country, and it should guide him to the job for which he is fitted. At present there is a terrible industrial waste of our immigrants. The field hand, fitted to aid America where she so much needs aid, in agriculture, takes the job nearest at hand, which may be in a machine shop; a man capable of becoming an engineer, perhaps, finds his way into a sweatshop. In short, America makes no study of the immigrant's qualifications, and in consequence more than half of his value is lost to American industry, simply by lack of intelligence in vocational guidance. The immigrant should be guarded from the fakers and frauds who almost invariably victimize him during his first year in this country; he should be decently housed; first of all, however, he should immediately begin to learn the English language.

An answer to the third question, as to the practical working of Americanization, will be found in the outline printed elsewhere. No woman sufficiently able to win leadership in the suffrage ranks needs to be told that any such outline must be varied to fit local conditions.

Political changes of a national character, to be effective, must move people in large numbers. The American public needs nothing less than a shock to make it appreciate the menace of our un-Americanized aliens. Editors, ministers and priests, both native and foreign, must be enlisted in the Americanization campaign.

A few weeks before the evening schools are to open their fall session a widespread house-to-house canvass in the foreign colonies should be made in the interests of attendance at the public schools. The personal visits of volunteer workers by hundreds are indispensable factors to success, since circular letters to foreigners are simply so much waste paper. The cost to the government of such service as our organization, with its trained workers, can render is not to be estimated. If the money were forthcoming the quality of work demanded could not be obtained. The immigrant himself will best be reached by mass meetings in the foreign colonies, held in school centers or elsewhere. Here, again, the rule of "put yourself in his place" must be applied.

We know that when the ocean is between us and our native land nothing warms our hearts and promotes a feeling of friendliness like a few words of praise of our beloved America. The psychology of the foreigner is just like our own. The way to make friends with an Italian audience or a Russian audience is to begin with the recognition of the beauty and the value of the home country. The stereopticon and the moving picture solve a world of difficulties in attracting an audience. A large reception committee of both Americans and foreigners should be present.

One should not forget that where English is not understood by foreign guests a gracious manner needs no interpretation. Be sure that the program is not long and that it is entertaining, and, if possible, have a band; but in any case be sure that every one in the audience goes away enthusiastic over having had a good time. In preparing for this meeting see that representatives of the local press, including foreign papers, have pictures of the celebrities, typewritten copies of speeches, opportunities for interviewing those taking part in the program, and station a member of your organization at the entrance to answer questions by interpreters or by others. A flier should be printed and circulated, something like the following:

AMERICA FOR ME                      AMERICA FOR YOU  
 AMERICA FOR EVERYBODY  
 Liberty, Happiness, Prosperity for you and for  
 your family.

*Become a Citizen of the United States  
 Learn the English Language  
 The Public School Offers Free Instruction  
 Evening Classes for Foreigners  
 Inquire at the Nearest Public School  
 All Are Cordially Invited.*

When foreign organizations or clubs are having celebrations or mass meetings, secure ten minutes or more for a speaker on Americanization.

Throughout the summer and fall there will be picnics on the various holidays observed by foreigners in this country. Circulate Americanization fliers on such occasions.

Three Don'ts for foreign meetings:

Don't Preach.

Don't Patronize.

Don't fancy because people are poor and live in a tenement house that they will stand being bored.

Every one likes being entertained, having a good time, and being made to feel at home. A meeting along these lines will pave the way for future Americanization work in any community.

## Program of Suffrage Americanization Committee

**A**MERICANIZATION is one of those words that every native-born citizen of the United States loves without analyzing its exact meaning. "One country, one people, one flag"—this is how we think of America. This solidarity, however, is our ideal of what our country ought to be, not what it actually is. In New York, parts of Pennsylvania and New England there are solid blocks where not a single word of English is spoken or understood. Our cities, great and small, many even of our towns are mere collections of foreign communities, each of which speaks the language and preserves the customs of the countries from which its foreign population comes. "Here we have a great mass of peoples," says Mr. Gompers, "coming from the shores of every country on the face of the globe who form colonies in every city and town of these United States, colonies of the peoples of their respective countries."

War has now come and in facing the gravest crisis of our history the supreme need is for a united America. President Wilson said at the dedication of the new Red Cross Building in Washington: "I pray God that the outcome of this struggle may be that every other element of difference among us will be obliterated and that some day historians will remember these momentous years as the years which made a single people out of the great body of those who called themselves Americans."

### A Nation-Wide Campaign

The district plan under which our organization operates, with working groups directed from a common center, gives the National American Woman Suffrage Association the machinery by which to carry on a national campaign for the purpose of bringing native-born Americans into a closer union with our millions of aliens.

In undertaking this campaign we are under the leadership and the guidance of the Government of the United States.

Suffragists will please take notice that the Department of Labor, through the Bureau of Naturalization, has linked the Americanization of the alien immigrant with the public school system of the United States.

### Plan for a Survey

**Number of Foreign Born** How many foreign-born or of foreign-born parentage in your Representative or School District? Give in numerical order the three largest groups of foreigners in your district.

**Schools for the Alien Foreigner** Does the public school in your district provide facilities for teaching foreign men and women English? If not, what shall be done? (Note: The maintenance for

evening schools for foreigners is usually left to the Board of Education of the city or town. Write to the Bureau of Naturalization in Washington stating the number of foreigners in your district for whom the public school provides no means for teaching of English.)

### Attendance at Foreign Schools

What is the attendance at the evening school or schools in your district? Enrolled membership at the beginning of the year? At the end of the year? Is a fee charged?

(Note: Attend the foreign schools in your district.)

### Adults Not Attending School

Where public school provides opportunity, how many foreign adults do not speak or write enough English to answer the requirements of the Naturalization Bureau? Note number of men and number of women separately.

When there are no school facilities, how many aliens approximately are there who would like to learn English?

In your district, are citizenship classes held giving the instruction necessary to naturalization?

### Employers of Foreign Labor

Does the public school in your district supply teachers to employers where twenty or more foreigners are working? Ascertain from school authorities if any employers in your district have made such an arrangement for employees. Where such classes are held, ascertain the particulars, whether held during working hours and on the working premises, and whether a fee is charged.

(Note: In most states, lists of industrial plants arranged according to localities may be obtained by application to the Secretary of State.)

### Digesting the Survey

After you have secured these statistics and this information study their significance in view of the following facts:

Virtually every immigrant landing upon these shores is a prospective candidate for American citizenship and may be so regarded.

And yet—

We have eight million aliens in the United States and at the last census in 1910 out of 5,942,000 foreign-born males, 3,221,000 were still aliens—Italians gave us, out of 586,000 aliens, only 126,000 citizens.

Our government desires aliens to become citizens. The law demands that every alien shall pass certain tests in speaking and writing English and in knowledge of our institutions. Yet thousands of foreign-born laborers are isolated in labor camps and elsewhere where opportu-

nity for acquiring the necessary education is limited if not lacking entirely.

Foreign immigrants want to learn English. Why? Aside from other considerations they can earn more money as soon as they can speak the language; money is what they chiefly want; yet in localities where evening schools are provided, a small percentage only attend evening school. In New York State, 362,025 cannot read or write. In New York City, there are over 245,000 illiterates.

### Unlocking the Americanization Machinery

The making of American citizens will begin when the government, school authorities and public-spirited citizens direct their attention to the following:

1. Standardization of the foreign schools. At present some are good and some are poor.
2. Standardization of methods of teaching English and citizenship. All teachers to be properly trained and to have special fitness for the work.

(Note: The alien immigrant usually takes his schooling in English and citizenship at the close of his day's work. Attractive surroundings and stimulating teachers are required.)

A short session in foreign schools is the rule. In some cities the term is only six or eight weeks. The average session for thirty-one towns and cities in New York State is only 60 nights a year. Not one of us could learn a foreign language in sixty nights of study after days of exhausting physical labor—yet this is expected of the aliens.

"Unfortunately," says the report of the Commissioner of Education of the United States, "evening classes for adult foreigners stop at about the time the period of greatest immigration sets in. The months of March, April and May are usually those in which the greatest number of foreigners come to our shores. This increased volume of immigration continues throughout the summer until as late as September. Evening schools are conducted through the period of greatest industrial activity, and, consequently, many pupils are unable to attend."

There are no summer sessions for foreign schools. Our big school houses are often the only cool places to be found in a tenement neighborhood. They are closed.

### How to Use Suffrage Organizations for Americanization Work

The Americanization Committee of the National American Woman Suffrage Association will work through the usual channels of the Association based on the political district system.

The Representative District or County of the state should be the unit for the work of each

local Americanization committee. Voting precincts will be working sub-units. Members of the Americanization Army of the National American Woman Suffrage Association need not necessarily reside in the district where they work, nor need they be suffragists. This is patriotic work for all women and each state should adopt the system best suited to its needs.

#### Duty of Central State Americanization Committee

1. Appoint district chairmen on Americanization for each District.
2. Keep on file government reports, Board of Education reports, etc.
3. Act as bureau of information for district chairmen.
4. Compile a bibliography and see that books and needed printed matter are in local libraries or available elsewhere.

#### Duty of District Americanization Committee

1. Recruit for the Americanization Army. Assign work to cover the interviewing of employers as to providing classes for foreign employees; assign work for visiting homes in foreign colonies in the interests of the evening schools.

2. Instruct Americanization workers that calls should be made upon foreign immigrants in their homes for the purpose of bringing up the attendance of the local evening schools—not for satisfying curiosity as to possible differences in the standards of living or in family customs. The visitor should be courteous, business-like and oblivious to personal matters.

As a preparation for Americanization utilize your suffrage meetings and your cultured suffrage speakers who have traveled in foreign lands to foreignize our Americans by educating them as to their debt to the European immigrant.

#### Duty of the Americanization Army of the National American Woman Suffrage Association

Americanization is patriotic service for all American women whether suffragists or not.

Join and let us make "one flag and one nation" a reality, instead of a sentiment existent only in Fourth of July and other patriotic celebrations.

The Americanization Committee of the National American Woman Suffrage Association suggests the following:

1. Each local committee should compile its own directory of all agencies which have to do with the immigrant and with Americanization, the name of the official or chairman to be addressed, and the telephone number. Also brief statement of the function of each, the list to include, for example—Naturalization Bureau, Evening School, Bureau of Statistics, Civic Organizations specializing on work for the immigrant, etc., or city Americanization Committee, if one exists.

2. Keep on file a list of speakers and others interested in the Americanization question such as Editors, Students and Experts in Research Work on Immigration.

3. Make a list of the foreign leaders in the foreign colony in which you expect to work, using your finest Americanization worker to win a favorable connection with the above, assigning the introductory approach to the member of the committee best adapted. The advice and co-operation of the important people in the foreign colonies are your most valuable assets.

4. A list of foreign newspapers should be on file and the co-operation of editors sought.

#### Americanization Badges

5. Enroll applicants for Americanization work and issue badges furnished by the Americanization Committee of the National American Woman Suffrage Association to be supplied through the state suffrage headquarters. The test for those to receive badges should include some one of the following qualifications:

- (a) Knowledge of conditions in the district.
- (b) Experience in the house-to-house canvass.
- (c) School teaching, or the possession of such other qualifications as the Committee may deem necessary.

### Twelve Books for Summer Reading

As a preparation for the Americanization campaign of the National American Woman Suffrage Association twelve books are recommended below. They are to be followed by two study outlines, one to be used by suffrage organizations and women's clubs; the other a practical working model for civic training for naturalization and American citizenship. The books are:

The Immigrant and the Community	Grace Abbott
Immigration .....	Henry Pratt Fairchild (McMillan)
Democracy and Social Ethics	} .Jane Addams
Twenty Years at Hull House	
The Promised Land.....	Mary Antin
The Making of an American.....	Jacob Riis
On the Trail of the Immigrant	} Edward A. Steiner
On the Immigrant Tide	
The Trade Union Woman.....	Alice Henry (Chapter on the Alien Woman)
The Immigrant Invasion..	Frank Julian Warne (Dodd, Mead & Co.)
The Social Center.....	Edward J. Ward
The Immigrant Problem.	} Jeremiah W. Jenks W. Jett Lauck

Read also current fiction, books of travel, and magazine articles showing the immigrant in his native setting.