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# Teaching America to Fight

## Gen. Johnson Declares National Army Is Agent of Peace

## Camps the Melting Pots Where Patriotism Is the Product

By BRIG.-GEN. EVAN M. JOHNSON.  
Commanding Metropolitan Division at  
Camp Upton.

ONE of the problems which have confronted this country is the amalgamation of the mass of foreigners who, from year to year, have come here as immigrants. The question has been discussed, written about, and attempts have been made to secure legislative action with the view to restriction. It has been a question as to how to Americanize, not only the mass of foreigners of different nationalities, but in many cases their sons brought up under an environment which is wholly foreign.

To those who witnessed the parade of the 308th Regiment of Infantry, National Army, in New York on Feb. 4 last there appeared a possible solution of the problem. As rank after rank of neat, clean, intelligent men of less than five and sometimes only two months service passed by, one thing must have impressed itself upon the minds of the observers: that was the absolute uniformity, not only of appearance but almost of expression.

### A Real Melting Pot.

There was a sameness in all faces—keen, steady, reserved—and a uniformity throughout. Only the close observer was able to detect that difference which indicated that in this regiment were to be found members of the approximately fifteen nationalities and fifty religious creeds which are at Camp Upton.

In other words, at last a melting pot has been discovered wherein can be fused the diverse elements which form our body politic, and from this fusion be evolved that unit which we call the American people.

What, then, are the methods by which this fusion can be accomplished?

These men of all races came to Camp Upton in obedience to law—in many cases aliens in thought, religion and custom—with an attitude antagonistic to our social and political customs. They obeyed the draft law, as they do many other laws, not willingly, but through fear of the result which disobedience brings. The unwillingness and resentment were not openly expressed, but latent.

The life, of course, was new; and often through actual knowledge, often through inherited instincts and tradition, the men were opposed to the military idea as exemplified in Continental Europe. This mental attitude and the racial antagonisms it was necessary to overcome before any harmonious and successful result could be obtained.

The instruments or teachers by means of which the fusion was to be brought about were, first, the officers, and, second, that body of men belonging to various civic associations who, generally, we may call social welfare workers.

In the army, as it is composed to-day, for the first time in the history of our country there has been a careful selection of the officer class. Popu-

larity and political pull have cut no figure whatever. The appointments have been made on merit from, first, the Regular Army, and, second, the graduates of the training camps after elimination of the unfit.

### Officers of Highest Quality.

The result has been the commissioning of the highest grade officer personnel that this country has ever seen; men who have received careful instruction in the basic principles of their profession, including not only drill, but discipline, administration and care of troops. It is this body of men that was charged primarily with the reception and instruction of the raw material as it was received at the several National Army encampments throughout the country.

These officers were guided by two considerations: one, the knowledge that their professional future and retention in service depended upon the success they made in training their organizations, and that the efficiency of this training would be in great measure the result of the attitude of the men toward

their officers, this attitude necessarily being dependent on the treatment they received; next, the knowledge which the educated officer has that there is a partnership in which both officers and men participate and that there must be mutual understanding and sympathy if there is to be success.

So much for the business end. The other is the provision for recreation, for the old saying that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" holds in the army, as in any other sphere. This recreation has been made possible by the activities of the social welfare workers, who have erected buildings as clubs and recreation rooms for the men, thus affording places to which they can resort in their spare hours instead of wandering afar to places of ill repute. This, it will be understood, resulted in contentment and morality.

These were the means for the working of the fusion.

### School of Americanism.

As thus conducted, the army becomes a school, an American school, the men realizing from the first they are serving a common country, which has for its symbol a common flag; thus patriotism is developed and they become Americans. This is the greatest gain, but there are others which are of utmost importance to the nation.

The higher the average of intelligence and education, the higher the plane of civilization, so any process which will develop a higher grade citizen means national progress. In many instances the men who join the colors come from the slums, are ignorant, unkempt, lawless and, one might almost say, unmoral. On joining their organizations they at once come under a paternal form of government; under officers whose success depends upon the ability they show in handling these organizations, and who are, therefore, interested in the mental, physical and moral development of their men.

They find associated with them in the ranks educated men, men who have been used to what are called the good things of life. Both classes are on a common level; it is a democracy in which each man stands solely on his own merits and whose success in the army will depend upon his own efforts and abilities.

Cleanliness and neatness are requirements which are insisted upon and enforced; so self-respect is inculcated. Obedience to authority is an essential and its violation meets swift and sure punishment; so respect for law becomes instinctive.

There is no discrimination on account of origin, for the company commander knows but little of the origin of his men and there is no favoritism; only merit is recognized, and a poor man with ability finds that he has the same opportunities for advancement as the rich man, and that it is ability and force of character only which win out; so

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General  
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of  
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