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Immigration Reform and Jane Addams - DBQ sample documents

Prompt:

How did Jane Addams respond to issues surrounding immigrants in the United States? Explain using specific examples from the following categories.

- Federal Legislation
- Social Reform/Social Services

Document 1

Source: Jane Addams, "Pen and Book as Tests of Character", Survey 29 (January 4, 1913): 419-20.

The House of Representatives by its recent affirmative vote upon the Burnett Bill reported from the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, registered itself in favor of the literacy test for immigrants arriving in the United States...literacy is neither a test of character nor of ability; it is merely an index of the educational system of the community in which a man has been reared. The literacy test will always work in favor of the man from the city and discriminate against the man from the country. On the face of it, it would seem safer to admit a sturdy peasant from the mountains of Calabria than a sophisticated Neapolitan, familiar with the refined methods of police graft which have made the Camorra famous. In addition to that, the peasant finds work waiting for him, the educated man "above manual labor" often has a pitiful struggle to keep himself from starvation. Our experience at Hull House is similar to that of the friends of the immigrants everywhere. We recall an Italian editor, a Greek professor, a Russian medical student, an Armenian Master of Arts, for whom it was impossible to obtain anything but manual work which they finally undertook in bitterness of spirit and with insufficiency of muscle. A settlement constantly sees the deterioration of highly educated foreigners under the strain of maladjustment, in marked contrast to the often rapid rise of the families of illiterate immigrants...Until industrial conditions in America are faced, the immigrant will continue to be blamed for conditions for which the community is responsible.

Document 2:

Source: Jane Addams Talks on Social Justice," The Inter Ocean (Chicago), Oct. 18, 1912, p. 4.

People like myself for many years have lived in quarters of the city greatly in need of changes. Around us we see men and women compelled to work long hours and many of them all night. We see immigrants out of work, in need, their families suffering.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACT.

Under conditions like these the government, we believe, has a right to step in, to interfere, to protect, to institute the minimum wage.

This idea has precedent in other forms of legislation. Right here in Chicago we have ordinances making requirements as to minimum air space for tenants, sanitary plumbing and so on. If wages are below the standard of sustenance, then life cannot be maintained. The modern day tendency is to conserve life and health.

Document 3:

Source: "Jane Addams on Social Science." Davenport Daily Times (Iowa), January 29, 1903. p. 10.

In a lecture delivered at Cedar Rapids this week Jane Addams of the Hull House in Chicago [...] told of the great good that had been done by the social settlements in London, Chicago and elsewhere.

[...]

In part she said:

[...]

“In the Italian district in Chicago our settlement has tried to do much to improve the condition of not only the individuals but of this whole class of interesting foreigners who come to our shores from sunny Italy. Of course, our first work is to get the children into the public schools and this of course is the most important step though we try to teach the children to unlearn some of the foolish notions they get by their veneration of American school education. While I believe that every foreigner who comes here ought to learn the English language we do not believe in training children to become ashamed, as a great many of these Italian children do, of the language which their parents speak, and to apologize for the manner of dress to which their parents are accustomed. I have seen Italian children brought up in the public schools look with shame on the handsomely embroidered shawl which their mothers wore becomingly and to think it the ideal of fashion to place on the mother's head a cheap department store creation.”

Document 4:

Source: From an Address by Jane Addams, of Hull House. Addams, Jane. "Value of the Immigrant." Washington Herald, Washington, DC. April 5, 1908. p. 7.

A better understanding of the immigrant will be not only a material and artistic and spiritual benefit, but an example in some ways as well. These people whom you regard vaguely as unclean, unlettered, and unworthy of consideration are almost without exception intelligently patriotic, with a pride in their own lands and their own heroes which is only gained after years of study in their countries' histories.

They are, in their completeness, as worthy of consideration as if they were colonized in their own countries, to which hosts of persons go each year for interest or information. But their spiritual value, their picturesqueness, their social value, their industrial significance, are dependent upon their cohesiveness, their exclusion of the superficial influences of the new country which robs them of the best of their inheritance and gives them the worst of their acquisition, and their recognition of their own nepotism as their strongest card in establishing the positions they have come to seek.

Document 5:

Source: Jane Addams writes on the assimilation of immigrants and discusses Hull House. Addams, Jane, "Social Attitudes and Character, February 1928."

I have seen a great deal of children and young people who were the children of immigrants and who had great difficulty with the social attitude which the people about them [...] took toward the immigrants in general. [...] I could illustrate with those who have fallen down, and whose characters have deteriorated under the strain.

[...]

We started several years ago at Hull House, what we called a Labor Museum. We put into historic order methods of spinning and weaving and other activities connected with textiles, partly in order to show the young people that their mothers, who could not do the things that American women could do, nevertheless possessed an old honorable craft, and that this craft had a historic place in the development of the American clothing which many of them so much admired.

[...]

I believe it has worked very wonderful things in the lives of many children and young people which I might give you in detail if you challenged me.

Answering the Question

Prompt:

How did Jane Addams respond to the issues surrounding immigrants in the United States? Explain using specific examples from the following categories.

- **Federal Legislation**
- **Social Reform/Social Services**

What federal legislation did Addams advocate for or oppose that affected immigration?

What social reforms did Addams call for?

What social services did Addams found and/or advocate for?

What was Addams' general view on immigrants and the immigrant condition to the United States? Answer the question using evidence from the previous questions.