Women's America

Refocusing the Past

NINTH EDITION

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Gender and the Jim Crow South

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Forging Interracial Links in the Jim Crow South

In 1892, Anna Julia Cooper—an extraordinary woman in her own right—wrote, "the colored woman of today . . . is confronted by a woman question and a race problem."* Equality between the sexes, she insisted, required the support of both black women and black men. Cooper also insisted that the leadership burdens in the struggle against racism should be shared by men and women. A remarkable group of African American women did just that.

As part of a small but growing black middle class in the South, these leaders were prepared by education, professional training, and voluntary work to perform this work. After the disfranchisement of black men in the 1890s, they emerged not only as community activists but also as ambassadors to the white community and as astute political strategists. Their political skills were put to the test when, during an intensely racist, violent period, these black women worked to forge links with elite white women in an interracial movement. At the forefront of the effort was a remarkable North Carolinian, Charlotte Hawkins Brown.

With sensitivity and insight, Glenda Gilmore illuminates Brown's search for fault lines in the system of white supremacy. She also demonstrates just how Brown navigated the politics of class, gender, and even her own identity in the interests of racial justice. In the end, Brown's generation fell short of their goal of racial and sexual equality. The odds against them were overwhelming. In the process, however, they created and nourished a tradition of activism that would emerge with new force and greater success in the 1960s.

Consider Brown's strategy. What were her options? What were the personal costs? Do you agree with Gilmore's characterization of her as a "political genius"?

In the segregated world of the Jim Crow South, laws told black and white people where to eat and where to sit. Undergirding those laws lay a complex web of custom. Its strands separated the races in places beyond the reach of legislation. Custom dictated, for example, which part of the sidewalk belonged to whites and which to blacks. When whites and blacks sometimes occupied the same space, custom demanded that African Americans behave in a subservient manner. Any breach of these codes by a black person could bring an instant response from a white person: a reprimand, a beating, a jail sentence, or even death at the end of a lyncher's rope.

Whites held two unshakable beliefs that gave them the courage and energy to structure such a complicated society, making good on its rules with violence and even murder. First, whites thought that they acted to protect

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white women from black men's sexual desires. Second, they firmly believed that African Americans should be excluded from the American democratic system. They spoke freely and acted openly against any extension of political rights to blacks. After the turn of the century, restrictive legislation prevented most southern black men from voting and segregation laws crowded the books. White men considered their work done. Henceforth, they thought, African Americans would be a permanent lower caste in southern society: physically separated and politically powerless.

But the white supremacists did not reckon with black women. From behind the borders of segregation and disfranchisement, African American women became diplomats to the white community. They built social service and civic structures that wrested some recognition and meager services from the expanding welfare state. Ironically, as black men were forced from the political sphere, the functions of government expanded, opening a new space for black women to approach officials as good citizens intent on civic betterment.

One of their political strategies was to build contacts with white women. Meager and unequal as they were, these interracial connections often provided black women access to resources for their families, students, and neighbors. Charlotte Hawkins Brown personified such black women across the South who forged invisible careers in interracial politics.

As president of the North Carolina Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Charlotte Hawkins Brown began to direct African American women's formal civic experiences in the state in 1912 and continued to do so for twenty-five years. . . . No black man could claim prominence to equal hers in . . . the state during the period. Brown's work and racialist ideologies illustrate that the decade before woman suffrage constituted a critical period in defining the boundaries of race relations that would remain in place until the post–World War II era.

Charlotte Hawkins Brown's life also provides a parable of the possibilities and the personal costs of interracial cooperation. Her story is so interwoven with myth—fiction that she fashioned to outmaneuver racism—that it is difficult to separate the reality of her experience from the result of her self-creation. The difference between her lived life and her public persona reveals a great deal about her perception of southern whites' racial ideologies and the points at which she saw possibility. Charlotte Hawkins Brown invented herself, repeatedly and with brilliance, but at great personal cost.[1]

According to her account, she was born in Henderson, North Carolina, in 1883 to Caroline Frances Hawkins, the daughter of Rebecca and Mingo Hawkins. Her father was Edmund H. Hight, from "whom fate separated me at birth" and who "belonged to a family that had grown up on the adjoining plantation."[2] Brown characterized her grandmother, Rebecca Hawkins, as a "fair" woman "with blue eyes," the African American sister of her white master, "a great railroad captain whose vision and foresight built up the great Southern Railroad." Brown cast the white master as the Hawkins family's "protector."[3] About the time of my birth, colored people in large numbers were leaving for parts north," she remembered. Charlotte moved with her mother and brother to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where her mother married and the family lived in a large, handsome house near Harvard University.[4] Caroline Hawkins managed a hand laundry in the basement, and Charlotte attended the public schools of Cambridge. Whisked away from the South at an early age, Charlotte was "not conscious of the difference in color and took part in all the activities of my class."[5] She acquired a New England accent, which she kept all of her life.

Charlotte Hawkins's family insisted that she get a practical education and sent her to Massachusetts State Normal School in Salem. Alice Freeman Palmer, the wife of a Harvard professor and the first female president of Wellesley College, was a member of the state board of education that oversaw the school. One day a few months before she entered the normal school, as Charlotte Hawkins was pushing a baby carriage while reading a high school Latin textbook, she chanced to meet Palmer on the street. Hawkins was babysitting to raise money for a silk slip to wear under her new organdy graduation dress, but Palmer assumed that she was an impoverished student, overcoming all odds to get an education. Palmer mentioned Hawkins favorably to the principal of her high school when they next met, and the incident ended. Now, when Hawkins realized that Palmer was an overseer of her normal school, she wrote to her and reminded her of their chance meeting. Palmer responded by paying Hawkins's tuition.[6]

Several months before graduation, Charlotte Hawkins met a supervisor from the American Missionary Association (AMA) on a train. The AMA representative impressed upon Hawkins the needs of the South, and Hawkins left school to accept a position at a one-teacher school in Sedalia, North Carolina, near Greensboro in 1901.[7] The AMA funded the school for two years, then withdrew support. For a year, Hawkins drew no salary, and she and the students survived on what they grew, the produce their parents donated, and a $100 county appropriation. Charlotte Hawkins returned to Cambridge and approached Alice Freeman Palmer for financial help, which Palmer promised to consider when she returned from Europe some months later. Palmer died in Europe, however, and Hawkins decided to name the school in her memory. With continuing county support and private contributions, Palmer Memorial Institute taught practical vocational skills to its students, and Hawkins became active in the North Carolina Teachers Association and in women's club work. In 1911, Hawkins married Edward S. Brown. But the marriage lasted only a few months since Edward said he could not remain in Sedalia and be "Miss Hawkins's husband."[8]

In the South, Brown tells us, she demanded the respect of whites and received it from the "quality people." She insisted upon being addressed as "Miss," "Mrs.," or, after she gained honorary degrees, "Doctor."[9] She refused to be Jim Crowed and reported that several times she was "put out of Pullman berths and seats during all hours of the night." . . . By 1920, with the support of prominent Greensboro whites, Brown built Palmer Memorial Institute into a sprawling complex. She was proud that the most powerful whites in Greensboro served on the Palmer board, including Lula McIver and Julius Cone, head of the huge Cone Mills.[10]

As Brown rendered it, the theme of her life story is challenge met through interracial cooperation. Brown shaped the narrative in two critical ways: she minimized the restrictions of race in her daily life and exaggerated whites' helpfulness at every critical juncture. She obscured the fact that she was illegitimate by making it seem as if her father, Edmund Hight, was separated from the family by slavery. Brown was born in 1883 and had an older brother, demonstrating that her mother had a long-term relationship with Hight. The Hight family continued to live near Henderson throughout the twentieth century. Brown's grandmother, Rebecca Hawkins, may have been the sister of railroad magnate Captain John Hawkins, Jr., but, far from acting as the family's protector, he retained no contact with his black relatives and was a Democrat of the white supremacist persuasion.[11]

Brown mythologized her birth to remind southern whites of slavery's legacy: their shared kinship with African Americans. At the same time, she drew whites as sympathetic figures, the "protectors" of their African American relatives. Such circumstances did exist in the South; they just did not happen to exist within Charlotte's immediate family. As whites created the fictional "good darky" who treasured the interpersonal relationships that sprang from the close association of whites and blacks during slavery, Brown created a fictional "good master" who realized the responsibilities of miscegenation and loved his family, white and black. She used this good master to assuage whites' guilt about slavery and to argue that even slaves and masters achieved interracial understanding. She did not have to fight whites who melded ancestral ties to romantic class mythologies; she could simply join them. She shared their aristocratic roots.

Brown had moved to Cambridge not "about the time of my birth" but at the age of six. Yet she claimed to have no memory of her early life in North Carolina, no first-hand recollection of discrimination against blacks in the South, indeed no racial consciousness while growing up, even though she spent a great deal of time in the South during her childhood, even entire summers. Brown remade herself as a New Englander. When asked how her name should appear on her high school diploma, she instantly dropped her North Carolina name—Lottie Hawkins—for the more genteel sounding "Charlotte Eugenia Hawkins," which she made up on the spot. She spoke in a manner that "combine[d] the mellow tones of the southern Negro and the quick clipped qualities of New England—people turn[ed] around to see who [was] speaking."[12]

By casting herself as a New Englander, Brown attempted to remain above the southern racial structure. In Greensboro, she occupied a place much like that of African diplomats to the United States—she was an exotic but North Carolina's own exotic. If whites accused her of being an outside agitator, Brown could fall back on her North Carolina roots.

Then she presented herself as native stock, a female, black Ulysses who fought her way back to the South and to her own people, where she belonged.

The story of the AMA's dispatch of Charlotte Hawkins to the South to save her people competes with another, more complicated parable that Brown merely hinted at and may have consciously avoided dwelling upon. Rather than seeing herself as a New England missionary to a foreign place, Brown may have construed her return to North Carolina as coming to terms with the realities of race in her own life. One night at a Cambridge meeting, she watched magic lantern slides of the race work being done by African Americans in the South. She was particularly struck by two educators, Joseph Price, the founder of Livingstone College, and Lucy Laney, the founder of Haines Institute in Augusta, Georgia. She noted that both Price and Laney were, like herself, very dark skinned. Price and Laney were also brilliant, and their faces on the screen moved Brown to feel that there was a place where she might belong: the South.[13] Brown never acknowledged publicly that she had any personal reason for wanting to leave New England, choosing rather to emphasize the missionary aspect of her return.

As the years passed, accounts of the relationship between Alice Freeman Palmer and Brown made it seem as if Palmer had sent Brown to the South to found the school and that they had enjoyed a close friendship. . . . Contemporary newspaper accounts, which relied on Brown's own promotional material, reported that Palmer's "efforts" had made the school possible and "until her death she was an ardent supporter of her namesake."[14]

Although Brown did not actually lie about Palmer's interest in her and the school, she embroidered the truth. Brown and Palmer spent less than fifteen minutes together in their lifetimes, and Palmer never promised that she would personally contribute to the school. Instead, Palmer had told Brown upon their second meeting that she was too busy at the moment but that after her return from Europe she would contact friends in Boston to encourage them to support the school. Why, then, when Palmer never returned, did Brown name the school Palmer Memorial Institute? Actually, Brown originally named the school Alice Freeman Palmer Settlement in order to gain support from Palmer's friends in Boston.[15] Palmer, after a brilliant career, had died at a young age and was mourned by her friends, and a memorial to her could prompt contributions. . . .

Around 1910, Brown cannily began to play southern pride against northern dollars when she inspired white leaders in Greensboro to challenge their community to take over the financial support of Palmer.[16] In soliciting southern white support, Brown . . . most often called the school Sedalia rather than Palmer. For example, Brown named the group of students who sang African American spirituals the Sedalia Singers.[17] She understood the white southerners' sense of place, and since her school was the only thing in the crossroads of Sedalia, she did not encroach upon white territory in appropriating the name. The location of Palmer at Sedalia facilitated support from Greensboro whites. It was ten miles outside of the city, surrounded by sparsely populated farmland. Brown never permitted Palmer students to travel alone to Greensboro but instead brought them as a group, with the boys clad in coats and ties and the girls wearing hats and white gloves. Once in the city, they did not mingle with Greensboro's African Americans; rather, Brown negotiated special seating sections for her students at public events.[18]

Although Brown cloaked the curriculum at Palmer in vocational disguises and portrayed it to the press as an industrial school until the late 1930s, the institute offered mostly academic courses from its inception.[19] Booker T. Washington met Brown on a trip to Boston while she was still a student there and pronounced her "the only convert that he made in New England." If he believed her to be a convert, she outfoxed the Wizard himself.[20] . . . Brown never embraced Washington's vocational philosophy past the point of providing for the school's basic needs, but she portrayed the school as industrial, detailing "farm yields" in fund-raising letters.[21] An unidentified Palmer teacher explained the ruse this way: "[Brown] always had a college preparatory class . . . a cultural academic school. All the Negroes had to have that in order to get along in the South." Even though this teacher believed, along with Brown, that African Americans profited most from classical knowledge coupled with reinforcement of middle-class values, support for that sort of training did not exist. So Brown and her teachers positioned Palmer as a "vocational" school.

Funding for industrial education "could always get through," the teacher recalled. Despite the vocational exterior, she continued, "you could teach anything you wanted when you got in your school. You came inside your class room and you taught them Latin and French and all the things you knew."[22] Although initially Brown's students were the poor children of the neighborhood, by 1920, Palmer functioned as an academic boarding school that drew students from counties across the state and included secondary grades.[23]

Notwithstanding her vocal cover, at times Brown argued that her approach to "cultural" instruction benefited whites as well as African Americans. She explained, "Recognizing the need of a cultural approach to life, believing absolutely in education through racial contacts, I have devoted my whole life to establish for Negro youth something superior to Jim Crowism." She tried to accomplish this "by bringing the two races together under the highest cultural environment that will increase race pride, mutual respect, confidence, sympathetic understanding, and interracial goodwill."[24]

Why did Brown repeatedly overdraw white understanding and support and minimize the restrictions that her color placed on her? Throughout her life, she operated by a simple rule: it is better to overestimate possibility than to underestimate it. Charlotte Hawkins Brown created a fictional mirror of civility in race relations and held it up to whites as a reflection of their better selves. From slavery, she drew compassion; from the loneliness of Cambridge, racial liberality among her schoolmates; from Alice Freeman Palmer's deferral, a legacy; and from frightened, pinched southern whites, chivalry of a sort. Brown was a political genius, especially suited for interracial work. Her renderings served her own purposes, but she did not . . . delude herself into thinking that they were true. Immune to her own romantic stories, Brown was the consummate pragmatist. So convinced was she of her mission and of her opponent's rigid character, that she could risk the heartbreak of gilding the lily. She expected nothing, received little, and turned that pittance into bounty.

But Charlotte Hawkins Brown was a double agent. When she refused to turn her head toward the "colored" waiting room, she must have felt the stares of its patrons burn into her consciousness. In the decade preceding 1920, Brown immersed herself in social welfare projects and political activity that she kept hidden from whites. After 1920, Brown acquired a national reputation for her interracial work and landed official positions in interracial organizations, success that brought her activities under public scrutiny. Until then, and thereafter when she could, Brown generally said one thing to whites and then did another if it suited her purposes.

Brown's double life left its mark on her. . . . Living her life as a diplomat to the white community, Brown could never be just Lottie Hawkins. African American women who chose to take up interracial work walked a tightrope that required them to be forever careful, tense, and calculating. One slip would end their careers; they worked without nets.

In Lula Martin McIver, Brown found an exception to her belief that the southern white woman stood at the center of the race "problem." Their first meeting represents a classic case of the Brown treatment. Constantly seeking funds for Palmer Memorial Institute, Brown decided in the spring of 1905 that she must approach prominent white men in Greensboro for support. In Greensboro, Brown had no magic key such as Alice Freeman Palmer's name. Sedalia was a crossroads, Palmer Institute tiny, and Brown unknown. She had no historic connections to white North Carolinians there, no reputation in the black community, no denominational bridge since she had converted to Congregationalism, a faith rare in the South among either African Americans or whites. She had only herself—the New England persona she so carefully cultivated—and courage.

In 1904, she had written a poignant letter to Charles McIver, president of the white women's normal college in Greensboro. It began, "This letter may come to you from a strange source, but it comes from one whose heart is in the educational and moral uplift of our people." It concluded by begging McIver to come to Palmer for a visit. A year later, Brown was still imploring him to the same end, touting the ease of the train ride and signing herself "Very Anxiously Yours."[25] Still McIver did not come. One morning Brown dressed carefully in her customary ankle-length dress, hat, and white gloves and set out to call on him in Greensboro. She had no appointment. Most often Brown did not write or telephone ahead and risk refusal from those she wished to meet but simply appeared on their doorstep. That morning she knocked on

the front door of the president's residence and found that he was away. His wife, Lula Martin McIver, invited Brown in, an unusual act in itself. Lula McIver was stunned by Brown's appearance at the door. "Her daring, her enthusiasm, her faith intrigued me," McIver recalled. The two women talked for over an hour and warmed toward each other. Soon, McIver was advising Brown on "the best way to win friends" and on how to raise money among the Greensboro elite for the school.[26]

When Lula McIver opened the door, Brown chanced upon a valuable connection that would prove enduring. Brown sat in the parlor of the state's foremost white female educational advocate. Graduated from the Moravian academy in Salem, Lula Martin had longed to become a doctor like her father. After she learned that the profession was virtually closed to women, she became an outspoken feminist. As an adolescent, she abandoned the Moravians for the Methodists upon reading that the early Moravian settlers chose wives by lottery. In 1885, strong-willed Lula Martin met Charles Duncan McIver, a dedicated young teacher, who supported her feminist ideas and called her a "most sensible" woman. They married in a ceremony that omitted the word "obey," and Lula refused a wedding ring, which she regarded as a "badge of slavery."[27]

The McIvers worked to build North Carolina's white public educational system one school at a time. While Charles traveled throughout the state promoting grade school education, Lula served as his advance team, preceding him to scrub courthouse venues speckled with tobacco juice, to set up chairs, to post flyers, and to raise a crowd. She was delighted when Charles became first president of the state-supported normal school for white women since both felt that educating women would be the key to building an effective public school system. She helped to found the Woman's Association for the Betterment of Public School Houses, and after Charles's death, she accepted a paying position as its field secretary.[28]

The subtleties of Lula McIver's racial ideology are elusive, but at the center of her thinking about race lay the strongly held belief that African Americans deserved a good education. For nearly a half century after they met, McIver continually raised money for Palmer Memorial Institute. Lula McIver attended meetings of black women's clubs in Greensboro. After the early death of Charles McIver in 1909, and to the eternal perplexity of Greensboro whites, each semester Lula McIver invited a male African American student from nearby North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College to board in the president's residence where she lived until her death. There, surrounded by young white women students, Lula McIver offered an object lesson in race relations.[29]

Both Brown and McIver realized the restrictions on their relationship in the Jim Crow South. For starters, McIver was a woman and thus not powerful in her own right. Moreover, as the normal school's maternal figurehead, she had to act circumspectly since all of her actions reflected upon the school, which was still in the minds of some a dangerous experiment that wasted state money to educate women. Given these restrictions, McIver could do three concrete things for Brown: influence prominent white Greensboro men to support her, introduce leading club women to Palmer's mission, and raise money. She did another intangible and invaluable thing for Brown: Lula McIver publicly referred to Charlotte Hawkins Brown as her friend.[30]

It appears that Lula McIver realized that her husband's influence would be more valuable than her own, and she urged Charles to write an "open letter of endorsement" for Palmer Memorial Institute shortly after she met Brown. Since Charles McIver served on the Southern Education Board, his vote of confidence carried weight in the North as well as the South. The letter went out in June 1905, but Charles McIver admitted in it that he had never been to Palmer.[31] He died four years later. Long after that, Brown named Charles D. McIver as her "first friend" in North Carolina.[32] There is no record that McIver ever made the trip to Sedalia or that Brown ever met him. With Lula McIver's help, Brown appropriated the memory of Charles McIver as she had that of Alice Freeman Palmer.

Local support of Palmer flowered around 1914 when Lula McIver brought a delegation of white women from across the state to visit the school. A member of the delegation wrote an account of the visit that appeared in the *Greensboro Daily Record* and encouraged white women to take an interest in Brown's work. Brown struck just the right note in her solicitation letter: Palmer, she said, "has conducted its work for the past 13 years without seeking very much help from our southern friends."

She claimed friendship and a debt come due in the same breath.[33] The 1914 campaign was the beginning of a steady stream of white visitors to the school and financial support from white North Carolinians.[34] In 1917, Lula McIver conducted some of Greensboro's leading white businessmen on a tour of the school. Many of the men who had ignored Brown's previous appeals converted after that visit. E. P. Wharton recalled that Charlotte Brown had called on him around 1903 to obtain support for Palmer and that he was "ashamed of [him]self for losing sight" of Brown's work. He subsequently served for decades as a Palmer trustee. By 1920, the board of Palmer Memorial Institute included a Greensboro attorney, a banker, and an industrial magnate.[35] McIver sought no publicity for a trip she made to Boston with Charlotte Hawkins Brown two years later. There McIver called upon prominent white women, vouched for Brown's success, and asked for contributions to Palmer. When northern white women visited Palmer, they would not spend the night at the black school but stayed instead with Lula McIver.[36]

In 1919, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, with the endorsement of Lula McIver, published a remarkable novel, *Mammy*. On its face, the appearance of *Mammy* places Brown squarely in the accommodationist camp of African Americans, currying favor from whites by invoking the ties of slavery. The story tells of a loving black woman who nurses a white family and raises its children. Then, when the woman becomes old and ill, the family provides no help beyond an occasional visit to her drafty log cabin. Ultimately, they stand by as Mammy goes to the county home. Brown dedicated the book to "my good friend, Mrs. Charles Duncan McIver." She continued, "It is with gratitude I acknowledge her personal interest in the colored members of her household."[37]

What could Brown have hoped to accomplish by the publication of *Mammy*? At the time, she served as president of the statewide Association of Colored Women's Clubs, refused Jim Crow seating, and was secretly organizing a campaign to interest the state's black women in woman suffrage. She had spent almost twenty years building her dignity in North Carolina. It was amazing that she would play the *Mammy* card now. A close reading of Brown's introduction and McIver's response to the dedication indicates that both saw *Mammy* as a tool to promote their agenda: interracial cooperation among women. Mammies represented the one point of contact between southern black and white women, and white women continually bragged about their love for their Mammies. But Brown's *Mammy* is not a tale of love rewarded; it is an indictment of white neglect of African Americans. Brown calls upon white women to remember their duty to black women and redefines that duty in new ways. It is no longer enough to be fond of ol' Mammy; white women must act on that affection.

McIver framed her endorsement of *Mammy* carefully. She said that today's white woman was not the person her mother was, for in her mother's day, there was "understanding and sympathy" between the races. The problem was the separation of the races since there could be no racial harmony without "knowledge of each other's problems and an active interest in solving them." McIver endorsed the concept of "racial integrity" but reminded white southerners that their "task [was the] training of the uncivilized African." Brown must have winced at that remark, but it preceded McIver's most important statement: "I verily believe that to the most intelligent southern white women we must look for leadership in keeping our 'ship of state' off the rocks of racial antagonism." She signed the piece, "Your friend, Lula Martin McIver."[38]

Interracial cooperation, association among black and white women to solve mutual problems, was the solution that *Mammy* endorsed. McIver did not propose that white women individually care for their mammies but that they enter the public sphere and provide leadership. Male sailors had steered the ship of state onto rocky racial shores. It was time for women to man the lifeboats and rescue government from the oppressive racial politics of the white supremacists. In the same month that *Mammy* appeared, the state's white and black women began to do just that by traveling to Memphis, Tennessee, for a formal interracial summit. The state associations of women's clubs and the YWCAs sent forth those first intrepid female navigators.

Most of the black women who traveled to the Memphis interracial summit learned leadership skills in the National Association of Colored Women, but their experience in working with white women had come from two other sources as well: heretofore racially segregated groups that came together on the homefront in World War I and the interracial work

of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). During World War I organizational lines between women's groups of both races blurred when the Council of National Defense chose white women from each southern state to head committees to coordinate work on the homefront. In North Carolina, white women set up integrated county councils that included African American and white women, carefully chosen to represent clubs, YWCAs, and denominational social service programs.[39]

The work of the black YWCA centered on another upheaval of the time: African American migration from farm to town. Southern black women believed strongly in the YWCA's ability to reach poor young women who had moved to the city to find work. The national YWCA board determined that any southern African American branch must be supervised by an existing "central" YWCA. "Central" meant white. Once founded, the black YWCA must be overseen by a management committee of three white women and two black women. The rules mandated interracial "cooperation" of a sort. Despite these humiliating restrictions, two southern black women, Mary McCrorey of Charlotte, North Carolina, and Lugenia Burns Hope of Atlanta, founded Ys in their cities.[40]

On the train to Memphis, a group of white men pulled Brown out of the Pullman car and marched her past "southern white women passing for Christians" who were on their way to the Memphis meeting. The white women sat silent as the men forced Brown to the Jim Crow car.[41] Brown probably recognized among the fellow Memphis delegates North Carolina white women whom she had come to know over the past decade. Among them was the wife of the governor, Fanny Bickett. . . .

When Brown rose to address the white women, the frustration of a decade of interracial work erupted, and she shared the humiliation of being ousted from the Pullman car two nights before. She exhorted white women to fight lynching, to recognize the dignity of the African American woman, and to help black women. Brown ended on an ominous note: "You are going to reach out for the same hand that I am reaching out for but I know that the dear Lord will not receive it if you are crushing me beneath your feet."[42] Most of the white women were profoundly moved.

As it happened, the women's Memphis interracial meeting foundered on the spot that Lula McIver had warned of in *Mammy*: the shoal of politics. Two months before the meeting, a federal amendment had mandated woman suffrage and a month after the meeting women would vote for the first time. Just before Brown left for Tennessee, she had been secretly organizing black women in North Carolina to register to vote. One faction of black women would not budge on the issue of suffrage at the Memphis meeting. A full year later, the white and black women still had not agreed on a statement of goals for an interracial movement. Brown, McCrorey, and Hope favored a version that included the controversial demand for protection of African American voting rights. Their language was blunt: "We believe that the ballot is the safe-guard of the Nation and that every citizen in the Nation should have the right to use it. We believe that if there is ever to be any justice before the law, the Negro must have the right to exercise the vote."[43] But the white women balked at the suffrage statement and the condemnation of lynching, both points "which the Negro women dared not leave out."[44] Whites suggested the wording, "We believe that the ballot is the safe-guard of the Nation, and that every *qualified* citizen in the Nation should have the right to use it."[45]

Interracial cooperation led straight into politics. As black and white women inched toward cooperation on a grass roots level, they came face-to-face with larger political forces. With a decade of women's interracial experience behind them, many African American women believed that the time had come to take a firm stand on suffrage. Black women looked to their white allies to support their right to vote, a gesture that underscores the success of interracial cooperation. Yet white women's confusion over black women's suffrage reveals the limits of voluntary interracial work. Upon the passage of woman suffrage, white women involved with interracial social service projects had to chose between gender and race. They could support black women's right to vote as women, or oppose their right to vote as *black* women. Charlotte Hawkins Brown called the question when she used the NACW to organize black women's voter registration drives in urban areas in the fall of 1920. Across the South, other black women did the same thing, reporting back to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

In Mobile, Alabama, registrars told black women that they must own property to vote,

and when the black juvenile court officer challenged them, court officials fired her.[46] From Birmingham came the news that when a black teacher attempted to register, the registrar "called her an ugly name and ordered her out." Another teacher "answered every question asked her—ex post facto law, habeas corpus proceedings, etc." The frustrated registrar still would not yield and "tore up her card and threw it in her face."[47] Ultimately, in Birmingham, 225 black women succeeded in registering, although 4,500 made the attempt.[48]

It is impossible to judge Charlotte Hawkins Brown's success in the North Carolina registration campaign. Most registration books failed to survive, but those that exist show not only that black women succeeded in urban areas, but that voter registration increased for black men as well. Probably less than 1,000 black women registered in North Carolina that fall.[49] To judge the results of black women's drive for suffrage, however, one must look not just at the few thousand who managed to register in 1920, but at the heritage of interracial work upon which they built and at the example they set for those who followed. The number of black women who voted in 1920 may have been small, but their significance in the South's racial politics was large. For the first time since the nineteenth century in the South, black voters approached the registrars en masse. They assembled as the result of a coordinated, subversive campaign that crossed over the boundaries of voluntary interracial work to reintroduce black civil rights in electoral politics. By their presence at the polls, black women dared whites to use violence and won the dare. In 1921, white supremacy still stood, but black women had found faultlines in its foundations.

NOTES

1. Ceci Jenkins, incomplete notes for "The Twig Bender of Sedalia" (1946), unpublished biography of Charlotte Hawkins Brown, reel 1, #12, Brown Collection, Manuscript Collection, Schlesinger Library (SL). See also Stephen Birmingham, *Certain People: America's Black Elite* (Boston, 1977).

2. "A Biography," reel 1, and "Some Incidents in the Life and Career of Charlotte Hawkins Brown Growing out of Racial Situations, at the Request of Dr. Ralph Bunche," reel 1, #2, both in Brown Collection, SL.

3. "Some Incidents," 1–2, reel 1, #2, ibid.

4. "A Biography," reel 1, ibid. The language of "A Biography" is closely echoed in Sadie L. Daniel, *Women Builders* (Washington, D.C., 1970), 133–63.

5. "A Biography," 13, reel 1, Brown Collection, SL.

6. On Palmer, see Ruth B. Bordin, *Alice Freeman Palmer: The Evolution of a New Woman* (Ann Arbor, 1993). On the Brown/Palmer relationship, see "A Biography," 16–18, reel 1, and Jenkins, "Twig Bender of Sedalia," reel 1, #7, both in Brown Collection, SL.

7. Daniel, *Women Builders*, 139; "A Biography," 19, reel 1, Brown Collection, SL.

8. Charlotte E. Hawkins to Dr. Buttrick, 31 Aug. 1904, folder 1005, box 111, series 1, subseries 1, General Education Board Collection, RAC. Mary Grinnell to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 4 Oct. 1910, 8 Feb. 1911; H. F. Kimball to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 12 June 1911; and J. G. Bright to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 1 Aug. 1911, all on reel 2, #33; Mary T. Grinnell to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 6 Aug. 1912, 17 Feb. 1913, reel 2, #34; and Charlotte Hawkins Brown Ebony Questionnaire, 16, reel 1, #11, all in Brown Collection, SL.

9. Brown wrote that it was a "big surprise" that the white people in the South refused to "use the term 'Miss'" when they addressed black women. She continued, "Naturally I was constantly being insulting and insulted which merited for me the name 'Yankee Huzzy.'" See "Some Incidents," 5, reel 1, #2, Brown Collection, SL. Leading whites in Greensboro referred to her as "Dr. Brown" after she received honorary degrees from Wilberforce, Lincoln, and Howard universities. See Junius Scales to Glenda Gilmore, 4 Jan. 1990, in author's possession.

10. Letterhead, Palmer Memorial Institute, C. Hawkins Brown to W. E. B. Dubois [*sic*], to June 1930, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, reel 33, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

11. Ruth Anita Hawkins Hughes, *Contributions of Vance County People of Color* (Raleigh: Sparks Press, 1988).

12. Jenkins, "Twig Bender of Sedalia," 1, reel 1, #7, Brown Collection, SL.

13. Ibid., insert B; "Some Incidents," 9, reel 1, #2, Brown Collection, SL.

14. Eva M. Young, "Palmer Memorial Institute Unique," *Charlotte Observer*, 10 Mar. 1940, folder 51, box 94–3, ibid.

15. Jenkins, "Twig Bender of Sedalia," E.F. 16, reel 1, #7, Brown Collection, SL.

16. Ibid., E.F. 16, E.F. 17; "Some Incidents," reel 1, #2, Brown Collection, SL.

17. For an example of the conflation of Sedalia and Palmer Institute, see *Palmer Memorial Institute: The Mission and the Legacy* (Greensboro: Women of Greensboro, 1981).

18. The description here is from interviews and conversations with Dawn Gilmore, Brooks Gilmore, and Lois MacKenzie, the author's aunt, uncle, and mother, respectively. The author's grandfather, Clyde Manly Gilmore, was Brown's physician, and the author's mother, MacKenzie, was her attorney's secretary in the 1950s.

19. Brown transformed the institute in the late 1930s into a preparatory school for upper-class African Americans. By 1940, the school letterhead read: "The Charm School Idea of the Palmer Memorial Institute, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, President and Promoter." See C. Hawkins Brown to My Dear Friend, 20 Mar. 1940, folder 124, box 112–4, Washington Conservatory of Music Records,

Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University (MRSC).

20. Jenkins, "Twig Bender of Sedalia," insert G, reel 1, #7, Brown Collection, SL.

21. Charlotte Hawkins Brown to Wallace Buttrick, 19 Dec. 1912, folder 1005, box 111, series 1, subseries 1, General Education Board Collection, Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC).

22. "Charlotte Hawkins Brown," Dannett Collection, uncataloged, LC. See also Sylvia G. L. Dannett, *Profiles of Negro Womanhood* (New York: 1964–66), 59–63. The notes for Dannett's biographical sketches often do not identify the interviewee and are fragmentary.

23. Map, "Palmer Memorial Institute—Sedalia—Enrol[l]ment—1920–1921," folder 1006, box 111, series 1, subseries 1, General Education Board Collection, RAC.

24. "Some Incidents," reel 1, #2, Brown Collection, SL.

25. Board, 1904, Correspondence G-M, box 14, and C. E. Hawkins to Dr. McIver, 13 Apr. 1905, file Southern Education Board, 1905, Correspondence, E-L, box 15, both in Charles D. McIver Collection, University Archives, Walter Clinton Jackson Library, University of North Carolina, Greensboro (WCJL).

26. Mrs. Charles D. McIver to editor of *Greensboro Daily News*, [ca. 1940], reel 1, #13, and Jenkins, "Twig Bender of Sedalia," reel 1, #7, both in Brown Collection, SL.

27. Rose Howell Holder, *McIver of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: 1917), 63–67. See also Virginia T. Lathrop, "Mrs. McIver Believes Greatness of the Past Holds State's Hope for Present and Future," *News and Observer*, 6 Oct. 1940, Clipping File, vol. 94, reel 24, 371–72, North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (NCC).

28. James Leloudis, "'A More Certain Means of Grace': Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880–1920" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1989), and Pamela Dean, "Covert Curriculum: Class and Gender in a New South Women's College" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1995). On the association, see James Leloudis, "School Reform in the New South: The Woman's Association for the Betterment of Public School Houses in North Carolina, 1902–1919," *Journal of American History* 69 (March 1983): 886–909. See also Lula Martin McIver to Charles L. Coon, 4 Feb. 1909, folder 28, box 2, and Lula Martin McIver to Charles L. Coon, 25 Jan. 1910, folder 29, box 2, both in Coon Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (SHC).

29. Sallie Waugh McBryan to Mrs. McIver, 22 Nov. 1913, file Correspondence, 1909–44, box 141, Lula Martin McIver Collection, WCJL; "Famous Landmark at WCUNC Razed," *Durham Morning Herald*, 26 Oct. 1952, Clipping File, vol. 94, reel 24, 343–44, NCC.

30. Lula Martin McIver to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 6 Apr. 1920, reel 2, #41, Brown Collection, SL.

31. Charles D. McIver letter, 5 June 1905, reel 2, #30, Correspondence, 1902–6, ibid.

32. "Award Will Go to Dr. Brown," *Greensboro Daily News*, 10 Apr. 1947, Clipping File, vol. 18, reel 5, 239, NCC.

33. C. Hawkins Brown to My dear Sir [Professor Julius I. Foust], 25 May 1914, file General Correspondence, 1913–15, box 57, Foust Collection, WCJL.

34. Jenkins, "Twig Bender of Sedalia," 77, reel 1, #12, Brown Collection, SL.

35. E. P. Wharton to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 12 Jan. 1917, reel 2, #37, Jan.–Apr. 1917; Mrs. Charles D. McIver to editor of *Greensboro Daily News*, n.d., reel 1 #13; and Jenkins, "Twig Bender of Sedalia," 78, reel 1, #12, all in Brown Collection, SL.

36. H. F. Kimball to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 6 Nov. 1916, reel 2, #36, 1916, and "Notes," copy of notebook maintained by Charlotte Hawkins Brown, reel 1, #8, both in Brown Collection, SL; Annie L. Vickery to Mrs. McIver, 7 Mar. 1917, file Correspondence, 1909–44, box 141, Lula Martin McIver Collection, WCJL.

37. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, *Mammy* (Boston: 1919).

38. Lula Martin McIver to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 6 Apr. 1920, reel 2, #41, Brown Collection, SL.

39. Laura Holmes Reilley to D. H. Hill, 18 Oct. 1917, file Women's Committee, box 30, North Carolina Council of Defense, World War I Papers, 1903–33, pt. 2, Military Collection, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

40. Mary J. McCrorey to Mrs. Hope, 7 May 1920; "Mrs. Hope of the Cleveland Meeting, 1920," 29 May 1920; "What the Colored Women Are Asking of the Y.W.C.A."; "To the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association"; Minutes of the Cleveland Meeting, 1920; "Minutes of the Meeting Held in the Offices of the South Atlantic Field Committee, Richmond, Virginia, 3 July 1920"; and Mary J. McCrorey to Mrs. Hope, 27 Jan. 1921, all in box 5, NU 14-C-5, Y.W.C.A., Neighborhood Union Papers, Special Collections, Robert Woodruff Library, Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia. Mary J. McCrorey to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 2 Apr. 1920, reel 2, #41, Brown Collection, SL.

41. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching*, rev. ed. (New York, 1987), 93; "Some Incidents," reel 1, #2, Brown Collection, SL.

42. Brown address, folder 1, box 1, ibid.; Hall, *Revolt against Chivalry*, 93–94.

43. "First Draft," section 2, folder 1, box 1, ibid.

44. "Statement of Negro Women in Session, Mar. 26, 1921," folder 1, box 1.

45. Folder 1, box 1, ibid. (emphasis added).

46. W. E. Morton to NAACP, file Voting, 10–30 Nov. 1920, C284, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Papers, Library of Congress.

47. H. M. Kingsley to NAACP, 9 Nov. 1920, file Voting, 1–9 Nov. 1920, C284, NAACP Papers.

48. Charles McPerson to NAACP, file Voting, 1–9 Nov. 1920, C284, NAACP Papers. For a summary of reports from across the South, see "Disfranchisement of Colored Americans in the Presidential Election of 1920" (1920), file Voting, Dec. 1920, C284, NAACP Papers.

49. Glenda E. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996), 219–24.

DOCUMENTS

Ida B. Wells, Southern Horrors *(with an introduction by Patricia A. Schechter)*

Ida B. Wells's 1892 pamphlet *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* launched a critical phase of the African American struggle for civil rights. Its statistical refutation of the rape charge against black men that was used to justify lynching is a sociological breakthrough that has stood the test of time and study. Wells also demonstrates how the concepts of "race" and "rape" were tied to power relations in the administration of justice, in the media, and in everyday life. Finally, Wells expounds the racial and class dimensions of the sexual double standard in ways that connect to contemporary feminist concerns with violence against all women, communities of color, and the poor in the United States and globally.

The insights expressed in *Southern Horrors* reflect Wells's personal and community survival strategy in the New South. Her situation was shaped by both new opportunities and new oppressions facing the first generation of free African Americans who came of age after the Civil War. Wells's parents, who had been slaves in Mississippi, bequeathed to their children a legacy of strong religious faith, pride in wage earning, and a commitment to education that echoes through the many projects their daughter undertook over her lifetime. Wells's father, James Wells, was a skilled carpenter and a member of the Masons who, after the war, served on the board of Holly Springs local American Missionary Association school, Rust College, which his daughter attended. Wells's mother, "Lizzie" Warrenton Wells, worked as a cook and was a devout Methodist who made sure her children attended church, where she herself learned to read the Bible. After James and Lizzie's untimely deaths in 1878 from a yellow fever epidemic that swept the Delta, sixteen-year-old Ida B. Wells was left to care for her five siblings, earning money by teaching school.

The prospect of better wages and the presence of extended family soon drew Wells to Memphis, Tennessee. There, her intellectual, social, and political horizons expanded in a burgeoning black community notable for its highly accomplished middle-class and elite members. Aspirations for equality nourished community institutions like schools, newspapers, social clubs, literary lyceums, and churches, especially the Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal denominations. In Memphis, Wells found encouragement to turn her intellectual talents into leadership by teaching Sunday school and by pursuing literary activities, especially journalism. Her first newspaper article appeared in 1883 in a Baptist weekly. It explained how Wells had been unfairly ejected from a first-class "ladies" railroad coach and how she fought racial discrimination by taking her case to court. While tens of thousands of educated women joined the paid labor force as school "ma'ams," religious educators, and journalists in the late nineteenth century, these social roles had particular significance for African American women, whose

personal, family, and community well-being was intimately bound up with their wage earning, educational activities, and community-betterment work.

As *Southern Horrors* emphatically argues, a white racist backlash followed closely upon the achievements of African Americans after Reconstruction. The result of this backlash was "Jim Crow" segregation, a set of laws designed for the economic deprivation, social marginalization, and political disfranchisement of black people. Jim Crow was established and enforced through systematic violence and terror. Ida B. Wells's eight pamphlets, written between 1892 and 1920, painstakingly document the ways in which African Americans were deprived of their rights through mob and police violence, through negative propaganda campaigns in the media, and through the elimination of economic opportunity and political rights.* Few aspects of Jim Crow escaped Wells's sharp scrutiny in the press and eventually, while in Memphis, she caught the negative attention of critics. As the following excerpt explains, she was forced to leave the South as a kind of political exile, first traveling to New York, then to Great Britain, and finally settling in Chicago in 1895. There, she married lawyer and fellow activist Ferdinand L. Barnett (hyphenating her name to Wells-Barnett) and raised a family of four children.

Post-exile, Wells-Barnett's writing and activism were sustained through African American community networks and by organizations shared by black and white women reformers, such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Her work with black women's church and club networks nurtured her into a powerful public speaker and political organizer. Between 1892 and 1895, Wells-Barnett organized scores of antilynching committees and women's clubs all over the United States and abroad and helped inaugurate the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), a group that functioned as the preeminent civil rights organization up to World War I. In 1909, Wells-Barnett cofounded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which, in 1917, assumed principal leadership of the antilynching fight in the United States.

The trajectory of Wells-Barnett's civil rights agitation was neither simple nor smooth. Controversy followed her and her work, especially during its first decade. White supremacists in the North and South vilified her in the press, slandering her morals and threatening her with violence for speaking out against lynching. While most African American communities embraced Wells-Barnett as a heroine, there was little consensus about how, exactly, to end lynching or resist Jim Crow. Black leaders were a diverse group ideologically and generationally; regional considerations also came into play as black Southerners found themselves more circumscribed than their northern peers. Women's roles were also fundamental to the building of black communities and to resistance work. Though black women's families and communities were dependent upon their contributions, any move on their part into official political and intellectual leadership—especially where interactions with whites were concerned—usually sparked controversy. Whether in journalism, public speaking, or institutional leadership—as with her Chicago social settlement, the Negro Fellowship League (1909–1919)—Wells-Barnett's initiatives

* Besides *Southern Horrors*, the pamphlets were *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition: The Afro-American's Contribution to Columbian Literature* (Chicago: Ida B. Wells, 1893); *United States Atrocities: Lynch Law* (London, 1894); *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States, 1892–1893–1894* (Chicago, 1895); *Lynch Law in Georgia* (Chicago: Ida B. Wells-Barnett, 1899); *Mob Rule in New Orleans: Robert Charles and His Fight to the Death* (Chicago: Ida B. Wells-Barnett, 1900); *The East St. Louis Massacre: The Greatest Outrage of the Century* (Chicago: The Negro Fellowship Herald Press, 1917); *The Arkansas Race Riot* (Chicago: Ida B. Wells-Barnett, 1920).

were always double-edged, affording new spaces for community defense and activism while potentially exposing black men as somehow deficient in their protective or leadership roles. For every celebration of her hard work and successes, there were always powerful voices affirming the propriety of male ministers, business leaders, and elected officials leading the civil rights agenda for African Americans. Wells-Barnett remained staunchly committed to equality for black women, however, fighting hard for suffrage rights in Illinois and nationally. After the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, she eventually ran for public office herself, in 1930.

Wells-Barnett's steadfast commitment to full equality not just for lynching victims but for "every citizen" rings through *Southern Horrors*, lending the text its prophetic, visionary quality; hers is a plea, to quote further from the pamphlet's preface, that "justice be done though the heavens fall." *Southern Horrors* draws on a number of powerful currents in American thought and style to make its case. As a graphic exposé, *Southern Horrors* shares kinship with muckraking journalism, a hallmark of the U.S. press at the turn of the century. Its empirical bent draws on statistical work to be found in the nascent academic field of sociology. *Southern Horrors* also stands in a tradition of radical pamphleteering in U.S. history that includes Tom Paine's *Common Sense* (1776) and David Walker's *Appeal to the Colored People of the Americas* (1829). Like these texts, *Southern Horrors* is peppered with wilting sarcasm and theatrical asides designed to provoke, starting with its title, a mocking send up of "southern honor." Instead of the neat closure of genteel fiction, *Southern Horrors* is full of questions and commands in a kind of call-and-response engagement with the reader, a pattern of expression at the heart of black worship traditions and one designed to work a deep transformation in participants. Finally, *Southern Horrors* ends with a practical list of strategies for "self-help," including education, boycotts, migration, agitation for protective legislation, suing through the courts, and even armed self-defense, to be "used to give that protection which the law refuses to give." Nearly five thousand Americans, almost three fourths of them black, were lynched in Wells-Barnett's lifetime. Repeated efforts of African American activists to pass federal legislation making lynching a crime were defeated in Congress in 1922, 1937, and 1940.

What are the different kinds of violence or threats of violence that Wells documents in *Southern Horrors*? How is violence linked to issues of sexual, racial, and class privilege? How does Wells compare the social and sexual experiences of black and white women under Jim Crow? In what ways does class shape the social behavior and political strategies of the historical actors Wells describes?

CHAPTER I: THE OFFENSE*

Wednesday evening May 24th, 1892, the city of Memphis was filled with excitement. Editorials in the daily papers of that date caused a meeting to be held in the Cotton Exchange Building; a committee was sent for the editors of the *Free Speech*, an Afro-American journal published in that city, and the only reason the open threats of lynching that were made were not carried out was because they could not be found. The cause of all this commotion was the following editorial published in the *Free Speech* May 21st, 1892, the Saturday previous.

> Eight negroes lynched since last issue of the *Free Speech*, one at Little Rock, Ark., last Saturday morning where the citizens broke (?) into the penitentiary and got their man; three near Anniston, Ala., one near New Orleans; and three at Clarksville, Ga., the last three for killing a white man, and five on the same old racket—the new alarm about raping white women. The same programme of hanging, then shooting bullets into the lifeless bodies was carried out to the letter.

* Excerpted from Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (New York, 1892).

Nobody in this section of the country believes the old threadbare lie that Negro men rape white women. If Southern white men are not careful, they will over-reach themselves and public sentiment will have a reaction; a conclusion will then be reached which will be very damaging to the moral reputation of their women.

The Daily Commercial of Wednesday following, May 25th, contained the following leader:

> Those negroes who are attempting to make the lynching of individuals of their race a means for arousing the worst passions of their kind are playing with a dangerous sentiment. The negroes may as well understand that there is no mercy for the negro rapist and little patience with his defenders. A negro organ printed in this city, in a recent issue publishes the following atrocious paragraph: "Nobody in this section of the country believes the old thread-bare lie that negro men rape white women. If Southern white men are not careful they will over-reach themselves, and public sentiment will have a reaction; and a conclusion will be reached which will be very damaging to the moral reputation of their women."
>
> The fact that a black scoundrel is allowed to live and utter such loathsome and repulsive calumnies is a volume of evidence as to the wonderful patience of Southern whites. But we have had enough of it.
>
> There are some things that the Southern white man will not tolerate, and the obscene intimations of the foregoing have brought the writer to the very outermost limit of public patience. We hope we have said enough.

The *Evening Scimitar* of same date, copied the *Commercial's* editorial with these words of comment: "Patience under such circumstances is not a virtue. If the negroes themselves do not apply the remedy without delay it will be the duty of those whom he has attacked to tie the wretch who utters these calumnies to a stake at the intersection of Main and Madison Sts., brand him in the forehead with a hot iron and perform upon him a surgical operation with a pair of tailor's shears."

Acting upon this advice, the leading citizens met in the Cotton Exchange Building the same evening, and threats of lynching were freely indulged, not by the lawless element upon which the deviltry of the South is usually saddled—but by the leading business men, in their leading business centre. Mr. Fleming, the business manager and owning a half interest the *Free Speech*, had to leave town to escape the mob, and was afterwards ordered not to return; letters and telegrams sent me in New York where I was spending my vacation advised me that bodily harm awaited my return. Creditors took possession of the office and sold the outfit, and the *Free Speech* was as if it had never been.

The editorial in question was prompted by the many inhuman and fiendish lynchings of Afro-Americans which have recently taken place and was meant as a warning. Eight lynched in one week and five of them charged with rape! The thinking public will not easily believe freedom and education more brutalizing than slavery, and the world knows that the crime of rape was unknown during four years of civil war, when the white women of the South were at the mercy of the race which is all at once charged with being a bestial one.

Since my business has been destroyed and I am an exile from home because of that editorial, the issue has been forced, and as the writer of it I feel that the race and the public generally should have a statement of the facts as they exist. They will serve at the same time as a defense for the Afro-American Sampsons who suffer themselves to be betrayed by white Delilahs.

The whites of Montgomery, Ala., knew J. C. Duke sounded the keynote of the situation—which they would gladly hide from the world, when he said in his paper, *The Herald*, five years ago: "Why is it that white women attract negro men now more than in former days? There was a time when such a thing was unheard of. There is a secret to this thing, and we greatly suspect it is the growing appreciation of white Juliets for colored Romeos." Mr. Duke, like the *Free Speech* proprietors, was forced to leave the city for reflecting on the "honah" of white women and his paper suppressed; but the truth remains that Afro-American men do not always rape (?) white women without their consent.

Mr. Duke, before leaving Montgomery, signed a card disclaiming any intention of slandering Southern white women. The editor of the *Free Speech* has no disclaimer to enter, but asserts instead that there are many white women in the South who would marry colored men if such an act would not place them at once beyond the pale of society and within the clutches of the law. The miscegenation laws of the South only operate against the legitimate union of the races; they leave the white man free to seduce all the colored girls he can, but it is death to the colored man who yields to the force and advances of a similar attraction in white women. White men lynch the offending Afro-American, not because he is a de-spoiler

of virtue, but because he succumbs to the smiles of white women.

CHAPTER II: THE BLACK AND WHITE OF IT

The *Cleveland Gazette* of January 16, 1892, publishes a case in point. *Mrs. J. S. Underwood*, the wife of a minister of Elyria, Ohio, accused an Afro-American of rape. She told her husband that during his absence in 1888, stumping the State for the Prohibition Party, the man came to the kitchen door, forced his way in the house and insulted her. She tried to drive him out with a heavy poker, but he overpowered and chloroformed her, and when she revived her clothing was torn and she was in a horrible condition. She did not know the man but could identify him. She pointed out William Offett, a married man, who was arrested and, being in Ohio, was granted a trial.

The prisoner vehemently denied the charge of rape, but confessed he went to Mrs. Underwood's residence at her invitation and was criminally intimate with her at her request. This availed him nothing against the sworn testimony of a minister's wife, a lady of the highest respectability. He was found guilty, and entered the penitentiary, December 14, 1888, for fifteen years. Some time afterwards the woman's remorse led her to confess to her husband that the man was innocent.

These are her words: "I met Offett at the Post Office. It was raining. He was polite to me, and as I had several bundles in my arms he offered to carry them home for me, which he did. He had a strange fascination for me, and I invited him to call on me. He called, bringing chestnuts and candy for the children. By this means we got them to leave us alone in the room. Then I sat on his lap. He made a proposal to me and I readily consented. Why I did so, I do not know, but that I did is true. He visited me several times after that and each time I was indiscreet. I did not care after the first time. In fact I could not have resisted, and had no desire to resist."

When asked by her husband why she told him she had been outraged, she said: "I had several reasons for telling you. One was the neighbors saw the fellow here, another was, I was afraid I had contracted a loathsome disease, and still another was that I feared I might give birth to a Negro baby. I hoped to save my reputation by telling you a deliberate lie." Her husband horrified by the confession had Offett, who had already served four years, released and secured a divorce.

There are thousands of such cases throughout the South, with the difference that the Southern white men in insatiate fury wreak their vengeance without intervention of law upon the Afro-Americans who consort with their women. A few instances to substantiate the assertion that some white women love the company of the Afro-American will not be out of place. Most of these cases were reported by the daily papers of the South.

In the winter of 1885–6 the wife of a practicing physician in Memphis, in good social standing whose name has escaped me, left home, husband and children, and ran away with her black coachman. She was with him a month before her husband found and brought her home. The coachman could not be found. The doctor moved his family away from Memphis, and is living in another city under an assumed name. . . .

Sarah Clark of Memphis loved a black man and lived openly with him. When she was indicted last spring for miscegenation, she swore in court that she was *not* a white woman. This she did to escape the penitentiary and continued her illicit relation undisturbed. That she is of the lower class of whites, does not disturb the fact that she is a white woman. "The leading citizens" of Memphis are defending the "honor" of *all* white women, *demi-monde* included.

Since the manager of the *Free Speech* has been run away from Memphis by the guardians of the honor of Southern white women, a young girl living on Poplar St., who was discovered in intimate relations with a handsome mulatto young colored man, Will Morgan by name, stole her father's money to send the young fellow away from that father's wrath. She has since joined him in Chicago. . . .

The very week the "leading citizens" of Memphis were making a spectacle of themselves in defense of all white women of every kind, an Afro-American, M. Stricklin, was found in a white woman's room in that city. Although she made no outcry of rape, he was jailed and would have been lynched, but the woman stated she bought curtains of him (he was a furniture dealer) and his business in her room that night was to put them up. A white woman's word was taken as absolutely in this case as when the cry of rape is made, and he was freed.

What is true of Memphis is true of the entire South. . . . Frank Weems of Chattanooga who was not lynched in May only because the prominent citizens became his body guard until the doors of the penitentiary closed on

him, had letters in his pocket from the white woman in the case, making the appointment with him. Edward Coy who was burned alive in Texarkana, January 1, 1892, died protesting his innocence. Investigation since as given by the Bystander in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, October 1, proves: . . . The woman who was paraded as a victim of violence was of bad character; her husband was a drunkard and a gambler. . . . She was compelled by threats, if not by violence, to make the charge against the victim. . . . When she came to apply the match Coy asked her if she would burn him after they had "been sweethearting" so long. . . .

Hundreds of such cases might be cited, but enough have been given to prove the assertion that there are white women in the South who love the Afro-American's company even as there are white men notorious for their preference for Afro-American women.

There is hardly a town in the South which has not an instance of the kind which is well-known, and hence the assertion is reiterated that "nobody in the South believes the old thread-bare lie that negro men rape white women." Hence there is a growing demand among Afro-Americans that the guilt or innocence of parties accused of rape be fully established. They know the men of the section of the country who refuse this are not so desirous of punishing rapists as they pretend. The utterances of the leading white men show that with them it is not the crime but the *class*, Bishop Fitzgerald has become apologist for lynchers of the rapists of *white* women only. . . . But when the victim is a colored woman it is different.

Last winter in Baltimore, Md., three white ruffians assaulted a Miss Camphor, a young Afro-American girl, while out walking with a young man of her own race. They held her escort and outraged the girl. It was a deed dastardly enough to arouse Southern blood, which gives its horror of rape as excuse for lawlessness, but she was an Afro-American. The case went to the courts, an Afro-American lawyer defended the men and they were acquitted.

In Nashville, Tenn., there is a white man, Pat Hanifan, who outraged a little Afro-American girl, and, from the physical injuries received, she has been ruined for life. He was jailed for six months, discharged, and is now a detective in that city. . . . Only two weeks before Eph. Grizzard, who had only been *charged* with rape upon a white woman, had been taken from the jail, with Governor Buchanan and the police and militia standing by, dragged through the streets in broad daylight, knives plunged into him at every step, and with every fiendish cruelty a frenzied mob could devise, he was at last swung out on the bridge with hands cut to pieces as he tried to climb up the stanchions. . . .

At the very moment these civilized whites were announcing their determination "to protect their wives and daughters," by murdering Grizzard, a white man was in the same jail for raping eight-year-old Maggie Reese, an Afro-American girl. He was not harmed. The "honor" of grown women who were glad enough to be supported by the Grizzard boys and Ed Coy, as long as the liaison was not known, needed protection; they were white. The outrage upon helpless childhood needed no avenging in this case; she was black. . . .

CHAPTER III: THE NEW CRY

. . . Thoughtful Afro-Americans with the strong arm of the government withdrawn and with the hope to stop such wholesale massacres urged the race to sacrifice its political rights for the sake of peace. They honestly believed the race should fit itself for government, and when that should be done, the objection to race participation in politics would be removed.

But the sacrifice did not remove the trouble, nor move the South to justice. One by one the Southern States have legally (?) disfranchised the Afro-American, and since the repeal of the Civil Rights Bill nearly every Southern State has passed separate car laws with a penalty against their infringement. The race regardless of advancement is penned into filthy, stifling partitions cut off from smoking cars. . . . The dark and bloody record of the South shows 728 Afro-Americans lynched during the past eight years; . . . and not less than 150 have been known to have met violent death at the hands of cruel bloodthirsty mobs during the past nine months.

To palliate this record (which grows worse as the Afro-American becomes intelligent) and excuse some of the most heinous crimes that ever stained the history of a country, the South is shielding itself behind the plausible screen of defending the honor of its women. This, too, in the face of the fact that only *one-third* of the 728 victims to mobs have been *charged* with rape, to say nothing of those of that one-third who were innocent of the charge. . . .

Even to the better class of Afro-Americans the crime of rape is so revolting they have too

often taken the white man's word and given lynch law neither the investigation nor condemnation it deserved.

They forget that a concession of the right to lynch a man for a certain crime, not only concedes the right to lynch any person for any crime, but (so frequently is the cry of rape now raised) it is in a fair way to stamp us a race of rapists and desperadoes. They have gone on hoping and believing that general education and financial strength would solve the difficulty, and are devoting their energies to the accumulation of both. . . .

Mary McLeod Bethune, "How the Bethune–Cookman College Campus Started"

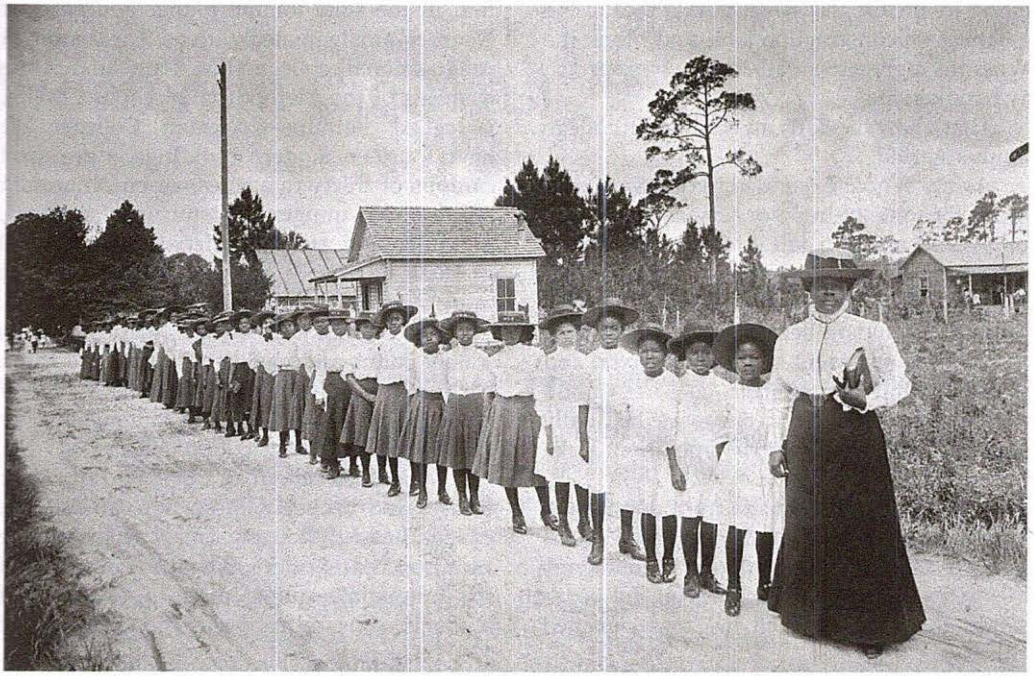
Mary McLeod Bethune was one of the most distinguished educators of her generation. The daughter of slaves, she received her early education from missionary teachers. Like others of her race who saw education as a key to racial advancement at a time when the white South was indifferent if not hostile to the aspirations of African Americans, Bethune faced extraordinary obstacles. When she began a little school at Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1904, America was entering an era of reform. Yet even most northern progressives—with the notable exception of women such as Mary White Ovington, one of the founders of the NAACP—shared the racist assumptions of that era, believing that the future of black women, like immigrant women, lay in domestic service. Bethune had larger dreams. Because of her courage, energy, and vision, she was able to keep her school afloat with her intrepid fundraising, guiding its growth from grammar school to high school and to what finally became an accredited four-year college. President of the institution from its founding until her resignation in 1942, she remained a trustee of Bethune–Cookman College until her death in 1955. She was an activist and held many important posts within the black community, founding such organizations as the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs and the National Council of Negro Women. A national figure as well, she served in the Roosevelt administration during the 1930s, advising the president on minority affairs. She was also involved in early efforts on behalf of the United Nations. Her many offices and honors, however, never diverted her from her primary purpose—the pursuit of full citizenship rights for all black Americans.*

On October 3, 1904, I opened the doors of my school, with an enrollment of five little girls, aged from eight to twelve, whose parents paid me fifty cents' weekly tuition. My own child was the only boy in the school. Though I hadn't a penny left, I considered cash money as the smallest part of my resources. I had faith in a living God, faith in myself, and a desire to serve. . . .

We burned logs and used the charred splinters as pencils, and mashed elderberries

* See Joyce A. Hanson, *Mary McLeod Bethune and Black Women's Political Activism* (Columbia, MO, 2003).

Excerpted from "Faith That Moved a Dump Heap" by Mary McLeod Bethune, in *Who, The Magazine about People* 1 (June 1941): 31–35, 54.



Soon after opening the Daytona Educational and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls, its founder, Mary McLeod Bethune, posed with pupils lining the road leading to its first Daytona Beach building—a four-room cottage. One of the fields nearby, nicknamed Hell's Hole, would soon be purchased by Bethune as the foundation of a genuine campus. At the time, Florida's handful of state-supported public "high" schools for blacks operated only five months a year, in contrast to nine for whites' schools. Bethune, a tireless fundraiser, chose Daytona Beach, despite the fact that it was home to a Ku Klux Klan chapter, because of two primary factors: it had a fast-growing black population attracted by relatively good jobs, and its wealthy whites, both year-round and summer residents, included some who supported her efforts. (Courtesy of the State Archives of Florida.)

for ink. I begged strangers for a broom, a lamp, a bit of cretonne to put around the packing case which served as my desk. I haunted the city dump and the trash piles behind hotels, retrieving discarded linen and kitchenware, cracked dishes, broken chairs, pieces of old lumber. Everything was scoured and mended. This was part of the training to salvage, to reconstruct, to make bricks without straw. As parents began gradually to leave their children overnight, I had to provide sleeping accommodations. I took corn sacks for mattresses. Then I picked Spanish moss from trees, dried and cured it, and used it as a substitute for mattress hair.

The school expanded fast. In less than two years I had 250 pupils. In desperation I hired a large hall next to my original little cottage, and used it as a combined dormitory and classroom. I concentrated more and more on girls, as I felt they especially were hampered by lack of educational opportunities. . . .

I had many volunteer workers and a few regular teachers, who were paid from fifteen to twenty-five dollars a month and board. I was supposed to keep the balance of the funds for my own pocket, but there was never any balance—only a yawning hole. I wore old clothes sent me by mission boards, recut and redesigned for me in our dress-making classes. At last I saw that our only solution was to stop renting space, and to buy and build our own college.

Near by was a field, popularly called Hell's Hole, which was used as a dumping ground. I approached the owner, determined to buy it. The price was $250. In a daze, he finally agreed to take five dollars down, and the balance in two years. I promised to be back in a few days with the initial payment. He never knew it, but I didn't have five dollars. I raised this sum

selling ice cream and sweet-potato pies to the workmen on construction jobs, and I took the owner his money in small change wrapped in my handkerchief.

That's how the Bethune–Cookman college campus started. . . .

As the school expanded, whenever I saw a need for some training or service we did not supply, I schemed to add it to our curriculum. Sometimes that took years. When I came to Florida, there were no hospitals where a Negro could go. A student became critically ill with appendicitis, so I went to a local hospital and begged a white physician to take her in and operate. My pleas were so desperate he finally agreed. A few days after the operation, I visited my pupil.

When I appeared at the front door of the hospital, the nurse ordered me around to the back way. I thrust her aside—and found my little girl segregated in a corner of the porch behind the kitchen. Even my toes clenched with rage.

That decided me. I called on three of my faithful friends, asking them to buy a little cottage behind our school as a hospital. They agreed, and we started with two beds.

From this humble start grew a fully equipped twenty-bed hospital—our college infirmary and a refuge for the needy throughout the state. It was staffed by white and black physicians and by our own student nurses. We ran this hospital for twenty years as part of our contribution to community life; but a short time ago, to ease our financial burden, the city took it over.

Gradually, as educational facilities expanded and there were other places where small children could go, we put the emphasis on high-school and junior-college training. In 1922, Cookman College, a men's school, the first in the state for the higher education of Negroes, amalgamated with us. The combined coeducational college, now run under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church, is called Bethune–Cookman College. We have fourteen modern buildings, a beautiful campus of thirty-two acres, an enrollment in regular and summer sessions of 600 students, a faculty and staff of thirty-two, and 1,800 graduates. The college property, now valued at more than $800,000, is entirely unencumbered.

When I walk through the campus, with its stately palms and well-kept lawns, and think back to the dump-heap foundation, I rub my eyes and pinch myself. And I remember my childish visions in the cotton fields.

But values cannot be calculated in ledger figures and property. More than all else the college has fulfilled my ideals of distinctive training and service. Extending far beyond the immediate sphere of its graduates and students, it has already enriched the lives of 100,000 Negroes.

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed me director of the division of Negro affairs of the National Youth Administration. My main task now is to supervise the training provided for 600,000 Negro children, and I have to run the college by remote control. Every few weeks, however, I snatch a day or so and return to my beloved home.

This is a strenuous program. The doctor shakes his head and says, "Mrs. Bethune, slow down a little. Relax! Take it just a little easier." I promise to reform, but in an hour the promise is forgotten.

For I am my mother's daughter, and the drums of Africa still beat in my heart. They will not let me rest while there is a single Negro boy or girl without a chance to prove his worth.

Women in the West

PEGGY PASCOE

Ophelia Paquet, a Tillamook of Oregon, Challenges Miscegenation Laws

When Ophelia Paquet's husband died in 1919, the county court recognized her as his widow—the Paquets had been married for thirty years—and appointed Ophelia to administer his estate. As there were no children, Ophelia stood to inherit her late husband's property. It was a just arrangement inasmuch as it was her money that had been used to purchase the land and pay taxes on it. John Paquet, Fred's disreputable brother, thought otherwise. Ultimately the court awarded the estate to him, leaving the sixty-five-year-old widow destitute.

Ophelia's story is a complicated one. It illuminates many issues: the purpose of miscegenation laws, the role of marriage in the transmission of property, the "invisibility" of married women's economic contributions, and the way race can compound gender disadvantage. What arguments did Ophelia offer when her brother-in-law sought to claim his brother's property? In what respects does John Paquet's victory illuminate the convergence of both race and class?

Although miscegenation laws are usually remembered (when they are remembered at all) as a Southern development aimed at African Americans, they were actually a much broader phenomenon. Adopted in both the North and the South in the colonial period and extended to western states in the nineteenth century, miscegenation laws grew up with slavery but became even more significant after the Civil War, for it was then that they came to form the crucial "bottom line" of the system of white supremacy embodied in segregation.

The earliest miscegenation laws, passed in the South, forbade whites to marry African Americans, but the list of groups prohibited from marrying whites was gradually expanded, especially in western states, by adding first American Indians, then Chinese and Japanese (both often referred to by the catchall term "Mongolians"), and then Malays (or Filipinos). And even this didn't exhaust the list. Oregon prohibited whites from marrying "Kanakas" (or native Hawaiians); South Dakota proscribed "Coreans"; Arizona singled out Hindus; and Georgia prohibited whites from marrying "West" and "Asiatic" Indians.

Many states packed their miscegenation laws with multiple categories and quasimathematical definitions of "race." Oregon, for example, declared that "it shall not be lawful within this state for any white person, male or female, to intermarry with any negro, Chinese, or any person having one fourth or more negro, Chinese, or Kanaka blood, or any person

Excerpted from "On the Significance of Miscegenation Law in United States History," in *New Viewpoints in Women's History: Working Papers from the Schlesinger Library 50th Anniversary Conference, March 4–5, 1994*, ed. Susan Ware (Cambridge, Mass.: Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College, [1994]). Reprinted by permission of the author. Notes have been renumbered and edited. We mourn Peggy Pascoe's death on July 23, 2010. For Estelle Freedman's remembrance, see: https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/november-2010/in-memoriam-peggy-pascoe.

having more than one half Indian blood." Altogether, miscegenation laws covered forty-one states and colonies. They spanned three centuries of American history: the first ones were enacted in the 1660s, and the last ones were not declared unconstitutional until 1967.

Although it is their sexual taboos that have attracted most recent attention, the structure and function of miscegenation laws were . . . more fundamentally related to the institution of marriage than to sexual behavior itself. In sheer numbers, many more laws prohibited interracial marriage than interracial sex. And in an even deeper sense, all miscegenation laws were designed to privilege marriage as a social and economic unit. Couples who challenged the laws knew that the right to marry translated into social respectability and economic benefits, including inheritance rights and legitimacy for children, that were denied to sexual liaisons outside marriage. Miscegenation laws were designed to patrol this border by making so-called "miscegenous marriage" a legal impossibility. Thus criminal courts treated offenders as if they had never been married at all; that is, prosecutors charged interracial couples with the moral offense of fornication or other illicit sex crimes, then denied them the use of marriage as a defense.

Civil courts guarded the junction between marriage and economic privilege. From Reconstruction to the 1930s, most miscegenation cases heard in civil courts were ex post facto attempts to invalidate relationships that had already lasted for a long time. They were brought by relatives or, sometimes, by the state, after the death of one partner, almost always a white man. Many of them were specifically designed to take property or inheritances away from the surviving partner, almost always an African American or American Indian woman. By looking at civil law suits like these (which were, at least in appeals court records, more common than criminal cases), we can begin to trace the links between white patriarchal privilege and property that sustained miscegenation laws.

Let me illustrate the point by describing [a] sample case, *In re Paquet's Estate*, decided by the Oregon Supreme Court in 1921.[1] The Paquet case, like most of the civil miscegenation cases of this period, was fought over the estate of a white man. The man in question, Fred Paquet, died in 1919, survived by his 63-year-old Tillamook Indian wife, named Ophelia. The Paquet estate included 22 acres of land, some farm animals, tools, and a buggy, altogether worth perhaps $2500.[2] Fred and Ophelia's relationship had a long history. In the 1880s, Fred had already begun to visit Ophelia frequently and openly enough that he had become one of many targets of a local grand jury which periodically threatened to indict white men who lived with Indian women.[3] Seeking to formalize the relationship—and, presumably, end this harassment—Fred consulted a lawyer, who advised him to make sure to hold a ceremony which would meet the legal requirements for an "Indian custom" marriage. Accordingly, in 1889, Fred not only reached the customary agreement with Ophelia's Tillamook relatives, paying them $50 in gifts, but also sought the formal sanction of Tillamook tribal chief Betsy Fuller (who was herself married to a white man); Fuller arranged for a tribal council to consider and confirm the marriage.[4] Afterwards Fred and Ophelia lived together until his death, for more than thirty years. Fred clearly considered Ophelia his wife, and his neighbors, too, recognized their relationship, but because Fred died without leaving a formal will, administration of the estate was subject to state laws which provided for the distribution of property to surviving family members.

When Fred Paquet died, the county court recognized Ophelia as his widow and promptly appointed her administrator of the estate. Because the couple had no children, all the property, including the land, which Ophelia lived on and the Paquets had owned for more than two decades, would ordinarily have gone to her. Two days later, though, Fred's brother John came forward to contest Ophelia for control over the property.[5] John Paquet had little to recommend him to the court. Some of his neighbors accused him of raping native women, and he had such an unsavory reputation in the community that at one point the county judge declared him "a man of immoral habits . . . incompetent to transact ordinary business affairs and generally untrustworthy."[6] He was, however, a "white" man, and under Oregon's miscegenation law, that was enough to ensure that he won his case against Ophelia, an Indian woman.

The case eventually ended up in the Oregon Supreme Court. In making its decision, the key issue for the court was whether or not to recognize Fred and Ophelia's marriage,

which violated Oregon's miscegenation law.[7] The Court listened to—and then dismissed—Ophelia's argument that the marriage met the requirements for an Indian custom marriage and so should have been recognized as valid out of routine courtesy to the authority of another jurisdiction (that of the Tillamook tribe).[8] The Court also heard and dismissed Ophelia's claim that Oregon's miscegenation law discriminated against Indians and was therefore an unconstitutional denial of the Fourteenth Amendment guarantee of equal protection. The Court ingenuously explained its reasoning; it held that the Oregon miscegenation law did not discriminate because it "applied alike to all persons, either white, negroes, Chinese, Kanaka, or Indians."[9] Following this logic, the Court declared Fred and Ophelia's marriage void because it violated Oregon's miscegenation law; it ordered that the estate and all its property be transferred to "the only relative in the state," John Paquet, to be distributed among him, his siblings and their heirs.[10]

As the Paquet case demonstrates, miscegenation law did not always prevent the formation of interracial relationships, sexual or otherwise. Fred and Ophelia had, after all, lived together for more than thirty years and had apparently won recognition as a couple from many of those around them; their perseverance had even allowed them to elude grand jury crackdowns. They did not, however, manage to escape the really crucial power of miscegenation law: the role it played in connecting white supremacy to the transmission of property. In American law, marriage provided the glue which allowed for the transmission of property from husbands to wives and their children; miscegenation law kept property within racial boundaries by invalidating marriages between white men and women of color whenever ancillary white relatives like John Paquet contested them.[11] . . . Property, so often described in legal sources as simple economic assets (like land and capital) was actually a much more expansive phenomenon, one which took various forms and structured crucial relationships. . . . Race is in and of itself a kind of property.[12] As [legal scholar] Derrick Bell . . . explains, most whites did—and still do—"expect the society to recognize an unspoken but no less vested property right in their 'whiteness.'" "This right," Bell maintains, "is recognized and upheld by courts and the society like all property rights under a government created and sustained primarily for that purpose."[13]

As applied to the Paquet case, this theme is easy to trace, for, in a sense, the victorious John Paquet had turned his "whiteness" (the best—and perhaps the only—asset he had) into property, and did so at Ophelia's expense. This transformation happened not once but repeatedly. One instance occurred shortly after the county judge had branded John Paquet immoral and unreliable. Dismissing these charges as the opinions of "a few scalawags and Garibaldi Indians," John Paquet's lawyers rallied enough white witnesses who would speak in his defense to mount an appeal which convinced a circuit court judge to declare Paquet competent to administer the estate.[14] Another example of the transformation of "whiteness" into property came when the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that Ophelia Paquet's "Indianness" disqualified her from legal marriage to a white man; with Ophelia thus out of the way, John and his siblings won the right to inherit the property.

The second property relationship [is] illuminated by the etymological connection between the words "property" and "propriety." Miscegenation law played on this connection by drawing a sharp line between "legitimate marriage" on the one hand and "illicit sex" on the other, then defining all interracial relationships as illicit sex. The distinction was a crucial one, for husbands were legally obligated to provide for legitimate wives and children, but men owed nothing to "mere" sexual partners: neither inheritance rights nor the legitimacy of children accompanied illicit relationships.

By defining all interracial relationships as illicit, miscegenation law did not so much prohibit or punish illicit sex as it did create and reproduce it. Conditioned by stereotypes which associated women of color with hypersexuality, judges routinely branded long-term settled relationships as "mere" sex rather than marriage. Lawyers played to these assumptions by reducing interracial relationships to interracial sex, then distinguishing interracial sex from marriage by associating it with prostitution. Describing the relationship between Fred and Ophelia Paquet, for example, John Paquet's lawyers claimed that "the alleged 'marriage' was a mere commercial affair" that did not deserve legal recognition because "the relations were entirely meretricious from their inception."[15]

It was all but impossible for women of color to escape the legacy of these associations. Ophelia Paquet's lawyers tried to find a way out by changing the subject. Rather than refuting the association between women of color and illicit sexuality, they highlighted its flip side, the supposed connection between white women and legitimate marriage. Ophelia Paquet, they told the judge, "had been to the man as good a wife as any white woman could have been."[16] In its final decision, the Oregon Supreme Court came as close as any court of that time did to accepting this line of argument. Taking the unusual step of admitting that "the record is conclusive that [Ophelia] lived with [Fred] as a good and faithful wife for more than 30 years," the judges admitted that they felt some sympathy for Ophelia, enough to recommend—but not require—that John Paquet offer her what they called "a fair and reasonable settlement."[17] But in the Paquet case, as in other miscegenation cases, sexual morality, important as it was, was nonetheless still subordinate to channelling the transmission of property along racial . . . lines. Ophelia got a judicial pat on the head for good behavior, but John and his siblings got the property.

Which brings me to the third form of property relationship structured by miscegenation laws—and, for that matter, marriage laws in general—and that is women's economic dependence on men. Here the problems started long before the final decision gave John Paquet control of the Paquet estate. One of the most intriguing facts about the Paquet case is that everyone acted as if the estate in question belonged solely to Fred Paquet. In fact, however, throughout the Paquet marriage, Fred had whiled away most of his time; it was Ophelia's basket-making, fruit-picking, milk-selling, and wage work that had provided the income they needed to sustain themselves. And although the deed to their land was made out in Fred Paquet's name, the couple had used Ophelia's earnings, combined with her proceeds from government payments to Tillamook tribal members, both to purchase the property and to pay the yearly taxes on it. It is significant . . . that, although lawyers on both sides of the case knew this, neither they nor the Oregon Supreme Court judges considered it a key issue at the trial in which Ophelia lost all legal right to what the courts considered "Fred's" estate.

Indeed, Ophelia's economic contribution might never have been taken into account if it were not for the fact that in the wake of the Oregon Supreme Court decision, United States Indian officials found themselves responsible for the care of the now impoverished Ophelia. Apparently hoping both to defend Ophelia and to relieve themselves of the burden of her support, they sued John Paquet on Ophelia's behalf. Working through the federal courts that covered Indian relations and equity claims, rather than the state courts that enforced miscegenation laws, they eventually won a partial settlement. Yet their argument, too, reflected the assumption that men were better suited than women to the ownership of what the legal system referred to as "real" property. Although their brief claimed that "Fred Paquet had practically no income aside from the income he received through the labor and efforts of the said Ophelia Paquet," they asked the Court to grant Ophelia the right to only half of the Paquet land.[18] In the end, the Court ordered that Ophelia should receive a cash settlement (the amount was figured at half the value of the land), but only if she agreed to make her award contingent on its sale.[19] To get any settlement at all, Ophelia Paquet had to relinquish all claims to actual ownership of the land, although such a claim might have given her legal grounds to prevent its sale and so allow her to spend her final years on the property.

It is not even clear that she received any payment on the settlement ordered by the court. As late as 1928, John Paquet's major creditor complained to a judge that Paquet had repeatedly turned down acceptable offers to sell the land; perhaps he had chosen to live on it himself.[20]

Like any single example, the Paquet case captures miscegenation law as it stood at one moment, and a very particular moment at that, one that might be considered the high water mark of American courts' determination to structure both family formation and property transmission along racial dividing lines.

Today, most Americans have trouble remembering that miscegenation laws ever existed . . . [and] are incredulous at the injustice and the arbitrariness of the racial classifications that stand out in [such] . . . cases. [Yet] few . . . notice that one of the themes raised in the Paquet case—the significance of marriage

in structuring property transmission—not only remains alive and well, but has, in fact, outlived both the erosion of traditional patriarchy and the rise and fall of racial classifications in marriage law.

More than a generation after the demise of miscegenation laws . . . the drawing of exclusionary lines around marriage [continues] . . . . The most prominent—though hardly the only—victims are lesbian and gay couples, who point out that the sex classifications currently embedded in marriage law operate in much the same way that the race classifications embedded in miscegenation laws once did: that is, they allow courts to categorize same-sex relationships as illicit sex rather than legitimate marriage and they allow courts to exclude same-sex couples from the property benefits of marriage, which now include everything from tax advantages to medical insurance coverage.

Both these modern legal battles and the earlier ones fought by couples like Fred and Ophelia Paquet suggest . . . that focusing on the connections between property and the political economy of marriage . . . offer a revealing vantage point from which to study both the form and power of analogies between race and sex classifications in American law and the relationships between race and gender hierarchies in American history.

NOTES

1. The Paquet case can be followed not only by reading the text of the appeals court decision, *In re Paquet's Estate*, 200 P 911 (Oregon 1921), but also in the following archival case files: *Paquet v. Paquet*, file No. 4268, Oregon Supreme Court, 1920; *Paquet v. Henkle*, file No. 4267, Oregon Supreme Court, 1920; and Tillamook County Probate file #605, all in the Oregon State Archives; and in *U.S. v. John B. Paquet*, Judgment Roll 11409, Register No. 8-8665, March 1925, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Northwest Branch.

2. Initial estimates of the value of the estate were much higher, ranging from $4500 to $12,500. I have relied on the figure of $2528.50 provided by court-appointed assessors. See Tillamook Country Probate file #605, Inventory and Appraisement, June 15, 1920.

3. *Paquet v. Paquet*, Respondent's brief, Nov. 1, 1920, 2–5.

4. Tillamook County Probate file #605, Judge A. M. Hare, Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law, February 3, 1920; *Paquet v. Paquet*, Appellants Abstract of Record, September 3, 1920, 10–16.

5. *Paquet v. Paquet*, Appellants Abstract of Record, Sept. 3, 1920, 3.

6. Tillamook County Probate file #605, Judge A. M. Hare, Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, Feb. 3, 1920.

7. Court records identify Fred Paquet as being of French Canadian origin. Both sides agreed that Fred was a "pure" or "full-blooded" "white" man and Ophelia was a "pure" or "full-blooded" "Indian" woman. *Paquet v. Paquet*, Appellant's First Brief, Oct. 8, 1920, 1; *Paquet v. Paquet*; Respondent's brief, Nov. 1, 1920, 2.

8. The question of legal jurisdiction over Indian tribes was—and is—a very thorny issue. Relations with Indians were generally a responsibility of the U.S. federal government, which, although it advocated assimilating Indian families into white middle-class molds, had little practical choice but to grant general recognition to tribally-determined marriages performed according to Indian custom. In the U.S. legal system, however, jurisdiction over marriage rested with the states rather than the federal government. States could, therefore, use their control over marriage as a wedge to exert some power over Indians by claiming that Indian–white marriages, especially those performed outside recognized reservations, were subject to state jurisdiction. In the Paquet case, for example, the court insisted that, because the Tillamook had never been assigned to a reservation and because Fred and Ophelia lived in a mixed settlement, Ophelia could not be considered part of a recognized tribe nor a "ward" of the federal government. As events would later show, both contentions were inaccurate: Ophelia was an enrolled member of the Tillamook tribe, which was under the supervision of the Siletz Indian Agency; the federal government claimed her as "a ward of the United States." See *U.S. v. John B. Paquet*, Bill of Complaint in Equity, Sept. 21, 1923, 3.

9. *In re Paquet's Estate*, 200 P 911 at 913 (Oregon, 1921).

10. *In re Paquet's Estate*, 200 P 911 at 914 (Oregon, 1921).

11. Although the issue did not come up in the Paquet case, . . . in miscegenation cases, not only the wife but also the children might lose their legal standing, for one effect of invalidating an interracial marriage was to make the children technically illegitimate. According to the law of most states, illegitimate children automatically inherited from their mothers, but they could inherit from their fathers only if their father had taken legal steps to formally recognize or adopt them. Since plaintiffs could rarely convince judges that fathers had done so, the children of interracial marriages were often disinherited along with their mothers.

12. Derrick Bell, "Remembrances of Racism Past," in Hill and Jones, *Race in America: The Struggle for Equality* (Madison, 1992), 78. See also Bell, "White Superiority in America: Its Legal Legacy, Its Economic Costs," *Villanova Law Review* 33 (1988), 767–779.

13. *Paquet v. Henkle*, Respondent's brief, March 14, 1920, 6; *Paquet v. Henkle*, Index to Transcript, August 25, 1920, 3.

14. *Paquet v. Paquet*, Respondent's brief, November 1, 1920, 7. Using typical imagery, they added that the Paquet relationship was "a case where a white man and a full blooded Indian woman have

chosen to cohabit together illictly [sic], to agree to a relation of concubinage, which is not only a violation of the law of Oregon, but a transgression against the law of morality and the law of nature" (16).

15. *Paquet v. Paquet*, Appellant's First Brief, Oct. 8, 1920, 2.

16. *In re Paquet's Estate*, 200 911 at 914 (Oregon, 1921).

17. *U.S. v. John B. Paquet*, Bill of Complaint in Equity, Sept. 21, 1923, 4, 6–7.

18. *U.S. v. John B. Paquet*, Stipulation, June 2, 1924; *U.S. v. John B. Paquet*, Decree, June 2, 1924.

19. Tillamook County Probate file #605, J. S. Cole, Petition, June 7, 1928. Cole was president of the Tillamook-Lincoln County Credit Association.

20. For a particularly insightful analysis of the historical connections between concepts of "race" and "family," see Liu, "Teaching the Differences among Women in a Historical Perspective," *Women's Studies International Forum* 14 (1991): 265–276.

JUDY YUNG

Unbound Feet: From China to San Francisco's Chinatown

The imbalance of men and women in the largest Chinese community on the West Coast was a source of immense frustration, especially after the Immigration Act of 1924 effectively barred Chinese wives, even those married to US citizens, from entering the country. Pany Lowe, an American-born Chinese man, explained, "I think most Chinese in this country like have their son go to China get married. Under this new law . . . can't do this. No allowed marry white girl. Not enough American-born Chinese to go around. China only place to get wife. Not allowed to bring them back. For Chinaman, very unjust."* Although the act was amended in 1930 to allow the entry of women who had been married to US citizens prior to May 26, 1924, the process of gaining entrance was lengthy, costly, and humiliating for most Chinese women. Many men, like Pany Lowe, chose to visit their wives in China rather than subject them to the ordeal of immigration.

Judy Yung's essay traces the experiences of three women from Guangdong Province who arrived in San Francisco in 1922. Two, Wong Ah So and Law Shee Low, came from impoverished villages to join their husbands in arranged marriages. Wong Ah So was in for a major surprise when she discovered that her "marriage" was part of a system of enslaving women in forced prostitution. The third woman came from a different background with different expectations. Jane Kwong Lee was an urbanized, unmarried "new woman" who came to the United States to advance her education. While she endured many of the same gender and racial restrictions as the other two women, differences in her class and education made her experience—and the opportunities available to her—significantly different from that of other immigrant Chinese women in the 1920s.

* Quoted in Yung, *Unbound Feet*, 58.

Women's emancipation was heralded in San Francisco's Chinatown on the afternoon of November 2, 1902, when Sieh King, an eighteen-year-old student from China and an ardent reformer, stood before a theater full of men and women and, according to newspaper accounts, "boldly condemned the slave girl system, raged at the horrors of foot-binding and, with all the vehemence of aroused youth, declared that men and women were equal and should enjoy the privileges of equals."[1] Her talk and her views on women's rights were inextricably linked with Chinese nationalism and the 1898 Reform Movement, which advocated that China emulate the West and modernize in order to throw off the yoke of foreign domination. Elevating the status of women to the extent that they could become "new women"—educated mothers and productive citizens—was part of this nationalist effort to strengthen and defend China against further encroachment.

What Sieh King advocated on behalf of Chinese women—unbound feet, education, equal rights, and public participation—remained at the heart of social change for Chinese women for the next three decades. This was due largely to the continuous influence of nationalism and women's emancipation in China, the reform work of Protestant missionary women in Chinatown, and Chinese women's entry into the urban economy. By 1929, immigrant women had made considerable progress toward freeing themselves of social restrictions and moving into the public arena. Footbinding was no longer practiced, prostitution had been eradicated, and a substantial number of women were working outside the home, educating themselves and their daughters, and playing a more visible role in community affairs. This discussion of the lives of Chinese immigrant women from 1902, when Sieh King introduced her feminist views in San Francisco, to 1929, the beginnings of the Great Depression, will illustrate how socioeconomic developments in China and the United States facilitated the unbinding of their feet and of their lives.

JOURNEY TO GOLD MOUNTAIN

At the time of Sieh King King's speech, China was still suffering under the stranglehold of Western imperialism and the inept rule of the Manchus. Life for the ordinary Chinese remained disrupted; survival was precarious. Consequently, many able-bodied peasants in Southeast China continued to emigrate overseas where kinfolk had already settled. Despite the Chinese Exclusion Acts and anti-Chinese hostilities, a good number went to California, the Gold Mountain. As increased numbers of Chinese sojourners became settlers, some found the economic means by which to get married or send for their wives and children from China. American immigration laws and the process of chain migration determined that most Chinese women would continue to come from the rural villages of Guangdong Province, where traditional gender roles still prevailed. Among these women were Wong Ah So and Law Shee Low, who both emigrated as obedient daughters in 1922 to escape poverty at home. Jane Kwong Lee, who also came the same year, was among the small number of urbanized "new women" who emigrated on their own for educational reasons. Together, these three women's stories provide insights into the gender roles and immigration experiences of Chinese women in the early twentieth century.

"I was born in Guangdong Province," begins Wong Ah So's story. "My father was sometimes a sailor and sometimes he worked on the docks, for we were very poor."[2] Patriarchal cultural values often put the daughter at risk when poverty strikes: From among the five children in the family, her mother chose to betroth her, the eldest daughter, to a Gold Mountain man in exchange for a bride price of 450 Mexican dollars.

> I was 19 when this man came to my mother and said that in America there was a great deal of gold. Even if I just peeled potatoes there, he told my mother I would earn seven or eight dollars a day, and if I was willing to do any work at all I would earn lots of money. He was a laundryman, but said he earned plenty of money. He was very nice to me, and my mother liked him, so my mother was glad to have me go with him as his wife.

Out of filial duty and economic necessity, Ah So agreed to sail to the United States with this laundryman, Huey Yow. He had a marriage certificate prepared and told her to claim him as her husband to the immigration officials in San Francisco, although as she admitted later, "I claimed to be the wife of Huey Yow, but in truth had not at any time lived with him as his wife."

In Law Shee Low's case, her family succumbed to poverty after repeated raids by roving bandits in the Chungshan District of Guangdong Province. Conditions became so bad that the family had to sell their land and give up their three servants; all four daughters had to quit school and help at home. Speaking of her arranged marriage to a Gold Mountain man, she said, "I had no choice; we were so poor. We had no food to go with rice, not even soy sauce or black bean paste. Some of our neighbors even had to go begging or sell their daughters, times were so bad. So my parents thought I would have a better future in Gold Mountain."[3] Her fiancé said he was a clothing salesman in San Francisco and a Christian. He had a minister from Canton preside over the first "modern" wedding in his village. Law was eighteen and her husband, thirty-four. Nine months after the wedding, they sailed for America.

Born in 1902 to wealthy parents of the Toishan District, Guangdong Province (her family owned land and her father and uncle were successful businessmen in Australia), Jane Kwong Lee was able to acquire a Western education in the treaty port of Canton. There she was first exposed to American ideas of democracy and women's emancipation. During her last year in school, she was swept up by the May Fourth Movement, in which students agitated for political and cultural reforms in response to continuing foreign domination. At the time of her graduation from middle school, she observed that classmates were either entering technical institutions or getting married. "I thought otherwise," she said. "I enjoyed studying and I wanted to be economically independent. In that sense, it was clear in my mind that I had to have as much formal education as possible."[4]

Although she wanted to become a doctor, medical school was out of the question, as her father's remittances from Australia could no longer support both her and her younger brother's education. Arguing that graduates trained in American colleges and universities were drawing higher salaries in China than local graduates, Jane convinced her mother to sell some of their land in order to pay her passage to the United States. She then obtained a student's visa and sailed for America, planning to earn a doctorate and return home to a prestigious academic post. Jane Kwong Lee's class background, education, and early exposure to Western ideas would lead her to a different life experience in America than Law Shee Low and Wong Ah So, who came as obedient wives from sheltered and impoverished families.

The San Francisco Chinatown that the three women came to call home was different from the slum of "filth and depravity" of bygone days. After the 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed Chinatown, Chinese community leaders seized the opportunity to create a new "Oriental City" on the original site. The new Chinatown, in stark contrast to the old, was by appearance cleaner, healthier, and more modern with its wider paved streets, brick buildings, glass-plated storefronts, and pseudo-Chinese architecture. In an effort to establish order in the community, nurture business, and protect the growing numbers of families, the merchant elite and middle-class bourgeoisie established new institutions: Chinese schools, churches, a hospital, newspapers, and a flurry of civic and political organizations. Soon after the 1911 Revolution in China, queues and footbinding were eliminated, tong wars and prostitution reduced, and more of Chinatown's residents were dressing in Western clothing and adopting democratic ideas. Arriving in San Francisco's Chinatown at this juncture in time gave immigrant women such as Wong Ah So, Law Shee Low, and Jane Kwong Lee unprecedented opportunities to become "new women" in the modern era of Chinatown.

ESCAPING "A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH"

Upon landing in America, Wong Ah So's dreams of wealth and happiness vanished when she found out that her husband, Huey Yow, had in fact been paid $500 by a madam to procure her as a slave.

> When we first landed in San Francisco we lived in a hotel in Chinatown, a nice place, but one day, after I had been there for about two weeks, a woman came to see me. She was young, very pretty, and all dressed in silk. She told me that I was not really Huey Yow's wife, but that she had asked him to buy her a slave, that I belonged to her, and must go with her, but she would treat me well, and I could buy back my freedom, if I was willing to please, and be agreeable, and she would let me off in two years, instead of four if I did not make a fuss.

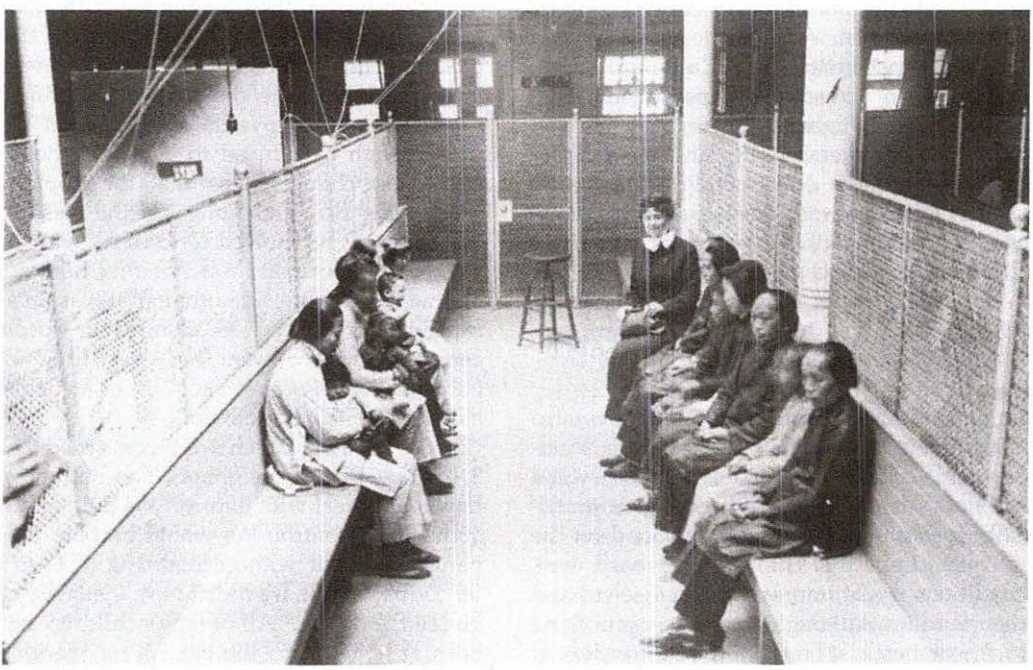
For the next year, Wong Ah So worked as a prostitute for the madam in various small

towns. She was also forced to borrow $1,000 to pay off Huey Yow, who was harassing her and threatening her life. Soon after, she was sold to another madam in Fresno for $2,500. Meanwhile, her family in China continued to write her, asking for money. Even as her debts piled up and she became ill, she fulfilled her filial obligation by sending $300 home to her mother, enclosed with a letter that read in part:

> Every day I have to be treated by the doctor. My private parts pain me so that I cannot have intercourse with men. It is very hard. . . . Next year I certainly will be able to pay off all the debts. Your daughter is even more anxious than her mother to do this. Your daughter will do her part so that the world will not look down upon us.

Then one evening at a tong banquet where she was working, Wong Ah So was recognized by a friend of her father's, who sought help from the Presbyterian Mission Home on her behalf. Ten days later, she was rescued and placed in the care of Donaldina Cameron, the director of the home. As she wrote, "I don't know just how it happened because it was all very sudden. I just know that it happened. I am learning English and to weave, and I am going to send money to my mother when I can. I can't help but cry, but it is going to be better. I will do what Miss Cameron says." A year later, after learning how to read Chinese and speak English and becoming a Christian, Ah So agreed to marry Louie Kwong, a merchant in Boise, Idaho.

Wong Ah So's story harks back to the plight of the many Chinese women who were brought to the United States as prostitutes to fill a specific need in the Chinese bachelor society. By the 1920s, however, the traffic had gone underground and was on the decline due to the Chinese exclusion laws, anti-prostitution legislation, and the efforts of Protestant missionaries. In 1870, the peak year of prostitution, 1,426 or 71 percent of Chinese women in San Francisco were listed as prostitutes. By 1900 the number had dropped to 339 or 16 percent; and by 1910, 92 or 7 percent. No prostitutes could be found in the 1920 census, although English- and Chinese-language newspaper accounts and the records of the Presbyterian Mission Home indicate that organized prostitution continued through the 1920s.[5]



Newly arrived Chinese women and children awaiting interrogation at the Immigration Station on Angel Island, near San Francisco, sometime after 1910. (Courtesy of California Historical Society, FN-18240.)

Most well known for her rescue work in Chinatown, Donaldina Cameron was a product of the Social Gospel and Progressive movements, which sought to uplift the "uncivilized" throughout the world and eradicate political corruption and social vices in the nation's cities. Unable to work effectively among Chinatown bachelors and spurned by white prostitutes, Cameron found her calling among Chinese prostitutes and slave girls. In turn, some Chinese prostitutes, calculating their chances in an oppressive environment with few options for improvement, saw the Mission Home as a way out of their problems. Cameron made it her crusade to free them from "a fate worse than death" by first rescuing them, and then inculcating them with Christian moral values. Numerous accounts in newspapers and religious publications describe in vivid detail the dangerous raids led by Cameron, who was credited with rescuing hundreds of Chinese slave girls during her forty years of service at the Presbyterian Mission Home.[6]

Once rescued, the young women were brought back to the Mission Home to be educated, trained in the domestic arts and industrial skills, and, most importantly, indoctrinated with Victorian moral values. The goal was to regroom them to enter society as Christian women. While some women chose to return to China under Christian escort, others opted to enter companionate marriages, pursue higher education, or become missionary workers. Wong Ah So—a direct beneficiary of the efforts of Protestant missionary women—was among the last to be rescued, Christianized, and married to a Chinese Christian.

IMMIGRANT WIVES AS INDISPENSABLE PARTNERS

Immigrant wives like Law Shee Low also found their lives transformed by the socioeconomic conditions in Chinatown. They did not find streets paved with gold, but practically speaking, they at least had food on the table and hope that through their hard work conditions might improve for themselves and their families. Although women were confined to the domestic sphere within the borders of Chinatown, their contributions as homemakers, wage earners, and culture bearers made them indispensable partners to their husbands in their struggle for economic survival. Their indispensability, combined with changing social attitudes toward women in Chinatown, gave some women leverage to shape gender arrangements within their homes and in the community.

Upon arrival in San Francisco, Law Shee Low moved into a one-room tenement apartment in Chinatown with her husband, where she lived, worked, and gave birth to eleven children, eight of whom survived. While her husband worked in a restaurant that catered to black customers on the outskirts of Chinatown, Law stayed home and took in sewing. Like other immigrant women who followed traditional gender roles, Law believed that the proper place for a woman was at home. As she recalls those days,

> There was no time to feel imprisoned; there was so much to do. We had to cook, wash the clothes and diapers by hand, the floors, and sew whenever we had a chance to sit still. It was the same for all my neighbors. We were all good, obedient, and diligent wives. All sewed; all had six or seven children. Who had time to go out?

Fortunately for Law Shee Low, her husband turned out to be cooperative, supportive, and devoted. Until he developed a heart condition in the 1950s, he remained the chief breadwinner, first cooking at a restaurant, then picking fruit in Suisun [California], sewing at home during the depression, and finally working in the shipyards during World War II. Although he refused to help with housecleaning or childcare, he did all the shopping, cooked the rice, and hung out the wash. In his own way, he showed concern for his wife. "When he was afraid I wasn't eating, he would tell me to eat more. Even though it was an arranged marriage, we got along well. I didn't complain that he went out every day. We hardly talked. Good or bad, we just struggled along as we had work to do."

As far as children were concerned Law Shee Low, like her neighbors, had not known how to interfere with nature. "We didn't know about birth control. We would become pregnant every year without realizing it. Even if we didn't want it, we didn't have the money to go see the doctor." All of Law's children were born at home, with the help of neighbors or the local midwife. Fortunately, her husband wanted children and was more than willing to provide for them all regardless of sex. "Other men would scold their children and beat them.

One woman who had four children told me her husband would drag her out of bed and beat her because she didn't want to have any more children. We heard all kinds of sad stories like that, but my husband never picked on me like that."

It was not until her children were older that Law Shee Low went out to work in the sewing factories and to the Chinese movies on Saturdays, but she still did not leave the confines of Chinatown. Prior to that, she went out so seldom that one pair of shoes lasted her ten years. Since their first responsibility was to their families, many immigrant wives like Law found themselves housebound, with no time to learn English or to participate in social activities outside the home. Their husbands continued to be the chief breadwinner, to hold the purse strings, and to be their liaison to the outside world. But in the absence of the mother-in-law, immigrant wives usually ruled the household and assumed the responsibility of disciplinarian, culture-bearer, and of maintaining the integrity of their families. With few exceptions, they were hardworking, frugal, and tolerant, faithful and respectful to their husbands, and self-sacrificing toward their children. As such, they were indispensable partners to their husbands in their efforts to establish and sustain family life in America. And although they presented a submissive image in public, many immigrant women were known to "wear the pants" at home.

Overall, as compared to their predecessors, immigrant women in the early twentieth century were less tolerant of abuses to their persons and more resourceful in upgrading their status, thanks to the influence of the press, the support of Protestant organizations in the community, and a legal system that was sympathetic toward abused women. Although most immigrant wives like Law Shee Low could not read the Chinese newspapers, they were affected by public opinion as filtered through their husbands, neighbors, and social reformers looking after their interests. Law noted that after the 1911 Revolution it was no longer considered "fashionable" to have bound feet, concubines, or slave girls. And as housebound as Law was, she was aware of the mission homes that rescued prostitutes, helped abused women, and provided education for children and immigrant women.

CHINESE WOMEN IN THE LABOR MARKET

Compared to Wong Ah So and Law Shee Low, Jane Kwong Lee had an easier time acclimating to life in America. Not only was she educated, Westernized, English-speaking, and unencumbered by family responsibilities, but she also had the help of affluent relatives who provided her with room and board, financial support, and important contacts that enabled her eventually to strike out on her own.

Arriving in the middle of a school semester and therefore unable to enroll in a college, she decided to look for a job. In spite of her educational background and qualifications, she found that only menial jobs and domestic service were opened to her. "At heart I was sorry for myself; I wished I were a boy," she wrote in her autobiography. "If I were a boy, I could have gone out into the community, finding a job somewhere as many newcomers from China had done." But as a Chinese woman, she had to bide her time and look for work appropriate for her race and gender. Thus, until she could be admitted to college, and during the summers after she enrolled at Mills College, Jane took whatever jobs were open to Chinese women. She tried embroidery work at a Chinatown factory, sorting vegetables in the wholesale district, working as a live-in domestic for a white family, peeling shrimp, sorting fruit at a local cannery, and sewing flannel nightgowns at home.

As was true for European immigrant women, the patterns of work for Chinese women were shaped by the intersection of the local economy, ethnic traditions, language and job skills, and family and child-care needs, but in addition, race was an influential factor. At the time of Jane's arrival, San Francisco was experiencing a period of growth and prosperity. Ranked the eighth largest city in the country, it was the major port of trade for the Pacific Coast and touted as the financial and corporate capital of the West. Jobs were plentiful in the city's three largest economic sectors—domestic and personal service, trade and transportation, and manufacturing and mechanical industries—but they were filled according to a labor market stratified by race and gender, with Chinese men occupying the lowest tier as laborers, servants, factory workers, laundrymen, and small merchants, while Chinese women, handicapped further

by gender, worked primarily in garment and food-processing factories for low piece-rate wages. With inadequate child-care services in the community, most seamstresses worked with their children close by or had their babies strapped to their backs.

For Jane Kwong Lee, being Chinese and a woman was a liability in the job market, but because she spoke English, was educated, and had good contacts among Chinese Christians, she was better off than most other immigrant women. She eventually got a scholarship at Mills College and part-time work teaching Chinese school and tutoring Chinese adults in English at the Chinese Episcopal Church in Oakland. After earning her bachelor's degree in sociology, she married, had two children, and returned to Mills College, where she received a master's degree in sociology and economics in 1933. She then dedicated herself to community service, working many years as coordinator of the Chinese YWCA and as a journalist and translator for a number of Chinatown newspapers.

For most immigrant women, joining the labor market proved to be a double-edged sword: On the one hand, their earnings helped to support their families and elevate their socioeconomic status; on the other hand, they became exploited laborers in the factory system, adding work and stress to their already burdensome lives. On the positive side, however, working outside the home offered women social rewards—a new sense of freedom, accomplishment, and camaraderie. They were no longer confined to the home, they were earning money for themselves or the family, and they were making new acquaintances and becoming exposed to new ideas. As Jane Kwong Lee observed, having money to spend made the women feel more liberated in America than in China: "They can buy things for themselves, go out to department stores to choose their own clothes instead of sewing them."

FIRST STEPS TOWARD SOCIAL ACTIVISM

For working-class women like Law Shee Low, family and work responsibilities consumed all their time and energy, leaving little left over for self-improvement or leisure activities, and even less for community involvement. This was not the case for a growing group of educated and professional women like Jane Kwong Lee, who, inspired by Christianity, Chinese nationalism, and Progressivism, took the first steps toward social activism. Prior to the 1911 Revolution in their homeland, Chinese women in America followed the tradition of remaining publicly invisible. They seldom ventured out of their homes except perhaps to shop or go to the Chinese opera, where they sat in a segregated section apart from the men.

The Protestant churches and Chinese YWCA were the first to encourage Chinese women's participation in organized activities outside the home, as evidenced by the small but visible number of them at Sunday services, English classes, meetings, outings, and other church-sponsored programs. Some of the churches also helped organize Chinese women's societies to encourage involvement in Christian activities. Members of these groups met regularly to have lunch or socialize, and paid dues to help support the work of Bible women in their home villages in China.[7]

Aside from Christianity, the intense nationalistic spirit that took hold in the early twentieth century also affected Chinese women in far-reaching ways. Not only did the call for modernization include the need to improve conditions for Chinese women, but reformers also solicited women's active participation in national salvation work. Fundraising for disaster relief and the revolution in China opened up opportunities for women to become involved in the community, develop leadership abilities, and move into the male-dominated public sphere. The Tongmenghui, the revolutionary party founded by Dr. Sun Yat-sen to overthrow the Qing dynasty and establish a republic in China, was the earliest organization to accept women into its ranks. While women in China participated in benefit performances, enlisted in the army, and engaged in dangerous undercover work, women in San Francisco also did their share for the revolutionary effort—making patriotic speeches, donating money and jewelry for the cause, and helping with Red Cross work—sometimes under the auspices of Protestant churches, other times under the banner of the Women's Young China Society.

Although the success of the revolution and the establishment of a republic in China failed to bring peace and prosperity to the country, it did have a lasting impact on the lives of Chinese American women. As Jane Kwong Lee observed, "After the establishment

of the Republic of China, Chinese women in this country picked up the forward-looking trend for equality with men. They could go to school, speak in public places, have their feet free from binding, and go out to work in stores and small factories if they needed to work."[8]

Arriving as a liberated woman at the time when she did, Jane did not hesitate to join other women in becoming socially active in the Chinatown community. In her capacity as a community worker at the Chinese YWCA, she made house visits, wrote articles that were published in the local newspapers, and implemented programs that benefited Chinese women in the community. She was particularly known for her loud and forceful speeches that she delivered in Chinese at churches and street corners in support of Christianity and nationalist causes, and before Chinatown organizations on behalf of the Chinese YWCA. Jane also made presentations in English to groups interested in learning more about Chinese culture, and traveled as a Chinese delegate to YWCA functions outside of Chinatown. On one of these occasions, she was so moved by a discussion on racial discrimination that she surprised herself and African Americans at a YWCA meeting by speaking up for them. "I said, you are all equal; nobody is inferior to another."[9]

CONCLUSION

As Sieh King had advocated in 1902, Chinese women unbound their feet and began to unbind their lives in America during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Most, like Law Shee Low and Wong Ah So, had immigrated for a better livelihood but found themselves exploited as prostitutes or working wives at the bottom of a labor market stratified by race and gender. Some, like Jane Kwong Lee, had come from a privileged background yet still encountered discrimination in the workplace and in the larger American society. But like many other immigrant women before them, they not only persevered and survived, but took advantage of new circumstances to improve their lives and contribute to the well-being of their families and community. Even as immigrant women began to enjoy their new roles as emancipated women, economic depression set in and war loomed large in their homeland. The challenges of the 1930s and 1940s—economic survival and the war effort on two fronts—would lead to even greater dramatic changes in their lives, allowing them to take the first steps toward fuller participation in American society.

NOTES

1. *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 3, 1902, 7.

2. Wong Ah So's story is taken from "Story of Wong Ah So—Experiences as a Prostitute," *Orientals and Their Cultural Adjustment*, Social Science Source Documents, no. 4 (Nashville: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1946), 31–35; and Donaldina Cameron, "The Story of Wong So," *Women and Missions* 2:5 (Aug. 1925):169–72.

3. Law Shee Low's story is based on her interview with Sandy Lee, May 2, 1982; and interview with author, Oct. 20, 1988.

4. Jane Kwong Lee's story is based on her unpublished autobiography, "A Chinese American," in the possession of her daughter, Priscilla Holmes.

5. See Lucie Cheng Hirata, "Free, Indentured, Enslaved: Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century California," *Signs* 5:1 (1979): 3–29. The figures for 1900, 1910, and 1920 are based on my computations from the U.S. National Archives, Record Group 29, "Census of U.S. Population" (manuscript), San Francisco, Calif.

6. See Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874–1939* (New York, 1990).

7. See Wesley Woo, "Protestant Work among the Chinese in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1850–1920" (Ph.D. diss.: Univ. of California, Berkeley, 1983).

8. Jane Kwong Lee, "Chinese Women in San Francisco," *Chinese Digest* (June 1938), 8.

9. Jane Kwong Lee, interview with author, Nov. 2, 1988.

DOCUMENT

Zitkála-Šá, The Americanization of Native American Children

Zitkála-Šá (1876–1938), whose mother was Sioux and father was Anglo-American, sought throughout her life to bridge the cultures of Native Americans and the United States. She was one of the first American Indian women who built an independent career as a writer; her voice, as the following selection from her early writing shows, could be simultaneously eloquent, sentimental, and bitter. Zitkála-Šá was eight years old when she left her home on the Yankton Sioux Agency in South Dakota for White's Indiana Manual Labor Institute in Wabash, Indiana, a training school funded by Quakers. She continued her education first at a teacher training school close to her home, then at Earlham College, and finally at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, where she studied the violin.

After her marriage in 1901, Zitkála-Šá worked with her husband, Raymond Bonnin, who was an employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, advocating citizenship for Indians, exposing corruption in the bureau, and insisting on the dignity of Indian religions. In this stage of her life, she used her anglicized married name, Gertrude Simmons Bonnin. Bonnin lobbied for the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924; she founded the National Council of American Indians; and she sought to shape the Indian policy of the New Deal years.

When she wrote this memoir of her childhood in 1900 at age twenty-four, Zitkála-Šá had not yet taught at the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. The experience would strengthen her criticism of the practice of removing native children from their homes. It would also lead her to expose the corruption she found among the school's directors, who received federal money for each child they boarded and whose promotion of "Americanization" could be harsh and cruel. To what extent did her mother anticipate that the experience at the mission school would be difficult? What advantage did the educators think would result from cutting girls' hair? What evidence is there to suggest that she herself was involved in the process of acculturation?

The first turning away from the easy, natural flow of my life occurred in an early spring. It was in my eighth year; in the month of March, I afterward learned. At this age I knew but one language, and that was my mother's native tongue.

From some of my playmates I heard that two paleface missionaries were in our village. They were from that class of white men who wore big hats and carried large hearts, they said. Running direct to my mother, I began to question her why these two strangers were among us. She told me, after I had teased much, that they had come to take away Indian boys and girls to the East. My mother did not seem to want me to talk about them. But in a day or two, I gleaned many wonderful stories from my playfellows concerning the strangers.

"Mother, my friend Judéwin is going home with the missionaries. She is going to a more beautiful country than ours; the palefaces told

Excerpted from "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian Girl," and "An Indian Teacher among Indians," by Zitkála-Šá, *Atlantic Monthly* 85 (Jan., Feb., Mar. 1900): 45–47, 186–87, 386.

Zitkála-Šá, ca. 1898, posed in traditional dress.
This photograph is one in a series taken by the professional photographer Gertrude Käsebier, who had a studio on Fifth Avenue in New York City. In other images taken at the same sitting, Zitkála-Šá is in Western dress (a white gown), and in some she holds in her lap a book, her violin, or an Indian basket. For interpretations of Käsebier's portraits of Zitkála-Šá and other American Indians, see Laura Wexler, Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of US Imperialism *(Chapel Hill: 2000), 115–124, 177–208; and Elizabeth Hutchinson, "When the 'Sioux Chief's Party Calls': Käsebier's Indian Portraits and the Gendering of the Artist's Studio,"* American Art *16 (Summer 2002), 40-65. (Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.)*

her so!" I said wistfully, wishing in my heart that I too might go.

Mother sat in a chair, and I was hanging on her knee. Within the last two seasons my big brother Dawée had returned from a three years' education in the East, and his coming back influenced my mother to take a farther step from her native way of living. First it was a change from the buffalo skin to the white man's canvas that covered our wigwam. Now she had given up her wigwam of slender poles, to live, a foreigner, in a home of clumsy logs.

Judéwin had told me of the great tree where grew red, red apples; and how we could reach out our hands and pick all the red apples we could eat. I had never seen apple trees. I had never tasted more than a dozen red apples in my life; and when I heard of the orchards of the East, I was eager to roam among them. The missionaries smiled into my eyes, and patted my head. I wondered how mother could say such hard words against them.

"Mother, ask them if little girls may have all the red apples they want, when they go East," I whispered aloud, in my excitement.

The interpreter heard me, and answered: "Yes, little girl, the nice red apples are for those who pick them; and you will have a ride on the iron horse if you go with these good people."

I had never seen a train, and he knew it.

"Mother, I'm going East! I like big red apples, and I want to ride on the iron horse! Mother, say yes!" I pleaded.

My mother said nothing. The missionaries waited in silence; and my eyes began to blur with tears, though I struggled to choke them back. The corners of my mouth twitched, and my mother saw me.

"I am not ready to give you any word," she said to them. "Tomorrow I shall send you my answer by my son."

With this they left us. Alone with my mother, I yielded to my tears, and cried aloud, shaking my head so as not to hear what she was saying to me. This was the first time I had ever been so unwilling to give up my own desire that I refused to harken to my mother's voice.

There was a solemn silence in our home that night. Before I went to bed I begged the Great Spirit to make my mother willing I should go with the missionaries.

The next morning came, and my mother called me to her side. "My daughter, do you still persist in wishing to leave your mother?" she asked.

"Oh, mother, it is not that I wish to leave you, but I want to see the wonderful Eastern land," I answered. . . .

. . . My brother Dawée came for mother's decision. I dropped my play, and crept close to my aunt.

"Yes, Dawée, my daughter, though she does not understand what it all means, is anxious to go. She will need an education when she is grown, for then there will be fewer real Dakotas, and many more palefaces. This tearing her away, so young, from her mother is necessary, if I would have her an educated woman. The palefaces, who owe us a large debt for stolen lands, have begun to pay a tardy justice in offering some education to our children. But I know my daughter must suffer keenly in this experiment. For her sake, I dread to tell you my reply to the missionaries. Go, tell them that they may take my little daughter, and that the Great Spirit shall not fail to reward them according to their hearts."

Wrapped in my heavy blanket, I walked with my mother to the carriage that was soon to take us to the iron horse. I was happy. I met my playmates, who were also wearing their best thick blankets. We showed one another our new beaded moccasins, and the width of the belts that girdled our new dresses. Soon we were being drawn rapidly away by the white man's horses. When I saw the lonely figure of my mother vanish in the distance, a sense of regret settled heavily upon me. I felt suddenly weak, as if I might fall limp to the ground. I was in the hands of strangers whom my mother did not fully trust. I no longer felt free to be myself, or to voice my own feelings. The tears trickled down my cheeks, and I buried my face in the folds of my blanket. Now the first step, parting me from my mother, was taken, and all my belated tears availed nothing.

Having driven thirty miles to the ferryboat, we crossed the Missouri in the evening. Then riding again a few miles eastward, we stopped before a massive brick building. I looked at it in amazement, and with a vague misgiving, for in our village I had never seen so large a house. Trembling with fear and distrust of the palefaces, my teeth chattering from the chilly ride, I crept noiselessly in my soft moccasins along the narrow hall, keeping very close to the bare wall. I was as frightened and bewildered as the captured young of a wild creature.

The first day in the land of apples was a bitter-cold one; for the snow still covered the ground,

and the trees were bare. A large bell rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears. The annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. And though my spirit tore itself in struggling for its lost freedom, all was useless.

A paleface woman, with white hair, came up after us. We were placed in a line of girls who were marching into the dining room. These were Indian girls, in stiff shoes and closely clinging dresses. The small girls wore sleeved aprons and shingled hair. As I walked noiselessly in my soft moccasins, I felt like sinking to the floor, for my blanket had been stripped from my shoulders. I looked hard at the Indian girls, who seemed not to care that they were even more immodestly dressed than I, in their tightly fitting clothes. While we marched in, the boys entered at an opposite door. I watched for the three young braves who came in our party. I spied them in the rear ranks, looking as uncomfortable as I felt. . . .

. . . Late in the morning, my friend Judéwin gave me a terrible warning. Judéwin knew a few words of English; and she had overheard the paleface woman talk about cutting our long, heavy hair. Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!

We discussed our fate some moments, and when Judéwin said, "We have to submit, because they are strong," I rebelled.

"No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!" I answered.

I watched my chance, and when no one noticed I disappeared. I crept up the stairs as quietly as I could in my squeaking shoes—my moccasins had been exchanged for shoes. Along the hall I passed, without knowing whither I was going. Turning aside to an open door, I found a large room with three white beds in it. The windows were covered with dark green curtains, which made the room very dim. Thankful that no one was there, I directed my steps toward the corner farthest from the door. On my hands and knees I crawled under the bed, and cuddled myself in the dark corner.

From my hiding place I peered out, shuddering with fear whenever I heard footsteps near by. Though in the hall loud voices were calling my name, and I knew that even Judéwin was searching for me, I did not open my mouth to answer. Then the steps were quickened and the voices became excited. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Women and girls entered the room. I held my breath, and watched them open closet doors and peep behind large trunks. Some one threw up the curtains, and the room was filled with sudden light. What caused them to stoop and look under the bed I do not know. I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder. . . .

. . . Now, as I look back upon the recent past, I see it from a distance, as a whole. I remember how, from morning till evening, many specimens of civilized peoples visited the Indian school. The city folks with canes and eyeglasses, the countrymen with sunburnt cheeks and clumsy feet, forgot their relative social ranks in an ignorant curiosity. Both sorts of these Christian palefaces were alike astounded at seeing the children of savage warriors so docile and industrious.

As answers to their shallow inquiries they received the students' sample work to look upon. Examining the neatly figured pages, and gazing upon the Indian girls and boys bending over their books, the white visitors walked out of the schoolhouse well satisfied: They were educating the children of the red man! They were paying a liberal fee to the government employees in whose able hands lay the small forest of Indian timber.

In this fashion many have passed idly through the Indian schools during the last decade, afterward to boast of their charity to the North American Indian. But few there are who have paused to question whether real life or long-lasting death lies beneath this semblance of civilization.

Change Agents

KATHRYN KISH SKLAR

Florence Kelley and Women's Activism in the Progressive Era

Florence Kelley was a remarkable woman who lived in a period when the social sciences and the welfare state sought to address the problems created by industrialization and urbanization. Through an examination of Kelley, historian Kathryn Sklar illuminates how she and other progressive women of her generation pursued social justice. Sklar reveals the factors that made it possible for these women—who still did not have the right to vote—to influence public policy. She also describes the changing political context that limited their impact during the first Red Scare at the end of World War I.

What were the personal and intellectual influences that shaped Kelley's vision of social reform? What strategies did she employ in pursuit of that vision? How did the Red Scare affect women's organizations' political agendas? What features of women's power in the Progressive Era could be described as "gendered"?

One of the most powerful women in American history deserves to be better known today. Florence Kelley (1859–1932) was well known to her contemporaries as a leading champion of social justice legislation. For most of the 1890s she lived in the nation's leading reform institution, Hull House, a social settlement founded in Chicago by Jane Addams in 1889. Between 1899 and 1932 she served as head of the National Consumers' League in New York City.

Living collectively with other women reformers in Chicago and New York, Florence Kelley was able to make the most of her talents; for four decades she occupied the vanguard of social reform. Her forceful personality flourished in the combative atmosphere generated by her struggles for social justice. Jane Addams's nephew, who resided with Kelley at Hull House, was awed by the way she "hurled the spears of her thought with such apparent carelessness of what breasts they pierced." He thought her "the toughest customer in the reform riot, the finest rough-and-tumble fighter for the good life for others, that Hull House ever knew: Any weapon was a good weapon in her hand—evidence, argument, irony or invective." Nevertheless, he said, those who were close to her knew she was "full of love."[1]

Kelley's career, like that of many of her reform contemporaries, was responding to profound changes in American social and economic life. Rapid industrialization was recasting the economy, massive immigration was reconstituting the working class, and sustained urbanization was making cities the focus of social change.[2] In this context, college-educated women reformers often achieved what men and male-dominated organizations could not.

Florence Kelley's life helps us understand how women reformers accomplished their

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goals. Her reform career exemplified four significant features of women's power in the Progressive Era: their access to higher education; their prominence in early social science; the political autonomy of their separate institutions; and their ability to challenge American traditions of limited government. Having experienced these ingredients of women's power in her own life before 1899, thereafter, as the General Secretary of the National Consumers' League, she integrated them into her strategies for pursuing social justice.[3]

WOMEN'S ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

When she graduated from Cornell University in 1882, Florence Kelley joined thousands of other young women in her generation who received college educations. Two changes in the 1860s and 1870s enabled white, middle-class women to attend college in sufficient numbers to become a sociological phenomenon. Elite women's colleges, such as Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley, began accepting students between 1865 and 1875, providing equivalents to elite men's colleges such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. And state universities, established through the allocation of public lands in the Morrill Act of 1862 and required to be "open for all," gradually made college educations accessible for the first time to large numbers of women in the nation's central and western states. By 1880 women, numbering forty thousand, constituted 33 percent of all enrolled students in higher education.[4] Though a small percentage of all women, they exercised an influence disproportionate to their numbers.

To Cornell Kelley brought a social conscience shaped by her family. Born into an elite Philadelphia family with Quaker and Unitarian political traditions, she grew up against the background of the Civil War and Reconstruction—dramas in which her father and her mother's aunt played major roles. Her father, William Durrah Kelley, one of the founders of the Republican Party, was reelected to fifteen consecutive terms in the U.S. Congress between 1860 and 1890. As a Radical Republican, he advanced the cause of black suffrage and tried to forge a biracial Republican Party in the South. Her mother's aunt, Sarah Pugh, served as president of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society almost every year between 1838 and 1870. In the 1860s and 1870s, Pugh accompanied her close friend, Lucretia Mott, to early woman suffrage conventions. To young "Florrie," Sarah Pugh was conscience incarnate, a full-time reformer who lived her beliefs, never wearing slave-made cotton or eating slave-produced sugar.[5]

During six mostly schoolless years before she entered Cornell, Florence systematically read through her father's library, imbibing the fiction of Dickens and Thackeray, Louisa May Alcott and Horatio Alger; the poetry of Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, and Goldsmith; the writings of James Madison; histories by Bancroft, Prescott, and Parkman; and the moral and political philosophy of Emerson, Channing, Burke, Carlyle, Godwin, and Spencer. These readings helped her reach out to her moody and distant father. For that purpose she also began reading government reports at the age of ten and, on trips to Washington, began using the Library of Congress by the time she was twelve.

A darker side of Kelley's childhood was shaped by her mother's permanent depression—caused by the death of five of her eight children before they had reached the age of six. Caroline Bonsall Kelley was a descendant of John Bartram, the Quaker botanist. Orphaned at the age of nine, she was raised in the Pugh family. With the death of her infants, Caroline developed a "settled, gentle melancholy" that threatened to envelop her daughter as long as she lived at home.[6] Florence grew up with two brothers, but no sisters survived. Keenly aware of the high social cost of infant mortality to nineteenth-century families, she developed a rage against human suffering that formed her lifelong career as a reformer.

WOMEN'S PROMINENCE IN EARLY SOCIAL SCIENCE

Like higher education, the newly emerging field of social science served as a critical vehicle by which middle-class women expanded the space they occupied within American civic life between 1860 and 1890. Social science leveled the playing field on which women interacted with men in public life. It offered tools of analysis that enhanced women's ability to investigate economic and social change, speak for the welfare of the whole society, devise policy initiatives, and oversee their implementation. Yet at the same time, social science also deepened women's gender identity in public

life and attached their civic activism even more securely to gender-specific issues.[7]

Kelley's early commitment to social science as a tool for social reform built on a generation of women's presence in American social science. Women came with the civic territory that social science embraced. Caroline Dall had been a cofounder of the association in 1865, and other women were especially active in the American Social Science Association's (ASSA) department of education, public health, and social economy, which gave them clear but limited mandates for leadership.

The question of "After college, what?" was as pertinent to Florence Kelley as it was to other women graduates.[8] Barred from admission to graduate study at the University of Pennsylvania because she was a woman, she faced a very limited set of opportunities. First she threw her energies into the New Century Working Women's Guild, an organization that fostered middle-class aid for self-supporting women. She helped found the guild, taught classes in history, and assembled the group's library. Then, remaining a dutiful daughter, in 1882 she accompanied her brother when his doctor prescribed a winter of European travel to cure temporary blindness. In Europe she encountered M. Carey Thomas, a Cornell acquaintance, who had just completed a Ph.D. at the University of Zurich, the only European university that granted degrees to women. Thomas recommended that Kelley go to Zurich for graduate study.

Initially accompanied by her mother and younger brother, Kelley studied government and law at Zurich between 1883 and 1886. There she promptly befriended exiled socialist students from Russia and Germany. To the shocked amazement of her family and friends, in 1885 she married Lazare Wischnewetzky, a Russian, Jewish, socialist medical student. She then gave birth to three children in three years.

Cloaked with her new personal identity as a European married woman, she stopped communicating with her family and began to forge a new political identity. Rejecting American public culture because it limited her opportunities for social service and because her father's career revealed so starkly that culture's tolerance of social injustice, she underwent a dramatic conversion to socialism, joined the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), and began to translate the writings of Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx. Outlawed in Germany, the SPD maintained its European headquarters in Zurich, where Kelley met many of its leaders. Since the death of Marx in 1885, Engels had become the chief theoretician of German socialism. Kelley's translation of his 1845 book, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, is still the preferred scholarly version of that now-classic social science study. This project launched a close but troubled relationship with Engels that persisted until his death in 1895.[9]

When Kelley returned to the United States in 1886 with her small family, she searched without success for a political context capable of sustaining her newfound radicalism. Settling in New York City, within a year she was expelled from the Socialist Labor Party, predominantly a German-speaking immigrant group, for "incessant slander" against party leaders, whom she denounced for failing to recognize the importance of the writings of Marx and Engels.[10] Having reached a political dead-end, Kelley reoriented her use of social science as a vehicle for her activism. She resumed contact with her Philadelphia family and became a self-taught authority on child labor in the United States, as well as a sharp critic of state bureaus of labor, the agencies responsible for monitoring child labor. Writing articles on child labor that deployed both statistical and rhetorical power, she discovered that her most responsive publisher was the Woman's Temperance Publication Association, which printed her lengthy, hard-hitting pamphlet, *Our Toiling Children*, in 1889.

Lazare Wischnewetzky, meanwhile, never having managed to establish a medical practice, began battering her. After enduring this for more than a year, she borrowed money from a friend and fled with her children to Chicago. There she headed for the Woman's Temple, a twelve-story office building and hotel constructed by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, where she was directed to an even more congenial place—Hull House, the nation's preeminent social settlement founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in 1889.

THE POLITICAL AUTONOMY OF WOMEN'S SEPARATE INSTITUTIONS

"We were welcomed as though we had been invited," Kelley later wrote about her arrival at Hull House. "We stayed."[11] Addams arranged for Kelley's children, Nicholas, Margaret, and

John, age seven, six, and five, to live with the family of Henry Demarest Lloyd and his wife, Jessie Bross Lloyd. That winter Kelley cast her lot with Addams and Hull House, remaining until May 1, 1899, when she returned to New York as a figure who had achieved national renown as a reformer of working conditions for women and children.

Chicago and the remarkable political culture of the city's women opened opportunities to Kelley that she had sought in vain in Philadelphia, Germany, and New York. Exploiting those opportunities to the fullest, she drew on the strength of three overlapping circles of politically active women. The core of her support lay with the community of women at Hull House. This remarkable group helped her reconstruct her political identity within women's class-bridging activism and provided her with an economic and emotional alternative to married family life. Partly overlapping with this nucleus were women trade unionists. By drawing women and men trade unionists into the settlement community, she achieved the passage of pathbreaking legislation. Toward the end of her years in Chicago, she worked with the circle of middle-class and upper-middle-class women who supported Hull House and labor reform.

Florence Kelley's life in Chicago began with her relationship with Jane Addams. Julia Lathrop, another Hull House resident, reported that Kelley and Addams "understood each other's powers" instantly and worked together in a "wonderfully effective way."[12] Addams, the philosopher with a deep appreciation of the unity of life, was better able to construct a vehicle for expressing that unity in day-to-day living than she was capable of devising a diagram for charting the future. And Kelley, the politician with a thorough understanding of what the future should look like, was better able to invoke that future than to express it in her day-to-day existence. Addams taught Kelley how to live and have faith in an imperfect world, and Kelley taught Addams how to make demands on the future.

At Hull House Kelley joined a community of college-educated women reformers who, like Addams and herself, sought work commensurate with their talents. Julia Lathrop, almost twenty years later the first director of the U.S. Children's Bureau, had joined the settlement before Kelley. Alice Hamilton, who arrived in 1897, developed the field of industrial medicine. These four, with Mary Rozet Smith, Jane Addams's life partner, became the settlement's main leaders. In addition to these women, Kelley forged close ties with Mary Kenney, a trade union organizer affiliated with the settlement, who lived nearby with her mother.

Since her father had lost most of his money before his death in 1890, Kelley had to support herself and her children. She first did so by working for the Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Department of Labor, collecting data for governmental studies of working conditions. A good example of the empowerment of her Hull House residence lay in her use of data collected for the U.S. Department of Labor, which in 1895 formed the basis of the maps published in *Hull House Maps and Papers*. She and four government "schedule men" collected responses to sixty-four questions on printed schedules from "each house, tenement, and room" in the ward surrounding Hull House.[13] From this data Carroll Wright, head of the Department of Labor, constructed scores of tables. But Kelley and Hull House associates, using only data about nationalities and wages in conjunction with residential information, created color-coded maps that displayed geographic patterns that told more than Wright's charts. Because the maps defined spatial relationships among human groups, they vividly depicted social and economic relationships: the concentration of certain ethnic groups in certain blocks; the relationship between poverty and race; the distances between the isolated brothel district and the rest of the ward; the very poor who lived in crowded, airless rooms in the rear of tenements and those with more resources in the front; and the omniscient observer and the observed. Expressing the democratic relationship among Hull House residents, *Hull House Maps and Papers* listed only "Residents of Hull House" as the volume's editors.

Kelley described the transformative effect of the Hull House community on her personal life in a letter to her mother a few weeks after her arrival. "In the few weeks of my stay here I have won for the children and myself many and dear friends whose generous hospitality astonishes me. It is understood that I am to resume the maiden name and that the children are to have it."[14] By joining a community of women, she had achieved a new degree of personal autonomy.

CHALLENGING TRADITIONS OF LIMITED GOVERNMENT

In the spring of 1892, Kelley used Hull House as a base to exert leadership within an anti-sweatshop campaign that had been launched in 1888 by the Illinois Woman's Alliance, a class-bridging coalition of women's organizations. At mass meetings that attacked the sweatshop system, Kelley shared the podium with Mary Kenney, Henry Demarest Lloyd, and other Chicago notables such as reverend Jenkin Lloyd Jones, minister at All Souls' Unitarian Church, the most liberal pulpit in Chicago, and with young trade union organizers in the clothing industry such as Abraham Bisno.

Campaigns against sweatshops were widespread in American cities in the 1890s. These efforts targeted "predatory management" and "parasitic manufacturers" who paid such low wages to their workers as to require them to seek support from relief or charity, thereby indirectly providing employers with subsidies that enabled them to lower wages further.[15] Supported by trade unions, these campaigns used a variety of strategies to shift work from tenement sweatshops to factories. In factories, union organizing could more easily succeed in improving working conditions and raising wages to levels necessary to sustain life.

Outcries raised by anti-sweatshop campaigns prompted government inquiries, and in 1893, after intense lobbying in Springfield by Hull House residents and other well-known Chicago women, the passage of pathbreaking legislation drafted by Florence Kelley. That year Governor John Peter Altgeld appointed Kelley to a position the new statute created: Chief Factory Inspector of Illinois. Nowhere else in the Western world was a woman trusted to enforce the labor legislation of a city, let alone of a large industrial region the size of Illinois. With eleven deputies, five of whom were required to be women, and a budget of $28,000, for the next three years Kelley enforced the act's chief clauses. The act banned the labor of children under fourteen years of age; it regulated the labor of children age fourteen to sixteen; it outlawed the production of garments in tenements; it prohibited the employment of women and minors for more than eight hours a day; and it created a state office of factory inspection.

The statute's eight-hour clause made it the most advanced in the United States, equaled only by an eight-hour law for all workers in Australia. The limitation of hours, whether through statutes or union negotiations with employers, was the second most important goal of the labor movement between 1870 and 1910, the first being the recognition of the right of workers to form unions. Skilled workers had acquired the eight-hour day for themselves in many trades by the 1890s, but since women were not admitted to most skilled occupations, their hours remained long, often extending to twelve or even fourteen hours a day. In the late 1880s more than 85 percent of female wage earners were between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five and only about 5 percent were married.[16] Excluded from access to skilled jobs and presumed to leave the paid labor force upon marriage, they were crowded into a few unskilled occupations, where they were easily replaced, and employers exploited them by requiring long hours and paying low wages. Statutes that limited women's hours limited this exploitation. How to achieve such reduction of hours without reducing wages was a challenge that Kelley's office met by promoting the formation of unions among affected women workers, thereby helping them negotiate better wages for the hours they worked.

But the reduction of women's hours by statute had other beneficial effects: in many occupations it also reduced the hours of unskilled men, as was the case in garment-making sweatshops. In this and many other occupations, it proved impossible to keep men working longer than the legal limit of the working day for women. Therefore, hours statutes drove sweatshops out of business, since their profits could only be achieved through long hours. In the United States more than in other industrializing nations, the union movement consisted with few exceptions (miners being the chief exception) of skilled workers who shunned responsibility for the welfare of unskilled workers. Therefore, in the United States more than in elsewhere, gender-specific reforms like Kelley's 1893 legislation—undertaken by women for women—also had the effect of aiding all unskilled workers, men as well as women and children. In the United States, where labor movements were not as strong as they were elsewhere, gender-specific reforms accomplished goals that elsewhere were achieved under the auspices of class-specific efforts.[17]

In an era when courts nullified legislative attempts to intervene in the laissez-faire

relationship between capital and labor, Kelley's enforcement of this new eight-hour law was inevitably challenged in the courts. In 1895 the Illinois Supreme Court found the eight-hour clause of the 1893 law unconstitutional because it violated women's right to contract their labor on any terms set by their employer. This setback made Kelley determined to change the power of state courts to overturn hours laws for women.

The high tide of Kelley's achievements between 1893 and 1896 ebbed quickly when Altgeld lost the election of 1896. His successor replaced her with a person who did not challenge the economic status quo, and she was unable to find work commensurate with her talents. German admirers came to her rescue. For fifty dollars a month she provided a leading German reform periodical with assessments of recent American social legislation. She also worked in the Crerar Library, a reference library specializing in economic, scientific, and medical topics.

Needing to reach beyond the limits of Hull House activities, Kelley began to work more closely with Ellen Henrotin. Wife of a leading Chicago banker, Henrotin had supported Kelley's legislation in 1892 and spoke vigorously at a rally to defend the law in 1894, urging those in attendance to "agitate for shorter hours for women because it means in the end shorter hours for all workers, men and women."[18] Henrotin's organization in 1893 of thirty women's congresses at the Chicago World's Fair catapulted her into the presidency of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC; founded 1890) from 1894 to 1898. By 1897 the GFWC served as an umbrella organization for more than five hundred women's clubs, including the powerful Chicago Women's Club. Fostering the creation of over twenty state federations to coordinate those clubs, Henrotin moved the GFWC in progressive directions by establishing national committees on industrial working conditions and national health. In this way she directed the path of what was to become one of the largest grass-roots organizations of American women beyond the minimal goals of good government and civil service reform to the more challenging issues of social inequalities and social justice.

Reflecting her growing awareness of the potential power of women's organizations as a vehicle for her social justice agenda, in 1897 Kelley began to work closely with Henrotin in organizing an Illinois Consumers' League. They built on the example of the New York Consumers' League, which had been founded in 1891 to channel consumers' consciousness toward political action on behalf of workers who made the goods that consumers purchased.

THE NATIONAL CONSUMERS' LEAGUE AND NEW STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Kelley's work with Henrotin helped her make the biggest career step of her life when, in 1899, she agreed to serve as secretary of the newly formed National Consumers' League, a position she held until her death in 1932. With a salary of $1,500 plus traveling and other expenses, the job offered financial stability and a chance to develop a more radical and more focused women's organization than the GFWC.

When she carried her formidable talents into the National Consumers' League in 1899, women's political culture gained a warrior with formidable rhetorical and organizational skills. She quickly made the National Consumers' League (NCL) into the nation's leading promoter of protective labor legislation for women and children. Between 1900 and 1904 she built sixty-four local consumer leagues—one in nearly every large city outside the South. Through a demanding travel schedule, which required her to spend one day on the road for every day she worked at her desk, Kelley maintained close contact with local leagues, urging them to implement the national organization's agenda and inspiring them to greater action within their states and municipalities. At the age of forty she had finally found a platform that matched her talents and goals.

In New York she lived until 1926 at Lillian Wald's nurses' settlement on Henry Street on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Her children moved east with her. Supported by aid from Jane Addams's life partner, Mary Rozet Smith, Nicholas Kelley graduated from Harvard in 1905 and then from Harvard Law School. Living in Manhattan, he became his mother's closest advisor. In a blow that caused Kelley to spend the rest of that year in retirement in Maine, her daughter Margaret died of heart failure during her first week at Smith College in 1905. After this bereavement Kelley maintained a summer home on Penobscot Bay,

Maine, where she retreated for periods of intense work with a secretary each summer. John Kelley never found a professional niche, but remained close to his mother and joined her in Maine each summer.

THE WHITE LABEL CAMPAIGN: NEW WAYS OF EDUCATING MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN ABOUT INDUSTRIAL WORKING CONDITIONS

The national branch of the Consumers' League was formed in 1898 to coordinate the efforts of previously existing leagues in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago, all of which had conducted campaigns against sweatshops. At a convention of the local leagues called to coordinate their anti-sweatshop efforts, Kelley proposed the creation of a consumers' label as a way of identifying goods made under fair conditions. Her proposal galvanized the convention into creating a national organization "for the express purpose of offering a Consumers' League Label" nationally, recognizing that local efforts against sweatshops could never succeed until all producers were "compelled to compete on a higher level," and agreeing that the label could be a means of achieving that goal.[19] The NCL awarded its label to manufacturers who obeyed state factory laws, produced goods only on their own premises, did not require employees to work overtime, and did not employ children under sixteen years of age. To enforce the label, however, factories had to be inspected. Local leagues had employed their own factory inspectors; Kelley became the league's national inspector.

In determining whether local factories qualified for the label, local league members had to educate themselves about local working conditions. They had to pose and answer questions new to middle-class women, though painfully familiar to union organizers: Did the manufacturer subcontract to home workers in tenements? Were children employed? Were state factory laws violated? Could workers live on their wages, or were they forced to augment their pay with relief or charitable donations? How far below the standard set by the consumers' label were their own state laws? Even more technical questions arose when leagues came into contact with factory inspectors, bureaus of labor statistics, state legislatures, and courts. Should the state issue licenses for home workers? What was the relationship between illiteracy in child workers and the enforcement of effective child labor laws? Was their own state high or low on the NCL's ranked list showing the number of illiterate child workers in each? Should laws prohibit the labor of children at age fourteen or sixteen? Should exceptions be made for the children of widows? How energetically were state factory laws enforced? How could local factory standards be improved? These questions, recently quite alien to middle-class women, now held the interest of thousands of the most politically active among them. This was no small accomplishment. State leagues differed in the degree to which they worked with state officials, but wherever they existed they created new civic space in which women used their new knowledge and power to expand state responsibility for the welfare of women and children workers.

On the road steadily between 1900 and 1907, Kelley inspected workshops, awarded the label to qualified manufacturers, and strengthened local leagues. Her efforts were rewarded by the spectacular growth of NCL locals, both in number and location. The NCL's 1901 report mentioned thirty leagues in eleven states; by 1906 they numbered sixty-three in twenty states.

Flourishing local leagues sustained the national's existence, channeling money, ideas, and the support of other local groups into the national office. At the same time, locals implemented the national's agenda at the state level. Most league members were white, urban, northern, middle-class Protestants, but Jewish women held important positions of leadership. Catholic women became more visible after cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore consented to serve as vice president of a Maryland league and bishop J. Regis Canevin of Pittsburgh encouraged members of that city's Ladies Catholic Benevolent Association to join. Two important reasons for the absence of black women from the NCL's membership and agenda were the league's focus on Northern urban manufacturing and the residence of 90 percent of the nation's black population in the South, employed primarily in agriculture, in 1900.

10-HOUR LAWS FOR WOMEN: NEW USES OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

The work of educating her constituency being achieved by 1907, Kelley implemented a second stage of league work. With the use of social

science data, the NCL overcame legal obstacles to the passage of state laws limiting women's hours. The overturning of Illinois's 1893 law by Illinois's Supreme Court in 1895 made Kelley determined to defend such laws before the U.S. Supreme Court. When an Oregon ten-hour law came before the court in 1907, she threw the resources of the NCL into its defense. This case, *Muller v. Oregon*, pitted the NCL and its Oregon branch against a laundry owner who disputed the state's ability to regulate working hours in non-hazardous occupations. For what became known as the "Brandeis Brief," Kelley's Research Director, Josephine Goldmark, gathered printed evidence from medical and other authorities (most of whom were British or European) to demonstrate that workdays longer than ten hours were hazardous to the health of women. Goldmark obtained the services of her brother-in-law, Louis D. Brandeis, a leading Boston attorney, who successfully argued the case on sociological rather than legal grounds, using the evidence that Goldmark had compiled. Thus, at the same time that this case cleared the way for state hours laws for women, it also established the court's recognition of sociological evidence, a strategy that sustained the court's ruling against segregated schools in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

In the years immediately following the Muller decision, inspired by Kelley's leadership, and supported by other groups, local consumer leagues gained the passage in twenty states of the first laws limiting women's working hours. Also responding to the decision, nineteen other states revised and expanded their laws governing women's working hours.

The Supreme Court's 1908 opinion tried to block the possibility of extending such protections to men by emphasizing women's special legal status (they did not possess the same contractual rights as men) and their physiological difference from men (their health affected the health of their future children). Nevertheless, in 1917 Kelley and the NCL again cooperated successfully with the Oregon league in arguing another case on sociological grounds before the U.S. Supreme Court, *Bunting v. Oregon*, in which the court upheld the constitutionality of hours laws for men in non-hazardous occupations. Viewing laws for women as an entering wedge for improving conditions for all working people, Kelley achieved that goal in the progression from Muller to Bunting. In this as in other aspects of her work with the league, though nominally focused on gender, her reforms had class-wide effects.

THE MINIMUM WAGE CAMPAIGN: NEW USES OF THE POWER OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

As early as 1899, Florence Kelley had hoped "to include a requirement as to minimal wages" in the NCL's White Label. Australia and New Zealand had already organized wage boards as part of compulsory arbitration, but the path to an American equivalent did not seem clear until she and other Consumers' League members in 1908 attended the First International Conference of Consumers' Leagues, in Geneva, where they learned about the proposed British wage law of 1909, which that year implemented minimum wages for all workers in certain poorly paid occupations.

Almost immediately on her return, Kelley established her leadership in what became an enormously successful campaign for minimum wage laws for women in the United States. In her campaign she denounced the large profits made in three industries: retail stores, sweatshop garment making, and textile manufacturers. "Low wages produce more poverty than all other causes together," she insisted, urging that "goods and profits are not ends in themselves to which human welfare may continue to be sacrificed."[20]

Kelley argued that minimum wages would raise the standards in women's employment by recognizing their need to support themselves. "So long as women's wages rest upon the assumption that every woman has a husband, father, brother, or lover contributing to her support, so long these sinister incidents of women's industrial employment (tuberculosis, insanity, vice) are inevitable." She urged that "society itself must build the floor beneath their feet."[21]

Minimum wage legislation was much more difficult to achieve than maximum hours laws because, as one of Kelley's allies put it, wage legislation "pierces to the heart the classic claim that industry is a purely private affair."[22] For this reason, Kelley and the NCL were unaided in their efforts by their male-dominated equivalent, the American Association for Labor Legislation (AALL). When Kelley appealed in 1910 to their executive director, John Andrews, he loftily replied: "I question very

seriously the wisdom of injecting the minimum wage proposal into the legislative campaign of this year, because I do not believe our courts would at the present time uphold such legislation, and I am afraid it would seriously jeopardize the splendid progress now being made to establish maximum working hours."[23] Two years later the AALL still opposed wage legislation as premature.

Kelley and the NCL were able to move ahead with this pathbreaking legislation because they could mobilize grass-roots support for it at local and state levels. The AALL had no local branches; instead, their power flowed from a network of male academic experts who advised politicians about legislation. If politicians were not ready to move, neither was the AALL. The NCL, by contrast, had in its sixty-four local branches enough political muscle to take the initiative and lead politicians where they otherwise wouldn't have gone.

In 1912 Massachusetts passed the first minimum wage law for women, followed in 1913 by eight additional states: California, Colorado, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. By 1919 fourteen states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico had enacted minimum wage statutes for women. The success of these laws influenced the inclusion of a minimum wage for men *and* women in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938. In 1942, when the U.S. Supreme Court approved the constitutionality of the FLSA, the eight-hour day and the minimum wage became part of the social contract for most American workers. The class-bridging activism of middle-class women in the NCL forged the way with these fundamental reforms.

GAINS AND SETBACKS IN THE 1920S

At Henry Street, Kelley continued to benefit from the same consolidation of female reform talents that had sustained her efforts at Hull House in Chicago. The creation of the U.S. Children's Bureau in 1911 sprang from her discussions with Lillian Wald. The Children's Bureau was the only governmental agency in any industrial society that was headed and run by women. Kelley thought that her most important contribution to social change was the passage in 1921 of the Sheppard–Towner Maternity and Infancy Protection Act, which first allocated federal funds to health care. She was instrumental in the creation of the coalition that backed the act's passage, the Women's Joint Congressional Committee, and in the coalition's successful campaign for the bill in Congress. Although limited to a program administered by the Children's Bureau to combat infant and maternal mortality, Kelley thought the Sheppard–Towner Act marked the beginning of a national health care program.[24]

After this high point in 1921, however, the decade brought a series of reversals that threatened to undo most of her achievements. In 1923 the U.S. Supreme Court in *Adkins v. Children's Hospital* found Washington, D.C.'s, wage law for women unconstitutional. Many state wage boards continued to function during the 1920s and 1930s, however, providing ample evidence of the benefits of the law, but no new wage laws were passed. In 1926, Congress refused to allocate new funds for Sheppard–Towner programs, and responsibility for maternal and infant health returned to state and county levels.[25]

Just as important, by 1922 Kelley's strategy of using gender-specific legislation as a surrogate for class legislation had generated opposition from a new quarter—women who did not themselves benefit from gendered laws. The National Woman's Party (NWP), formed in 1916 by the charismatic leadership of Alice Paul and funded almost entirely by Alva Belmont, created a small coalition consisting primarily of professional women with some wage-earning women who worked in male-dominated occupations. Despite Kelley's strong objections over the damage they would do to gender-specific legislation, including the Sheppard–Towner Act, in 1921 the NWP proposed an Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (ERA). Although mainstream organizations such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the League of Women Voters continued to support gender-specific legislation, the NWP's proposed amendment undercut the momentum of such gendered strategies. In the 1920s most wage-earning women opposed the ERA because they stood to lose rather than benefit from it. By the 1970s changes in working conditions and protective labor laws meant that most wage-earning women stood to benefit from the amendment, and many more supported it.[26]

Even more damaging than these reversals, however, were the right-wing attacks launched by hyperpatriots against Kelley and other women reformers during the "red scare" of the 1920s. *The Woman Patriot* exemplified these attacks. Launched in 1916 and published twice a month, before the enactment of the woman suffrage amendment this newsletter was subtitled *Dedicated to the Defense of Womanhood, Motherhood, the Family and the State AGAINST Suffragism, Feminism and Socialism.* After 1920 the newsletter dropped its reference to suffrage, but continued its virulent attacks on the social agenda of women reformers. "SHALL BOLSHEVIST-FEMINISTS SECRETLY GOVERN AMERICA?" their headlines screamed, referring to the Sheppard–Towner Act. When *The Woman Patriot* referred to Kelley as "Mrs. Wischnewetzky" and called her "Moscow's chief conspirator," Kelley urged Addams to join her in a libel suit against them. Addams gently persuaded her to ignore the attacks. Kelley then wrote an impassioned series of autobiographical articles that established her lineage as an inheritor of American ideals and a dedicated promoter of American values.[27]

Attacks on women reformers in the 1920s were in part generated by supporters of American military expansion in the aftermath of World War I, when Kelley and many other women reformers were actively promoting peace and disarmament. For example, *The Woman Patriot* characterized the support that women reformers were giving to disarmament as "an organized internationalist Bolshevist–Feminist plot to embarrass the Limitation of Armaments Conference." Government employees joined the attack in 1924, when Lucia Maxwell of the Chemical Warfare Department of the Department of War issued a "Spider Web Chart" entitled "The Socialist-Pacifist Movement in America Is an Absolutely Fundamental and Integral Part of International Socialism." Depicting the connections between women's organizations and congressional lobbying for social legislation and for disarmament, the chart sought to characterize as "pacifist-socialist" most women's organizations in the United States, including the National Consumers' League, the National League of Women Voters, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the National Congress of Mothers and Parent–Teachers Association, the National Women's Trade Union League, the American Home Economics Association, the American Association of University Women, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Girls' Friendly Society, the Young Women's Christian Association, and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women.[28]

Historians have not measured the effect of these attacks on the political agendas of women's organizations, but after these attacks the agendas of many women's organizations, for example, that of the League for Women Voters, shifted from social justice to good government projects, from support for a Child Labor Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to advocacy for a city manager form of governance.[29] Such a shift was in keeping with the demise of the Progressive movement after World War I. But that demise was hastened by the rise of "red scare" tactics in American political culture.

Florence Kelley did not live to see many of her initiatives incorporated into federal legislation in the 1930s. Faced with the collapse of the American economy in the Great Depression of 1929–1939, policymakers drew heavily on the legacy of Progressive reforms initiated between 1890 and 1920. Florence Kelley's legacies, including the minimum wage and maximum hours legislation incorporated in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, were strong enough to survive the reversals of the 1920s. In 1933, with the inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Kelley's protégée Frances Perkins became the first woman to serve as a cabinet member. Reflecting the power of women's organizations in shaping a new social contract for American working people, Perkins was appointed Secretary of Labor.[30]

But Kelley's legacy reaches beyond any specific policies. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter said in 1953 that the nation owed Kelley an "enduring debt for the continuing process she so largely helped to initiate, by which social legislation is promoted and eventually gets on the statute books."[31] As Kelley shaped it during her long reform career between 1890 and 1930, that process relied heavily on women's organizations and their ability to act independently of the political status quo.

NOTES

1. James Weber Linn, *Jane Addams: A Biography* (New York, 1938), 138.

2. For an overview of social change in the Progressive Era, see Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York, 1998).

3. For more on Kelley before 1900, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830–1900* (New Haven, 1995).

4. Mabel Newcomer, *A Century of Higher Education for American Women* (New York, 1959), 37, 46. See also Barbara Miller Solomon, *"In the Company of Educated Women": A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven, 1985), 62–77.

5. For Kelley's childhood, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, ed., *The Autobiography of Florence Kelley: Notes of Sixty Years* (Chicago, 1986).

6. Sklar, *Autobiography of Florence Kelley*, 30.

7. Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Hull House Maps and Papers: Social Science as Women's Work in the 1890s," in Helene Silverberg, ed., *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years* (Princeton, 1998).

8. See Joyce Antler, "After College, What?: New Graduates and the Family Claim," *American Quarterly* 32 (Fall 1980): 409–34.

9. See Dorothy Rose Blumberg, "'Dear Mr. Engels': Unpublished Letters, 1884–1894, of Florence Kelley (Wischnewetzky) to Friedrich Engels," *Labor History* 5 (Spring 1964): 103–33.

10. Sklar, *Florence Kelley*, 129.

11. Sklar, *Autobiography of Florence Kelley*, 77.

12. Jane Addams, *My Friend Julia Lathrop* (New York, 1935), 77.

13. Residents of Hull House, *Hull House Maps and Papers* (New York, 1895).

14. FK to Caroline B. Kelley, Chicago, Feb. 24, 1892, Nicholas Kelley Papers, New York Public Library.

15. Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Two Political Cultures in the Progressive Era: The National Consumers' League and the American Association for Labor Legislation," in Linda K. Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Kathryn Kish Sklar, eds., *U.S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1995), 58.

16. U.S. Commissioner of Labor, *Fourth Annual Report, Working Women in Large Cities* (Washington, D.C., 1889), 62–64.

17. For a full argument of this point, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, "The Historical Foundations of Women's Power in the Creation of the American Welfare State, 1830–1930," in Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (New York, 1993).

18. "Hit at Sweat Shops," *Chicago Tribune*, April 23, 1894; Sklar, *Florence Kelley*, 261.

19. Sklar, *Florence Kelley*, 309.

20. Florence Kelley, "Minimum Wage Boards," *American Journal of Sociology* 17 (Nov. 1911): 303–14.

21. Florence Kelley, "Ten Years from Now," *Survey*, March 26, 1910, 978–81.

22. Sklar, "Two Political Cultures," 60.

23. See, for example, John B. Andrews to Erich Stern, New York, Dec. 14, 1910, American Association for Labor Legislation Papers, Cornell University.

24. See Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890–1930* (Urbana, Ill., 1994), 167–96.

25. See J. Stanley Lemons, *The Woman Citizen: Social Feminism in the 1920s* (Urbana, Ill., 1973), 169–76.

26. For the opposition of the progressive mainstream of the women's movement, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Why Did Most Politically Active Women Oppose the ERA in the 1920s?" in Joan Hoff-Wilson, ed., *Rights of Passage: the Past and Future of the ERA* (Bloomington, Ind., 1986).

27. *The Woman Patriot*, vol. 5, no. 29, Nov. 1, 1921, 1. For the complete documents of this correspondence between Kelley and Addams, see Anissa Harper, "Pacifism vs. Patriotism in Women's Organizations in the 1920s: How Was the Debate Shaped by the Expansion of the American Military," in *Women and Social Movements, 1600–2000*, an Internet website initiated by Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin, http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/ (Accessed Apr. 17, 2019). See also Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, 1987), 243–67.

28. The Spider Web Chart is reproduced in Helen Baker, "How Did the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Respond to Right Wing Attacks in the 1920s?" in *Women and Social Movements* at http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/wilpf/intro.htm (Accessed April 17, 2019).

29. For example, see the furor aroused within the League of Women Voters over the proposed Child Labor Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1924, in Louise M. Young, *In the Public Interest: The League of Women Voters, 1920–1970* (New York, 1989), 97–98.

30. For Perkins see Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), *passim*.

31. Felix Frankfurter, "Foreword," in Josephine Goldmark, *Impatient Crusader: Florence Kelley's Life Story* (Urbana, Ill., 1953), v.

ANNELISE ORLECK

From the Russian Pale to Labor Organizing in New York City

The pale of Jewish settlement was a territory in Russia to which Jews were restricted during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and where they were frequently subjected to ferocious outbursts of anti-Semitic violence. Crossing from the pale to the teeming streets of Manhattan's Lower East Side was a transition of major proportions. Yet two million European Jews who came to the United States between 1880 and 1924 made it across, among them the remarkable young women who are the subjects of Annelise Orleck's lively and informative essay.

Rose Schneiderman, Fannia Cohn, Clara Lemlich, and Pauline Newman gravitated to one of the earliest industries to employ women—the garment industry. Based in New York City, the industry had long provided countless married women with piecework to take back to dimly lit tenements, where they often enlisted the help of grandmothers and children. By the turn of the century, much of the work had been transferred to sweatshops and factories that were notorious for their low wages and squalid working conditions. Because so many of the employees were young single women who presumably regarded their work as a temporary necessity until rescued by marriage, labor leaders usually assumed that the women were unorganizable. Yet between 1909 and 1915, women garment workers exploded in labor militancy. By 1919, half of all women garment workers belonged to trade unions and many had joined the suffrage struggle, too.

As you read Orleck's profiles of four labor activists, consider these questions: what experiences shaped their political consciousness? As young girls forced to forego high school and college, how did they educate themselves? Who were their allies and why were these alliances so necessary, yet so unstable? What attracted these young working women to suffrage? What is meant by the term "industrial feminists"?

During the summer of 1907, when New York City was gripped by a severe economic depression, a group of young women workers who had been laid off and were facing eviction took tents and sleeping rolls to the verdant Palisades overlooking the Hudson River. While rising rents and unemployment spread panic among the poor immigrants of Manhattan's Lower East Side, these teenagers lived in a makeshift summer camp, getting work where they could find it, sharing whatever food and drink they could afford, reading, hiking, and gathering around a campfire at night to sing Russian and Yiddish songs. "Thus we avoided paying rent or, worse still, being evicted," Pauline Newman later recalled. "Besides which, we liked living in the open—plenty of fresh air, sunshine and the lovely Hudson for which there was no charge."[1]

Away from the clatter of the shops and the filth of Lower East Side streets, the young

Excerpted from the prologue and chs. 1 and 2 of *Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900–1965* by Annelise Orleck (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). Used by permission of the author and publisher. Notes have been edited and renumbered.

women talked into the night, refreshed by what Newman called "the cool of the evening, glorious sunsets, the moon and stars." They shared personal concerns as well as shop-floor gripes—worries about love, about the future, and about the pressing problems of housing and food.

Their cliffside village meant more to Newman and her friends than a summer escape. They had created a vibrant alternative to the tenement life they found so oppressive, and their experience of it had set them to wondering. Perhaps the same sense of joy and comradeship could help workers transcend the drudgery of the garment shops and form the basis for effective organizing.[2]

At season's end, they emerged with strengthened bonds and renewed resolve to organize their communities around issues that the recent depression had brought into sharp relief: the need for stabilized rent and food prices, improved working conditions, and housing for the poor.[3]

The spirit of intimacy and solidarity that pervaded the summer of 1907 would inspire much of Pauline Newman's later organizing. Indeed, it became a model for the vision of change that Newman shared with her fellow Jewish immigrant radicals Fannia Cohn, Rose Schneiderman and Clara Lemlich. The four women moved to political struggle not simply by the need for better wages, hours and working conditions but also, in Newman's words, by a need to ensure that "poverty did not deprive us from finding joy and satisfaction in things of the spirit."[4] This essay examines the early careers of these four remarkable organizers and the role they played in building a militant working women's movement during the first decades of the twentieth century.

For even as girls, these marginally educated immigrants wanted to be more than . . . shop-floor drudges. They wanted lives filled with beauty—with friendships, books, art, music, dance, fresh air, and clean water. "A working girl is a human being," Newman would later tell a legislative committee investigating factory conditions, "with a heart, with desires, with aspirations, with ideas and ideals." That image nourished Newman, Schneiderman, Lemlich, and Cohn throughout their long careers. And it focused them on a single goal: to reshape U.S. society so that "working girls" like themselves could fulfill some of their dreams.[5]

The four women moved through strikingly different cultural milieus over the course of long careers that would carry them in different directions. Still, they each bore the imprint of the shared culture in which they were raised, first in Eastern Europe and then in New York City. That common experience gave them a particular understanding of gender, class, and ethnicity that shaped their later activism and political thought.

All four were born in the Russian-dominated pale of Jewish settlement during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Rose Schneiderman was born in the Polish village of Saven in 1882; Fannia Cohn was born in Kletsk, Poland, in 1885; Clara Lemlich was born in the Ukrainian village of Gorodok in 1886; and Pauline Newman was born in Kovno, Lithuania, around 1890.[6]

They were ushered into a world swept by a firestorm of new ideas, where the contrasting but equally messianic visions of orthodox Judaism and revolutionary Socialism competed for young minds. The excitement of living in a revolutionary era imbued these young women with a faith in progress and a belief that political commitment gave life meaning. It also taught them, at an early age, that gender, class, and ethnicity were fundamental social categories and essential building blocks for political change. Being born into turbulence does not in itself make a child into a political activist. But the changes sweeping the Russian Empire toward the end of the nineteenth century shaped the consciousness of a generation of Eastern European Jews who contributed, in wildly disproportionate numbers, to revolutionary movements in Russia and to the labor and radical movements in the United States.[7]

The four were exposed to Marxist ideas at a tender age. As Eastern Europe shifted uneasily from feudalism to capitalism in the latter part of the nineteenth century, class analysis became part of the common parlance of young people in Jewish towns and villages. "Behind every other volume of Talmud in those years, there was a volume of Marx," one union organizer recalled of his small Polish town. Clara Lemlich grew up on revolutionary tracts and songs; Fannia Cohn considered herself a committed Socialist by the age of sixteen.[8]

Their awareness of ethnicity was even more keen. As Jews in Eastern Europe, the four learned young that ethnic identity was a double-edged sword. It was a source of strength and solace in their bitterly poor communities,

but it also enabled Tsarist authorities to single Jews out and sow seeds of suspicion among their peasant neighbors. Jews living under Russian rule were made painfully aware of their status as permanent "others" in the land where they had lived for centuries. Clara Lemlich's family lived not far from Kishinev, where in 1903 the Tsar's government openly and unabashedly directed an orgy of anti-Jewish violence that shocked the world. In cosmopolitan Minsk, where she had gone to study, Fannia Cohn watched with dismay as the revolutionary populist organization she had joined began mouthing the same anti-Semitic conspiracy theories spewed by the government they despised. Frustration turned to fear when her brother was almost killed in yet another pogrom.[9]

Sex was just as distinct a dividing line as class and ethnicity. Eastern European Jews had observed a strict sexual division of labor for more than a thousand years. But by the late nineteenth century, as political and economic upheaval jolted long-accepted ways of thinking, sex roles too were being questioned. And so the four girls' understandings of gender were informed both by traditional Jewish conceptions of womanhood and by the challenges issued by new political movements.

In traditional Jewish society, mothers were also entrepreneurs. Clara Lemlich, Pauline Newman, and Rose Schneiderman were all raised by mothers who were skilled businesswomen. Jewish mothers' success in this role grew out of and reinforced a belief that women were innately suited to competition in the economic sphere. In contrast to the image of the sheltered middle-class housewife then dominant in the United States, Eastern European Jewish religious tradition glorified strong, economically sophisticated wives and mothers.

But as much as women's entrepreneurship was respected, a far higher premium was placed on study and prayer. And that, religious tradition dictated, could be performed only by men. A woman was expected to be pious, to read the vernacular Yiddish—rather than ancient Hebrew—translation of the Bible, and perhaps to attend women's services at the synagogue. But her primary religious role was as keeper of the home. Formal religious education was offered only to males.[10] Because Eastern European Jewish women had to fight for every scrap of education they received, many began to see education as the key to independence from all masters. This view would strongly influence their political organizing once in the United States.

The four emigrated as part of the mass movement that brought two million Jews from Eastern Europe to the United States between 1881 and 1924. Schneiderman came in 1890, Newman in 1901, Lemlich in 1903, and Cohn in 1904. Like most of their compatriots, they arrived in New York Harbor and settled on Manhattan's Lower East Side, the largest settlement of Eastern European Jews in the United States.[11] The newcomers were tantalized by the exciting diversions that New York life promised: libraries, theater, music, department stores, and amusement parks. But they had neither time nor money to indulge in such pleasures, for all of them soon found themselves laboring long hours to support their families.

At an age when most girls in the United States were still in grade school, immigrant working girls like Newman spent twelve- to fourteen-hour days in the harshest of atmospheres. Their bodies and minds reeled from the shock of the shops: the deafening noise, the brutal pace, and the rebukes of foremen. Some children were able to slough off the hardship with jokes and games. Others, realizing that they were destined to spend their youth in dank factories rather than in classrooms or schoolyards, grew sullen and withdrawn.

Clara Lemlich, like so many others, was quickly disillusioned by her first job in a New York garment shop: "I went to work two weeks after landing in this country. We worked from sunrise to set seven days a week. . . . Those who worked on machines had to carry the machines on their back both to and from work. . . . The shop we worked in had no central heating, no electric power. . . . The hissing of the machines, the yelling of the foreman, made life unbearable."[12]

Anger drove young women workers like Lemlich and Newman to band together. Untrained and largely unschooled, these young women were drawn to Socialism and trade unionism not because they felt an ideological affinity but because they had a desperate need to improve their working conditions. "I knew very little about Socialism," Lemlich recalled. "[But] the girls, whether Socialist or not, had many stoppages and strikes." Newman too found that for most young women workers, political understanding followed action rather than precipitating it: "We of the 1909 vintage

Newly arrived European women undergoing medical examinations at Ellis Island, ca. 1900. *"The day of the emigrant's arrival in New York was the nearest earthly likeness to the final day of Judgement, when we have to prove our fitness to enter Heaven." The words are those of a sympathetic journalist who shared the anxiety-ridden experience awaiting the immigrants at the port of entry. Failing the medical test could mean deportation. (Courtesy of Brown Brothers, Sterling, Pennsylvania.)*

knew nothing about the economics of . . . industry or for that matter about economics in general. All we knew was the bitter fact that, after working seventy and eighty hours in a seven day week, we did not earn enough to keep body and soul together." These assertions reveal much about the political development of the tens of thousands of women garment workers who would soon amaze New York and the nation with their militancy.[13]

Shop-floor culture fed the young women's emerging sense of political identity. Working alongside older men and women who discussed Socialism daily, they began to feel a sense of belonging to a distinct class of people in the world: workers. This allegiance would soon become as important to them as their Judaism. The shops also provided an opportunity for bonding with other women. Slowly, out of their workplace experiences, they began to develop a complex political identity in which class, gender and ethnicity overlapped. Young women workers were moved by the idea of sisterhood. It captured their own experiences in the sex-segregated shops where they worked. The majority of New York's garment workers were little more than girls, and the relationships they forged with factory friends were similar to those of schoolgirls—intense, melodramatic, and deeply loyal. They were teenage confidantes as well as fellow workers, and they relied on shop-floor rapport to soften the harshness of factory life.[14] For young immigrant women trying to build lives in a new land, such bonds were powerful and lasting. From these shop-floor friendships would soon evolve the ties of union sisterhood.[15]

Pauline Newman and her co-workers at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory literally grew up together. Only twelve when she first came to Triangle, Newman was assigned to a corner known as "the kindergarten," where workers as

young as eight, nine, or ten years old trimmed threads from finished garments. They labored, Newman later recalled, "from 7:30 A.M. to 6:30 at night when it wasn't busy. When the season was on we worked till 9 o'clock. No overtime pay." Their only taste of a normal childhood came through the songs and games they invented to help pass the time, the stories they told and the secrets they shared.[16]

By the early twentieth century, New York State had passed laws prohibiting night work for children. But little attempt was made to enforce them. On the rare occasions when an inspector showed up at her factory, Newman remembered, "the employers were always tipped off. . . . 'Quick,' they'd say, 'Into the boxes!' And we children would climb into the big box the finished shirts were stored in. Then some shirts were piled on top of us and when the inspector came—No children." In a way it was fun, Newman remembered. They thought they were playing a game like hide and seek.[17]

But it wasn't really a game. Children who had to help support their parents grew up quickly. Rose Schneiderman was thirteen when her mother begged United Hebrew Charities, an organization run by middle-class German Jews, to find her daughter a "respectable job" at a department store. Retail jobs were deemed more respectable than factory work because the environment was more pleasant and sexual harassment was thought to be less common. Deborah Schneiderman worried that factory work would sully Rose's reputation and make her less marriageable. A job as a fashionable salesgirl, she hoped, would usher Rose into the middle class. The single mother who had fed her children on charity food baskets and had been forced to place them in orphanages was grimly determined to help them escape poverty.

But then as now, pink-collar jobs paid significantly less than industrial work. Anxious to free her mother from the rigors of maintaining their tenement building, Schneiderman left her job in Ridley's department store for the harsher and more morally suspect conditions of an industrial shop. Making linings for caps and hats, she immediately raised her weekly income from $2.75 to $6. As the sole supporter of her family, the sixteen-year-old hoped to work her way up quickly to a skilled job in the cap trade.[18]

Clara Lemlich's family also relied on her wages, particularly because her father was unemployed. She aspired to the skilled position of draper, one of the highest-paid positions a woman could attain in the dressmaking trade. Despite terrible working conditions, many ambitious young women chose garment work over other jobs because it seemed to offer their greatest chance to acquire skills and command high wages. When these hopes were dashed, some young workers grew angry. That anger was fanned and channeled by older women in the shops who were itching to challenge the authority of the bosses.[19]

That is what happened to Rose Schneiderman, who, like many skilled women garment workers, was blocked from advancement by the unofficial gender hierarchy at her factory. Finding that all the highest-paid jobs in her capmaking shop were reserved for men, Schneiderman asked around about ways to break through those barriers. When she approached fellow worker Bessie Braut with her concerns, Schneiderman was initiated simultaneously into trade unionism, Socialism, and feminism. Schneiderman recalled, "Bessie was an unusual person. Her beautiful eyes shone out of a badly pockmarked face and the effect was startling. An outspoken anarchist, she made a strong impression on us. She wasted no time in giving us the facts of life—that the men in our trade belonged to a union and were, therefore, able to better their conditions. She added pointedly that it would be a good thing for the lining-makers to join a union along with the trimmers, who were all women."[20]

Schneiderman, Braut, and several other workers called on the secretary-treasurer of the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers to request union recognition for their fledgling local of trimmers and lining makers. Within a few days they had enough signatures to win a charter for their local, and Schneiderman was elected secretary.[21]

Surprising even herself, the once-shy redhead soon found she could be an eloquent and fierce advocate for her fellow workers. In recognition of her growing reputation, the capmakers elected her to the Central Labor Union of New York. Deborah Schneiderman was disturbed by the turn Rose's life was taking. She warned Rose that if she pursued a public life she would never find a husband. No man wants a woman with a big mouth, her mother said.[22]

In the flush of excitement at the praise and warmth suddenly coming her way, young Rose

did not stop to worry. In organizing, she had found both a calling and a world of friends. She had no intention of turning back. "It was such an exciting time," she wrote later. "A new life opened up for me. All of a sudden I was not lonely anymore. . . . It was the beginning of a period that molded all my subsequent life."[23]

Fannia Cohn, too, chose garment work as her path to a career. And like Schneiderman, Lemlich, and Newman, she found a community there. Unlike the others, however, she did not enter a garment factory looking for work that paid well. She was a comfortable middle-class woman in search of a trade ripe for unionizing.

Cohn arrived in New York in 1904 and moved in with her affluent cousins. There was little about her early days in the United States that was comparable to the hard-pressed scrambling for a living that the Schneidermans, Lemlichs, and Newmans experienced. "My family suggested that I complete my studies and then join the labor movement but I rejected this as I did not want to come into it from 'without' but from 'within.' I realized then that if I wanted to really understand the mind, the aspirations of the workers, I should experience the life of the worker in a shop."[24] In 1905, Fannia Cohn became a sleevemaker. For a year she moved from shop to shop until, in the "white goods" trade, she found the organizing challenge she was looking for.

Shops that manufactured white goods—underwear, kimonos, and robes—were considered particularly hard to organize. Production took place in tiny sweatshops, not large factories, and the manufacturing process had been broken down into small tasks that required little skill. The majority of white goods workers were immigrant girls under the age of fifteen. And because they came from a wide range of backgrounds—Jewish, Italian, Syrian, Turkish, and Greek—it was difficult for them to communicate with each other, let alone organize. As a result, these workers were among the lowest paid in the garment trades.

At twenty, Cohn was an elder in the trade. With her high school education and fluency in three languages, she was seen as a mother figure by many of the adolescents in the shops. She and a handful of older women workers began to operate as mentors, meeting with the girls in each shop and identifying potential leaders. Cohn taught her co-workers to read, write, and speak in public, hoping they would channel those skills into the union struggle. Cohn had already created the role that she would play throughout her career: an educator of younger workers.[25]

Education was a primary driving force in the metamorphosis of all four young women from shop workers to union organizers. From the isolated towns and restive cities of Eastern Europe, where gender, class, and ethnicity stymied Jewish girls' hopes for education, the lure of free public schooling in the United States beckoned powerfully. Having to drop out of school to work was more than a disappointment for many Jewish immigrant girls; it was their first great disillusionment with the dream of America. And they did not give that dream up easily.

"When I went to work," Rose Schneiderman remembered, "I was determined to continue my studies." Her only option was to attend one of the many night schools then open to immigrant workers in New York. Having carried with her from Poland the ideal of education as an exalted, liberating process, she was disgusted by the mediocre instruction she encountered and felt betrayed by teachers who seemed to be patronizing her. "I enrolled and went faithfully every evening for about four weeks. But I found that . . . the instructor seemed more interested in getting one-hundred-percent attendance than in giving one-hundred-percent instruction. He would joke and tell silly stories. . . . I soon realized I was wasting my time." Schneiderman left the evening school but did not stop studying. She asked older co-workers if she could borrow books that she had discussed with them in the shop. In the evenings, she read with her mother at home. Serializations of Emile Zola's *J'Accuse* and other contemporary writings in the Yiddish evening paper *Abendblatt* gave Rose a taste for literature. "I devoured everything I could get my hands on."[26]

Clara Lemlich was an equally avid reader. At the end of each twelve-hour day stitching shirtwaists, she would walk from her factory to the East Broadway branch of the New York Public Library. There she read the library's entire collection of Russian classics. "I was so eager to learn things," she later recalled. When she tired of solitary study, Lemlich joined a free night school on Grand Street. She returned home late each night, ate the dinner her mother had kept warm for her, then slept for just a few hours before rising again for work.[27]

Not surprisingly, young women like Schneiderman, Newman, and Lemlich turned to radical politics to fulfill their desire for a life of the mind. If no other school was available, then what Pauline Newman called "the school of solidarity" would have to do. Membership in the Socialist Party and in unions, tenant organizations, and benevolent societies provided immigrant women with an opportunity to learn and study that most would never have gotten otherwise. And as Newman put it, "Because they were hitherto deprived of any tutorship, they at once became ardent students."[28]

Pauline Newman was just fifteen when she first knocked on the doors of the Socialist Literary Society. Although women were not yet allowed to join, she was permitted to attend classes. The Literary Society was a revelation to the young worker. There she was introduced to the writings of Shakespeare, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy and personally met writers like Jack London and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who came to speak there. Gratitude, however, didn't stop her from joining a successful petition drive to admit women to the society.

For Newman—as for Clara Lemlich, who attended Marxist theory classes at the Socialist Party's Rand School—studying was more than a distraction from work. The "desire to get out of the shop," Newman wrote later, "to learn, to understand, became the dominant force in my life." But unlike many immigrants, who saw schooling as a ladder out of the working class, both she and Lemlich were committed to helping others rise with them. So Newman and Lemlich formed study groups that met during lunch hours and after work to share what they were learning with their friends.[29]

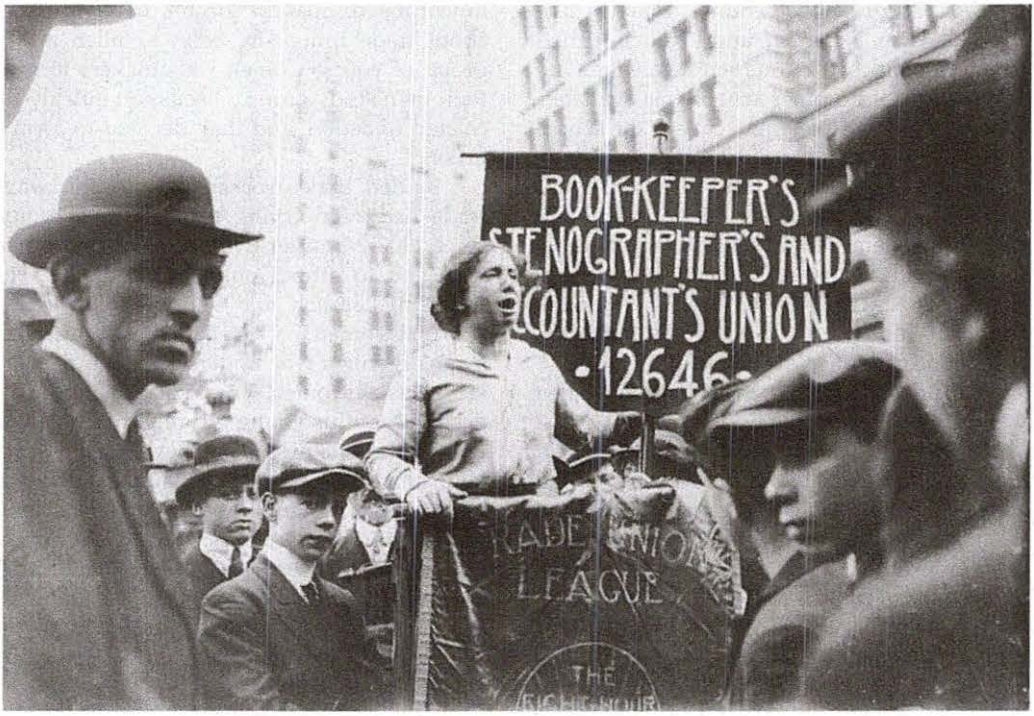
"We tried to educate ourselves," Newman remembered of her co-workers at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. "I would invite the girls to my room and we took turns reading poetry in English to improve our understanding of the language." Because they had to steal the time to study, the young women approached everything they read with a heightened sensitivity. And when something they were reading struck a chord of recognition, seemed to reflect on their own lives, the catharsis was not only emotional; it was political.[30]

The evolution of Lemlich's study group illustrates how study often led to union activity. Older workers, who were teaching Lemlich the craft of draping, invited her to join their lunchtime discussion groups to learn more about trade unionism. Soon Lemlich and a group of young women waistmakers formed their own study group. Discussion quickly escalated to action, and they decided to form a union.[31]

Skilled male workers in the shirtwaist trade had been trying to establish a union since 1900. But after five years the union had managed to attract only ten members. The problem, Lemlich told her male colleagues, was that women workers had to be approached by an organizer who understood their particular needs as women. They bristled at the suggestion that this young girl might know more about their business than they did. But years later, one conceded that the failure of the first waistmakers' union was due at least in part to their ham-fisted tactics: "We would issue a circular reading somewhat as follows: 'Murder the exploiters, the blood-suckers, the manufacturers. . . . Pay your dues. . . . Down with the Capitalists!'" Few women or men showed up at their meetings.[32]

During the spring of 1905 the union disbanded and reorganized as Local 25 of the ILGWU, with Clara Lemlich and a group of six young women from her waistmaking shop on the executive board. Taking their cue from Lemlich, the new union used women organizers to attract women workers. Lemlich addressed street-corner meetings in English and Yiddish and found Italian women to address the Italian workers. Soon, like Schneiderman, Newman, and Cohn, she realized that she had found a calling.[33]

In the progressive atmosphere of early-twentieth-century New York City, influential people quickly noticed the militant young working women. Older Socialists, trade unionists, and middle-class reformers offered their assistance. These benefactors helped the young organizers sharpen their arguments, provided financial assistance, and introduced them to politicians and public officials. The protégés recognized the importance of this informal mentoring and would later work to recreate such networks in the unions, schools, and training programs they built for young women workers. Schneiderman, Newman, Lemlich, and Cohn were keenly aware that young working women needed help from more experienced and more powerful allies. But they also worried that the voices of women workers might be outshouted in the clamorous



Rose Schneiderman addresses a street rally in New York City, probably 1910s.
(Courtesy of Brown Brothers, Sterling, Pennsylvania.)

process of building alliances. From these early days, they battled to preserve the integrity of their vision.

Pauline Newman found her first mentors in the Socialist Party, which she joined in 1906 at the age of fifteen. Older women, including former garment worker Theresa Serber Malkiel, took her on as a protégé. Newman quickly blossomed under their tutelage. Before long she was running street-corner meetings. Armed with a sonorous voice and the certitude of youth, she would take "an American flag and a soapbox and go from corner to corner," exhorting the gospel of Socialism in Yiddish and English. "I, like many of my friends and comrades, thought that socialism and socialism alone could and would someday fill the gap between rich and poor," Newman recalled. In a neighborhood crowded with sidewalk proselytizers, this child evangelist became one of the party's most popular street-corner attractions.[34]

In 1908, nine years before New York State gave women the vote, seventeen-year-old Newman was nominated by the Socialist Party to run for New York's Secretary of State. Newman used her campaign as a platform for suffrage. Her speeches were heckled by some Socialist men, and her candidacy provoked amused commentaries in New York City newspapers; some writers snickered at the prospect of a "skirted Secretary of State." It was a largely symbolic crusade, but Newman felt that she got people talking about the idea of women in government. The highlight of the campaign was her whistlestop tour with presidential candidate and Socialist leader Eugene V. Debs on his "Red Special" train.

The Socialist Party opened up a new world to Newman, who, after all, had never graduated from elementary school. Along with Debs, she met future Congressmen Meyer Berger and Morris Hillquit and leading Socialist intellectuals. Newman later wrote about the excitement of discussions that carried over from meetings and went into the night as she and her friends walked through Central Park, arguing till the sun came up. Those nights made her feel part of a historic moment.[35]

While Newman was being nurtured by the Socialist Party, Rose Schneiderman found her mentors in the United Cloth Hat and Cap

Makers. At the union's 1904 convention she was elected to the General Executive Board; she was the first woman to win such a high-level post in the American labor movement. During the winter of 1904–5, Schneiderman's leadership skills were tested when owners tried to open up union shops to nonunion workers. The largely immigrant capmaker's union called for a general strike. The 1905 strike was a watershed event in Schneiderman's emerging career. Her role as the only woman leader in the union won attention from the press and lasting respect from male capmakers, including the future president of the union, Max Zaritsky, who became a lifelong friend and admirer.[36]

It also brought her to the attention of the newly formed Women's Trade Union League (WTUL), an organization of progressive middle- and upper-class women reformers founded in 1903 to help working women organize. Schneiderman had misgivings about the group because she "could not believe that men and women who were not wage earners themselves understood the problems that workers faced." But she trusted the League's best-known working-class member, Irish shirtmaker Leonora O'Reilly. And she could not ignore the favorable publicity that the WTUL won for the strikers. By March 1905, Schneiderman had been elected to the executive board of the New York WTUL. In 1906, the group elected her vice president.[37]

Schneiderman's entrance into the New York WTUL was an important turning point for both her and the organization. Three years after its founding, the WTUL remained dominated by affluent reformers who had dubbed themselves "allies" of the working class. Despite their genuine commitment to trade unionism, League leaders had credibility problems among women workers. Schneiderman had joined the League recognizing that working women lacked the education, the money, and the political clout to organize effectively without powerful allies. Still, she remained ambivalent for a variety of reasons.[38]

The progressive reformers who dominated the League tried to steer workers away from radical influences, particularly the Socialist Party. Yet Schneiderman and O'Reilly, the League's leading working-class organizers, were Socialist Party members and saw unionism as a potentially revolutionary tool. As a result, the pair often felt torn by competing loyalties. Socialists distrusted their work with upper-crust women reformers. Union men were either indifferent or openly hostile to working women's attempts to become leaders in the labor movement. And the League women often seemed to Schneiderman and O'Reilly to act out of a patronizing benevolence that had little to do with real coalition building. The two grew angry at what they saw as attempts by wealthy allies to manipulate them. In January 1906, Leonora O'Reilly announced the first of her many resignations from the League, claiming "an overdose of allies."[39]

There were a few deep friendships between affluent WTUL leaders and working women like Schneiderman, O'Reilly, and Pauline Newman, who joined the League in 1909. Such bonds created hope that intimacy was possible between women of different classes; but cross-class friendships were the exception rather than the rule. Working women like Newman never lost sight of the ways their class background separated them from wealthy reformers. Sisterhood was exhilarating, but outside the WTUL, their lives and political agendas diverged sharply.[40]

Consequently, these women's relations with most wealthy League supporters were marked by deep ambivalence inasmuch as WTUL backers wanted to distance the League from radical working-class activism and to stake out a decidedly middle ground in the struggle for women's rights that was then gathering steam.

Schneiderman tried to counterbalance such influences by encouraging male union leaders to play a more active role in the League, but she had little success. She told them that the WTUL could help the labor movement by successfully organizing women workers, whose low wages might otherwise exert a downward pressure on unionized male wages. A *women's* trade union league was needed, she insisted, because women workers responded to different arguments than did men workers. The League could focus on the particular concerns of women, such as the double shift—having to perform household chores after coming home from long days in the factory. Her suggestions were greeted with indifference.

Addressing the First Convention of American Women Trade Unionists, held in New York on July 14, 1907, Schneiderman reported that she "was very much surprised and not a little disappointed that the attention of men

unionists was so small." The truth is, she told her audience, working women needed more than unions. They needed political power. "The time has come," she said firmly, "when working women of the State of New York must be enfranchised and so secure political power to shape their own labor conditions." The convention passed a suffrage resolution, one of the first prosuffrage statements by any organization representing American working-class women.[41]

Schneiderman confronted middle- and upper-class allies with equal frankness. She told the NYWTUL executive board that they were having little success organizing women workers because they approached their task like scholars, not trade unionists. They surveyed conditions in the women's trades, noting which had the lowest salaries, the longest hours, and the worst hygienic conditions. Then they established committees to study the possibilities for unionizing each trade. Finally they went into the shops to explain their findings to the working women. Schneiderman suggested a simpler alternative: take their lead from women workers and respond to requests for aid from women workers who were already trying to organize. It was something they had never thought to do.[42]

Before long, requests for help were pouring in, mostly from immigrant Jewish women. In the dress trade, where Clara Lemlich was working, and in the white goods trade, where Fannia Cohn was organizing, women workers had launched a series of wildcat strikes. "It was not unusual for unorganized workers to walk out without having any direct union affiliation," Schneiderman later recalled.[43]

By 1907, long-simmering anger over speedups, wage cuts, and the requirement that employees pay for their own thread reached a boiling point. Foreshadowing its role in the decades to come, the Women's Trade Union League decided to champion women workers ignored by the male unions. The strike fever soon engulfed Brooklyn, where for two years Fannia Cohn had been struggling against male union leaders' indifference to organize white goods workers. So when three hundred workers in one shop decided to strike in 1908, they bypassed the UGW and called for help from Schneiderman and the WTUL.

Since the ethnic makeup of the Brooklyn white goods trade was far more diverse than any other in the garment industry, this strike raised a new challenge for Schneiderman: how to forge a sense of solidarity between working-class women of many religions and nationalities. Schneiderman decided that the best way to reach immigrant workers was through organizers who literally spoke their language.[44]

She decided to focus first on Italian workers because, after Jews, they comprised the single largest ethnic group in the garment trades. Recognizing the cultural as well as linguistic differences that separated her from Italian immigrant women, Schneiderman tried a strategy she would employ many times over the years to come: to identify and cultivate a leader from within the ranks of the workers. She began working with a Brooklyn priest on ways to approach young Italian women. She also got the League to hire an Italian-speaking organizer who assembled a committee of progressive New York Italians—including prominent women professionals and the editor of a popular evening paper *Bolatino de la Sera*—to popularize trade unionism among Italian women workers.[45]

The strategy proved successful. By 1909 enough workers had enlisted that the ILGWU finally recognized the Brooklyn white goods workers' union. The vast majority of its members were teenage girls; these young women elected their mentor, Fannia Cohn, then twenty-four, to the union's first executive board. Cohn, who stepped off the shop floor to a policy-making position, would remain a paid union official for the rest of her life.[46]

In 1909, Clara Lemlich—then in her twenties and on the executive board of ILGWU Local 25—enlisted Schneiderman's aid in her drive to organize shirt-waist makers. For the past three years, Lemlich had been zigzagging between small shops, stirring up trouble. Her first full-scale strike was at Weisen and Goldstein's Manhattan factory. Like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, where Newman worked, Weisen and Goldstein's was considered a model shop. The workrooms were modern and airy—a pleasant contrast to the dark basement rooms where most white goods workers labored. However, the advantages of working in a clean, new factory were offset by the strains of mechanization. In 1907 the workers at Weisen and Goldstein's went on strike to protest speedups.

Older male strikers proved critical to Lemlich's political education. Confused by an argument between workers at a strike meeting, Lemlich asked one to explain the

difference between Socialist unionism and the "pure and simple trade unionism" of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). When the meeting ended, the man took Lemlich for a long walk. He explained Socialism in terms she could use with her fellow workers. "He started with a bottle of milk—how it was made, who made the money from it through every stage of its production. Not only did the boss take the profits, he said, but not a drop of that milk did you drink unless he allowed you to. It was funny, you know, because I'd been saying things like that to the girls before. But now I understood it better and I began to use it more often—only with shirtwaists."[47]

Lemlich returned to the picket line with a more sophisticated view of organizing. She became a regular at Socialist Party meetings and began attending classes at the Rand School. Through the Socialist Party she became friends with Rose Schneiderman, Pauline Newman, and other young women organizers. Both individually and in tandem, this group of radical young women organized strikes across the Lower East Side.

In 1909, after being fired from two more shops for leading strikes, Lemlich began working at the Leiserson shop. Brazenly, she marched uninvited into a strike meeting that had been called by the shop's older male elite—the skilled cutters and drapers. Warning them that they would lose if they attempted to strike without organizing the shop's unskilled women, Lemlich demanded their help in organizing women workers. They bridled at her nerve, but ultimately they helped her unionize the women.[48]

Lemlich's reputation as a leader grew rapidly during the fall of 1909 as stories of her bravery spread. During the Leiserson strike, which began that September, she was arrested seventeen times and had six ribs broken by club-wielding police and company guards. Without complaint, she tended to her bruises and returned to the line. By November 1909, when she stepped onto the stage in Cooper Union's Great Hall of the People to deliver the speech that would spark the largest women's strike the nation had yet seen, Lemlich was not the anonymous "wisp of a girl" that news accounts described. She was a battle-scarred veteran of the labor movement, well known among her fellow workers.[49]

Still, it is worth remembering that in this period, the four women activists were just barely adults. Newman, Schneiderman, and Lemlich still lived with their parents. During the Leiserson strike, Lemlich was so fearful that her parents would try to keep her home if they knew about her injuries that she hid her escapades and bruises from them. Later she explained the events to her grandson: "Like rain the blows fell on me. The gangsters hit me. . . . The boys and girls invented themselves how to give back what they got from the scabs, with stones and whatnot, with sticks. . . . Sometimes when I came home I wouldn't tell because if I would tell they wouldn't want me to go anymore. Yes, my boy, it's not easy. Unions aren't built easy."[50]

On November 23, 1909, New York City awoke to a general strike of shirtwaist makers, the largest strike by women workers the United States had ever seen. Overnight, between 20,000 and 40,000 workers—most of them teenage girls—silenced their sewing machines to protest the low wages, long hours, and dangerous working conditions. Though the magnitude of the strike amazed nearly everyone, including Schneiderman, Newman, Cohn, and Lemlich, the four knew that this was no spontaneous uprising: they had been organizing feverishly for almost three years and had noted a transformation in the working women they talked to, a growing sense of collective identity matched by an increasing militancy. They had laid the groundwork through a series of smaller strikes and had trained fellow workers to expect and respond to the violent and divisive tactics used by bosses to break the strike.

Despite their effectiveness, the strike was threatened by the escalation of police violence against the young women picketers. Two weeks after the strike call, Schneiderman and Dreier led ten thousand young waistmakers on a march to city hall to demand that Mayor George McClellan rein in the police. He promised an investigation but did little. One month into the strike, there had been 771 arrests, many made with undue force.[51]

WTUL leaders decided to try a different tack. They called a mass meeting of all the young women who had been attacked by police. The press and wealthy supporters were invited. One after another, adolescent girls rose to the stage to tell their stories. Mollie Weingast told a cheering crowd that when an officer tried to arrest her, she informed him that she had a constitutional right to picket. Minnie Margolis demanded that a policeman protect

her from physical attack by her boss. When he refused, she took down his badge and precinct numbers. It was, she told the audience, an officer's job to protect her right to protest peacefully. Celie Newman, sixteen, said that police had manhandled her and dragged her into court, where her boss told a judge that she was an anarchist and should be deported. At another meeting earlier that week, seventeen-year-old Etta Ruth said that police had taunted her with lewd suggestions.[52]

Implying that picketers were little better than streetwalkers, employers often resorted to sexual innuendos to discredit the strikers. The workers clearly resented the manner in which middle-class standards of acceptable feminine behavior were used to manipulate them even though they enjoyed none of the advantages of middle-class birth. Then as now, society offered a limited range of cultural images of working-class women. They were either "good" girls who listened docilely to fathers, employers, and policemen, or "bad" women whose aggressive behavior made them akin to prostitutes. By walking on picket lines and going public with their demands, they'd forfeited their claims to femininity and respectability—and thus to protection.[53]

Such women were shown little deference by police and company thugs, who attacked them with iron bars, sticks, and billy clubs. And they received little sympathy in court when they attempted to press charges. One young woman appeared in court with a broken nose, a bruised face, and a head swathed in bandages. Yet the judge dropped her assault charge against police. "You are on strike against God and nature," one magistrate told a worker. Only the League's decision to invite college students and wealthy women onto the picket lines ended the violence. Alva Belmont and Anne Morgan led a contingent of New York's wealthiest women in what newspapers dubbed "mink brigades," which patrolled the dirty sidewalks of the Lower East Side. Fearful of clubbing someone on the Social Register, police grew more restrained.[54]

The socialites' presence generated both money and press for the strikers. The move proved politically wise for the suffrage cause as well, because the constant proselytizing of suffrage zealot Alva Belmont, who often bailed strikers out of jail, got young workers talking about the vote. But rubbing elbows with the mink brigade did not blind workers to the class-determined limits of sisterhood. How far they were from the protected status of more affluent women was made abundantly clear by the violence they encountered at the hands of police and company guards and by the fact that the mink brigades were able to end police brutality simply by joining the picket lines.

Encounters in court and with feminist allies speeded the growth of group consciousness. Telling their stories in court, to reporters, and to sympathetic audiences of college and society women, the strikers grew more confident of their speaking abilities and of their capacity to interpret their world. They became more aware of the distribution of power in the United States. And finally, the violence directed against them intensified their bonds with one another.

For Schneiderman, Newman, and Lemlich, the 1909 shirtwaist uprising sped their maturation as organizers and political leaders. The strike breathed new life into a struggling immigrant labor movement and transformed the tiny ILGWU into a union of national significance. Still, it ended with mixed success for workers. Many won pay increases and union recognition; others did not. And the contracts hammered out by ILGWU negotiators left a devastating legacy, for without consulting the strikers, male union negotiators decided that safety conditions were less important than other issues. Their concessions would come back to haunt the entire labor movement two years later, when the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory burned.[55]

Flames from the volcanic 1909 uprising licked industrial cities from New York to Michigan. Within a matter of weeks, 15,000 women waistmakers in Philadelphia walked off their jobs. The spirit of militancy soon touched the Midwest. In 1910, Chicago women led a strike of 41,000 men's clothing makers. The following year, women workers and the wives of male workers played key roles in a bitter cloakmakers' strike in Cleveland. Meanwhile, in Muscatine, Iowa, young women button makers waged and won a long battle for union recognition. In 1912, corset makers in Kalamazoo, Michigan, launched a campaign for better working conditions that polarized their city and won national press attention. In 1913, a strike of underwear and kimono makers swept up 35,000 young Brooklyn girls and women. Finally, in 1915, Chicago dressmakers capped this period of women's labor militancy by winning recognition of their local union

after years of struggle. They elected their organizer, Fannia Cohn, as the first woman vice president of a major American labor union.[56]

Cohn, Rose Schneiderman, Pauline Newman, and Clara Lemlich were at the center of a storm that by 1919 had brought half of all women garment workers into trade unions. Individually and in tandem, the four women participated in all of the major women's strikes between 1909 and 1915, arguably the most intense period of women's labor militancy in U.S. history. This wave of "uprisings" seemed to herald the birth of a working women's movement on a scale never before seen. And it catapulted the four young women into positions of leadership, forcing them, in conjunction with colleagues, to articulate a clearly defined set of goals for the new movement.[57] In the passion and excitement of the years that followed, Schneiderman, Newman, Lemlich, and Cohn would begin to mature as political leaders and to forge a vision of political change that originated in their years on the shop floor. Pauline Newman would later describe this new brand of activism as politics of the 1909 vintage, fermented during a brief era of young women's mass protest. That description expresses the importance of the 1909 strike as both symbol and catalyst for a new working women's politics.

"Industrial feminism," the phrase coined in 1915 by scholar Mildred Moore to describe working women's militancy over the previous six years, evokes the same spirit but focuses more broadly. It simultaneously captures the interaction between women workers and feminist activists and recognizes the profound influence that the shop floor had on shaping working women's political consciousness. Industrial feminism accurately depicts the contours of an emerging political movement that by decade's end would propel the problems and concerns of industrial working women to the center of U.S. political discourse and make them players in the Socialist Party, the suffrage movement, and the politics of progressive reform.[58]

Industrial feminism was not a carefully delineated code of political thought. It was a vision of change forged in an atmosphere of crisis and awakening, as women workers in one city after another "laid down their scissors, shook the threads off their clothes and calmly left the place that stood between them and starvation." These were the words of former cloakmaker, journalist, and Socialist Party activist Theresa Malkiel, a partisan chronicler of women's labor militancy. Once an organizer, later a mentor for Newman, Lemlich, and Schneiderman, Malkiel told readers of the *New York Call* that they should not be surprised by the seemingly sudden explosion of young women workers' discontent. As hard as they might find it to take seriously the notion of a "girl's strike," she warned them, this was no outburst of female hysteria. "It was not . . . a woman's fancy that drove them to it," she wrote, "but an eruption of a long smoldering volcano, an overflow of suffering, abuse and exhaustion."[59]

Common sense, Pauline Newman would later say, dictated the most immediate goals of industrial feminists in the era of women's strikes. Given the dire realities of garment workers' lives, the first order of business had to be to improve their wages, hours, and working conditions. Toward that end the "girl strikers" of 1909–15 followed the most basic tenets of unionism. They organized, struck, and negotiated through their labor unions. But the "long-smoldering volcano" that Malkiel cautioned her readers to heed had been stirred to life by more than dissatisfaction over low wages and poor conditions.

The nascent political philosophy that began to take shape after the 1909 strike was more complex than the bread-and-butter unionism of AFL president Samuel Gompers. Why, young working women reasoned, should unions only negotiate hours and wages? They wanted to build unions that would also offer workers educational and cultural activities, health care, and maybe even a chance to leave the city and enjoy the open countryside.

Such ambitious goals derived largely from the personal experiences of industrial feminist leaders like Cohn, Schneiderman, Lemlich, and Newman. Political activism had enriched the four young women's lives, exposing them to more interesting people than they would have met had they stayed on the shop floor: writers, artists, professors, people with ideas. Through politics they had found their voices and a forum in which to raise them. The personal excitement and satisfaction they found in activism in turn shaped the evolution of their political vision: they wanted to create institutions that would provide some of the same satisfactions to any working woman who joined.

But alone, working women had none of the political or economic clout needed to open

up such doors of opportunity. To build a successful movement, the four knew that they would have to win the support of more powerful allies. So they learned to build coalitions. From the time they left the shop floor until the end of their careers, they operated within a tense nexus of union men, progressive middle- and upper-class women, and the working women they sought to organize. These alliances shifted continuously, requiring the four women to perform a draining and politically hazardous balancing act. But each core group contributed an important dimension to the political education of the four organizers.

With their male counterparts and older women in the labor movement, they shared a class solidarity that would always remain at the heart of their politics. Traveling around the country, they met coal miners, loggers, and railroad workers who shared both their experiences of exploitation as laborers and their exhilaration in the economic and political strength that trade unions gave them.

From the middle- and upper-class women who joined them on the picket lines and lent them both financial and strategic support, they learned that trade union activism was not the only way to fight for improved work conditions. These allies would expose Newman, Cohn, Schneiderman, and Lemlich to a world of power and political influence, encouraging them to believe that through suffrage and lobbying, government could be put to work for their benefit.

Finally, as they began to think in terms of forging a national movement, they were forced to develop new techniques to reach women workers of different races, religions, and ethnicities. They learned from the women they sought to organize that just as women workers were best reached by women organizers, so Italian, Polish, and Hispanic immigrants and native-born black and white Protestant women were better reached by one of their own than by Jewish women steeped in the political culture of Eastern Europe and the Lower East Side. Though each of the four women had some success in bridging racial and ethnic divisions, they were forced to acknowledge their limitations. They could not do it all themselves; they had to nurture women shop-floor leaders from different backgrounds.

The work required to remain politically effective in this nexus of often-conflicting relationships yielded some real rewards, both strategically and personally. But sometimes the constant struggling wore on them. Conflicts and tensions were brought into sharp relief as the four exhausted themselves making speeches and giving pep talks to weary workers, when they themselves needed reassurance: although they had achieved recognition by the end of the 1909 strike, Schneiderman, Cohn, Newman, and Lemlich were still poor, uneducated, and young. Newman was only eighteen years old when the strike began, and Lemlich twenty-three. Even the elders in the circle, Cohn and Schneiderman, were only twenty-five and twenty-eight, respectively.

Letters between Newman and Schneiderman from that era reveal their vulnerability to slights and criticisms by male union leaders and female reformers. Life on "the battlefield," as Newman referred to it, was lonely. At an age when other women were contemplating marriage and family, they spent their nights in smoky union halls or the cheap, dingy hotel rooms that unions rented for their organizers. They sometimes questioned their life choices, for the reality of union work was far less glamorous than it had seemed in their shop-floor days. Indeed, Newman would quit several times before decade's end. Ultimately, though, their disillusionment did not drive the four women from the union movement. Instead, it fueled their desire to broaden the vision of U.S. trade unionism. When Schneiderman said "The working woman needs bread, but she needs roses, too," she was speaking from personal experience.[60]

NOTES

1. Pauline Newman, "Letters to Hugh and Michael" (1951–69), box 1, folder 3, Pauline M. Newman Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass. (hereafter cited as Newman Papers).

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.; *New York Times*, Nov. 2, 25, Dec. 3, 26, 1907.

4. Newman, "Letters to Hugh and Michael."

5. "The Testimony of Miss Pauline M. Newman," in *Hearings of the New York State Factory Investigating Commission* (Albany, NY, 1915), 2868–71.

6. My estimate of Newman's age is based on evidence suggesting that she was around eighteen years old at the time of the 1909 shirtwaist strike. Newman, like many Jews of her generation, never knew for sure how old she was. Her birthdate was recorded only on the flyleaf of the family Bible. After the Bible was lost in transit, she could only guess at her age.

7. For analyses of the position of Jews in Russian society at the turn of the century, see S. Ettinger,

"The Jews at the Outbreak of the Revolution," in *The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917*, ed. Lionel Kochan, 3d ed. (Oxford, UK, 1978), 15–30; see also Salo Baron, *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets* (New York, 1976).

8. Sidney Jonas, interview by author, Brooklyn, N.Y., Aug. 10, 1980; Paula Scheier, "Clara Lemlich Shavelson: Fifty Years in Labor's Front Line," *Jewish Life*, Nov. 1954; Ricki Carole Myers Cohen, "Fannia Cohn and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1976), 5.

9. Newman, "Letters to Hugh and Michael"; Cohen, "Fannia Cohn," ch. 1; Scheier, "Clara Lemlich Shavelson"; Fannia M. Cohn to "Dear Emma," May 15, 1953, Fannia M. Cohn Papers, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library (hereafter cited as Cohn Papers). In March 1903, gangs organized by Russian police rampaged through the Ukrainian town of Kishinev, killing 51 Jewish men, women, and children, and wounding at least 495 others. Edward H. Judge, *Eastern Kishinev: Anatomy of a Pogrom* (New York, 1992).

10. See Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman, and Sonya Michel, *The Jewish Woman in America* (New York, 1977), 55–91; Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life Is with People* (New York, 1962); Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Bayarin, *From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry* (New York, 1985).

11. The Lower East Side continued to receive Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe into the 1920s. See Ettinger, "Jews at the Outbreak of the Revolution," 19–22; Celia Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction* (New York, 1980), 45–55; and Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York, 1976), xix.

12. Clara Lemlich Shavelson to Morris Schappes, March 15, 1965, published in *Jewish Currents* 36, no. 10 (Nov. 1982): 9–11.

13. Clara Lemlich, "Remembering the Waistmakers' General Strike, 1909," *Jewish Currents*, Nov. 1982; Newman, "Letters to Hugh and Michael."

14. Much has been written about the importance of women's colleges to the various social reform movements of the Progressive Era. Stephen Norwood makes a similar argument for high schools. Norwood, *Labor's Flaming Youth: Telephone Workers and Labor Militancy, 1878–1923* (Urbana, IL, 1990).

15. Newman, "Letters to Hugh and Michael"; Pauline Newman, interview by Barbara Wertheimer, New York, N.Y., Nov. 1976; Pauline Newman résumé, n.d., Newman Papers.

16. Pauline Newman, interview by author, New York, Feb. 9, 1984; Newman, interview by Wertheimer.

17. Joan Morrison and Charlotte Fox Zabusky, eds., *American Mosaic* (New York, 1980).

18. See Rose Schneiderman, *All for One* (New York, 1967), 35–42, and Susan Porter Benson, "The Customers Ain't God: The Work Culture of Department Store Saleswomen, 1890–1940," in *Working Class America*, ed. Michael Frisch and Daniel J. Walkowitz (Urbana, IL, 1983), 185–212.

19. Scheier, "Clara Lemlich Shavelson." See also Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Work, Unionism and the Immigrant Generation* (Ithaca, NY, 1990), 122–31.

20. Schneiderman, *All for One*, 48.

21. Ibid., 48–50.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. FMC to Selig Perlman, Dec. 26, 1951, Box 5, Cohn Papers.

25. Information on the problems of organizing the white goods trade is located in Minutes of the Executive Board of the NYWTUL, Feb. 28, Aug. 22, and Nov. 26, 27, 1907, Reel 1, New York Women's Trade Union League Papers, Tamiment Institute Library, New York University (hereafter cited as NYWTUL Papers); information on Cohn comes from Cohen, "Fannia Cohn," 11–21.

26. Schneiderman, *All for One*, 39–40.

27. Scheier, "Clara Lemlich Shavelson."

28. Pauline Newman, "The White Goods Workers' Strike," *Ladies' Garment Worker* 4, no. 3 (March 1913): 1–4.

29. Scheier, "Clara Lemlich Shavelson"; Pauline Newman, Fragments 1958–61, box 1, Newman Papers.

30. Newman, interview by Wertheimer; Newman, interview in Morrison and Zabusky, *American Mosaic*.

31. Scheier, "Clara Lemlich Shavelson."

32. Louis Levine [Lewis Lorwin], *The Women's Garment Workers: A History of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union* (New York, 1924), 148–49.

33. This information is pieced together from Scheier, "Clara Lemlich Shavelson"; Dora Smorodin, interview by author, Maplewood, N.J., March 12, 1991; and Levine, *Women's Garment Workers*, 148–49.

34. Newman, interview by Wertheimer; Newman, "Letters to Hugh and Michael."

35. Ibid.

36. Schneiderman, *All for One*, 58–60.

37. Ibid., 73–77; Minutes of the NYWTUL Executive Board, Feb. 24, March 24, 1905. Reel 1, NYWTUL Papers.

38. Nancy Schrom Dye, *As Equals and as Sisters: Feminism, Unionism and the Women's Trade Union League of New York* (Columbia, MO, 1980), 110–22.

39. Ibid.; Minutes of the NYWTUL Executive Board, Jan. 25, 1906, Reel 1, NYWTUL Papers.

40. Newman, interview by Wertheimer; Newman, interview by author, Feb. 9, 1984, New York.

41. See also Alice Kessler-Harris, "Rose Schneiderman," in *American Labor Leaders*, ed. Warren Van Tine and Melvyn Dubofsky (Urbana, IL, 1987), 160–84.

42. Minutes of the NYWTUL Executive Board, Feb. 24, 1905-Feb. 1, 1909, Reel 1, NYWTUL Papers.

43. Schneiderman, *All for One*, 84.

44. Minutes of the NYWTUL Executive Board, Feb. 28, Aug. 22, Nov. 26, 27, 1907, Reel 1, NYWTUL, Papers; Levine, *Women's Garment Workers*, 220.

45. Minutes of the NYWTUL Executive Committee, Nov. 26, 27, 1907, Reel 1, NYWTUL Papers.

46. Levine, *Women's Garment Workers*, 220; Cohen, "Fannia Cohn," 36–43.

47. Scheier, "Clara Lemlich Shavelson."

48. Martha Schaffer, telephone interview by author, March 11, 1989; Joel Schaffer, Evelyn Velson, and Julia Velson, interview by author, Oakland, CA, Sept. 9, 1992.

49. Scheier, "Clara Lemlich Shavelson."

50. Clara Lemlich Shavelson, interview by Martha and Joel Schaffer, Los Angeles, Feb. 2, 1974.

51. *New York Call*, Nov. 30, Dec. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 29, 1909.

52. *New York Call*, Dec. 5, 7, 8, 1909.

53. *New York Call*, Dec. 29, 1909. For complete coverage of day-to-day events on the picket line, see the *New York Times*, Nov. 5, 6, and 14, 1909, and almost daily from Nov. 23, 1909, through Jan. 28, 1910.

54. Minutes of the New York Women's Trade Union League Membership Meeting, April 20, June 15, 1910, Reel 1, NYWTUL Papers.

55. See Meredith Tax, *The Rising of the Women: Feminist Solidarity and Class Conflict, 1880–1917* (New York, 1980), 230–240. Tax discusses the hierarchical union structure and the ways that union-appointed arbitrators undermined the women workers' control of the strike.

56. For information on the many women's strikes of the period, read the WTUL publication *Life and Labor*, which covered them all in some detail. The progressive magazine *The Survey* (1909–1914) also has good coverage of most of the strikes. See too, Pauline Newman, "The White Goods Workers' Strike," *Ladies' Garment Worker* 4, number 3 (March 1913): 1–4; on the Chicago strike see Mari Jo Buhle, *Women and American Socialism, 1870–1920* (Urbana, IL, 1981), 194–198. On the Kalamazoo strike see Karen Mason, "Feeling the Pinch: The Kalamazoo Corset Makers' Strike of 1912," in *To Toil the Livelong Day: America's Women at Work*, ed. Carol Groneman and Mary Beth Norton (Ithaca, NY, 1987), 141--60. On the 1915 strike see *Chicago Day Book* cited in Winifred Carsel, *A History of the Chicago Ladies' Garment Workers' Union* (Chicago, 1940).

57. Gladys Boone, *The Women's Trade Union Leagues* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 112–14.

58. Mildred Moore, "A History of the Women's Trade Union League of Chicago" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1915), cited in Diane Kirkby, "The Wage-Earning Woman and the State: The National Women's Trade Union League and Protective Labor Legislation, 1903–1923," *Labor History* 28, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 58–74.

59. Theresa Malkiel, "The Uprising of the 40,000," *New York Call*, Dec. 29, 1909.

60. Pauline Newman, "From the Battlefield—Some Phases of the Cloakmakers' Strike in Cleveland," *Life and Labor*, Oct. 1911.

DOCUMENTS

Pauline Newman, Life in the Garment District

One of the four young garment industry workers whose organizing activities emerged so vividly in Annelise Orleck's account, Pauline Newman had started out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, which became the scene of one of the great industrial tragedies in New York City's history. Although the factory contained several elevators and two staircases, the eight-story wooden building had no sprinkler system; the doors to the fire escapes were locked to prevent outdoor relaxation. When fire broke out in 1911, 500 employees—many of them young Jewish and Italian women—were trapped behind locked doors. Some on the upper floors jumped to their deaths; others burned or asphyxiated while trapped inside. Altogether, the fire claimed the lives of 146 women. Viewing their charred bodies on the street, one reporter recalled that some of these same women had gone on strike only the year before to demand decent wages, more sanitary working conditions, and safety precautions.

The young women who died at the Triangle fire were buried together under a single monument. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers walked in the funeral procession in a driving rain. Not until 2011, one hundred years later, were they identified. The last living survivor of the fire, Rose Freedman, died in 2001 at the age of 107. She had saved herself by asking: what are the executives doing? She headed for their offices on the tenth floor, and then to the roof by way of the freight elevator, from which firefighters pulled them to safety. She never forgave the executives for saving themselves but leaving the doors locked or, later, attempting to bribe her to testify that the doors were unlocked.

Unsafe buildings, blocked exits, and inadequate sprinkler systems threaten garment workers again today. The mass-market clothes that American women wear are often made in substandard conditions—in the United States where minimum wage, maximum hour, and occupational health and safety laws are unenforced, and abroad, in places where such standards barely exist. In an eerie reprise of the Triangle Fire, almost exactly 102 years later, in April 2013, the Rana Plaza factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh, collapsed, killing 1,129 workers, mostly women, who made cheap clothes for Western markets. (The United States suspended trade preferences for Bangladesh in recognition of labor rights violations and the persistence of safety problems, but unsafe factories continue to be used in that country and elsewhere.)*

* "100 Years Later, the Roll of the Dead in a Factory Fire Is Complete," *New York Times*, Feb. 20, 2011; "Rose Freedman, Last Survivor of Triangle Fire, Dies at 107," ibid., Feb. 17, 2001; "Manufacturers in Bangladesh Resist Closing Garment Factories," ibid., June 26, 2014, B1, B7.

Educational director for the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union until her death in 1986, Newman conveys in her own words what it was like to be a garment worker in the early twentieth century. What does she feel has been gained by organized labor? What does she feel has been lost over the years?

A cousin of mine worked for the Triangle Shirtwaist Company and she got me on there in October of 1901. It was probably the largest shirtwaist factory in the city of New York then. They had more than two hundred operators, cutters, examiners, finishers. Altogether more than four hundred people on two floors. The fire took place on one floor, the floor where we worked. You've probably heard about that. But that was years later.

We started work at seven-thirty in the morning, and during the busy season we worked until nine in the evening. They didn't pay you any overtime and they didn't give you anything for supper money. Sometimes they'd give you a little apple pie if you had to work very late. That was all. Very generous.

What I had to do was not really very difficult. It was just monotonous. When the shirtwaists were finished at the machine there were some threads that were left, and all the youngsters—we had a corner on the floor that resembled a kindergarten—we were given little scissors to cut the threads off. It wasn't heavy work, but it was monotonous, because you did the same thing from seven-thirty in the morning till nine at night.

Well, of course, there were [child labor] laws on the books, but no one bothered to enforce them. The employers were always tipped off if there was going to be an inspection. "Quick," they'd say, "into the boxes!" And we children would climb into the big boxes the finished shirts were stored in. Then some shirts were piled on top of us, and when the inspector came—no children. The factory always got an okay from the inspector, and I suppose someone at City Hall got a little something, too.

The employers didn't recognize anyone working for them as a human being. You were not allowed to sing. Operators would have liked to have sung, because they, too, had the same thing to do and weren't allowed to sing. We weren't allowed to talk to each other. Oh, no, they would sneak up behind if you were found talking to your next colleague. You were admonished: "If you keep on you'll be fired." If you went to the toilet and you were there longer than the floor lady thought you should be, you would be laid off for half a day and sent home. And, of course, that meant no pay. You were not allowed to have your lunch on the fire escape in the summertime. The door was locked to keep us in. That's why so many people were trapped when the fire broke out.

My pay was $1.50 a week no matter how many hours I worked. My sisters made $6.00 a week; and the cutters, they were skilled workers, they might get as much as $12.00. The employers had a sign in the elevator that said: "If you don't come in on Sunday, don't come in on Monday." You were expected to work every day if they needed you and the pay was the same whether you worked extra or not. You had to be there at seven-thirty, so you got up at five-thirty, took the horse car, then the electric trolley to Greene Street, to be there on time. . . .

I stopped working at the Triangle Factory during the strike in 1909 and I didn't go back. The union sent me out to raise money for the strikers. I apparently was able to articulate my feelings and opinions about the criminal conditions, and they didn't have anyone else who could do better, so they assigned me. And I was successful getting money. After my first speech before the Central Trade and Labor Council I got front-page publicity, including my picture. I was only about fifteen then. Everybody saw it. Wealthy women were curious and they asked me if I would speak to them in their homes. I said I would if they would contribute to the strike, and they agreed. So I spent my time from November to the end of March upstate in New York, speaking to the ladies of the Four Hundred [the elite of New York's society] and sending money back. . . .

We didn't gain very much at the end of the strike. I think the hours were reduced to fifty-six a week or something like that. We got a 10 percent increase in wages. I think that the best thing that the strike did was to lay a foundation on which to build a union. There was so much feeling against unions then. The judge, when one of our girls came before him, said to her: "You're not striking against your

There was no morgue in New York City large enough to hold the bodies of the young women who had jumped from the burning buildings of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in 1911. They were laid out on a pier for families to identify. Six of the victims were so badly burned that even relatives could not recognize them. (Courtesy of UNITE Archives, Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.)

employer, you know, young lady. You're striking against God," and sentenced her to two weeks on Blackwell's Island, which is now Welfare Island. And a lot of them got a taste of the club. . . .

After the 1909 strike I worked with the union, organizing in Philadelphia and Cleveland and other places, so I wasn't at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory when the fire broke out, but a lot of my friends were. I was in Philadelphia for the union and, of course, someone from here called me immediately and I came back. It's very difficult to describe the feeling because I knew the place and I knew so many of the girls. The thing that bothered me was the employers got a lawyer. How anyone could have *defended* them!—because I'm quite sure that the fire was planned for insurance purposes. And no one is going to convince me otherwise. And when they testified that the door to the fire escape was open, it was a lie! It was never open. Locked all the time. One hundred and forty-six people were sacrificed, and the judge fined Blank and Harris seventy-five dollars!

Conditions were dreadful in those days. But there was something that is lacking today and I think it was the devotion and the belief. We *believed* in what we were doing. We fought and we bled and we died. Today they don't have to.

You sit down at the table, you negotiate with the employers, you ask for 20 percent, they say 15, but the girls are working. People are working. They're not disturbed, and when the negotiations are over they get the increases. They don't really have to fight. Of course, they'll belong to the union and they'll go on strike if you tell them to, but it's the inner

faith that people had in those days that I don't see today. It was a terrible time, but it was interesting. I'm glad I lived then.

Even when things were terrible, I always had that faith. . . . Only now, I'm a little discouraged sometimes when I see the workers spending their free hours watching television—trash. We fought so hard for those hours and they waste them. We used to read Tolstoy, Dickens, Shelley, by candlelight, and they watch the *Hollywood Squares*. Well, they're free to do what they want. That's what we fought for.

Crystal Eastman, Now We Can Begin

Crystal Eastman charts an agenda for feminists after the achievement of suffrage. For all humankind, what should we think of as being embraced by her observation that "freedom is a large word"? Most of her short essay focuses on how to achieve "woman's freedom" as she saw it through her particular early twentieth-century feminist frame. Do you agree that the issues she identifies needed to be prioritized in the 1920s? Are these issues still relevant today?

We invite you to do background research on Crystal Eastman and *The Liberator,* a magazine published in New York City starting in 1918 and named for William Lloyd Garrison's legendary abolitionist newspaper of the early nineteenth century. What things do you find most striking about Eastman's life? Who published *The Liberator* and for how long? Take a moment to open the link to the digitized December 1920 issue so that you can see her short essay alongside other essays, artwork, and advertisements, imagining yourself as someone who moved in Eastman's circles in the 1920s.

Most women will agree that August 23, the day when the Tennessee legislature finally enacted the Federal suffrage amendment, is a day to begin with, not a day to end with. Men are saying perhaps "Thank God, this everlasting woman's fight is over!" But women, if I know them, are saying, "Now at last we can begin." In fighting for the right to vote most women have tried to be either non-committal or thoroughly respectable on every other subject. Now they can say what they are really after; and what they are after, in common with all the rest of the struggling world, is *freedom.*

Freedom is a large word.

Many feminists are socialists, many are communists, not a few are active leaders in these movements. But the true feminist, no matter how far to the left she may be in the revolutionary movement, sees the woman's battle as distinct in its objects and different in its methods from the workers' battle for industrial freedom. She knows, of course, that the vast majority of women as well as men are without property, and are of necessity bread and butter slaves under a system of society which allows the very sources of life to be privately owned by a few, and she counts herself a loyal soldier in the working-class army that is marching to overthrow that system. But as a feminist she also knows that the whole of woman's slavery is not summed up in the profit system, nor her complete emancipation assured by the downfall of capitalism.

Woman's freedom, in the feminist sense, can be fought for and conceivably won before the gates open into industrial democracy. On the other hand, woman's freedom, in the feminist

Crystal Eastman, "Now We Can Begin," *The Liberator,* 3 (December 1920), 23–4. For an open-access, digitized copy of the magazine issue, go to http://www.marxists.org/history/usa/culture/pubs/liberator/1920/12/v3n12-w33-dec-1920-liberator.pdf.

sense, is not inherent in the communist ideal. All feminists are familiar with the revolutionary leader who "can't see" the woman's movement. "What's the matter with the women? My wife's all right," he says. And his wife, one usually finds, is raising his children in a Bronx flat or a dreary suburb, to which he returns occasionally for food and sleep when all possible excitement and stimulus have been wrung from the fight. If we should graduate into communism tomorrow this man's attitude to his wife would not be changed. The proletarian dictatorship may or may not free women. We must begin now to enlighten the future dictators.

What, then, is "the matter with women"? What is the problem of women's freedom? It seems to me to be this: how to arrange the world so that women can be human beings, with a chance to exercise their infinitely varied gifts in infinitely varied ways, instead of being destined by the accident of their sex to one field of activity—housework and child-raising. And second, if and when they choose housework and child-raising, to have that occupation recognized by the world as work, requiring a definite economic reward and not merely entitling the performer to be dependent on some man.

This is not the whole of feminism, of course, but it is enough to begin with. "Oh, don't begin with economics," my friends often protest, "Woman does not live by bread alone. What she needs first of all is a free soul." And I can agree that women will never be great until they achieve a certain emotional freedom, a strong healthy egotism, and some unpersonal sources of joy—that in this inner sense we cannot make woman free by changing her economic status. What we can do, however, is to create conditions of outward freedom in which a free woman's soul can be born and grow. It is these outward conditions with which an organized feminist movement must concern itself.

Freedom of choice in occupation and individual economic independence for women: How shall we approach this next feminist objective? First, by breaking down all remaining barriers, actual as well as legal, which make it difficult for women to enter or succeed in the various professions, to go into and get on in business, to learn trades and practice them, to join trades unions. Chief among these remaining barriers is inequality in pay. Here the ground is already broken. This is the easiest part of our program.

Second, we must institute a revolution in the early training and education of both boys and girls. It must be womanly as well as manly to earn your own living, to stand on your own feet. And it must be manly as well as womanly to know how to cook and sew and clean and take care of yourself in the ordinary exigencies of life. I need not add that the second part of this revolution will be more passionately resisted than the first. Men will not give up their privilege of helplessness without a struggle. The average man has a carefully cultivated ignorance about household matters—from what to do with the crumbs to the grocer's telephone number—a sort of cheerful inefficiency which protects him better than the reputation for having a violent temper. It was his mother's fault in the beginning, but even as a boy he was quick to see how a general reputation for being "no good around the house" would serve him throughout life, and half-consciously he began to cultivate that helplessness until today it is the despair of feminist wives.

A growing number of men admire the woman who has a job, and, especially since the cost of living doubled, rather like the idea of their own wives contributing to the family income by outside work. And of course for generations there have been whole towns full of wives who are forced by the bitterest necessity to spend the same hours at the factory that their husbands spend. But these breadwinning wives have not yet developed homemaking husbands. When the two come home from the factory the man sits down while his wife gets supper, and he does so with exactly the same sense of fore-ordained right as if he were "supporting her." Higher up in the economic scale the same thing is true. The business or professional woman who is married, perhaps engages a cook, but the responsibility is not shifted, it is still hers. She "hires and fires," she orders meals, she does the buying, she meets and resolves all domestic crises, she takes charge of moving, furnishing, settling. She may be, like her husband, a busy executive at her office all day, but unlike him, she is also an executive in a small way every night and morning at home. Her noon hour is spent in planning, and too often her Sundays and holidays are spent in "catching up."

Two business women can "make a home" together without either one being overburdened or over-bored. It is because they both know how and both feel responsible. But it is a rare man who can marry one of them and continue the homemaking partnership. Yet if there

are no children, there is nothing essentially different in the combination. Two self-supporting adults decide to make a home together: if both are women it is a pleasant partnership, more fun than work; if one is a man, it is almost never a partnership—the woman simply adds running the home to her regular outside job. Unless she is very strong, it is too much for her, she gets tired and bitter over it, and finally perhaps gives up her outside work and condemns herself to the tiresome half-job of housekeeping for two.

Cooperative schemes and electrical devices will simplify the business of homemaking, but they will not get rid of it entirely. As far as we can see ahead people will always want homes, and a happy home cannot be had without a certain amount of rather monotonous work and responsibility. How can we change the nature of man so that he will honorably share that work and responsibility and thus make the home-making enterprise a song instead of a burden? Most assuredly not by laws or revolutionary decrees. Perhaps we must cultivate or simulate a little of that highly prized helplessness ourselves. But fundamentally it is a problem of education, of early training—we must bring up feminist sons.

Sons? Daughters? They are born of women—how can women be free to choose their occupation, at all times cherishing their economic independence, unless they stop having children? This is a further question for feminism. If the feminist program goes to pieces on the arrival of the first baby, it is false and useless. For ninety-nine out of every hundred women want children, and seventy-five out of every hundred want to take care of their own children, or at any rate so closely superintend their care as to make any other full-time occupation impossible for at least ten or fifteen years. Is there any such thing then as freedom of choice in occupation for women? And is not the family the inevitable economic unit and woman's individual economic independence, at least during that period, out of the question?

The feminist must have an answer to these questions, and she has. The immediate feminist program must include voluntary motherhood. Freedom of any kind for women is hardly worth considering unless it is assumed that they will know how to control the size of their families. "Birth control" is just as elementary an essential in our propaganda as "equal pay." Women are to have children when they want them, that's the first thing. That ensures some freedom of occupational choice; those who do not wish to be mothers will not have an undesired occupation thrust upon them by accident, and those who do wish to be mothers may choose in a general way how many years of their lives they will devote to the occupation of child-raising.

But is there any way of insuring a woman's economic independence while child-raising is her chosen occupation? Or must she sink into that dependent state from which, as we all know, it is so hard to rise again? That brings us to the fourth feature of our program—motherhood endowment. It seems that the only way we can keep mothers free, at least in a capitalist society, is by the establishment of a principle that the occupation of raising children is peculiarly and directly a service to society, and that the mother upon whom the necessity and privilege of performing this service naturally falls is entitled to an adequate economic reward from the political government. It is idle to talk of real economic independence for women unless this principle is accepted. But with a generous endowment of motherhood provided by legislation, with all laws against voluntary motherhood and education in its methods repealed, with the feminist ideal of education accepted in home and school, and with all special barriers removed in every field of human activity, there is no reason why woman should not become almost a human thing.

It will be time enough then to consider whether she has a soul.

Suffrage and Citizenship

LEILA J. RUPP

Sexuality and Politics in the Early Twentieth-Century International Women's Movement

We often imagine that in US history "the sexual revolution" took place in the 1960s. Historians, however, perceive what they sometimes call a first sexual revolution, occurring early in the twentieth century (although this ignores changing ideas about sexual expression and gender roles throughout American history, including in the 1700s and 1800s*). At the turn of the twentieth century, two broad shifts were at work in mainstream American culture, most notably in the 1920s. The first concerned homosociality, or the extent to which persons of one perceived sex spend most of their time with members of the same sex. For decades prior to 1920, women and men were expected largely to occupy different social realms. Around the period of the "roaring twenties," some Europeans and Americans began to pursue and celebrate heterosocial patterns of engagement, both in informal social activities and in the organizations they joined. At the same time, heterosexual experimentation prior to and outside marriage became more acceptable in some circles. One consequence of these shifts was that same-sex emotional and physical intimacy became increasingly stigmatized and labeled (often pejoratively) as homosexuality.

Leila J. Rupp's essay tells us about the political alliances forged across national borders by women in Europe and the Americas against the backdrop of the sexual revolution of the early twentieth century. These activists, who were often fluent in several languages, could afford to travel overseas and to devote themselves full-time to volunteer or paid work on the behalf of organizations such as the International Council of Women. Some lived openly as same-sex couples. Others gloried in their heterosexual marriages or did not do much to hide their many affairs with men. Rupp reads personal correspondence and organizational records to find out how much sexual (or "affectional," as in where you place your most important affections) life choices factored in the

* For arguments about major shifts prior to 1830, see Richard Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America* (Baltimore, 2002); and Clare A. Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730–1830* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006).

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political differences among the activists—such as over the issue of woman-only gatherings.

How do you think Rupp's insights about sexuality and politics might apply to activists today? Rupp's study focuses on transnational connections among women in the West. How might issues relating to sexual politics be similar or different if we examined transnational women's activism today between the global North and global South?

In her autobiography, Lena Madesin Phillips, U.S. founder of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, who lived for thirty-three years with a woman to whom she "lost her heart," reported that an Austrian colleague had once asked her about the large number of unmarried women in the organization. "You women seem quite content to have meetings without men present; to be happy though unmarried. . . . American women told us they had a splendid banquet where women had a fine meal, some speeches, and no men," the Austrian woman remarked with evident astonishment. Within the same international women's movement circles, Brazilian International Alliance of Women member Bertha Lutz expressed her disgust at the lobbying tactics of Inter-American Commission of Women head Doris Stevens, an American "emancipated woman" who worked for an international equal rights treaty by seeking the support of male government representatives to the Pan American Union. Lutz called Stevens a "nymphomaniac" and accused her of "paying the Mexican delegates in kisses . . . [and] luring the Haitians with a French secretary she has."[1]

These contrasting observations—about a surprisingly happy female world and a disturbingly (hetero)sexual one—alert us to some of the tensions that simmered beneath the seemingly placid surface of early-twentieth-century international women's organizations. In the industrialized societies of the Euroamerican arena, the first decades of the century marked a critical transition, sometimes graced with the label of "sexual revolution," from a world of privatized to a world of more public and commercialized sexuality. As the barriers between women's and men's public worlds began to break down in the decades on either side of 1900 and young women in Chicago and Harlem, London, and Copenhagen laid assertive new claims to their own sexuality, increasingly rigid definitions of heterosexuality and homosexuality cast more and more suspicion on a whole range of women's relationships and forms of organizing.[2] Women might step over the line of respectable heterosexuality by cavorting with men outside of marriage, but women without men—whether "spinsters" or women in same-sex couples—came more frequently to earn the label "deviant." And, as I argue here, these moves had consequences for the politics of women's single-sex organizing.

Sexual respectability was not a new concern in the women's movement of the early twentieth century—one has only to think of the scandals that surrounded Mary Wollstonecraft or Victoria Woodhull. But heightened attention to the deviant lesbian subject did transform the context in which women gathered in single-sex organizations. Before the categorization of the "female invert" or "lesbian" at the end of the nineteenth century, women in the women's movement could more easily form intense and passionate relationships as "romantic friends" or choose to live out their lives as single women without a diagnosis of abnormality.[3] Scholarship has long emphasized the importance of supportive relationships among women for the strength of the women's movement.[4] Although recent work has opened our eyes to the ease with which romantic friends in the nineteenth century and earlier could transgress what the counsel for the defense in a famous [Scottish] case called "ordinary female friendship," there is no question that coupled women had to trod ever more carefully as time wore on.[5]

The organizations making up the international women's movement provide a particularly interesting case study of such tensions, because these bodies came to life as shifts in the conceptualization of women's relationships proceeded. They also brought together women from a variety of cultures, if primarily middle- and upper-class women of European origin from the countries of Western Europe and North America. As we shall see, not only affectional but generational, class, and national

differences—and their complex interplay in the lives of women—shaped responses to the practice of single-sex organizing.

My research concentrates on the three major transnational women's groups—the International Council of Women, the International Alliance of Women, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom—and the more narrowly focused bodies with which they interacted on a regular basis in the years between the emergence of international organizing in the 1880s and the conclusion of the Second World War, which marked the end of the first wave of the international women's movement (and the lull before the swell of the second). In this period all three organizations remained heavily elite and Euroamerican in composition and leadership. Not only did Europe and what have been called the "neo-Europes" contribute all but one of the national sections until 1923 but women from the United States, Great Britain, and Western and Northern Europe also served as the founders and leaders. This pattern perpetuated itself through the choice of official languages—English, French, and German—and the location of congresses primarily in Europe, with a few excursions to North America. Although women from Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa increasingly found their voices within the international organizations after the First World War undermined European dominance of the world system, their relative silence in the recorded debate about sexuality is testimony to their marginality in the organizational friendship circles.[6]

The International Council of Women (ICW), the most vaguely defined group, came together in 1888 and welcomed all women's organizations with whatever purposes, bringing in a huge number of members but forestalling commitment to controversial goals. The International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), later known as the International Alliance of Women (IAW), split off from the ICW in 1904 in order to take a position in favor of suffrage and remained a strongly feminist-identified body, even after the increasing extension of the vote to women in the years after the First World War undermined the group's

Farewell banquet, International Council of Women, Quinquennial Congress at the Mayflower Hotel, May 13, 1925.

Reproduced from the Report on the Quinquennial Meeting, *Washington, D.C., 1925. (Image courtesy of Leila Rupp.)*

original rationale. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), founded in 1915 by IWSA members who insisted on meeting despite wartime hostilities, consistently took quite radical positions on a range of issues.[7] These three groups, in conjunction with a wide array of bodies organized on a regional basis, or comprised of particular constituencies of women, or devoted to single issues, formed coalitions in the years between the wars to coordinate international collective action, especially lobbying at the League of Nations.

The transnational women's groups focused on issues of women's rights, peace, and women's work, paying minimal attention to questions of sexuality, with the exception of what they called "the traffic in women." The dialogue about sexuality and politics, then, must be ferreted out of the sources, read from assumptions and associations. As I explored discussions of difference between women and men, arguments about the appropriateness of single-sex organizing, and correspondence about personal relationships, I began to perceive tensions within the international organizations and patterns linking women's personal lives and cultural contexts to their political choices.

SAME-SEX LOVE, HOMOSOCIALITY, AND SEPARATISM

Within the international women's organizations, some women coupled with women in what seem to have been "lesbian" relationships or as "romantic friends," sometimes in relationships in which one woman served as a kind of caretaker for the other. Some women never formed intimate relationships with either women or men. None of these women can be easily categorized, but in one way or another all made their lives with other women.

We have no direct evidence that any of the women involved in the international women's movement identified as lesbians, but the concept of lesbianism was not unknown in their intellectual world. As early as 1904, in a speech to the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, the pioneering German homosexual rights group, Anna Ruhling associated lesbians ("Uranian women" in the terminology of the time) with the international women's movement, asserting that

> the homosexual woman is particularly capable of playing a leading role in the international women's rights movement for equality. And indeed, from the beginning of the women's movement until the present day, a significant number of homosexual women assumed the leadership in the numerous struggles and, through their energy, awakened the naturally indifferent and submissive average women to an awareness of their human dignity and rights.[8]

... That women in the international women's movement had some familiarity with the discourse of "homosexuality" as it emerged in the late nineteenth century is clear.... Discussion within international women's movement circles of "fairies," use of the terms "queer" and "perverse from a sexual point of view," [and] references to "Manly-Looking" women and women who "went about together at the Hague, hair cropped short and rather mannish in dress," ... suggest that at least the European women had some familiarity with the work of the sexologists [such as Havelock Ellis].[9]

Despite such derogatory usages, women within the movement accepted women's couple relationships, conceptualizing them as romantic friendships or "Boston marriages" rather than lesbian love affairs. Anita Augspurg and Lida Gustava Heymann formed one such couple within the circle of internationally organized women. Augspurg, leading member of the radical wing of the German women's movement and the country's first woman lawyer, met Heymann, who had freed herself from the life of a daughter of a rich Hamburg merchant to become a social worker and trade union organizer, at an 1896 international women's conference in Berlin. In their memoirs, Heymann described her first vision of the woman she came to live with for over forty years. Arrested by Augspurg's powerful voice, she saw her at the lectern, dressed in a brown velvet dress. "Already graying short hair framed a high forehead, under which two clear-sighted eyes sparkled. A sharp profile contrasted markedly but not unharmoniously with a delightful small mouth, chin, and small ears."[10] Obviously it was a momentous meeting, and the physical description smacks of a "love at first sight" genre.

Although early on the two women decided not to live together, they happily broke that promise. "Every year brought us closer," Heymann wrote, "deepened our friendship, let us know that not only in questions of Weltanschauung

[worldview] . . . but also in all the events of daily life . . . we stood in exquisite harmony." They moved to the country where they launched a series of ambitious, and successful, agricultural enterprises, a quite unusual undertaking for two women. As a result, they reported that their Upper Bavarian peasant neighbors viewed them with some suspicion. In the section of their memoirs entitled "Private Life," Heymann recounted that "it excited the envy and anger of the farmers that two 'vagabonds in petticoats' were successful, creative, and happy to organize their lives according to their own desires and inclinations." One day a cattle dealer came to call with proposals of marriage for both women, explaining that the farm was splendid and lacked only a man. "It took all our effort to remain serious and make clear to the man the hopelessness of his desire. As he left, we shook with laughter," Heymann commented.[11]

As such descriptions make clear, Heymann and Augspurg presented themselves in public, in their daily lives, and unselfconsciously as a couple, and that is certainly how they were treated within the international women's movement. Correspondents regularly sent messages to and received them from both women. Heymann sent "Heartfelt greetings from us both" to Rosika Schwimmer in 1919. . . . Augspurg and Heymann stayed in double rooms when they attended congresses, entertained movement friends at their home, and described a happy family life: "I had a very good journey home and found Anita and our dog in good health," Heymann wrote [to the French WILPF leader] on her return from a trip to Paris. When Heymann planned to travel to Geneva for a meeting in 1930, a WILPF staff member reported that "she is coming without Dr. Augspurg which is scarcely believable!"[12]

Heymann and Augspurg were enjoying a Mediterranean vacation in March of 1933 when Hitler came to power in Germany. As pacifists and feminists they had made themselves enemies of the Nazis, so they never returned to the land of their birth. Although in this way they stayed out of the Nazis' clutches, the regime seized all their property, including their books and personal papers, prompting WILPF friends to try to help them. Swiss WILPF cochair Clara Ragaz, hoping to arrange hospitality at headquarters in Geneva, commented about Augspurg, who suffered from heart disease, that "it is a very hard time for her friend—and of course for herself." When Heymann died in June of 1943, American Emily Greene Balch worked to raise money to support Heymann's "life-long friend and coworker . . . , for whom she had cared so devotedly." But as it turned out, Augspurg did not survive long. "Did you notice that Lida Gustava Heymann and Dr. Anita Augspurg died within a few short weeks of each other?" Rosika Schwimmer asked a friend.[13]

Augspurg and Heymann made the acquaintance of another well-known couple, Hull House founder and WILPF president Jane Addams and Mary Rozet Smith, in the course of their work in the international women's movement. The German women enjoyed the hospitality of Addams and Smith when they came to the United States for the WILPF congress in 1924. . . . Like the German couple, Addams and Smith sent and received messages for one another, made arrangements for double-bedded rooms when they traveled, and took care of each other, although that responsibility fell more heavily on [the younger] Smith. . . . [14]

. . . Such relationships between older and younger, or more and less powerful, women [like Smith's devoted service to her more prominent partner] seemed to obscure the bond of love from the vision of outsiders. The relationship between Anna Howard Shaw, American minister, charismatic orator, and international leader, and Lucy Anthony, a niece of . . . Susan B. Anthony, falls into this category. Shaw had a reputation within suffrage circles for her "strong and passionate attachments to other women," some of which "have broken up in some such tempestuous fashion." Shaw described her "abiding love for home and home life" at her country house, Moylan, which she shared with Anthony. When Shaw fell and broke her foot and Anthony, at the same time, fractured her elbow, Shaw ruefully labeled them "rather a broken up couple." Yet Aletta Jacobs [Dutch IWSA leader and WILPF founder] saw Anthony as Shaw's "secretary, friend, and housekeeper," since Shaw paid her a salary. Anthony herself called Shaw, after her death, "my Precious Love," "the joy of my life."[15]

The same confusion greeted the relationship of International Woman Suffrage Alliance president Carrie Chapman Catt and New York suffrage leader Mary Garrett Hay. Catt's reserve and distaste for emotional display—one intimate friend likened her to "cold boiled halibut"—may have obscured the reality of her relationships, or the fact that Catt married twice

may have led observers—as it has scholars—to undervalue her ties to women.[16] But Catt did not even live full time with her husband when he was alive, and when he died she and Hay set up housekeeping together. . . . Apparently rather authoritarian, Hay was not popular in international circles. Shaw, who detested her, . . . did "not think there is any hope of breaking that affair off." . . . When Catt died in 1947, she was buried, at her request, not with either of her two husbands but next to her "unforgettable friend and comrade" Hay.[17]

More ambivalent, but following a similar pattern, was the relationship of Emily Greene Balch, Wellesley professor, WILPF leader, and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, and her childhood friend Helen Cheever. Balch, like Catt, was a reserved woman; she described her Yankee background as one that valued "restraint not only of expression of emotion but of emotion itself." Cheever was a wealthy woman who financially supported Balch and wanted to live with her on a permanent basis. But Balch, who admitted that she both loved and was irritated by Cheever, balked. Perhaps, she wrote her sister, it was a result of Cheever's "giving me more love than I can quite digest." Yet when Balch was in Geneva as international secretary of WILPF, her coworkers eagerly anticipated, on Balch's behalf, a visit from Cheever. "I think she is homesick and it would be very good if her friend from America came soon to keep her company and also attend a bit to her physical health," Heymann confided to Jane Addams. Three years later Cheever wanted to resign her offices in the U.S. section of WILPF in order to go to Geneva where "my usefulness to the W.I.L. will be confined to being with Miss Balch." . . . [In the end] Balch resisted becoming part of a female couple and identified [instead] as an unmarried woman. . . . Unmarried women [found it] strange, [she later explained to Jane Addams, that] . . . "everything that is not concerned with the play of desire between men and women [is seen] as without adventure."[18]

The public defensiveness of single women may have originated in the awakened suspicion that women living without men might have perverse desires or it might simply have been provoked by popular assumptions that such women had no intimate ties. In a 1931 German anthology on the modern single career woman, Elisabeth Busse explained that such women were not "amazonian," "inverts," or "homosexuals," although "they lived in women's unions." So it is not surprising that ICW secretary Alice Salomon, a German Jewish pioneer in the world of social work who never married, apologized in her autobiography that "this book may sometimes seem as much a book about women as though I had lived in a harem." Actually, she assured her readers, "I always had men and women, old and young, rich and poor, and sometimes whole families as my friends." But, in fact, Salomon made her life in the female world of social reform and the women's movement. She apparently felt compelled to discuss why she never married, explaining that her work . . . "made me reluctant to form a union which could not combine love with common interests and convictions."[19]

In the ICW *Bulletin* of October 1932, Salomon published a defense of unmarried women, the first generation of independent women who pursued careers. She recognized that the discipline of psychology had changed attitudes toward single women—that they were reputed to be warped by celibacy—but quoted a woman of "international fame" to the effect that "they are alive, active, and they fully participate in present-day life by means of a thousand interests." Similarly, Lena Madesin Phillips recognized: "To live an old maid was . . . considered something to be greatly deplored"; but she insisted that she had "no complaints, no regrets, no fears" about her own unmarried, but woman-coupled life. Helen Archdale, a British equal rights advocate active in the international arena, reacted testily to a paean to marriage penned [by a friend]. . . . "What you say about the beneficial effects of marriage on one's life rather puzzles me. Why should 'spinsterhood' be gray?" Archdale shared a London flat and country home with Lady Margaret Rhondda, another international activist, in the 1920s, after which they "personally drifted very far apart."[20] Such defensiveness and defiance about living apart from men reflects the power of the intensified vision of married life as the only healthy alternative for women.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, then, overlapping frames of lesbianism, romantic friendship, devoted service, and singleness existed for women's choices in their personal lives. Women-only organizations offered an appealing haven for those who made their lives with other women, whatever the nature of their ties. But in a context in which homosociality often cast a pall of deviance,

the desire to work apart from men grew more complex.

Almost all participants in the major international women's organizations accepted—or did not raise public objections to—an ideology of fundamental difference between women and men. The notion of difference underlay . . . "maternalist politics"—the construction of public positions on the foundation of women's biological and social roles as mothers.[21] But among women not involved in intimate relationships with men, belief in female values—read superior values—also led in a different direction: to the regular expression of anti-male sentiments in both private and public life. Heymann and Augspurg tried as far as possible to hire only women to manage their farm, and Heymann contrasted their satisfaction with their women employees to their displeasure with a male manager: "Vanity, thy name is man!" she proclaimed. "The customary judgment maintains, of course, that the female sex is the one enslaved by vanity, but this customary assertion is only a diversion and contradicts the law of nature among humans and animals."[22]

Similarly, Anna Howard Shaw had little use for men in her private life. When Lucy Anthony's broken arm failed to heal properly, Shaw announced that if a woman physician had treated Anthony everything would have been all right. During the First World War, Shaw complained about "male experts" wasting "millions of dollars on smoke and drink" while advising housewives to tighten their belts. "Men, I am convinced, never grow up and of all the animal creation are the least capable of reason."[23]

Such views spilled over into work in the international women's movement, merging especially with the common association of men with war and women with peace. The outbreak of the First World War unleashed a veritable barrage of anti-male proclamations. Shaw found men's "war madness and barbarism" "unthinkable" and claimed, despite her already low opinion of men, that "I have not half the respect for man's judgment or common sense that I used to have, that they are such fools as to go out and kill and be killed without knowing why." Heymann condemned men's "lies and hatred and violence" at the WILPF congress in 1919, proclaiming that the war would "never have come to pass had we women, the mothers of the world, been given the opportunity of helping to govern the people and join in the social life of nations." At the 1934 WILPF congress, Augspurg denounced the "world of men" as "built up on profit and power, on gaining material wealth and oppressing other people." Women "would be able to build a new world which would produce enough for all." According to Carrie Chapman Catt, "All wars are men's wars. Peace has been made by women but war never."[24]

Advocacy of separatist organizing logically flowed from such assumptions about women's moral superiority and potential efficacy in creating a peaceful world. It is not that women who built lives apart from men never associated or worked with them—both Heymann and Addams, for example, participated in political parties—but that they seemed particularly to value the women's world of the women's movement. Yet few women in the international women's movement explicitly defended the practice of separatism. Emily Greene Balch seemed to prefer work with women but to feel that WILPF had to consider admitting men. In the first year after the [1915] Hague congress, she wrote that "my interest and belief in our woman's organization is as strong as ever." WILPF debated its commitment to separatism in the early 1920s but decided to remain a woman-only organization on the international level, in the process putting out a pamphlet that explained the reasons for keeping out men, one of the only public documents to defend the practice of separatism. . . .[25]

Given the persistence of all-female groups, the lack of vigorous defense of the principle of separatism is curious. Yet such silence speaks. It is possible that the need never occurred to those long committed to organizing in woman-only groups. But because the question of admitting men did arise, perhaps the silence was a sign of uneasiness over the old-fashioned associations of single-sex organizing in an increasingly heterosocial world. That separatist inclinations remained strong is clear from the apology of Eva Fichet, member of the mixed-gender Tunis section of WILPF, who planned to bring her member husband to the 1934 international congress. Noting that "his presence will offend some of our collaborators," she promised that "he will only make an appearance at public meetings, if there are any." Still, the comments of British suffragist and WILPF member Catherine E. Marshall,

who never married, stand out in the records of the international women's movement: "It is always a pleasure to meet Women fellow workers. . . . I do like women best! Who was it said: The more I see of men the better I think of women!"[26] Such sentiments expressed the conviction that women had more in common with one another than with men and underlay the inclination to make both a personal and work life with other women.

HETEROSEXUALITY AND WORK WITH MEN

Some women within the international women's movement lived traditional married lives, while others engaged in more unconventional forms of heterosexual relationships. The model of the woman leader married to a supportive husband received a great deal of praise, but unorthodox heterosexuality crossed the line of respectability in a way that women's same-sex relationships did not and as a result met with disapproval. This difference probably reflects the generational divide that separated the predominantly older women of the international women's movement from younger cohorts more blasé about heterosexual expressiveness and more attuned to the sexual possibilities between women.

Lady and Lord Aberdeen, Scottish aristocrats, were without doubt the most lauded couple in international women's movement circles. The ICW regularly held them up as an exemplar of a couple committed to the same work, even though Lord Aberdeen in fact played no role in the organization. . . . Lady Aberdeen's devoted friend Alice Salomon described the Aberdeen marriage as modern and ideal and insisted that the ICW was as much a matter of concern to Lord Aberdeen as to Lady Aberdeen. The ICW president herself appreciated her husband's "never wavering support and . . . belief in the I.C.W." that had made possible everything she had accomplished. Emma Ender, the president of the German section of the ICW, responded that she knew from her own experience "what it means, to live at the side of a man who totally understands and supports the life work that we have taken on." Even after Lord Aberdeen's death, Lady Aberdeen referred to "the inestimable blessing of husbands who wish us to enter into all the fullness of life in service and responsibility."[27]

Aletta Jacobs, the first woman physician in the Netherlands and an international leader, and her husband, Carel Victor Gerritsen, also attracted favorable attention as a model couple within the international women's movement. Jacobs entered into [the] marriage, despite her perception of the institution's injustice, in deference to her husband's political career and their mutual desire to have a child. She described Gerritsen as "a feminist from the start," and when they married she kept her own name and they maintained separate quarters within the house they shared. Gerritsen actually took up Jacobs's cause by not only supporting her but by also speaking himself in favor of women's suffrage.[28] . . .

[Some] married women leaders [spoke] out on behalf of cooperation across the lines of gender. In her 1899 presidential address, Lady Aberdeen referred to separate women's organizations as a "temporary expedient to meet a temporary need" and hoped that they would not be allowed "to crystallise into a permanent element in social life." Her successor as [ICW] president, American May Wright Sewall, also a married woman, agreed: "the Council idea does not stand for the separation of women from men, but rather for the reunion of women with men in the consideration of great general principles and large public interests." In a 1976 interview, Margery Corbett Ashby [president of the IWSA/IAW from 1923 to 1946] explained that the goal of women's organizations was to eliminate the need for women's organizations, although she admitted that it could be difficult for devoted members to accept this.[29]

. . . [Tension arose in the case of] women perceived as too involved—or in improper relationships—with men attracted harsh criticism. Martina Kramers, who maintained a long-term but unconventional liaison with a man, faced the censure of Carrie Chapman Catt in 1913. Bobbie, whom Kramers called her "left-handed husband," was a socialist and married man whose wife refused to divorce him. As president of the IWSA, Catt wrote to Kramers to recommend that she resign as editor of the organization's journal, *Jus Suffragii*, because her "moral transgressions" had provoked "horror and repugnance" among U.S. IWSA members. Kramers reacted with incredulity and defiance, refusing to give up either her man or her work and insisting to Catt that she was not a "propagandist of free love." She also implicitly equated the unconventionality but acceptability

of her relationship with same-sex sexuality by comparing her situation to "the cases of Anita Augspurg [and] Kathe Schirmacher . . . accused by many gossipers of homosexual intercourse." . . . But to no avail. Catt managed, as Kramers put it, "to throw me out of the whole movement" by moving the office of *Jus Suffragii* to London and appointing a new editor.[30] . . .

[Controversy also swirled around Doris Stevens's work at] the Inter-American Commission of Women, as seen [in this essay's opening paragraph]. Stevens struck Bertha Lutz, a single woman who called herself Catt's "daughter," . . . as a "sex-mad psychopath" and a "mentally deranged woman." In fact, Stevens did engage in heterosexual activities outside of marriage, and in her work for the Inter-American Commission of Women she pursued flirtatious relationships with several Latin American diplomats. Far from [being] ashamed of such interactions, she remarked that women and men active in politics together were likely to find that the "deep personal bond takes the form of heterosexual love." . . . [But heterosexually active women like Stevens drew from some female comrades] strong criticism of [not only their allegedly] disreputable behavior but also [their] political [alliances] with men.[31] . . .

I do not mean to imply that the lines on the question of separatism ran strictly in accordance with sexuality or that no other factors shaped the political practices of separatist organizing. As the evidence presented here makes clear, women within the international women's movement in the first half of the twentieth century formed a variety of relationships, with both women and men, and cannot easily be categorized as "homosexual" and "heterosexual" in any case. There were married women such as Carrie Chapman Catt who lived with and loved women, and single women such as Alice Salomon who lavished devoted admiration on Lord and Lady Aberdeen. Coupled women's relationships might be characterized as lesbian partnerships, romantic friendships, loving caretaking, or some combination. In fact, given the variety of bonds, we might wonder whether internationally organized women managed to cross the boundaries of sexuality more easily than those of class, religion, and nationality.[32] Certainly the conflicts over sexuality within the movement tended to pit "respectable" against unconventional behavior rather than same-sex against heterosexual relationships.

And even if we could divide women into neat categories, the association would not be perfect. Rosika Schwimmer, who was married briefly in her youth but lived most of her life in close association with women, grew disgusted with separatist organizing in the 1930s. Mildred Scott Olmstead, a U.S. WILPF leader who maintained an intimate relationship with a woman throughout her married life, proposed in 1934 that the international organization admit men.[33] And the married women leaders and heterosexual renegades all continued to commit themselves to all-female groups, whatever their ideas about the proper way to organize.

Furthermore, affectional choices alone did not fashion the politics of separatism. National and generational differences, which helped to construct interpretations of sexuality, are particularly striking. European women seemed both more open to sexual expression and less interested in single-sex organizing than their Anglo-American colleagues. . . . [European women tended to associate separatism, like sexual prudery,] with the "New World." Danish women responded to the announcement of the Woman's Peace Party in the United States and a call for the formation of similar groups in other countries by asserting that "we preferred to work together, men and women, in the same organisation." At the 1915 Hague congress, Dutch women called for the concentration of all forces, female and male, working for peace. They noted that "a special women's movement is not necessary and therefore undesired. The force of a movement where two sexes cooperate will come to better results than an organisation of one sex only." Women trade unionists from Germany and Austria refused to send representatives to the second congress of the International Federation of Working Women in 1921, because they were "opposed to taking part in a separate women's trade union organisation" in the American fashion.[34] . . .

Similarly, women struggling side by side with men of their class or national group for justice or independence had reason to look critically at separatist organizing. . . . In 1935, Margery Corbett Ashby reported that the enormous difficulties facing the nationalist struggle in Egypt "bring the men and women nearer together" and found the leading Egyptian nationalist movement, the Wafd, "quite progressive as regards women's position." A Syrian woman, speaking at the Istanbul

congress of the IAW in the same year, asserted her belief in the necessity of working shoulder to shoulder with men in her country for prosperity and freedom. "The economic and political situation of my country is so desperate that it is extremely difficult for us women to give our wholehearted energies to the cause of feminism alone."[35]

Generational differences on the question of separatism are also striking. Young women experiencing firsthand the breakdown between female and male social spheres in the twentieth-century world challenged women-only groups more readily than their older colleagues who clung to separatist organizing. . . . In 1931, Canadian Dorothy Heneker pointed out that young European women thought that women should work with men, and the IAW Youth Committee reported in 1938 that the general feeling favored a mixed organization of young women and men.[36] Generational, like national, differences on the question of separatism grew from distinctive patterns of homosocial versus heterosocial interaction, and so resistance to all-female groups came from both traditional and progressive sources.

The case of the international women's movement in this period illuminates the paradoxes of a women's world in an era undergoing profound change in the relations between the sexes. Internationally organized women, or at least some of them, knew about lesbianism but chose to view the same-sex relationships of their coworkers in an older frame, [not as pathologized]. Single women alternated between defiance and defensiveness, suggesting that the declining social segregation of the sexes in the industrialized Western world and the more insistent labeling of women without men as lesbians or old maids made a woman's choice of a female—or no—partner more suspicious and thus the women's world of separatist organizations more precarious. The . . . reservation of the strongest condemnation for women who challenged respectability through their sexual liaisons with men hints at the unease that spilled over from the transformation of social and sexual relations to the process of political organizing.

The story of the international women's movement also reveals how important it is to attend to the interaction of sexuality and politics. Conflict over sexuality and separatism added to the national, class, and generational tensions already bubbling within the international organizations and foreshadowed some of the contemporary critiques of lesbian separatism in the United States by working-class women and women of color.[37] At the same time, the silencing of the defenders of separatist organizing may have helped to undermine the potential power of a global women's movement in these years by questioning the validity of gathering apart from men in an increasingly heterosocial world. Whatever the case, the dynamics within the first wave of international organizing among women make clear that our contemporary struggles over sexuality and politics have a longer and more complex history than we sometimes think.

NOTES

1. Marjory Lacey-Baker, "Chronological Record of Events and Activities for the Biography of Lena Madesin Phillips, 1881–1955"; Lena Madesin Phillips, "Unfinished History of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women," Phillips Papers, cartons 7 and 9, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.; Lutz to Carrie Chapman Catt, 12 Feb. 1934, 7 July 1936, National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) Papers, reel 12, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

2. See Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880–1930* (Chicago, 1988); Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia, 1986); Hazel V. Carby, "'It Jus Be's Dat Way Sometime': The Sexual Politics of Women's Blues," in *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, ed. Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz (New York, 1990), 238–49; Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago, 1992); Birgitte Søland, *Becoming Modern: Young Women and the Reconstruction of Womanhood in the 1920s* (Princeton, N.J., 2000).

3. On the emergence of the category and identity "lesbian" at the turn of the century, see George Chauncey Jr., "From Inversion to Homosexuality: Medicine and the Changing Conceptualization of Female Deviance," *Salmagundi*, nos. 58–59 (Fall 1982–Winter 1983): 114–46; and Lisa Duggan, "The Trials of Alice Mitchell: Sensationalism, Sexology, and the Lesbian Subject in Turn-of-the-Century America," *Signs* 18 (Summer 1993): 791–814.

4. See, for example, Mineke Bosch with Annemarie Kloosterman, *Politics and Friendship: Letters from the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, 1902–1942* (Columbus, 1990); Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World, Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill, 1991), which discusses couples within the World Woman's Christian Temperance Union; Johanna Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace, 1914–1928* (London, 1989), which describes women's love for other women within the

British women's movement; and Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (New York, 1987), which emphasizes the centrality of coupled women in the U.S. women's rights movement.

5. In this early-nineteenth-century case, a well-connected girl accused her two schoolmistresses of engaging in sexual behavior, causing the ruin of the school; see Lillian Faderman, *Scotch Verdict* (New York, 1983). For more on the acceptability issue, see Martha Vicinus, "'They Wonder to Which Sex I Belong': The Historical Roots of the Modern Lesbian Identity," *Feminist Studies* 18 (Fall 1992): 467–97; Lisa Moore, "'Something More Tender Still Than Friendship': Romantic Friendship in Early-Nineteenth-Century England," ibid., 499–520; and Marylynne Diggs, "Romantic Friends or a 'Different Race of Creatures'? The Representation of Lesbian Pathology in Nineteenth-Century America," *Feminist Studies* 21 (Summer 1995): 317–40.

6. The neo-Europes included Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada. See Leila J. Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women's Organizations, 1888–1945," *American Historical Review* 99 (Dec. 1994): 1571–1600, and Rupp, "Challenging Imperialism in International Women's Organizations," *NWSA Journal* 8 (Spring 1996): 8–27.

7. *Women in a Changing World: The Dynamic Story of the International Council of Women since 1888* (London, 1966); Arnold Whittick, *Woman into Citizen* (London, 1976), on the International Alliance of Women; and Bosch, *Politics and Friendship*. On WILPF, see, for example, Gertrude Bussey and Margaret Tims, *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915–1965* (London, 1965); Lela B. Costin, "Feminism, Pacifism, Internationalism, and the 1915 International Congress of Women," *Women's Studies International Forum* 5, no. 3/4 (1982): 301–15; Catherine Foster, *Women for All Seasons: The Story of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom* (Athens, 1989).

8. Anna Ruhling, "Welches Interesse hat die Frauenbewegung an der Losing des homosexuellen problems?" [What interest does the women's movement have in the homosexual question?], in *Lesbian-Feminism in Turn-of-the-Century Germany*, ed. and trans. Lillian Faderman and Brigitte Eriksson (Weatherby Lake, Mo., 1980), 81–91 (quotation on 88).

9. Rosika Schwimmer to Wilhelmina van Wulfften Palthe, 29 July 1917, Schwimmer-Lloyd Collection, box A-90, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations; Marguerite Gobat to Vilma Glucklich [French], 27 Oct. 1924, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Papers, reel 1; Aletta Jacobs to Rosika Schwimmer, 3 May 1909, Schwimmer–Lloyd Collection, box A-20; Helen Archdale to Anna Nilsson, 17 May 1933, Equal Rights International Papers, box 331, Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University.

10. Lida Gustava Heymann with Anita Augspurg, *Erlebtes-Erschautes: Deutsche Frauen kampfen fur Freiheit, Recht und Frieden 1850–1940*, ed. Margrit Twellman (Meisenheim am Glan, 1972), 62. See also Regina Braker, "Bertha von Suttner's Spiritual Daughters: The Feminist Pacifism of Anita Augspurg, Lida Gustava Heymann, and Helene Stocker at the International Congress of Women at The Hague, 1915," *Women's Studies International Forum* 18, no. 2 (1995): 103–11.

11. Heymann with Augspurg, *Erlebtes-Erschautes*, 64, 74, 76.

12. Heymann to Schwimmer [in German], 3 Oct. 1919, Schwimmer–Lloyd Collection, box A-119; Emily Balch to Aletta Jacobs, 15 Nov. 1916, Jacobs Papers, box 2, Internationaal Informatiecentrum en Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging, Amsterdam (hereafter, IIAV); Emily Hobhouse to Aletta Jacobs, 24 Apr. 1920, ibid., box 1; "List of individuals expected in Innsbruck" [German], [1925], WILPF Papers, reel 2; Heymann to Gabrielle Duchene, 17 Feb. 1926, Dossiers Gabrielle Duchene, Fol Res. 206, Bibliotheque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, University of Paris, Nanterre; Anne Zueblin to Jane Addams, 17 Jan. 1930, Addams Papers, reel 21 (University Microfilms International).

13. Clara Ragaz to K. E. Innes and Gertrud Baer, 18 Apr. 1940, WILPF Papers, reel 4; Rosika Schwimmer to Alice Park, 7 Jan. 1944, Alice Park Papers, box 1, Hoover Institution, Stanford, California.

14. Heymann to Mary Rozet Smith [in German and English], 5 June 1924, Addams Papers, reel 16; Anne Zueblin to M. Illova, 10 June 1929, WILPF Papers, reel 19. On Addams and Smith, see Blanche W. Cook, "Female Support Networks and Political Activism: Lillian Wald, Crystal Eastman, Emma Goldman," *Chrysalis* 3 (Autumn 1977): 43–61. Addams described Smith as her "most intimate friend"; Addams to Heymann, 23 Feb. 1924, Addams Papers, reel 16.

15. For the theme of devoted service in these relationships, see Karin Lutzen, *Was das Herz begehrt: Liebe und Freundschaft zwischen Frauen*, translated from Danish by Gabriele Haefs (Hamburg, 1990), 110–38. Shaw: Rachel Foster Avery to Aletta Jacobs, 14 July 1910, Jacobs Papers; Biography of Anna Howard Shaw, Dillon Collection, box 18, Schlesinger Library; Anna Howard Shaw to Aletta Jacobs, 19 Mar. 1914, Jacobs Papers; Aletta H. Jacobs, *Uithet leven van merkwaardige vrouwen* (Amsterdam, 1905), 37, quoted in Bosch, *Politics and Friendship*, 25; Barbara R. Finn, "Anna Howard Shaw and Women's Work," *Frontiers* 4 (Fall 1979): 21–25, quoted in ibid., 26.

16. Mary G. Peck to Carrie Chapman Catt, 6 Feb. 1929, quoted in Robert Booth Fowler, *Carrie Catt: Feminist Politician*, 1986), 42. Catt also carried on a romantic relationship with Peck, who herself lived with another woman; see Catt to Frances Squire Potter, n.d., quoted in Bosch, *Politics and Friendship*, 38.

17. Anna Howard Shaw to Aletta Jacobs, 8 Feb. 1909, 7 Apr. 1911, and 14 Dec. 1908, Jacobs Papers, box 2; Rachel Foster Avery to Aletta Jacobs, 14 July 1910, ibid.; Anna Manus-Jacobi, tribute to Carrie Chapman Catt [in German], 11 Mar. 1947, Manus Papers, IIAV.

18. Quoted in Mercedes Randall, *Improper Bostonian: Emily Greene Balch* (New York, 1964), 397, 299; Heymann to Addams [in German], 16 Sept. 1919, and Helen Cheever to Jane Addams, 13 Sept. 1922, both in Addams Papers, reel 12 and 15; Jane Addams, *Second Twenty Years at Hull House*, 197–98, quoted in Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 399.

19. Elisabeth Busse, "Das moralische Dilemma in der modernen Madchenerziehung," in Ada Schmidt-Beil, *Die Kultur der Frau* (Berlin, 1931), 594; Alice Salomon, "Character Is Destiny," 218 and 39–42, Alice Salomon Papers, Memoir Collection, Leo Baeck Institute, New York.

20. Alice Salomon, "The Unmarried Woman of Yesterday and Today," ICW *Bulletin* 11 (October 1932); Lena Madesin Phillips to Carrie Probst, 28 May 1935, Phillips Papers, carton 4, Schlesinger Library (on Phillips's relationship, see Rupp and Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums*, 121–24); Archdale to Doris Stevens, 14 Feb. 1936, and Lady Rhondda to Doris Stevens [May 1928], both in Stevens Papers, cartons 4 and 5, Schlesinger Library. On Lady Rhondda's relationships with women, see Shirley M. Eoff, *Viscountess Rhondda: Equalitarian Feminist* (Columbus, 1991), 107–16.

21. See Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism." On maternalist politics, see the various contributions to Lynn Y. Weiner et al., "Maternalism as a Paradigm," *Journal of Women's History* 5 (Fall 1993): 95–131; Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of the Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880–1920," *American Historical Review* 95 (October 1990): 1076–1108; and Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach," *Signs* 14 (Autumn 1988): 119–57.

22. Heymann with Augspurg, *Erlebtes-Erschautes*, 70.

23. Lucy Anthony to Aletta Jacobs, 10 Jan. 1915, and Anna Howard Shaw to Aletta Jacobs, 30 Aug. 1917, both in Jacobs Papers, box 2.

24. Anna Howard Shaw to Aletta Jacobs, 22 Aug. 1915 and 18 Apr. 1916, Jacobs Papers, box 2; speech of Lida Gustava Heymann, WILPF Zurich Congress, [1919], WILPF Papers, reel 17; Minutes, WILPF International Congress, 3–8 Sept. 1934, WILPF Papers, reel 20; "Man Made Wars," *Pax* 6 (May 1931).

25. Emily Greene Balch to Aletta Jacobs, 15 Nov. 1916, Jacobs Papers, reel 9.

26. Eva Fichet to Emily Balch [French], 19 Aug. 1934, WILPF Papers, reel 20; Catherine E. Marshall to Vilma Glucklich, 14 May [1923], Addams Papers, reel 15. On Marshall, see Jo Vellacott, *From Liberal to Labour with Women's Suffrage: The Story of Catherine Marshall* (Buffalo, N.Y., 1993).

27. Alice Salomon, "To Lord and Lady Aberdeen on the Occasion of Their Golden Wedding, November 7th, 1927," ICW *Bulletin* 6 (November 1927); Lady Aberdeen to Emma Ender [in German], 31 Jan. 1928, Helene-Lange-Archiv, 78–315 (1), Landesarchiv Berlin; Emma Ender to Lady Aberdeen [German], 13 Feb. 1928, Helene-Lange-Archiv, 85–333 (2), Landesarchiv Berlin; "Lady Aberdeen's Response to Toast Proposed by Baroness Boel . . . ," 13 July 1938, ICW, *President's Memorandum Regarding the Council Meeting of the ICW held at Edinburgh, (Scotland), July 11th to 21st 1938*, 15–17.

28. Aletta Jacobs to Rosika Schwimmer [in German], 18 Nov. 1903, Schwimmer–Lloyd Collection, box A-4; see Bosch, *Politics and Friendship*, 9–12, 53–55. Jacobs's reminiscences have been translated and published as *Memories: My Life as an International Leader in Health, Suffrage, and Peace*, ed. Harriet Feinberg, trans. Annie Wright (New York, 1996).

29. Lady Aberdeen, "Presidential Address," ICW, *Report of Transactions of Second Quinquennial Meeting Held in London July 1899*, ed. Countess of Aberdeen (London, 1900), v. 1, 49; ICW, *Report of Transactions*, 1899, v. 1, 56; Margery Corbett Ashby interview, 21 Sept. 1976, conducted by Brian Harrison, Corbett Ashby Papers, cassette #6, Fawcett Library, London.

30. Catt to Kramers, 21 May 1913, box A-33; Kramers to Schwimmer [in German], 27 May 1913 and 2 June 1913, box A-32 and box A-33; Kramers to Schwimmer [in German], 31 May 1907 and 7 Oct. 1908, box A-12 and box A-17, all in Schwimmer–Lloyd Collection.

31. Lutz to Carrie Chapman Catt, 7 July 1936, 12 Feb. 1934, 15 July 1936, NAWSA Papers, reel 12; Doris Stevens, transcription of taped reminiscences, Stevens Papers, carton 3, Schlesinger Library. See Leila J. Rupp, "Feminism and the Sexual Revolution in the Early Twentieth Century: The Case of Doris Stevens," *Feminist Studies* 15 (Summer 1989): 289–309.

32. I am indebted to Susan Hartmann for this insight.

33. Rosika Schwimmer to Gabrielle Duchene, [1934], WILPF Papers, reel 20; Minutes, Eighth International Congress, Zurich, 3–8 Sept. 1934, WILPF Papers, reel 20. On Mildred Scott Olmstead's complex personal life, see Margaret Hope Bacon, *One Woman's Passion for Peace and Freedom: The Life of Mildred Scott Olmstead* (Syracuse, 1993).

34. Elizabeth Baelde, "Impressions of the Visit of the I.C.W. to Canada," in *Our Lady of the Sunshine*, ed. Countess of Aberdeen (London, 1909), 310–34; Eline Hansen to Rosika Schwimmer, 12 Mar. 1915, and Edna Munch to Schwimmer, 18 Mar. 1915, both in Schwimmer–Lloyd Collection, box A-55 and A-57; "Report of Business Sessions," 29 Apr. and 1 May [1915], *International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace, International Congress of Women, The Hague—April 28th to May 1st 1915: Report*, 111–17, 162–63; "Stenographic Report of Second Congress," 17 Oct. 1921, International Federation of Working Women Papers, Schlesinger Library.

35. Margery Corbett Ashby to Josephine Schain, 5 Feb. 1935, Schain Papers, box 4 [Mrs. Bader Dimeschquie], "Delegates and Friends," 1935, International Alliance of Women Papers, box 1, both in Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

36. Idola Saint-Jean to Helen Archdale, 15 Sept. 1931, Equal Rights International Papers, box 334; Minutes, Meeting of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship Board, Paris, 6–9 Dec. 1938, International Alliance of Women Papers, both at Fawcett Library.

37. For more on the national, ethnic, class, and generational tensions within the international women's movement, see Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton, N.J., 1997).

DOCUMENTS

Chinese Exclusion: The Page Act and Its Aftermath

Named for the California congressman Horace F. Page, who was its most ardent supporter, the Page Act of 1875 was the nation's first federal exclusion of certain kinds of immigrants. Public and congressional debate on expanding the statute continued, and within seven years, the much more expansive Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred virtually all but elite Chinese from entering the United States and reiterated the exclusion of women. "The Exclusion Act is clearly the pivot on which all American immigration policy turned," writes historian Roger Daniels, "the hinge on which Emma Lazarus's 'Golden Door' began to swing toward a closed position. It initiated an era of steadily increasing restrictions on immigration of all kinds that lasted until 1943."* Not until our alliance with China in World War II was the Chinese exclusion law repealed.

The Page Act, like the more capacious legislation that followed, was fueled by a mixture of policies: racist hostility to Asians; hostility to unscrupulous entrepreneurs who recruited unskilled workers, pressured them into multiyear contracts, brought them to the United States, and then undercut established wages; and authentic fears of prostitution rings. Knowledge that Chinese families practiced polygamy and foot-binding fueled generalizations about immorality and sexual exploitation. One San Francisco politician conceded that "as a class Chinese are intelligent," but insisted that among "the multitudes of Chinese women in our state there is not a wife or virtuous female in their number."†

The Page Act gestured in the direction of outlawing contract labor but actually focused on trafficking in women. It made the American consular officers in Chinese ports responsible for interrogating all prospective immigrants; in practice, any woman who wished to travel to the United States had first to persuade the consul that she was not a prostitute. Memories of this humiliating experience have been passed down over many generations in some Chinese American families.

The impact of the law was quickly felt. In the two years between 1880 and 1882, some 50,000 Chinese men entered the United States, but only 220 Chinese women did so. In 1910 the gender ratio among Chinese in the United States was 14:1. The principle that prospective immigrant women had the additional burden of proving their morality persisted. The 1891 Immigration Act required all incoming pregnant women to prove that they were married. It also provided for the expulsion of immigrants who became a public charge within a year of entry.

* Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882* (New York, 2004), 19.

† For a helpful overview, see Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870–1965* (Princeton, 2005).

Page Act of 1875, 43rd Cong., 2nd sess., ch. 141.

That time limit was gradually expanded—to two years, then three, then five. In 1910, a new statute provided that alien women who turned to sex work could be deported at any time. In the debates over immigration policy in the early twenty-first century, shrill accusations against pregnant women seeking entry are again heard. Why do you think immigration officials and the American public are so concerned about female sexuality and reproductive capabilities?

The second gatekeeping mechanism in the Page Act took on renewed vigor in later acts and with the construction of immigrant receiving stations—Ellis Island in New York Harbor in 1892 and Angel Island in San Francisco Bay in 1910. At the latter, Asian immigrant women tended to be detained longer than men, and they were also grilled about their sexual character, plans to marry (if single), and ability to support themselves in the United States.

Be it enacted . . . that in determining whether the immigration of any subject of China, Japan, or any Oriental country, to the United States, is free and voluntary . . . it shall be the duty of the . . . consul of the United States residing at the port from which it is proposed to convey such subjects, in any vessels enrolled or licensed in the United States . . . to ascertain whether such immigrant has entered into a contract or agreement for a term of service within the United States, for lewd and immoral purposes; and if there be such contract or agreement, the said . . . consul shall not deliver the required permit or certificate. . . .

. . . That the importation into the United States of women for the purposes of prostitution is hereby forbidden; and all contracts and agreements in relation thereto, made in advance or in pursuance of such illegal importation and purposes, are hereby declared void; and whoever shall knowingly and willfully import, or cause any importation of, women into the United States for the purposes of prostitution, or shall knowingly or willfully hold or attempt to hold, any woman to such purposes, in pursuance of such illegal importation and contract or agreement, shall be deemed guilty of a felony, and, on conviction thereof shall be imprisoned not exceeding five years and pay a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars. . . .

. . . That it shall be unlawful for aliens of the following [two] classes to immigrate into the United States, namely, persons who are undergoing a sentence for conviction in their own country of felonious crimes other than political . . . and women "imported for the purpose of prostitution." Every vessel arriving in the United States may be inspected under the direction of the collector of the port at which it arrives, if he shall have reason to believe that any such obnoxious persons are on board. . .

Mackenzie v. Hare, *1915*

The persistent expansion of married women's property acts and the increasing popularity of woman suffrage make it tempting to conclude that the practice of coverture—women's legal and civic subordination to men—steadily dissolved over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But although it is true that some aspects of coverture eroded, others were sustained and even strengthened.

Although chief justice Morrison R. Waite had been right when he observed in *Minor v. Happersett* (1874) that "there is no doubt that women may be citizens," he

Mackenzie v. Hare, 239 U.S. 299 (1915).

was wrong when he went on to claim that "sex has never been made one of the elements of citizenship. . . . Men have never had an advantage over women." According to the common law and early American practice, white women, like men, became citizens either by birth or by their own choice to be naturalized. But in 1855, following practices established in France by the conservative Code Napoleon (1804) and in Britain in 1844, the US Congress extended the principle of marital unity to provide that "any woman who might lawfully be naturalized under the existing laws, married, or shall be married to a citizen of the United States shall be deemed and taken to be a citizen." That is, foreign women who married male citizens did not need to go through a naturalization process or even take an oath of allegiance. The law did not explain what should happen when a woman with US citizenship married a noncitizen man. For the next fifty years, there was little consistency in how courts dealt with related cases that came before them. Often the principle of "marital unity" prevailed, meaning that women who were American citizens lost their citizenship by marrying a foreign national. In 1907, Congress passed a statute explicitly providing that women take the nationality of their husbands when they marry.

Expatriation—the loss of citizenship—traditionally has been a very severe punishment, usually reserved for cases of treason. If a married woman had to assume the nationality of her husband, she might become the subject of a king or czar in a political system that offered her even less protection than did the United States. She might even become stateless. If Americans claimed to base their political system on the "consent of the governed," could women's "consent" be arbitrarily denied? In time of war, the American woman who married, say, a German national could change her status overnight from a citizen to an alien enemy. President Ulysses S. Grant's daughter lost her citizenship when she married an Englishman in 1874; it required a special act of Congress to reinstate her citizenship when she returned from England as a widow in 1898.

Ethel Mackenzie, who had been born in California, married Gordon Mackenzie, a British subject, in 1909—two years after the passage of the Citizenship Act of 1907. She was active in the woman suffrage movement in California, and when it was successful in 1911 she worked in the San Francisco voter registration drive. It is not surprising that she herself would try to register to vote. When the Board of Election Commissioners denied her application, holding that upon her marriage to a British subject she had "ceased to be a citizen of the United States," she refused to let her husband apply for citizenship and instead challenged the law, claiming that Congress had exceeded its authority. She could not believe that Congress had actually *intended* to deprive her of the citizenship she understood to be her birthright. Why did the Supreme Court deny her claim? What "ancient principle of jurisprudence" did they rely on? Why did the Court think that the marriage of an American woman to a foreign man should be treated differently from the marriage of an American man to a foreign woman?

MR. JUSTICE MCKENNA:

. . . The question . . . is, Did [Ethel Mackenzie] cease to be a citizen by her marriage? . . . [Mackenzie contends] that it was not the intention [of Congress] to deprive an American-born woman, remaining within the jurisdiction of the United States, of her citizenship by reason of her marriage to a resident foreigner. . . . [She is trying to persuade the Court that the citizenship statute was] beyond the authority of Congress. . . . [She offered the] earnest argument . . . that . . . under the Constitution and laws of the United States, [citizenship] became a right, privilege and immunity which could not be taken away from her except as a punishment for crime or by her voluntary expatriation. . . .

[But the Court concludes:] . . . The identity of husband and wife is an ancient principle of our jurisprudence. It was neither accidental nor arbitrary and worked in many instances for her protection. There has been, it is true, much relaxation of it but in its retention as in its origin it is determined by their intimate relation and unity of interests, and this relation and unity may make it of public concern in many instances to merge their identity, and give dominance to the husband. It has purpose, if not necessity, in purely domestic policy; it has greater purpose and, it may be, necessity, in international policy. . . . Having this purpose, has it not the sanction of power?

. . . The law in controversy deals with a condition voluntarily entered into. . . . The marriage of an American woman with a foreigner has consequences . . . [similar to] her physical expatriation. . . . Therefore, as long as the relation lasts it is made tantamount to expatriation. This is no arbitrary exercise of government. . . . It is the conception of the legislation under review that such an act [marriage to a foreign man] may bring the Government into embarrassments and, it may be, into controversies. . . . [Marriage to a foreign man] is as voluntary and distinctive as expatriation and its consequence must be considered as elected.

The decision in *Mackenzie* angered suffragists and energized them; American women needed suffrage to protect themselves against involuntary expatriation and statelessness. The repeal of the Citizenship Act of 1907 was high on the suffragists' agenda, and they returned to it as soon as suffrage was accomplished (see Equal Suffrage [Nineteenth] Amendment). The Cable Act of 1922 provided that "the right of a person to become a naturalized citizen shall not be denied to a person on account of sex or because she is a married woman," but it permitted American women who married foreigners to retain their citizenship only if they married men from countries whose subjects were eligible for U.S. citizenship—that is, not from China or Japan. American-born women who married aliens from China or Japan still lost their citizenship. American-born women who married aliens not from China or Japan were treated as naturalized citizens who would lose their citizenship should they reside abroad for two years.

The Cable Act was extended by amendments well into the 1930s, but some exclusions remained, and the improvements were generally not retroactive. Thus, as late as the 1950s, some American-born women were denied passports because they had married foreign men before 1922. In 1998, 2001, and again in 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a practice of different rules for non-marital children born abroad. The child born to an unmarried citizen mother and a noncitizen man is a citizen at birth (so long as the mother has lived in the United States for at least one year). The child born to an unmarried citizen father and a noncitizen woman can be a citizen only if the father has met a number of requirements. Among them are that he must have lived in the United States for a specified number of years after he reached the age of fourteen. (The number of years changed when Congress revised the statute: until 1986 it was five years; then it was reduced to two years.) The father must also formally legitimize and financially support the child before the child reaches the age of eighteen.*

In sustaining different rules for mothers and fathers, the Supreme Court majority emphasized the possibility of fraudulent claims of citizenship by unmarried noncitizen mothers and their children; the dissenting minority emphasized the ease with which men could avoid responsibility for the nonmarital children they had fathered.

* *Miller v. Albright*, 523 U.S. 420 (1998); *Nguyen v. Immigration and Naturalization Service*, 533 U.S. 53 (2001); *Flores-Villar v. United States*, 564 U.S. ____ (2011). This note draws on Candice Lewis Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage and the Law of Citizenship* (Berkeley, 1998).

Equal Suffrage (Nineteenth) Amendment, 1920

"College Day in the Picket Line, Feb. 1917," National Women's Party Records, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., LC-USZ62-31799. See Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene, Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign *[Urbana, 2007], and the documentary film by Ruth Pollak for the American Experience and WGBH,* One Woman, One Vote *[PBS Home Video, 1995; reissued on DVD, 2006], especially the closing episodes.)*

In his second successful campaign for the presidency, Woodrow Wilson promised—vaguely—to support woman suffrage. In January 1917, Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party undertook a permanent demonstration—a picket line—in front of the White House, near the gates, to hold the president to his promise. Their silent protest was modeled on the campaigns of British suffragists and may have been the first use of this political strategy in the United States. To provoke continued press attention and to represent the widespread support for the cause, Paul ingeniously arranged for themed days. First came State days—Maryland was first—in which the pickets came exclusively from the given state. On College Day, the one represented in this photograph, thirteen women wore sashes announcing their alma maters. On the afternoon of Wilson's second inaugural, March 4, one thousand women, in a freezing rain, encircled the White House in one long, marching line, with the pictures and story generating unprecedented press coverage.

In April, with Congress about to declare war and the pickets' banners offering sharp political jibes, the strategy proved divisive among women's rights advocates. Some called the tactic indecorous, insulting to the president, and close to treasonous. Press commentary grew shrill, and the crowds gathered to heckle the "silent sentinels" grew violent; banners were torn to shreds. Arrests followed, in April and on into the fall—not of the attackers but of the pickets for "obstructing sidewalk traffic." These women accepted jail or workhouse terms rather than pay the twenty-five dollar fine; and on release, they returned defiantly to the picket line.

The cycle of peaceful protest and violent response intensified in August, when the picketers provocatively carried banners mocking "Kaiser Wilson" and highlighting the contradiction between the US policies of criticizing the kaiser for denying democracy in Germany and denying the vote to the half of the US population. In the fall, jailed picketers, including Alice Paul, went on hunger strikes because they had asked for and been denied political prisoner status. Like British suffragists, they were force-fed—an intrusive act that was painful and medically dangerous. All were released in late November, when local officials anticipated (rightly) that the arrests and detentions would be ruled unconstitutional on appeal.

Meanwhile, the pickets of 1917, the private letters that Wilson received from feminists such as Jane Addams and Carrie Chapman Catt, and the exigencies of war led to a presidential change of mind: in early January 1918, Wilson announced his support for the federal woman suffrage amendment then making its way through Congress. In September, he went to the Senate to urge passage there, presenting the matter as critical to the war effort. However, it would take new elections and a newly constituted Senate for the bill to pass and another year until ratification.

When the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments failed to provide for universal suffrage, a federal amendment was introduced into the Senate by S. C. Pomeroy of Kansas in 1868 and into the House by George W. Julian of Indiana in March 1869. Historian Ellen DuBois has observed, "Previously the case for suffrage had consistently been put in terms of the individual rights of all persons, regardless of their sex and race. Angered by their exclusion from the Fifteenth Amendment, women's rights advocates began to develop fundamentally different arguments for their cause. They claimed their right to the ballot not as individuals but as a sex. . . . The reason women should vote was not that they were the same as men but that they were different. That made for a rather thorough reversal of classic women's rights premises."*

Arguing for the vote on the basis of women's *difference* from men could be effective in strengthening women's sense of group consciousness, but it also was compatible with racist and nativist arguments that white women needed the vote to counteract the suffrage of black and immigrant men. The old alliance of woman suffrage and abolitionist activism eroded, even though voting rights for black men were under siege after Reconstruction. The suffrage efforts of 1870 to 1920 continued to display arguments on the basis of equality, but younger generations of activists were increasingly likely to emphasize difference—what one activist called "the mother instinct for government."

Woman suffrage was not accomplished easily. One scholar has counted 480 suffrage campaigns waged at the state level between 1870 and 1910, but in the end only seventeen referenda were held, with only two successes (in Colorado and Idaho).** Stanton died in 1902; Anthony in 1906. But a new, younger generation adopted new strategies. Americans were inspired by the militancy of the British suffrage movement. In 1902 Carrie Chapman Catt was simultaneously president of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance and the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). By 1910 it was clear that a reinvigorated movement was under way, using

* Ellen Carol DuBois, "Outgrowing the Compact of the Fathers: Equal Rights, Woman Suffrage, and the United States Constitution, 1820–1878," *Journal of American History* 74 (December 1987): 848.

** Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 13; Rebecca Edwards, "Pioneers at the Polls: Woman Suffrage in the West," in *Votes for Women: The Struggle for Suffrage Revisited*, ed. Jean H. Baker (New York, 2002), 90–101.

door-to-door campaigns, street-corner speakers, and poll watchers on Election Day. For the first time, cross-class suffrage organizations, like New York's Equality League of Independent Women, were mobilizing support for suffrage. Suffragists staged public parades that attracted tens of thousands of supporters.

Although many suffragists had claimed that when women got the vote, there would be no more American endorsements of war, Catt swung NAWSA behind Woodrow Wilson, American support for the allies, and, eventually, the nation's entry into World War I in April 1917. The more radical National Women's Party (NWP), under the leadership of Alice Paul, staked out a very public position protesting Wilson's failure to explicitly endorse a federal guarantee for women's suffrage. Putting aside his states' rights approach, the president publicly endorsed a constitutional amendment in early 1918. One day later, the House of Representatives passed the suffrage amendment, barely achieving the required two-thirds majority. But despite a personal appearance from Wilson, it failed by only two votes to carry the Senate.

As state after state enacted woman suffrage for statewide elections, the number of members of Congress dependent on women's votes increased. With the federal suffrage amendment slated to come before Congress again and again, these men were likely to believe that they had no choice but to support it. In the fall 1918 elections, NAWSA targeted four senators for defeat; two of them failed to be reelected. Moreover, energetic campaigns in the states to elect prosuffrage candidates to Congress worked. When the amendment came up in the new Congress, according to Anne F. Scott and Andrew Scott, "224 of those voting yes came from suffrage states, and eighty from nonsuffrage states."[1] It squeaked by in the Senate. It was ratified by thirty-five states by August 1920; the final state was Tennessee, where, after a bitter struggle, it was ratified by a single vote, just in time to permit women to vote in the elections of 1920.

When Puerto Rican women attempted to register to vote in 1920, however, the U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs decided that the Nineteenth Amendment did not automatically apply to U.S. territories. Suffragist groups mobilized in Puerto Rico, lobbying throughout the next decade both on the island and in Washington, D.C., with support from the NWP. In 1929 the territorial legislature granted suffrage to women restricted by a literacy requirement; not until 1935 was universal suffrage established in Puerto Rico.

Many southern states had excluded African American men from voting by using literacy tests, poll taxes, and intimidation; in those states black women could vote no more easily than black men, and suffrage was an empty victory. The state of Georgia effectively discouraged white women from voting as well by providing that any woman who did not choose to register to vote did not have to pay the poll tax. This law, which encouraged women—and their husbands—to see voting as an expensive extravagance, was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1937 (*Breedlove v. Suttles*, 302 U.S. 277).

Section 1. The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

[1] Anne F. Scott and Andrew MacKay Scott, *One Half of the People: The Fight for Woman Suffrage* (Urbana, 1982; orig. publ. Philadelphia, 1975), 45.

Jazz Age Opportunities and Limits

VICKI L. RUIZ

The Flapper and the Chaperone: Mexican American Teenagers in the Southwest

Over one million Mexicans immigrated to the United States between 1900 and 1930, forming new communities or settling alongside families whose descendants had migrated north decades and centuries before. This essay plunges us into young Mexican American women's decisions about dating, dancing, and dressing up as they grew up in western cities and farm towns from the 1920s to the 1940s. Focusing on first-generation teenagers, historian Vicki L. Ruiz insists that we see them not as caught between the mores of their Mexican-born Catholic parents and the freedoms of modern America, but rather as navigating "across multiple terrains" simultaneously. Home for most, if not all, of these young women was located in the *barrios*, dense neighborhoods where Mexican and Mexican American families, businesses, and parishes were clustered. What range of sources and methods does Ruiz employ to uncover these young women's dreams and strategies? If you were conducting such a study of teenage girls in the recent past, what types of sources would you consult?

In the interwar years, a central figure in cross-sex socializing was the chaperone—*la dueña*. Why do you think this role was reserved for adult women? What cultural messages would be sent if chaperones had also monitored young men's activities? Ruiz finds that second-generation Mexican American women who married and had their own children tended not to continue the chaperoning tradition. In the 1960s, activist women of Mexican descent embraced the identity of Chicana and, as Ruiz indicates at the close of her essay, issued new challenges to conventional expectations shaped by popular culture, family oligarchy, and men's demands.

Imagine a gathering in a barrio hall, a group of young people dressed "to the nines" trying their best to replicate the dance steps of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. This convivial heterosocial scene was a typical one in the lives of teenagers during the interwar period. But along the walls, a sharp difference was apparent in the barrios. Mothers, fathers, and older relatives chatted with one another as they kept one eye trained on the dance floor. They were the chaperones—the ubiquitous companions of unmarried Mexican-American women. Chaperonage was a traditional instrument of social control. Indeed, the presence of *la dueña* was the prerequisite for attendance at a dance, a movie, or even church-related events.

Excerpted and slightly revised by the author from ch. 3 of *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* by Vicki L. Ruiz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Reprinted by permission of the author and publisher. Notes have been edited and renumbered.

"When we would go to town, I would want to say something to a guy. I couldn't because my mother was always there," remembered Maria Ybarra. "She would always stick to us girls like glue. . . . She never let us out of her sight."[1]

An examination of events like this one reveals the ways in which young Mexican women in the United States between the wars rationalized, resisted, and evaded parental supervision. It offers a glimpse into generational conflict that goes beyond the more general differences in acculturation between immigrants and their children. Chaperonage existed for centuries on both sides of the political border separating Mexico and the United States. While conjuring images of patriarchal domination, chaperonage is best understood as a manifestation of familial oligarchy whereby elders attempted to dictate the activities of youth for the sake of family honor. A family's standing in the community depended, in part, on women's purity. Loss of virginity not only tainted the reputation of an individual, but of her kin as well. For Mexicano immigrants living in a new, bewildering environment filled with temptations, the enforcement of chaperonage assumed a particular urgency.[2] . . .

Confronting "America" began at an early age. Throughout the Southwest, Spanish-speaking children had to sink or swim in an English-only environment. Even on the playground, students were punished for conversing in Spanish. Admonishments, such as "Don't speak that ugly language, you are an American now," not only reflected a strong belief in Anglo conformity but denigrated the self-esteem of Mexican-American children. As Mary Luna stated: "It was rough because I didn't know English. The teacher wouldn't let us talk Spanish. How can you talk to anybody? If you can't talk Spanish and you can't talk English. . . . It wasn't until maybe the fourth or fifth grade that I started catching up. And all that time I just felt I was stupid." Yet Luna credited her love of reading to a Euro-American educator who had converted a small barrio house into a makeshift community center and library. Her words underscore the dual thrust of Americanization—education and consumerism. "To this day I just love going into libraries . . . there are two places that I can go in and get a real warm, happy feeling; that is, the library and Bullock's in the perfume and make-up department."[3] . . .

For Mexican Americans, second-generation women as teenagers have received scant scholarly attention. Among Chicano historians and writers, there appears a fascination with the sons of immigrants, especially as *pachucos*.[4] Young women, however, may have experienced deeper generational tensions as they blended elements of Americanization with Mexican expectations and values. . . .

. . . The recollections of seventeen women serve as the basis for my reconstruction of adolescent aspirations and experiences (or dreams and routines). The women themselves, . . . with two [major] exceptions, . . . are U.S. citizens by birth and attended southwestern schools. All the interviewees were born between 1908 and 1926. Although three came from families once considered middle class in Mexico, most can be considered working class in the United States. Their fathers' typical occupations included farm worker, miner, day laborer, and railroad hand. These women usually characterized their mothers as homemakers, although several remembered that their mothers took seasonal jobs in area factories and fields. The most economically privileged woman in the sample, Ruby Estrada, helped out in her family-owned hardware and furniture store. She is also the only interviewee who attended college. It should be noted that seven of the seventeen narrators married Euro-Americans. Although intermarriage was uncommon, these oral histories give us insight into the lives of those who negotiated across cultures in a deeply personal way and who felt the impact of acculturation most keenly. Rich in emotion and detail, these interviews reveal women's conscious decision-making in the production of culture. In creating their own cultural spaces, the interwar generation challenged the trappings of familial oligarchy.[5]

. . . Within families, young women, perhaps more than their brothers, were expected to uphold certain standards. Parents, therefore, often assumed what they perceived as their unquestionable prerogative to regulate the actions and attitudes of their adolescent daughters. Teenagers, on the other hand, did not always acquiesce in the boundaries set down for them by their elders. Intergenerational tension flared along several fronts.

Like U.S. teenagers, in general, the first area of disagreement between an adolescent and her family would be over her personal appearance. . . . The length of a young woman's tresses was a hot issue spanning class, region, and ethnic lines. During the 1920s, a woman's

decision "to bob or not bob" her hair assumed classic proportions within Mexican families. After considerable pleading, Belen Martinez Mason was permitted to cut her hair, though she soon regretted the decision. "Oh, I cried for a month." Differing opinions over fashions often caused ill feelings. One Mexican American woman recalled that as a young girl, her mother dressed her "like a nun" and she could wear "no make-up, no cream, no nothing" on her face. Swimwear, bloomers, and short skirts also became sources of controversy. Some teenagers left home in one outfit and changed into another at school. Once María Fierro arrived home in her bloomers. Her father inquired, "Where have you been dressed like that, like a clown?" "I told him the truth," Fierro explained "He whipped me anyway. . . . So from then on whenever I went to the track meet, I used to change my bloomers so that he wouldn't see that I had gone again."[6] . . . A popular ballad chastised Mexican women for applying makeup so heavily as to resemble a piñata. [7]

The use of cosmetics, however, cannot be blamed entirely on Madison Avenue ad campaigns. The innumerable barrio beauty pageants, sponsored by *mutualistas*, patriotic societies, churches, the Mexican Chamber of Commerce, newspapers, and even progressive labor unions, encouraged young women to accentuate their physical attributes. Carefully chaperoned, many teenagers did participate in community contests from La Reina de Cinco de Mayo to Orange Queen. They modeled evening gowns, rode on parade floats, and sold raffle tickets.[8] . . .

The commercialization of personal grooming made additional inroads into the Mexican community with the appearance of barrio beauty parlors. Working as a beautician conferred a certain degree of status—"a nice, clean job"—in comparison to factory or domestic work. As one woman related:

> I always wanted to be a beauty operator. I loved makeup; I loved to dress up and fix up. I used to set my sisters' hair. So I had that in the back of my mind for a long time, and my mom pushed the fact that she wanted me to have a profession—seeing that I wasn't thinking of getting married.[9]

While further research is needed, one can speculate that neighborhood beauty shops reinforced women's networks and became places where they could relax, exchange *chisme* (gossip), and enjoy the company of other women.

During the 1920s, the ethic of consumption became inextricably linked to making it in America. The message of affluence attainable through hard work and a bit of luck was reinforced in English and Spanish-language publications. Mexican barrios were not immune from the burgeoning consumer culture. The society pages of the influential Los Angeles–based *La Opinion*, for example, featured advice columns, horoscopes, and celebrity gossip. Advertisements for makeup, clothing, even feminine hygiene products reminded teenagers of an awaiting world of consumption.[10] . . .

Advertisements aimed at women promised status and affection if the proper bleaching cream, hair coloring, and cosmetics were purchased. Or, as one company boldly claimed, "Those with lighter, more healthy skin tones will become much more successful in business, love, and society." A print ad [in English] for Camay Soap carried by *Hispano America* in 1932 reminded women readers that "Life Is a Beauty Contest." Flapper fashions and celebrity testimonials further fused the connections between gendered identity and consumer culture. Another promotion encouraged readers to "SIGA LAS ESTRELLAS" (FOLLOW THE STARS) and use Max Factor cosmetics.[11] . . .

. . . Mexican women interpreted these visual representations in a myriad of ways. Some ignored them, some redefined their messages, and other internalized them. The popularity of bleaching creams offers a poignant testament to color consciousness in Mexican communities, a historical consciousness accentuated by Americanization through education and popular culture.

Reflecting the coalescence of Mexican and U.S. cultures, Spanish-language publications promoted pride in Latino theater and music while at the same time celebrated the icons of Americanization and consumption. Because of its proximity to Hollywood, *La Opinion* ran contests in which the lucky winner would receive a screen test. On the one hand, *La Opinion* nurtured the dreams of "success" through entertainment and consumption while, on the other, the newspaper railed against the deportations and repatriations of the 1930s. Sparked by manufactured fantasies and clinging to youthful hopes, many Mexican women teenagers avidly read celebrity gossip columns, attended Saturday matinees, cruised Hollywood

and Vine, and nurtured their visions of stardom. A handful of Latina actresses, especially Dolores del Rio and Lupe Velez, whetted these aspirations and served as public role models of the "American dream." As a *La Opinion* article on Lupe Velez idealistically claimed, "Art has neither nationalities nor borders."[12]

. . . Mexican-American women teenagers . . . positioned themselves within the cultural messages they gleaned from English and Spanish-language publications, afternoon matinees, and popular radio programs. Their shifting conceptions of acceptable heterosocial behavior, including their desire "to date," heightened existing generational tensions between parents and daughters.

Obviously, the most serious point of contention between an adolescent daughter and her Mexican parents regarded her behavior toward young men. In both cities and rural towns, close chaperonage was a way of life. Recalling the supervisory role played by her "old maid" aunt, María Fierro laughingly explained, "She'd check up on us all the time. I used to get so mad at her." Ruby Estrada recalled that in her small southern Arizona community, "all the mothers" escorted their daughters to the local dances. Estrada's mother was no exception when it came to chaperoning her daughters. "She went especially for us. She'd just sit there and take care of our coats and watch us." Even talking to male peers in broad daylight could be grounds for discipline. Adele Hernández Milligan, a resident of Los Angeles for over fifty years, elaborated: "I remember the first time that I walked home with a boy from school. Anyway, my mother saw me and she was mad. I must have been sixteen or seventeen. She slapped my face because I was walking home with a boy"[13] . . .

Faced with this type of situation, young women had three options: they could accept the rules set down for them; they could rebel; or they could find ways to compromise or circumvent traditional standards. "I was *never* allowed to go out by myself in the evening; it just was not done," related Carmen Bernal Escobar. In rural communities, where restrictions were perhaps even more stringent, "nice" teenagers could not even swim with male peers. According to Ruby Estrada, "We were ladies and wouldn't go swimming out there with a bunch of boys." Yet many seemed to accept these limits with equanimity. Remembering her mother as her chaperone, Lucy Acosta insisted, "I could care less as long as I danced." "It wasn't devastating at all," echoed Ruby Estrada. "We took it in stride. We never thought of it as cruel or mean. . . . It was taken for granted that that's the way it was."[14] . . .

Women in cities had a distinct advantage over their rural peers in that they could venture miles from their neighborhood into the anonymity of dance halls, amusement parks, and other forms of commercialized leisure. With carnival rides and the Cinderella Ballroom, the Nu-Pike amusement park of Long Beach proved a popular hangout for Mexican youth in Los Angeles. It was more difficult to abide by traditional norms when excitement loomed just on the other side of the streetcar line.

Some women openly rebelled. They moved out of their family homes and into apartments. Considering themselves free-wheeling single women, they could go out with men unsupervised as was the practice among their Anglo peers. Others challenged parental and cultural standards even further by living with their boyfriends. In his field notes, University of California economist Paul Taylor recorded an incident in which a young woman had moved in with her Anglo boyfriend after he had convinced her that such arrangements were common among Americans. "This terrible freedom in the United States," one Mexicana lamented. "I do not have to worry because I have no daughters, but the poor *señoras* with many girls, they worry."[15]

Those teenagers who did not wish to defy their parents openly would "sneak out" of the house to meet their dates or attend dances with female friends. Whether meeting someone at a drugstore, roller rink, or theater, this practice involved the invention of elaborate stories to mask traditionally inappropriate behavior. In other words, they lied.[16] . . .

. . . What other tactics did teenagers devise? . . . Alicia Mendeola Shelit recalled that one of her older brothers would accompany her to dances ostensibly as a chaperone. "But then my oldest brother would always have a blind date for me." Carmen Bernal Escobar was permitted to entertain her boyfriends at home, but only under the supervision of her brother or mother. The practice of "going out with the girls," though not [generally] accepted until the 1940s, was fairly common. Several Mexican-American women, often related, would escort one another to an event (such as a dance), socialize with the

men in attendance, and then walk home together. In the sample of seventeen interviews, daughters negotiated their activities with their parents. Older siblings and extended kin appeared in the background as either chaperones or accomplices. . . .

. . . Many teenage women knew little about sex other than what they picked up from friends, romance magazines, and the local theater. As Mary Luna remembered, "I thought that if somebody kissed you, you could get pregnant." In *Singing for My Echo*, New Mexico native Gregorita Rodríguez confided that on her wedding night, she knelt down and said her rosary until her husband gently asked, "Gregorita, *mi esposa*, are you afraid of me?" At times this naiveté persisted beyond the wedding. "It took four days for my husband to touch me," one woman revealed. "I slept with dress and all. We were both greenhorns, I guess."[17] . . .

Chaperonage . . . exacerbated conflict not only between generations but within individuals as well. In gaily recounting tales of ditching the *dueña* or sneaking down the stairwell, the laughter of the interviewees fails to hide the painful memories of breaking away from familial expectations. Their words resonate with the dilemma of reconciling their search for autonomy with their desire for parental affirmation. . . . Every informant who challenged or circumvented chaperonage held a fulltime job, as either a factory or service worker. In contrast, most women who accepted constant supervision did not work for wages. Perhaps because they labored for long hours, for little pay, and frequently under hazardous conditions, factory and service workers were determined to exercise some control over their leisure time.[18] . . .

It may also be significant that none of the employed teenagers had attended high school. They entered the labor market directly after or even before the completion of the eighth grade. Like many female factory workers in the United States, most Mexican operatives were young, unmarried daughters whose wage labor was essential to the economic survival of their families. As members of a "family wage economy," they relinquished all or part of their wages to their elders. According to a 1933 University of California study, of the Mexican families surveyed with working children, the children's monetary contributions constituted 35 percent of total household income. Cognizant of their earning power, they resented the lack of personal autonomy.[19]

Delicate negotiations ensued as both parents and daughters struggled over questions of leisure activities and discretionary income. Could a young woman retain a portion of her wages for her own use? If elders demanded every penny, daughters might be more inclined to splurge on a new outfit or other personal item on their way home from work or, even more extreme, they might choose to move out, taking their paychecks with them. Recognizing their dependence on their children's income, some parents compromised. Their concessions, however, generally took the form of allocating spending money rather than relaxing traditional supervision. Still, women's earning power could be an important bargaining chip. . . .

To complete the picture, we also have to consider the perspective of Mexican immigrant parents who encountered a youth culture very different from that of their generation. For them, courtship had occurred in the plaza; young women and men promenaded under the watchful eyes of town elders, an atmosphere in which an exchange of meaningful glances could well portend engagement. One can understand their consternation as they watched their daughters apply cosmetics and adopt the apparel advertised in fashion magazines. In other words, "If she dresses like a flapper, will she then act like one?" Seeds of suspicion reaffirmed the penchant for traditional supervision. . . .

. . . Parents in the barrios of major cities fought a losing battle against urban anonymity and commercialized leisure. The Catholic Church was quick to point out the "dangerous amusement" inherent in dancing, theatergoing, dressing fashionably, and reading pulp fiction. Under the section, "The Enemy in the Ballroom," a Catholic advice book warned of the hidden temptations of dance. "I know that some persons can indulge in it without harm; but sometimes even the coldest temperaments are heated by it." Therefore, the author offered the following rules:

> (1) If you know nothing at all . . . about dancing do not trouble yourself to learn (2) Be watchful. . . . and see that your pleasure in dancing does not grow into a passion. . . . (3) Never frequent fairs, picnics, carnivals, or public dancing halls where Heaven only knows what sorts of people congregate. (4) Dance only at private parties where your father or mother is present.

Pious pronouncements such as these had little impact on those adolescents who cherished the opportunity to look and act like vamps and flappers.[20]

Attempting to regulate the social life of young parishioners, barrio priests organized gender-segregated teen groups. In Los Angeles, Juventud Católica Feminina Mexicana (JCFM) had over fifty chapters. In her autobiography *Hoyt Street*, Mary Helen Ponce remembered the group as one organized for "nice" girls with the navy blue uniform as its most appealing feature. . . .

Ponce enjoyed going to "*las vistas*," usually singing cowboy movies shown in the church hall after Sunday evening rosary. . . . The cut-rate features . . . raised money for local activities. . . . In an era of segregated theaters, church halls tendered an environment where Mexicanos and their children could enjoy inexpensive entertainment and sit wherever they pleased.[21] . . .

Popular culture offered an alternative vision to parental and church expectations complete with its own aura of legitimacy. . . . Even the Spanish-language press fanned youthful passions. On May 9, 1927, *La Opinion* ran an article entitled; "How do you kiss?" Informing readers that "el beso no es un arte sino una ciencia" [kissing is not an art but rather a science], this short piece outlined the three components of a kiss: quality, quantity, and topography. The modern kiss, furthermore, should last three minutes.[22] Though certainly shocking older Mexicanos, such titillating fare catered to a youth market. . . .

Mexican-American women were not caught between two worlds. They navigated across multiple terrains at home, at work, and at play. They engaged in cultural coalescence. The Mexican-American generation selected, retained, borrowed, and created their own cultural forms. Or as one woman informed anthropologist Ruth Tuck, "Fusion is what we want—the best of both ways."[23] These children of immigrants may have been captivated by consumerism, but few would attain its promises of affluence. Race and gender prejudice as well as socioeconomic segmentation constrained the possibilities of choice. . . .

. . . What seems most striking is that the struggle over chaperonage occurred against a background of persistent discrimination. During the early 1930s, Mexicans were routinely rounded up and deported and even when deportations diminished, segregation remained. Historian Albert Camarillo has demonstrated that in Los Angeles restrictive real estate covenants and segregated schools increased dramatically between 1920 and 1950. The proportion of Los Angeles area municipalities with covenants prohibiting Mexicans and other people of color from purchasing residences in certain neighborhoods climbed from 20 percent in 1920 to 80 percent in 1946. Many restaurants, theaters, and public swimming pools discriminated against their Spanish-surnamed clientele. In southern California, for example, Mexicans could swim at the public plunges only one day out of the week (just before they drained the pool). Small-town merchants frequently refused to admit Spanish-speaking people into their places of business. "White Trade Only" signs served as bitter reminders of their second-class citizenship.[24]

Individual acts of discrimination could also blunt youthful aspirations. Erminia Ruiz recalled that from the ages of thirteen to fifteen, she worked full-time to support her sisters and widowed mother as a doughnut maker. "They could get me for lower wages." When health officials would stop in to check the premises, the underage employee would hide in the flour bins. At the age of sixteen, she became the proud recipient of a Social Security card and was thrilled to become the first Mexican hired by a downtown Denver cafeteria. Her delight as a "salad girl" proved short-lived. A co-worker reported that $200 had been stolen from her purse. In Erminia's words:

> Immediately they wanted to know what I did with the $200.00. I didn't know what they were talking about so they got . . . a policewoman and they took me in the restroom and undressed me. [Later they would discover that the co-worker's friend had taken the money.] I felt awful. I didn't go back to work.

Though deeply humiliated, Erminia scanned the classified ads the next day and soon combined work with night classes at a storefront business college.[25] . . .

Mexican-American adolescents felt the lure of Hollywood and the threat of deportation, the barbs of discrimination, and the reins of constant supervision. In dealing with all the contradictions in their lives, many young women focused their attention on chaperonage, an area where they could make decisions. The inner conflicts expressed in the

oral histories reveal that such decisions were not made impetuously. Hard as it was for young heterosexual women to carve out their own sexual boundaries, imagine the greater difficulty for lesbians coming of age in the Southwest barrios. . . .

. . . Although still practiced in some areas, chaperonage appeared less frequently after World War II. By the 1950s, chaperonage had become more of a generational marker. Typically only the daughters of recent immigrants had to contend with constant supervision. Mexican Americans relegated chaperonage to their own past, a custom that, as parents, they chose not to inflict on their children. Family honor also became less intertwined with female virginity; but the preservation of one's "reputation" was still a major concern.[26] In the poem "Pueblo, 1950," Bernice Zamora captures the consequences of a kiss:

> I remember you, Fred Montoya
> You were the first *vato* to ever kiss me
> I was twelve years old.
> My mother said shame on you,
>
> my teacher said shame on you, and
> I said shame on me, and nobody
> said a word to you.[27] . . .

In challenging chaperonage, Mexican-American teenagers did not attack the foundation of familial oligarchy—only its more obvious manifestation. It would take later generations of Chicana feminists to take on this task.

NOTES

1. Interview with Maria Ybarra, Dec. 1, 1990, conducted by David Pérez.

2. For colonial New Mexico, Ramón Gutiérrez convincingly demonstrates how family honor was tied, in part, to women's *vergüenza* (literally, shame or virginity). See Ramón Gutiérrez, "Honor, Ideology, and Class Gender Domination in New Mexico, 1690–1846," *Latin American Perspectives* 12 (Winter 1985): 81–104.

3. Ruth D. Tuck, *Not with the Fist: Mexican-Americans in a Southwest City* (New York, 1946; rpt. Arno Press, 1974), 185–88; Vicki L. Ruiz, "Oral History and La Mujer: The Rosa Guerrero Story," in *Women on the U.S.–Mexico Border: Responses to Change* (Boston, 1987), 226–27; interview with Mary Luna, Volume 20 of *Rosie the Riveter Revisited: Women and the World War I Work Experience*, ed. Sherna Berger Gluck (Long Beach, 1983), 9–10. Bullock's was a major department store in the West. During the 1940s, bilingual education appeared as an exciting experiment in curriculum reform.

4. Mauricio Mazón's *The Zoot Suit Riots* (Austin, TX, 1984) and the Luis Valdez play and feature film, *Zoot Suit*, provide examples of the literature on *pachucos*.

5. María Fierro, Rose Escheverria Mulligan, Adele Hernández Milligan, Beatrice Morales Clifton, Mary Luna, Alicia Mendeola Shelit, Carmen Bernal Escobar, Belen Martínez Mason, and Julia Luna Mount grew up in Los Angeles. Lucy Acosta and Alma Araiza García came of age in El Paso and Erminia Ruiz in Denver. Representing the rural experience are María Arredondo and Jesusita Torres (California), María Ybarra (Texas), and Ruby Estrada (Arizona). As a teenager, Eusebia Buriel moved with her family from Silvis, Illinois, to Riverside, California. Nine of these women were born between 1908 and 1919 and eight between 1920 and 1926. This sample includes some who were chaperoned during the 1920s and others who were chaperoned during the thirties and forties. Nine interviews are housed in university archives; seven are part of the *Rosie the Riveter* collection at California State University, Long Beach, California.

6. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair," *Flappers and Philosophers* (London: 1922), 209–46; Martínez Mason interview, 44; interview with Alicia Mendeola Shelit, Volume 37 of *Rosie the Riveter*, 18; Paul S. Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States, Volume II* (Berkeley, 1932), 199–200; interview with María Fierro, Volume 12 of *Rosie the Riveter*, 10. [Vicki Ruiz Writes:] Changing clothes at school is not peculiar to our mothers and grandmothers. As a high school student in the early 1970s, I was not allowed to wear the fashionable micro-mini skirts. But I bought one anyway. I left home in a full dirndl skirt with a flowing peasant blouse, but once I arrived at school, I would untie the skirt (which I would then dump in my locker) to reveal the mini-skirt I had worn underneath.

7. Taylor, *Mexican Labor, Vol. II*, vi–vii.

8. Rodolfo F. Acuña, *Community under Siege: A Chronicle of Chicanos East of the Los Angeles River, 1945–1975* (Los Angeles, 1984), 278, 407–8, 413–14, 418, 422.

9. Sherna B. Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited: Women, The War and Social Change* (Boston, 1987), 81, 85.

10. For examples, *see La Opinion*, September 26, 1926; May 14, 1927; June 5, 1927; September 9, 1929; Jan. 15, 1933; Jan. 29, 1938.

11. *La Opinion*, Sept. 29, 1929; *Hispano-America*, July 2, 1932.

12. For examples, *sec La Opinion*, September 23, 24, 27, and 30, 1926; March 2, 1927.

13. Interview with Adele Hernández Milligan, Volume 26 of *Rosie the Riveter*, 17.

14. Escobar interview, 1986; Estrada interview, 11, 13; interview no. 653 with Lucy Acosta conducted by Mario T. García, Oct. 28, 1982 (on file at the Institute of Oral History, University of Texas, El Paso), 17.

15. Paul S. Taylor, "Women in Industry," field notes for his book, *Mexican Labor in the United States, 1927–1930*, Bancroft Library, University of California, 1 box; Richard G. Thurston, "Urbanization and Sociocultural Change in a Mexican-American Enclave" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1957).

16. Martínez Mason interview, 30; Ruiz interviews (1990, 1993); Thomas Sheridan, *Los Tucsonenses* (Tucson, AZ, 1986), 131–32.

17. Interview with Julia Luna Mount, November 17, 1983, by the author; Fierro interview, 18; Luna interview, 29; Ruiz interview (1993); Gregorita Rodríguez, *Singing for My Echo* (Santa Fe, NM, 1987), 52; Martínez Mason interview, 62.

18. See Douglas Monroy, "An Essay on Understanding the Work Experiences of Mexicans in Southern California, 1900–1939," *Aztlán* 12 (Spring 1981): 70. Feminist historians have also documented this push for autonomy among the daughters of European immigrants.

19. Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics of the University of California and Constantine Panuzio, *How Mexicans Earn and Live*, University of California Publications in Economics, XIII, No. 1, Cost of Living Studies V (Berkeley, 1933), 11, 14, 17; Taylor notes; Luna Mount interview; Ruiz interviews (1990, 1993); Shelit interview, 9.

20. Rev. F. X. Lasance, *The Catholic Girl's Guide and Sunday Missal* (New York, 1905), 249–75. I have a 1946 reprint edition passed down to me by my older sister who had received it from our mother.

21. George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900–1945* (New York, 1993), 167; Mary Helen Ponce, *Hoyt Street* (Albuquerque, 1993), 258, 266–71.

22. *La Opinion*, May 9, 1927.

23. Tuck, *Not with the Fist*, 134.

24. Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 310, 318, 323, 330–31; Shelit interview, 15; Paul S. Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States*, Vol. I (Berkeley, 1930; rpt. Arno Press, 1970), 221–24; Arredondo interview; Ruiz interviews (1990, 1993).

25. Ruiz interview (1993).

26. Acosta interview: Tuck, *Not with the Fist*, 126–27; Thurston, "Urbanization," 109, 117–19; Ruiz interviews (1990, 1993).

27. Bernice Zamora, "Pueblo, 1950," in *Infinite Divisions: An Anthology of Chicana Literature*, eds. Tey Diana Rebolledo and Eliana Rivero (Tucson, AZ, 1993), 315.

JOAN JACOBS BRUMBERG

Fasting Girls: The Emerging Ideal of Slenderness

Although anorexia nervosa is generally considered a modern disease, appetite control has long been an important dimension of female experience. Joan Jacobs Brumberg's pioneering study of anorexia nervosa traces changing cultural pressure on women to control their appetite. Exploring the links between food and femininity in the nineteenth century, Brumberg found that by 1890 thinness had become a way in which young privileged women could distance themselves from their working-class counterparts. More important, food preferences and thin bodies also sent moral and aesthetic messages. The young woman whose frail, delicate frame demonstrated her rejection of all carnal appetites more closely approached the Victorian ideal of femininity than did her more robust counterpart whose heavier physique signaled sexual craving. The twentieth century brought additional pressures to control body weight, according to Brumberg, with the development of scientific nutrition and the standard sizing of clothes. By 1920, fat had become a moral issue. Combined with social changes having to do with food and sexuality occurring in the 1960s, the stage was set for the epidemic of eating disorders evident in the 1980s and 1990s. How do these disorders persist today?

Excerpted and slightly revised by the author from ch. 9 and the afterword of *Fasting Girls: The History of Anorexia Nervosa* by Joan Jacobs Brumberg (New York: Vintage/Random House, 2000). Reprinted by permission of the author and publisher. Notes have been edited and renumbered.

Within the first two decades of the twentieth century, even before the advent of the flapper, the voice of American women revealed that the female struggle with weight was under way and was becoming intensely personal. As early as 1907 an *Atlantic Monthly* article described the reaction of a woman trying on a dress she had not worn for over a year: "The gown was neither more [n]or less than anticipated. But I . . . *the fault was on me* . . . I was more! Gasping I hooked it together. The gown was hopeless, and I . . . I am fat."[1] . . . By the twentieth century . . . overweight in women was not only a physical liability, it was a character flaw and a social impediment.

Early in the century elite American women began to take body weight seriously as fat became an aesthetic liability for those who followed the world of haute couture. Since the mid-nineteenth century wealthy Americans—the wives of J. P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Harry Harkness Flagler, for instance—had traveled to Paris to purchase the latest creations from couturier collections such as those on view at Maison Worth on the famed rue de la Paix. The couturier was not just a dressmaker who made clothes for an individual woman; rather, the couturier fashioned "a look" or a collection of dresses for an abstraction—the stylish woman. In order to be stylish and wear couturier clothes, a woman's body had to conform to the dress rather than the dress to the body, as had been the case when the traditional dressmaker fitted each garment.[2] . . .

In 1908 the world of women's fashion was revolutionized by Paul Poiret, whose new silhouette was slim and straight. . . . Almost immediately women of style began to purchase new kinds of undergarments that would make Poiret's look possible; for example, the traditional hourglass corset was cast aside for a rubber girdle to retract the hips.

After World War I the French continued to set the fashion standard for style-conscious American women. In 1922 Jeanne Lanvin's chemise, a straight frock with a simple bateau neckline, was transformed by Gabrielle Chanel into the uniform of the flapper. Chanel dropped the waistline to the hips and began to expose more of the leg: in 1922 she moved her hemlines to midcalf, and in 1926–27 the ideal hem was raised to just below the knee. In order to look good in Chanel's fashionable little dress, its wearer had to think not only about the appearance of her legs but about the smoothness of her form.[3] Women who wore the flapper uniform turned to flattening brassieres constructed of shoulder straps and a single band of material that encased the body from chest to waist. In 1914 a French physician commented on the revised dimensions of women's bodies: "Nowadays it is not the fashion to be corpulent; the proper thing is to have a slight, graceful figure far removed from embonpoint, and *a fortiori* from obesity. For once, the physician is called upon to interest himself in the question of feminine aesthetics."[4]

The slenderized fashion image of the French was picked up and promoted by America's burgeoning ready-to-wear garment industry.[5] Stimulated by the popularity of the Gibson girl and the shirtwaist craze of the 1890s, ready-to-wear production in the United States accelerated in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Chanel's chemise dress was a further boon to the garment industry. Because of its simple cut, the chemise was easy to copy and produce, realities that explain its quick adoption as the uniform of the 1920s. According to a 1923 *Vogue*, the American ready-to-wear industry successfully democratized French fashion: "Today, the mode which originates in Paris is a factor in the lives of women of every rank, from the highest to the lowest."[6]

In order to market ready-to-wear clothing, the industry turned in the 1920s to standard sizing, an innovation that put increased emphasis on personal body size and gave legitimacy to the idea of a normative size range. For women, shopping for ready-to-wear clothes in the bustling department stores of the early twentieth century fostered heightened concern about body size.[7] With a dressmaker, every style was theoretically available to every body; with standard sizing, items of clothing could be identified as desirable, only to be rejected on the grounds of fit. (For women the cost of altering a ready-made garment was an "add-on"; for men it was not.) Female figure flaws became a source of frustration and embarrassment, not easily hidden from those who accompanied the shopper or from salesclerks. Experiences in department-store dressing rooms created a host of new anxieties for women and girls who could not fit into stylish clothing. . . .

Ironically, standard sizing created an unexpected experience of frustration in a marketplace that otherwise was offering a continually expansive opportunity for gratification via

purchasable goods. Because many manufacturers of stylish women's garments did not make clothing in large sizes, heavy women were at the greatest disadvantage. In addition to the moral [disgrace] of overweight, the standardization of garment production precluded fat women's participation in the mainstream of fashion. This situation became worse as the century progressed. Fashion photography was professionalized, a development that paralleled the growth of modern advertising, and models became slimmer both to compensate for the distortions of the camera and to accommodate the new merchandising canon—modern fashion was best displayed on a lean body.[8]

The appearance in 1918 of America's first best-selling weight-control book confirmed that weight was a source of anxiety among women and that fat was out of fashion. *Diet and Health with a Key to the Calories* by Lulu Hunt Peters was directed at a female audience and based on the assumption that most readers wanted to lose rather than gain weight. . . . "You should know and also use the word calorie as frequently, or more frequently, than you use the words foot, yard, quart, gallon and so forth. . . . Hereafter you are going to eat calories of food. Instead of saying one slice of bread, or a piece of pie, you will say 100 calories of bread, 350 calories of pie."[9]

Peters' book was popular because it was personal and timely. Her 1918 appeal was related to food shortages caused by the exigencies of the war in Europe. Peters told her readers that it was "more important than ever to reduce" and recommended the formation of local Watch Your Weight Anti-Kaiser Classes. "There are hundreds of thousands of individuals all over America who are hoarding food," she wrote. "They have vast amounts of this valuable commodity stored away in their own anatomy." In good-humored fashion Peters portrayed her own calories counting as both an act of patriotism and humanitarianism:

> I am reducing and the money that I can save will help keep a child from starving . . . [I am explaining to my friends] that for every pang of hunger we feel we can have a double joy, that of knowing we are saving worse pangs in some little children, and that of knowing that for every pang we feel we lose a pound. A pang's a pound the world around we'll say.[10]

But Peters showed herself to be more than simply an informative and patriotic physician. Confessing that she once weighed as much as 200 pounds, the author also understood that heavy women were ashamed of their bulk and unlikely to reveal their actual weight. Peters observed that it was not a happy situation for fat women. "You are viewed with distrust, suspicion, and even aversion," she told her overweight readers. . . .

Peters' book was among the first to articulate the new secular credo of physical denial: modern women suffered to be beautiful (thin) rather than pious. Peters' language and thinking reverberated with references to religious ideas of temptation and sin. For the modern female dieter, sweets, particularly chocolate, were the ultimate temptation. Eating chocolate violated the morality of the dieter and her dedication to her ideal, a slim body. Peters joked about her cravings ("My idea of heaven is a place with me and mine on a cloud of whipped cream") but she was adamant about the fact that indulgence must ultimately be paid for. "If you think you will die unless you have some chocolate creams [go on a] *debauch*," she advised. "'Eat 10 or so' but then *repent* with a 50-calorie dinner of bouillon and crackers."[11]

Although the damage done by chocolate creams could be mediated by either fasting or more rigid dieting, Peters explained that there was a psychological cost in yielding to the temptation of candy or rich desserts. Like so many modern dieters, Peters wrote about the issue of guilt followed by redemption through parsimonious eating: "Every supposed pleasure in sin [eating] will furnish more than its equivalent of pain [dieting]." But appetite control was not only a question of learning to delay gratification, it was also an issue of self-esteem. "You will be tempted quite frequently, and you will have to choose whether you will enjoy yourself hugely in the twenty minutes or so that you will be consuming the excess calories, or whether you will dislike yourself cordially for the two or three days you lose by your lack of will power." For Peters dieting had as much to do with the mind as with the body. "There is a great deal of psychology to reducing," she wrote astutely.[12] In fact, with the popularization of the concept of calorie counting, physical features once regarded as natural—such as appetite and body weight—were designated as objects of conscious control. The notion of weight control through restriction of calories implied that . . . overweight resulted solely from lack of control; to be a fat woman constituted a failure of personal morality.

The tendency to talk about female dieting as a moral issue was particularly strong among the popular beauty experts, that is, those in the fashion and cosmetics industry who sold scientific advice on how to become and stay beautiful. Many early-twentieth-century beauty culturists, including Grace Peckham Murray, Helena Rubenstein, and Hazel Bishop, studied chemistry and medical specialties such as dermatology. The creams and lotions they created, as well as the electrical gadgets they promoted, were intended to bring the findings of modern chemistry and physiology to the problem of female beauty. Nevertheless, women could not rely entirely on scientifically achieved results. The beauty experts also preached the credo of self-denial: to be beautiful, most women must suffer.

Because they regarded fat women as an affront to their faith, some were willing to criminalize as well as medicalize obesity. In 1902 *Vogue* speculated, "To judge by the efforts of the majority of women to attain slender and sylph-like proportions, one would fancy it a crime to be fat." By 1918 the message was more distinct: "There is one crime against the modern ethics of beauty which is unpardonable; far better it is to commit any number of petty crimes than to be guilty of the sin of growing fat." By 1930 there was no turning back. Helena Rubenstein, a high priestess of the faith, articulated in *The Art of Feminine Beauty* the moral and aesthetic dictum that would govern the lives of subsequent generations of women: "An abundance of fat is something repulsive and not in accord with the principles that rule our conception of the beautiful.[13] . . .

In adolescence fat was considered a particular liability because of the social strains associated with that stage of life. In the 1940s articles with titles such as "What to Do about the Fat Child at Puberty," "Reducing the Adolescent," and "Should the Teens Diet?" captured the rising interest in adolescent weight control.[14] Women's magazines, reflecting the concerns of mothers anxious to save their daughters from social ostracism, for the first time promoted diets for young girls. According to the *Ladies' Home Journal*: "Appearance plays too important a part in a girl's life not to have her grow up to be beauty-conscious. Girls should be encouraged to take an interest in their appearance when they are very young."[15] . . . Adolescent weight control was also promoted by popular magazines hoping to sell products to young women. . . . *Seventeen's* adoption of the cause of weight control confirmed that slimness was a critical dimension of adolescent beauty and that a new constituency, high school girls, was learning how to diet. From 1944 [when it was founded] to 1948, *Seventeen* had published a full complement of articles on nutrition but almost nothing on weight control. Following the mode of earlier home economists and scientific nutritionists, the magazine had presented basic information about food groups and the importance of each in the daily diet; balance but not calories had been the initial focus. In 1948, however, *Seventeen* proclaimed overweight a medical problem and began educating its young readers about calories and the psychology of eating. Adolescent girls were warned against using eating as a form of emotional expression (do not "pamper your blues" with food) and were given practical tips on how to avoid food bingeing. No mention was made of the new "diet pills" (amphetamines) introduced in the 1930s for clinical treatment of obesity. Instead, teenagers were encouraged to go on "sensible" and "well-rounded" diets of between 1,200 and 1,800 calories. By the 1950s advertisements for "diet foods" such as Ry-Krisp were offering assistance as they told the readership "Nobody Loves a Fat Girl."[16] Girls, much as adult women, were expected to tame the natural appetite.

Although adolescent girls were consistently warned against weight reduction without medical supervision, dieting was always cast as a worthwhile endeavor with transforming powers. "Diets can do wonderful things. When dispensed or approved by your physician . . . all you have to do is follow whither the chart leads."[17] The process of metamorphosis from fat to thin always provided a narrative of uplift and interest. "The Fattest Girl in the Class" was the autobiographical account of Jane, an obese girl who, after suffering the social stigma associated with teenage overweight, went on a diet and found happiness.[18] Being thin was tied to attractiveness, popularity with the opposite sex, and self-esteem—all primary ingredients in adolescent culture. Nonfiction accounts of "make-overs" became a popular formula in all the beauty magazines of the postwar period and provided a tantalizing fantasy of psychological and spiritual transformation for mature and adolescent women alike.[19]

The popularization of adolescent female weight control in the postwar era is a prime

component of the modern dieting story and a critical factor in explaining anorexia nervosa as we know it today. . . . Since the 1960s the dieting imperative has intensified in two noticeable and important ways. . . . First, the ideal female body size has become considerably slimmer. After a brief flirtation with full-breasted, curvaceous female figures in the politically conservative postwar recovery of the 1950s, our collective taste returned to an ideal of extreme thinness and an androgynous, if not childlike, figure.[20] A series of well-known studies point to the declining weight since the 1950s of fashion models, Miss America contestants, and *Playboy* centerfolds.[21] Neither bosoms, hips, nor buttocks are currently in fashion as young and old alike attempt to meet the new aesthetic standard. A Bloomingdale's ad posits, "Bean lean, slender as the night, narrow as an arrow, pencil thin, get the point?"[22] It is appropriate to recall Annette Kellerman who, at 5 feet 3¾ inches and 137 pounds, epitomized the body beautiful of 1918. Obviously, our cultural tolerance for body fat has diminished over the intervening years.

Second, notably since the middle to late 1970s, a new emphasis on physical fitness and athleticism has intensified cultural pressures on the individual for control and mastery of the body. For women this means that fitness has been added to slimness as a criterion of perfection.[23] Experts on the subject, such as Jane Fonda, encourage women to strive for a lean body with musculature. The incredible popularity among women of aerobics, conditioning programs, and jogging does testify to the satisfactions that come with gaining physical strength through self-discipline, but it also expresses our current urgency about the physical body. Many who are caught up in the exercise cult equate physical fitness and slimness with a higher moral state. . . . Compulsive exercising and chronic dieting have [thus] been joined as twin obsessions. . . . [In the] 1980s clinical reports and autobiographical statements show a clear-cut pattern of anorexic patients who exercise with ritualistic intensity. How much one runs and how little one eats is the prevailing moral calculus in present-day anorexia nervosa. . . .

The proliferation of diet and exercise regimens in the past decade, although an important context for understanding the increase in anorexia nervosa, is not the whole story. For a more complete explanation we must turn to some other recent social changes, keeping in mind that no one factor has caused the contemporary problem. Rather, it is the nature of our economic and cultural environment, interacting with individual and family characteristics, which exacerbates the social and emotional insecurities that put today's young women at increasing risk for anorexia nervosa. Two very basic social transformations are relevant to the problem: one has to do with food; the other, with new expectations between the sexes.

Since World War II, and especially in the last two decades, middle-class Americans have experienced a veritable revolution in terms of how and what we eat, as well as how we think about eating.[24] The imperatives of an expanding capitalist society have generated extraordinary technological and marketing innovations, which in turn have transformed food itself, expanded our repertoire of foods, and affected the ways in which we consume them. Even though much contemporary food is characterized by elaborate processing and conservation techniques that actually reduce and flatten distinctive textures and flavors, the current array of food choices seems to constitute an endless smorgasbord of new and different tastes. [Since] the 1980s an individual in an urban center looking for a quick lunch [has been] able to choose from tacos with guacamole and salsa, hummus and falafel in pita, sushi, tortellini, quiche, and pad thai—along with more traditional "American" fare such as hamburgers. Thirty years ago this diversified international menu was as unknown to most Americans as were many of the food products used to create it. . . . As a consequence of [the expansion of our food repertoire], we are faced with an abundance of food which, in our obesophobic society, necessitates ever greater self-control. . . . It is no wonder, then, that we talk so incessantly about food and dieting.

The food revolution is a matter of ideas and manners as much as technology and markets. . . . In our society food is chosen and eaten not merely on the basis of hunger. It is a commonplace to observe that contemporary advertising connects food to sociability, status, and sexuality. In an affluent society, in particular, where eating appears to involve considerable individual choice, food is regarded as an important analogue of the self.

In the 1960s, for example, many young people in the counterculture gave up goods associated with their bourgeois upbringing

and turned instead to a diet of whole grains, unprocessed foods, and no meat. This new diet made a statement about personal and political values and became a way of separating one generation from another. . . . In the 1980s, the extent to which the choice of cuisine dominates and defines the sophisticated life-style [among well-to-do urbanites] is reflected in a recent *New Yorker* cartoon, which shows a young professional couple after a dinner party given by friends. In complete seriousness they say to each other, "We could get close with David and Elizabeth if they didn't put béarnaise sauce on everything."[25] The anorectic is obviously not alone in her use of food and eating as a means of self-definition. There are many others who internalize the dictum "You are what you eat"—or, for that matter, what you don't eat.[26]

Along with the expansion of our food repertoire and our extraordinary attention to food selection, the eating context has changed. Eating is being desocialized. In American society today, more and more food is being consumed away from the family table or any other fixed center of sociability. This process began in the postwar period with the introduction of convenience foods and drive-in restaurants, precursors of the fast-food chains that now constitute a $45-billion-a-year industry. . . . Americans [now] eat everywhere—in the classroom; in theaters, libraries, and museums; on the street; at their desks; on the phone; in hot tubs; in cars while driving. . . . Signs saying "no food and drink," infrequent in other parts of the world, adorn our public buildings, a clear sign of our pattern of vagabond eating.[27]

On college and university campuses, where eating disorders are rampant, the situation is exaggerated. By the early 1970s most undergraduate students were no longer required to take any sit-down meals at fixed times in college dormitories. . . . Typically, students frequent a series of university cafeterias or commercial off-campus restaurants where they can obtain breakfast, lunch, or dinner at any time of the day. Some campus food plans allow unlimited amounts, a policy that fuels the behavior of the bulimic: "I used to go to Contract, eat a whole bunch of stuff, go to the bathroom, throw it up, come back, eat again, throw it up, eat again."[28] In addition, the availability of nearly any kind of food at any time contributes to a pattern of indiscriminate eating. Traditions of food appropriateness—that is, that certain foods are eaten at particular times of the day or in a certain sequence—disappear in this unstructured climate. Thus, an ice-cream cone, a carbonated soft drink, and a bagel constitute an easy popular "meal" that may be eaten at any time of day. Most colleges and the surrounding communities have made provisions to gratify student appetites no matter what the hour. Snack bars and vending machines adorn nearly every free alcove in classroom buildings and residence halls; pizza and Chinese food are delivered hot in the middle of the night.

In a setting where eating is so promiscuous, it is no wonder that food habits become problematic. This is not to say that our universities, on their own, generate eating-disordered students. They do, however, provide fertile ground for those who carry the seeds of disorder with them from home. In the permissive and highly individualized food environment of the post-1970 college or university, overeating and undereating become distinct possibilities.[29]

For those young women with either incipient or pronounced anorexia nervosa, the unstructured college life . . . often accentuates the anorectic's physical and emotional problems. [As one young anorectic explained]:

> I don't know any limits here at all. At home, I have my mom dishing out my food . . . But when I'm here it's a totally different story—I can't tell portion size at all. I always get so afraid afterwards, after eating. Oh my God did I eat that much or this much? So I just pass things up altogether and don't eat.[30]

The anorectic's preoccupation with appetite control is fueled by incessant talk about dieting and weight even among friends and associates who eat regularly. Diet-conscious female students report that fasting, weight control, and binge eating are a normal part of life on American college campuses.[31] . . . In our obesophobic society women struggle with food because, among other things, food represents fat and loss of control. For a contemporary woman to eat heartily, energetically, and happily is usually problematic (and, at best, occasional). As a result, some come to fear and hate their own appetite; eating becomes a shameful and disgusting act, and denial of hunger becomes a central facet of identity and personality. . . .

Among adolescents concerned with the transition to adulthood, an intense concern with appetite control and the body [also] operates in tandem with increasing anxiety over sexuality

and the implications of changing sex roles. For sex is the second important arena of social change that may contribute to the rising number of anorectics. There are, in fact, some justifiable social reasons why contemporary young women fear adult womanhood. The "anorexic generations," particularly those born since 1960, have been subject to a set of insecurities that make heterosexuality an anxious rather than a pleasant prospect. Family insecurity, reflected in the frequency of divorce, and changing sex and gender roles became facts of life for this group in their childhood. . . . Although there is no positive correlation between divorced families and anorexia nervosa, family disruption is part of the world view of the anorexic generations. Its members understand implicitly that not all heterosexual relationships have happy endings.

As a consequence of these social changes, some young women are ambivalent about commitments to men and have adopted an ideal of womanhood that reflects the impact of post-1960 feminism. Although they generally draw back from an explicitly feminist vocabulary, most undergraduate women today desire professional careers of their own without forsaking the idea of marriage and a family. A 1985 study of college women by sociologist Mirra Komarovsky reveals that finding one's place in the world of work has become essential for personal dignity in this generation—yet a career without marriage was the choice of only 2 percent of the sample.[32] Convinced that individuality can be accommodated in marriage, these young women are interested in heterosexuality, but admit that "relationships with guys" are difficult even in college. Komarovsky describes conflict over dating rituals (who takes the initiative and who pays), decision making as a couple, intellectual rivalries, and competition for entrance into graduate school. Unlike Mother, who followed Dad to graduate school and supported him along the way, today's undergraduate—whether she is a declared feminist or not—wants her own professional career both as a ticket to the good life and as a protection for herself in case of divorce.

Sexual activity also requires an extraordinary degree of self-protection in the modern world of AIDS. While premarital sex is acceptable (if not desirable), it is an understandable source of worry among female undergraduates. An advertisement in a 1986 issue of *Ms.*, aimed at selling condoms to young women, captured the current ambivalence about the physical side of heterosexuality: "Let's face it, sex these days can be risky business, and you need all the protection you can get. Between the fear of unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and the potential side effects of many forms of contraception, it may seem like sex is hardly worth the risk anymore."[33] For some students the unprecedented privacy and freedom of modern university life generates as much fear as pleasure. It bears repeating that clinical materials suggest an absence of sexual activity on the part of anorectics.

Even though feminine dependency is no longer in fashion, these same young women combine traditional expectations with a quest for equity and power. To be brainy and beautiful; to have an exciting $100,000-a-year job; to nurture two wonderful children in consort with a supportive but equally high-powered husband—these are the personal ambitions of many in the present college generation. In order to achieve this level of personal and social perfection, young women must be extremely demanding of themselves: there can be no distracting personal or avocational detours—they must be unrelenting in the pursuit of goals. The kind of personal control required to become the new Superwoman (a term popularized by columnist Ellen Goodman)[34] parallels the single-mindedness that characterizes the anorectic. In sum, the golden ideal of this generation of privileged young women and their most distinctive pathology appear to be flip sides of the same record.

My assertion that the post-1960 epidemic of anorexia nervosa can be related to recent social change in the realm of sexuality [and gender roles] is not an argument for turning back the clock. . . .Historical investigation demonstrates that anorexia nervosa was latent in the economic and emotional milieu of the bourgeois family as early as the 1950s. It makes little sense to think a cure will be achieved by putting women back in the kitchen, reinstituting sit-down meals on the nation's campuses, or limiting personal and professional choices to what they were in the Victorian era. On the basis of the best current research on anorexia nervosa, we must conclude that the disease develops as a result of the intersection of external and internal forces in the life of an individual. External forces such as those described here do not, by themselves, generate psychopathologies, but they do give them shape and influence their frequency.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, when a new future is being tentatively charted for women but gender roles and sexuality are still constrained by tradition, young women on the brink of adulthood are feeling the pain of social change most acutely.[35] They look about for direction, but find little in the way of useful experiential guides. What parts of women's tradition do they want to carry into the future? What parts should be left behind? These are difficult personal and political decisions, and most young women are being asked to make them without benefit of substantive education in the history and experience of their sex. In effect, our young women are being challenged and their expectations raised without a simultaneous level of support for either their specific aspirations or for female creativity in general.

Sadly, the cult of diet and exercise is the closest thing our secular society offers women in terms of a coherent philosophy of the self.[36] This being the case, anorexia nervosa is not a quirk and the symptom choice is not surprising. When personal and social difficulties arise, a substantial number of our young women become preoccupied with their bodies and control of appetite. Of all the messages they hear, the imperative to be beautiful and good, by being thin, is still the strongest and most familiar. Moreover, they are caught, often at a very early age, in a deceptive cognitive trap that has them believing that body weight is entirely subject to their conscious control. Despite feminist influences on the career aspirations of the present college-age generation, little has transpired to dilute the basic strength of this powerful cultural prescription that plays on both individualism and conformity. The unfortunate truth is that even when she wants more than beauty and understands its limitations as a life goal, the bourgeois woman still expends an enormous amount of psychic energy on appetite control as well as on other aspects of presentation of the physical self.

And what of the future? . . .

We can expect to see eating disorders continue, if not increase, among young women in those postindustrial societies where adolescents tend to be under stress. For both young men and young women, vast technological and cultural changes have made the transition to adulthood particularly difficult by transforming the nature of the family and community and rendering the future unpredictable. According to psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner and others, American adolescents are in the worst trouble: we have the highest incidence of alcohol and drug abuse among adolescents of any country in the world; we also have the highest rate of teenage pregnancy of any industrialized nation; and we appear to have the most eating disorders.[37]

Although the sexually active adolescent mother and the sexually inactive adolescent anorectic may seem to be light-years apart, they are linked by a common, though unarticulated, understanding. For adolescent women the body is still the most powerful paradigm regardless of social class. Unfortunately, a sizable number of our young women—poor and privileged alike—regard their body as the best vehicle for making a statement about their identity and personal dreams. This is what unprotected sexual intercourse and prolonged starvation have in common. Taken together, our unenviable preeminence in these two domains suggests the enormous difficulty involved in making the transition to adult womanhood in a society where women are still evaluated primarily in terms of the body rather than the mind.

NOTES

1. "On Growing Fat," *Atlantic Monthly* (Mar. 1907): 430–31 (italics added).
2. Jo Ann Olian, *The House of Worth: The Gilded Age, 1860–1918* (New York, 1982); Jane Beth Abrams, "The Thinning of America: The Emergence of the Ideal of Slenderness in American Popular Culture, 1870–1930" (B.A. thesis, Harvard University, 1983), chap. 2.
3. Michael Batterberry and Ariane Batterberry, *Mirror: A Social History of Fashion* (New York, 1977), 289–97; Diane DeMarly, *The History of Haute Couture, 1850–1950* (New York, 1980), 81–83.
4. P. Rostaine, "How to Get Thin," *Medical Press and Circular* 149 (Dec. 23, 1914): 643–44.
5. Stuart Ewen and Elizabeth Ewen, *Channels of Desire: Mass Images and the Shaping of American Consciousness* (New York, 1982), pt. 4; Claudia Kidwell and Margaret C. Christman, *Suiting Everyone: The Democratization of Clothing in America* (Washington, D.C., 1974).
6. *Vogue* (Jan. 1, 1923): 63.
7. Lois W. Banner, *American Beauty* (New York, 1983), 262; Ewen and Ewen, *Channels of Desire*, 193–98.
8. Banner, *American Beauty*, 287; Anne Hollander, *Seeing through Clothes* (New York, 1975).
9. Lulu Hunt Peters, *Diet and Health with a Key to the Calories* (Chicago, 1918), 24, 39.
10. Ibid., 12, 104, 110.
11. Ibid., 85, 94 (italics added).
12. Ibid., 85, 93, 94.
13. "On Her Dressing Table," *Vogue* (Apr. 24, 1902): 413; ibid. (July 1, 1918): 78.

14. Mildred H. Bryan, "Don't Let Your Child Get Fat!" *Hygeia* 15 (1937): 801–3; G. D. Schultz, "Forget That Clean-Plate Bogey!" *Better Homes and Gardens* 21 (Sept. 1942): 24.

15. Louise Paine Benjamin, "I Have Three Daughters," *Ladies Homes Journal* 57 (June 1940): 74.

16. "You'll Eat It Up at Noon," *Seventeen* (Sept. 1946): 21–22; Irma M. Phorylles, "The Lost Waistline," ibid. (Mar. 1948): 124; "Overweight?" ibid. (Aug. 1948): 184.

17. Ibid.

18. "Fattest Girl in the Class," ibid. (Jan. 1948): 21–22.

19. "Psychology of Dieting," *Ladies' Home Journal* (Jan. 1965): 66.

20. Banner, *American Beauty*, 283–85.

21. David M. Garner et al., "Cultural Expectations of Thinness in Women," *Psychology Reports* 47 (1980): 483–91.

22. Rita Freedman, *Beauty Bound* (Lexington, KY, 1986), 150.

23. "Coming on Strong: The New Ideal of Beauty," *Time* (Aug. 30, 1983): 71–77.

24. William Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II* (New York, 1986).

25. *New Yorker* (July 21, 1986): 71.

26. "What's Your Food Status Because the Way You Live Has a Lot to Do with the Way You Eat," *Mademoiselle* (Sept. 1985): 224–26; "Food as Well as Clothes, Today, Make the Man—As a Matter of Life and Style," *Vogue* (June 1985): 271–73.

27. "Severe Growing Pains for Fast Food," *Business Week* (Mar. 22, 1985): 225.

28. Greg Foster and Susan Howerin, "The Quest for Perfection: An Interview with a Former Bulimic," *Iris: A Journal about Women* [Charlottesville, Va.] (1986): 21.

29. Before they even arrive on campus, during their senior year in high school and the summer before entering college, many girls began to talk about the "freshmen 10 or 15." This is the weight gain predicted as a result of eating starchy institutional food and participating in late-night food forays with friends.

30. Elizabeth Greene, "Support Groups Forming for Students with Eating Disorders," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Mar. 5, 1986): 1, 30.

31. K. A. Halmi, J. R. Falk, and E. Schwartz, "Binge-Eating and Vomiting: A Survey of a College Population," *Psychological Medicine* 11 (1981): 697–706; R. L. Pyle et al., "The Incident of Bulimia in Freshman College Students," *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 2, 3 (1983): 75–86.

32. Mirra Komarovsky, *Women in College: Shaping the New Feminine Identities* (New York, 1985), 89–92, 225–300.

33. *Ms.* (Sept. 1986): n.p. The condom is called Mentor.

34. Ellen Goodman, *Close to Home* (New York, 1979).

35. In *Theories of Adolescence* (New York, 1962), R. E. Muuss wrote: "Societies in a period of rapid transition create a particular adolescent period; the adolescent has not only the society's problem to adjust to but his [or her] own as well" (164).

36. My view of this issue complements ideas presented in Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York, 1986).

37. These data are synthesized in Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Alienation and the Four Worlds of Childhood," *Phi Delta Kappan* (Feb. 1986): 434.

LINDA GORDON

Women and the KKK in the 1920s

The Ku Klux Klan, a social movement dedicated to maintaining white supremacy, emerged in the aftermath of the Civil War. As seen in Tera Hunter's essay, "Reconstruction and the Meanings of Freedom," members of the Klan terrorized African Americans who sought to exercise their political rights or enter the middle class, along with their white allies. In the late 1910s, the Klan experienced a nationwide resurgence and its targets of hatred expanded to include immigrants, Jews, and Catholics. In this essay, Linda Gordon explains why so many women joined the Klan during the 1920s. What types of work did Klanswomen perform? Why were women able to wield so much influence in the organization? Do you agree with Gordon's assertion that many Klanswomen of the 1920s were feminists?

Excerpted from ch. 7 of *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* by Linda Gordon (New York: Liveright, 2017). Reprinted by permission of the author and publisher. Notes have been edited and renumbered.

Although Klansmen outnumbered Klanswomen by six to one, at least half a million women (some claimed as many as three million) joined the movement, and that doesn't count the many who participated in its public events and supported its ideas. In fact, women clamored to participate from the moment the second Klan reappeared. They contributed a new argument for the cause: that women's emergence as active citizens would help purify the country. That claim may well have emerged only after the woman suffrage amendment was ratified, in 1920; before that, many Klanspeople of both sexes had doubts about the righteousness of women entering politics. Nevertheless, the claim that women might bring "family values" back into the nation's governance—a claim made at the time in movements of all political hues—created a contradiction within conservative movements: despite an ideological commitment to Victorian gender norms, including women's domesticity, many conservative women enjoyed participating in politics. In fact, some Klanswomen interpreted political activism as a female responsibility. Then, once active, they often came to resent men's attempts to control them and even challenged men's power. Thus we meet a phenomenon that many progressive feminists found and still find anomalous—the existence not only of conservative feminism but even of bigoted feminism.[1] Readers who have not already done so must rid themselves of notions that women's politics are always kinder, gentler, and less racist than men's.

Women who became active in the Klan were continuing a populist tradition of the 1880s and 1890s. Even without voting rights, women had constituted a significant force in the Farmers Alliance and then in the Populist and Socialist Parties. Women activists spoke at meetings, edited newspapers, lobbied, legislatures, published novels, wrote political tracts, ran for local office and got elected to leadership in the Alliance—in short, they got engaged in every form of political activity allowed them. When the Populist Party emerged, women were increasingly shut out of official roles, not only because of their disenfranchisement but also because increasing Populist power made male leaders less open to sharing influence. (It was often the case that women had more space to lead in social movements than in formal political parties.) There were exceptions, though. Kansas feminist Mary Elizabeth Lease, to cite just one example, was a major Populist traveling speaker, in demand throughout the Midwest. She gave the opening address at the 1892 Kansas Populist convention and was an at-large delegate at the national convention. Many Populist women were also stalwarts of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. They brought these experiences into the Ku Klux Klan. They did not assume that politics was a male activity.

Moreover, women had won at least partial suffrage in 27 states and the Alaska Territory prior to the national amendment, and these states included those where the Klan was strong, such as Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, and Oregon. But the 1920s political world in which Klanswomen entered was rapidly changing. After the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified, the most visible women's rights organizations waned in strength. As a result, the narrative of women's struggle for equality has often characterized the 1920s as a period of inaction or even retreat.[2] But that conclusion, while accurate with respect to electoral engagement, does not hold up with respect to social and cultural developments. For example, rates of women's college education mushroomed. Between 1910 and 1920 the number of women in college doubled, reaching almost 300,000, or nearly half of all students in higher education. That increase continued during the Klan's heyday, growing by nearly 84 percent over the 1920s. Similarly with women's employment: by 1920 women constituted 21 percent of all those employed outside their homes, a rate much higher among poor women and women of color, of course. Both changes—education and employment—drew more women into the public sphere. . . . Progressive Era women activists had obtained a base for promoting women's and children's health and welfare in the US Children's Bureau. At the same time, divorce rates were growing, which meant that more women were not only leaving husbands but also fighting for child custody, always the right about which women cared the most.

Meanwhile, commercial culture was responding to these changes. The stereotype of the new culture has been the flapper, but this was a small group compared to the millions captivated by new forms of leisure and social adventure, many of them entirely secular. Prohibition was flouted openly in big cities and discreetly in smaller locations. . . . Nightclubs, records, and above all radios brought jazz out of

Harlem into white communities. Radio broadcasting began in 1920; by 1930, 60 percent of Americans owned a radio, and as a result radically expanded the acquaintance of small-town and urban Americans with big-city culture. By 1927 fifty million Ford cars were on the roads—many with women drivers—offering greater mobility and privacy. Well into the 1960s, most young people had their first sexual experience in a car. For the young and unmarried, unchaperoned commercial leisure such as dance halls, soda fountains, and the movies—where couples could sit in the dark!—became a magnetic attraction. Images of beauty changed rapidly: women cut off and "bobbed" their hair . . . and wore makeup, shorter skirts and brighter colors.

Together these cultural developments transformed social life and, of course, created a backlash. Conservatives railed at the decline of morals, and by this they meant mainly women's morals. [Reporter] Walter Lippmann's phrase "the acids of modernity" captured Klannish fears that the very ground of Protestant morality was being eroded.[3] The Klan blamed Jews and, to a lesser extent, Catholics for subverting what would later be called the gender order; nevertheless, Klanspeople fretted about immodesty precisely because this freer society and sexual culture appealed to Protestants as well. Because anxiety about immodesty focused on women, Klanswomen were both repelled and enticed by these developments, and this shows in the contradictions within their program and activism.

Klanswomen were often the wives of Klansmen, but many joined on their own, and others led their husbands into the organization. In fact, some husbands resented their wives' Klan activities and absences from the home, and some opponents taunted Klansmen with the charge that they were not man enough to keep their wives at home.[4] It seems likely, though, that Klanswomen often spent more hours on Klan work than did rank-and-file Klansmen because they had more disposable time.

Women did not always wait to get Klansmen's permission to join the movement but organized themselves through churches, clubs, sororities, and Klan picnics. Male leaders, alarmed by these initiatives outside their control, formed competing women's groups, producing a variety of organizations with names such as Kamelias, Queens of the Golden Mask, and Ladies of the Invisible Empire.[5] In 1923 Imperial Wizard Hiram Evans, seeing that women could not be kept out of the Klan movement, managed to merge these groups forcibly into the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK). Some preexisting women's groups resisted this merger, and then, after acceding, refused to accept a subordinate status. An Oregon group proclaimed that "the women's organization is an exact counterpart of the Klan itself, with no difference whatever except that of gender. They will use the same constitution, ritual, regalia and methods."[6] In another assertion of its independence the WKKK set up its headquarters in Little Rock, hundreds of miles from Atlanta, the home of the Klan headquarters. By November 1923, the WKKK claimed chapters in all forty-eight states. In Indiana, the state of the greatest Klan strength, where the population was 97 percent white and Protestant, the WKKK boasted of 250,000 members; if true (not likely), this would have meant that 32 percent of the state's native-born white Protestant women belonged.[7]

Brief profiles of three WKK leaders illustrate their combination of conservatism with assertiveness, a combination that many might find surprising. . . . Elizabeth Tyler, cohead of the Klan's PR firm . . . defied almost all the gender norms of the time and displayed a business acumen that might befit a CEO today. Her extraordinary career grew from both nativist and fraternal traditions. Born in 1881, married at fourteen, either abandoned or widowed at fifteen, she made several further brief marriages, becoming a multiple divorcée. In Atlanta in the 1910s she was a member of a sororal order, Daughters of America, an anti-immigration organization. . . . Tyler participated in the eugenics cause as a volunteer "hygiene" worker, managing publicity and organizing parades for a "Better Babies" campaign. Through that activity she met Edward Clarke. Together they sensed the profitable opportunities that could arise from professionalizing and commercializing their efforts and set up the Southern Publicity Association, selling their services to groups like the Red Cross and the Anti-Saloon League. In their first fifteen months of work for the Klan, they claimed to have netted upward of $200,000 ($2.7 million in 2016); this is probably an exaggeration, but they were doing well. Tyler personally owned and profited from the *Searchlight*, a Klan newspaper, and built herself a large Classical Revival house on fourteen acres in downtown

Atlanta. It was she and Clarke who . . . revived a southern organization into a mass national movement and a profitable business.[8] . . .

In 1919 their position became precarious when Atlanta police literally rousted them out of bed and arrested them for disorderly conduct; the "disorder" was the fact that they were sexual partners while married to other people. When the arrest was discovered two years later, newspaper coverage revealed not only the illicit sex but also that they had used false names and had been in possession of whiskey. The scandal was big news, covered even in the *New York Times* when the New Jersey Klan demanded [their] firing.[9] Learning of the arrest some Klansmen were doubly dismayed—by the alleged immorality but also by the discovery that a woman was a key organizer of the KKK. . . .

Meanwhile, Klan opponents forced congressional hearings on the Klan in 1921. Fearing further exposure, since he was guilty of other improprieties, Clarke immediately announced his resignation. This made Tyler furious. She publicly denounced him, saying he was "weak-kneed and won't stand by his guns." She refused to resign.[10] She even survived an attempt on her life when unknown assailants shot up her home. The congressional report treated her with both respect and misogyny, as the éminence grise [a person who exercises influence without holding an official position] behind the Klan. Instead of backing down, she skillfully turned the negative publicity from the hearings into a successful membership drive that grew the Klan exponentially.

Tyler was finally forced to resign by accusations, almost certainly true, of embezzling Klan money. But she had been a gift to the national Klan. The organization might well have grown without this driven, bold, corrupt, and precociously entrepreneurial woman, but it would likely have been smaller.

While Tyler's audacity might seem surprising in a woman of the 1920s, the career of Daisy Douglas Barr undoes today's assumptions even more, because she was a Quaker. In the late twentieth century Quakers became associated with liberal theology, anti-racism, and other progressive attitudes. But a century ago the Friends church included plenty of racists and conservatives and was moving rapidly toward evangelicalism. Barr was by no means the only Quaker in the Klan; in the town of Richmond, Indiana, for example, some 7 percent of Klansmen were Quaker.[11]

A native Hoosier, Daisy Douglas Brushwiller was born in 1875 into a devout Quaker family. She was a prodigy: she was only four, she later said, when she first felt inspired to testify to her spiritual commitment, and at eight and again at twelve she felt "the personal call from God" to preach and spread the word. At sixteen . . . she reportedly preached her first public sermon, after which she was "saved" at a United Brethren service conducted by a woman evangelist. ("Girl evangelists" were in vogue at the time.) At eighteen she married schoolteacher Thomas Barr, who joined the Klan at her urging and began leading tent revivals around the state. In 1910 she became pastor of the Muncie, Indiana, Quaker meeting. (Female ministers were uncommon in mainstream white Protestantism but by no means entirely absent.) Soon she too was preaching at revivals, causing many of her listeners to be "saved" and at least one sick man to be cured. She was prolific on paper as well as out loud, writing a great deal of poetry like this:

> . . . I am the Spirit of Righteousness.
> They call me the Ku Klux Klan.
> I am more than the uncouth robe and hood
> With which I am clothed.
> YEA, I AM THE SOUL OF AMERICA.[12]

Daisy Barr thus fused religiosity and Klannishness with extraordinary confidence and without a touch of feminine meekness.

Like many other clubwomen of the time, Barr was a joiner, never limiting herself to a single affiliation. A woman of formidable energy, she also threw herself into an array of reform causes: president of the Indiana Humane Society, active in the campaign for Prohibition, creator of the Muncie YWCA (the Y's were then fierce temperance and revivalist organizations), and founder of a "refuge," the Friendly Inn, for former prostitutes. . . . When the Barrs moved to Indianapolis in 1917, Daisy became president of the Indiana War Mothers. Soon after the woman suffrage amendment passed, she became the vice chair of the Republican State Committee, the first woman to hold such a position. . . . Meanwhile, her husband became Indiana's deputy state bank commissioner. This was a power couple.

Barr soon became Imperial Empress of a women's Klan affiliate, Queens of the Golden Mask. She wielded considerable bargaining power with Klansmen, a power enlarged when she established the "poison squad," a statewide

women's network. The squad practiced black psywar [psychological warfare], spreading rumors, allegedly from Catholics or Jews, designed to make the alleged sources appear immoral and thus build support for Klan political candidates. By 1923 she was head of the Indiana WKKK and a traveling speaker for the Klan itself. A whirlwind of energy, in July of that year she led a naturalization ceremony with two hundred women and claimed that one thousand would-be members were present but lacked the proper regalia required for admission. Three months later she led Indiana's most spectacular Klan parade yet. So influential was the Indiana WKKK under her leadership that she almost succeeded in moving its national headquarters to Indianapolis.

As WKKK spokeswoman, Barr frequently broadcast feminist messages. Her reform work had long been oriented toward women, and she campaigned to have a woman added to the Indianapolis police force—a typical Progressive Era cause, motivated by the belief that women were less corrupt and harder on moral offenses than men. . . . Her speeches honored woman suffrage and urged women to make active use of their new political citizenship. Her temperance arguments featured stories of drunken male brutality, as befitted a member of the WCTU. She hurled vitriol against gamblers, adulterers, and men who patronized prostitutes and despoiled young girls. She called on women to support female candidates, to step up and to exert power in their churches.

Her affiliations arose, no doubt, from firm principle, but they were also lucrative. She contracted with the Klan to be the chief WKKK recruiter for Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, and Minnesota. This agreement guaranteed her a dollar for each woman initiated and four dollars for each recruit within Indiana. Moreover, she became the conduit for purchases of robes, from which she likely received a percentage of sales. (No wonder she refused to "naturalize" women who lacked the regalia.) But like Tyler, Barr was apparently not satisfied with these profits, and Klan leaders complained that she did not deliver the required sums to national headquarters. Numerous male Klan leaders did the same; the flow of money, combined with lack of accountability, presented irresistible temptations to corruption.

Klan feminism also appeared prominently in the work and words of the Rev. Alma Bridwell White. Although never an official of a Klan group, she was easily as influential as Barr in spreading its message. As evangelist, minister, and bishop, she founded the Pillar of Fire "holiness" congregations and gained national fame through multitudinous lectures, and wrote thirty-five religious books, and some two hundred hymns. Her Pillar of Fire religious movement ultimately established fifty-two churches, not counting a few abroad, seven divinity schools, two radio stations, ten magazines and newsletters, and two colleges. Like Tyler and Barr, she displayed extraordinary entrepreneurial skills, but her bigotry surpassed theirs and rivaled that of any Klansman in its intensity.[13]

Born in 1862 in Kentucky, one of seven sisters, White was also a girl evangelist. She found rebirth at age sixteen at a Wesleyan Methodist revival. . . . She enrolled in Millersburg Female College, then at age nineteen traveled on her own to Montana and Utah, where she taught school—clearly an adventurous teenager. She married Kent White, a seminarian, and the couple started an unsanctioned Methodist Pentecostal church in Denver.[14] They soon broke with Pentecostalism and moved their church into the holiness movement, christening it Pillar of Fire. Already impatient with her husband, Alma White took over and soon became its recognized leader.

Defying protests from the Methodist hierarchy, White remained committed to arousing Pentecostal-style "enthusiastic" worship, with singing, shouting, dancing and fits. . . . Never particularly modest, she claimed the power to bring people to their knees, sobbing in agony of contrition, or to "make them skip about the aisles, singing and shouting with joy."[15] As she described her method, she never prepared a sermon but chose a text and then waited for the "heavenly dynamite" to explode. . . . In writing and performing, she not only surpassed the fervor of Klan lecturers but even claimed that many biblical heroes were actually Klansmen. One of her many books, *The Klan in Prophesy*, reported that the KKK had been divinely ordained.

In 1907 one of the Whites' converts, a rich widow gifted them a large farm property in central New Jersey. The Whites moved there, naming it Zarephath, after the biblical village where the prophet Elijah raised the son of a widow from the dead. In 1918 White arranged for the evangelist who had converted her to

consecrate her as Pillar of Fire's bishop—the first woman bishop in the United States. She traveled the country speaking at revivals and camp meetings and established a mission in London, preaching against liquor and "present tendencies in women's dress."[16] Her stamina and ambition outdid even the most committed Klan speakers; she claimed to have crossed the Atlantic fifty-eight times and traveled fifty thousand miles in one year.

Zarephath flourished and expanded. Alma White was part of a trend: the 1920s produced numerous preachers, particularly Pentecostal preachers, many of whom could arouse zealous followers through their tent revivals. Even a few more mainstream religious groups, such as Reform Jews, Northern Baptists, and Presbyterians, were giving women larger roles and the Methodist Episcopals decided in 1920 to allow women deacons. (African American churches had female ministers much earlier.) . . . White compared herself favorably to Aimee Semple McPherson, the most popular evangelist of the time, who advertised her 10,000-member congregation as the largest in the world. White emulated McPherson in establishing a radio station WAWZ, the letters standing for Alma White Zarephath.[17] . . .

Pillar of Fire distinguished itself from other holiness groups through its explicit and intensive support of the Ku Klux Klan. White's writings and speeches focused on four pillars of Klan ideology: white supremacy, anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, and temperance. Perhaps because of her base in New Jersey, home of 117,000 African Americans in 1920, she emphasized racism against African Americans, while Klanspeople in locations with smaller black populations emphasized immigrants, Catholics, and Jews. . . . "Whatever wrong may have been perpetrated against the Negro race by bringing black men to this country . . . the argument will not hold that they should share equal social or political rights with the white men—the sons of Japheth." She advocated, therefore, repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment: "America is a white man's country and should be governed by white men. Yet the Klan is not anti-negro . . . [but] is eternally opposed to the mixing of the white and colored races. . . . God drew the color line and man should so let it remain."[18] "Red men" were equally doomed because God had given the land to the sons of Japeth.[19]

Her camp meetings and revivals began to feature cross-burnings and Klan lectures. She published three books of praise for the Klan and a periodical devoted exclusively to the Klan, the *Good Citizen*, and offered positive appraisals of the Klan in her many other sermons, books, and hymnals. The Klan funded her purchase of Westminster College (later renamed Belleview College) in Westminster, Colorado; . . . located high on a hill, it proved a perfect location for cross-burnings that were visible for miles. She established there another Christian radio station, KPOF, known as AM91: The Point of Faith. Three years later the Klan provided the funds to establish Alma White College in Zarephath, used frequently for Klan meetings and large spectacles. In 1926 the Klan joined White in establishing a 396-acre summer resort for its members in Zarephath.

Alma White anointed the Klan as the country's savior: "Now come the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in this crucial hour to contend for the faith of our fathers. . . ." She also situated the Klan in a historical patriotism: "Our heroes in the white robes are the perpetuators of the work so nobly begun by the colonists and the Revolutionary fathers." She supported the Klan's electoral activism: "They must name candidates who can be safely trusted, those who will not betray the public on questions of such vital importance as prohibition, restricted immigration, white supremacy, and other issues." She also called for "the prevention of unwarranted strikes by foreign labor agitators."[20]

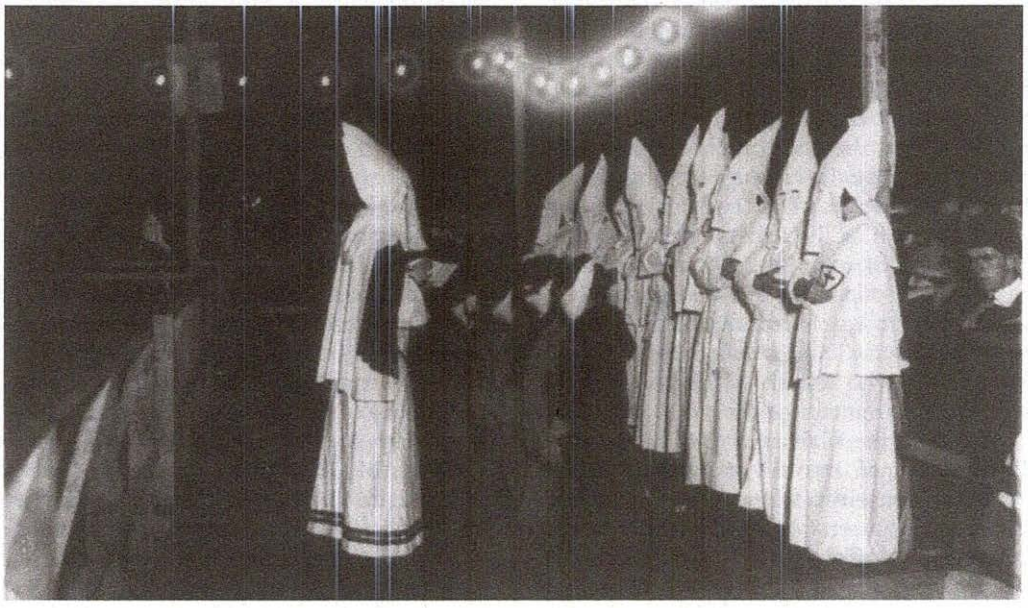
At the same time, White made no attempt to soft-pedal her feminism. She reprinted the 1848 "Declaration of Sentiments" from the famous Seneca Falls women's rights convention in one of her books. She condemned women's lack of legal rights vis-à-vis their husbands, calling for action against wife-beating and for women's right to their own property and legal domicile. (In many states a husband could still control his wife's property and require her to move with him anywhere he desired.) She called for sex equality in inheritance rights. Defying evangelical opposition to divorce, she argued for a woman's entitlement to divorce in case of infidelity or threat to her personal safety. She denounced the practice of granting child custody to men in divorce—important because the risk of losing children was by far the most important factor keeping women in abusive marriages. And she supported the Equal Rights Amendment, first proposed in 1923 (and, of course, still not ratified.)[21]

This passionate feminism likely arose, in part, from her own ambition and a bitterness about the obstacles and insults she had encountered. But her brand of feminism also supported her religious bigotry. The Catholic Church rested on the subjugation of women, she charged. This accounted for its opposition to Prohibition: liquor was for Catholic men a tool for keeping women subordinated. Convents were "paper prisons" that served to keep women uneducated, in ignorance of cultural and political affairs.[22] . . .

Each in her own way, Elizabeth Tyler, Daisy Barr, and Alma White rupture some commonsense expectations about the 1920s Klan and other conservative movements. Perhaps most striking was their entrepreneurship, which involved both ambition and skill, both principle and profit. In this respect, they probably differed from rank-and-file Klanswomen. Experienced at organizing large events, state-of-the-art in managing money, unafraid to attract publicity, they were thoroughly modern women. . . . In this movement, as in liberal and leftist movements, women found themselves enjoying not only the sociability and prestige of club membership but also the opportunity to weigh in on political matters. The clubby solidarity of the WKK, like that of the Klan itself, grew more attractive, more interesting when it involved collective action.

Barr and White were also women's right advocates, as was Tyler, implicitly, through her achievements. Their activism requires a more capacious understanding of feminism. Their combination of feminism and bigotry may be disturbing to today's feminists, but it is important to feminism's history. There is nothing about a generic commitment to sex equality that inevitably includes commitment to equalities across racial, ethnic, religious, or class lines. In fact, espousing sex equality and enacting female leadership have often been easier for conservative women, because their whole ideological package does not threaten those who would benefit from other inequalities. . . .

Barr's and White's fusion of religion and politics also suggests another way that Klanswomen fit into the American political tradition. . . . The women's mastery of public speaking, derived from church experience, not only benefited the Klan but also brought



The Library of Congress has titled this 1924 photograph "First Public Appearance of Women of the KKK on Long Island." If you look closely, you can see at least four women kneeling in front of the row of standing women. Observe the spectators gathered to watch this initiation. (Triangle Studio, Richmond, NY, 1924. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.)

them personal rewards—fame, prosperity, and the pleasure of doing something so well and so highly valued. We should not assume that the late-twentieth-century rise of the Christian Right was unprecedented.

Whether influenced by these three spokeswomen or by local campaigners, women's Klan groups sprang up across the nation [during the 1920s.] They often drew in women who were already members of other women's organizations, particularly elite societies. . . . There was great overlap between the WKKK and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), but their difference in priorities was significant. While the DAR was intensely racist toward African Americans, it did not agitate against Catholics or Jews; in fact, it acknowledged that some of them were eligible for membership because they had ancestors who contributed to the American Revolution. And unlike the Klan, the 1920s DAR concentrated on reviling "subversives"—that is, liberals and radicals—[and thus] continuing the postwar anticommunist hysteria. . . .

The first groups to appear called themselves Klan auxiliaries. They announced themselves boldly. Elizabeth Tyler announced that "we plan that all women who join us shall have equal rights with that of the men."[23] Many male leaders rejected this claim, because it implied a sex-integrated Klan. To admit women represented a major sacrifice to many Klansmen who valued their entitlement to a unique men's club and the male camaraderie they so enjoyed. But the evidence suggests that Tyler's claim was correct. . . . The Oregon chapter, for example, began as the Ladies of the Invisible Empire (LOTIE), organized through an ad in the Klan newspaper, the *Western American*—a typical way to reach recruits. And LOTIE's Supreme Grand Council included four male Klan leaders, who filed the articles of incorporation for the women's group.

But even the Klansmen most resistant to allowing women the use of the KKK name reversed themselves when they recognized their material interest: by making the women's organizations official, the Klan could seize a significant share of women's Klecktokens [membership fees] (priced initially at five dollars but later raised to ten) and other payments. At least one Indiana WKKK Klavern [a local Klan unit] had to send 66 percent of its revenue to Klan headquarters. In Pennsylvania another dollar per woman member went to the state Klan, and this practice may also have prevailed elsewhere. Anti-Klan journalists pointed out that women's groups were "profitable enterprises" for the Klan. Unsurprisingly, there was rebellion. . . . Because the women's Klaverns were often quite flush—the Arkansas WKKK took in $322,000 in 1925, for example—conflicts over money soon weakened male–female unity in the Klan.[24]

Official Klan publications typically communicated conservative, even Victorian messages about what women should do: ". . . We pity the man who permits the loss of manhood through fear of wife."[25] The most important female virtue was chastity, and it was men's duty to protect and enforce that virtue. Klansmen imagined "their" women as supporting the men, who would monopolize the serious work. . . . A Klan newspaper assigned women to conventional, traditional domesticity: "The charm of the home depends upon the woman, because the Woman is the Home. . . . If . . . each night sees her a better housekeeper, a better seamstress, a better cook, a better wife, a better mother, a better woman—which means a better citizen."[26] WKKKers not only rejected that definition of their work but soon rejected even the label "auxiliary" and began to identify as full-fledged Klanspeople, full partners in the Invisible Empire.

Many of these new Klanswomen, already a part of the world of sororal orders, joined in search of female belonging. Writer Rebecca McClanahan recalled that her grandmother, envious that her husband had been admitted to the Improved Order of Red Men—which, of course, did not admit American Indians—yearned to be accepted by its little sister, the Order of Pocahontas, as she was "tired of being a paleface." She longed for connections to other women. Though Klanswomen did not typically engage in violence, the psychological violence of being excluded from a prestigious group could be painful indeed. Those admitted, McClanahan's grandmother knew, indulged in titillating rituals: initiates were "tied to a stake and then rescued by a warrior or warrioress, were given access to secret signs and passwords. . . . A complicated right-hand gesture signified, 'Who are you?' A left-hand response signified, 'A friend.'"[27] It was not only men who enjoyed these performances.

So the WKKK unified its many locals through rituals similar to men's, but just different enough to exhibit some creativity. It

used the Klan's secret symbols, acronyms, gestures, and new names for days of the week and months, but created its own constitution, ritual books, and manifestos, including a women's Kloran [the Ku Klux Klan's handbook.] New initiates received congratulations for their womanly sacrifice and their decision to join the "delectable" Invisible Empire. They established their own internal judicial system, arguing that women could discipline and punish each other more effectively than men could. Crimes subject to WKKK discipline included disrespecting or disgracing women's honor, miscegenation, profanity, and failure to follow the rules of the constitution. The women's ritual used water differently than the men's: replicating a christening, they wet their fingers, then touched shoulders, foreheads, and the air, signifying body, mind, and spirit. . . . The hourglass, another WKKK ritual object, symbolized women's patriotism: "So long as the sands run through the American hourglass, whenever Patriotism calls, we Women of the Ku Klux Klan will respond."[28]

The women's robes were similar, but they offered a discriminatory choice: an ordinary "Klan cloth" robe was five dollars, but you could order a satin robe for twenty-five. Men, of course, did not wear satin, a feminine fabric, but the availability of upscale regalia may have signified something more: that women's interest in attractive clothing led to greater class differentiation within the movement, in contrast to the much-touted simulation of leveling among the men.

The WKKK adopted a heroine first exalted by an earlier Klan women's group, the Kamelia: Joan of Arc—yes, that Catholic heroine—as "Joan, the Militant Kamelia." It did not seem to bother Klanswomen that they could not find a Protestant heroine to honor in the same way, but the appropriation of Joan signals their desire to identify with someone powerful; her warlike militancy did not seem to them unladylike. They identified with St. Joan because they, like her, were responding to the voice of God and defending their country against "foreign" invaders. There is a long tradition of ambitious and eloquent women defending their right to public leadership on the grounds that God called upon them. [Antebellum] American feminists Maria Stewart and Angelina Grimké, leading spokeswomen for the campaign against slavery, used that justification for their public speaking. . . .

For the majority of Klanswomen, organizing social events and pageants was their biggest contribution to the cause. These events required massive amounts of labor, much of it done by women: finding a site, generating publicity, arranging for parking, preparing or ordering food and drink, designing and executing decorations, advertising, mimeographing programs, keeping children occupied and well behaved, ushering visiting dignitaries in and out, collecting items for bake sales, handling the inevitable logistical breakdowns. . . . This work was doubly traditional: an extension of their personal domestic labor and a service to Klansmen. . . . Without these hours of labor the Klan could not have become such a mass movement. At the same time, this work brought women together, and that togetherness both strengthened the Klan and, at times, challenged its male hierarchy.

Still, some Klanswomen enunciated ideas that did not comport with conventional domesticity. It may be an indication of women's influence that once the suffrage amendment passed, the whole northern Klan supported it enthusiastically—though, of course, only for white women. Support for woman suffrage also reflected the Klan's opportunism in their desire for white women's votes to counteract "alien" votes. Whatever the motives, WKKK members strenuously encouraged women's political participation, and understood that maintaining that right required vigilance. One recruitment leaflet declared that men should no longer hold "exclusive dominion" in the world of politics and chastised women for their political passivity.[29]

Klanswomen similarly supported women's employment and even called for women's economic independence. . . . Oregon Klanswomen urged members to patronize female proprietors.[30] Local studies report that about 20 percent of WKKK members were employed; [sociologist] Kathleen Blee thought this an underestimate. In one Klavern, 25 percent of the members were schoolteachers and one-third held middle-class jobs. Surprisingly, and rather opportunistically, Oregon Klanswomen condemned the Meier & Frank department store for paying "slave wages" to the women and girls it employed; they knew, of course, that Meier & Frank was Jewish-owned. . . . Major Kleagle Leah H. Bell of Indiana told an audience of 8,000 that "the mothers of America" should "begin campaigning for an eight-hour

workday." Larger groups paid salaries to their staffers . . . indicating that not enough volunteer labor was available, that some members needed the money, that women expected to be paid, or all of the above.[31]

To a lesser extent the WKKK expressed opinions about national issues, supporting child welfare provisions. A 1926 Klonvocation called for uniform marriage statutes across the states so as to regularize domestic law in women's favor. . . . Oregon Klanswomen expressed outrage that you could, they claimed, get a divorce by mail in that state, and demanded that men be made to pay child support.[32]

In one small but much-cited indication of WKKK feminism, in 1926 the Silver Lake, New Jersey, Klavern invited Margaret Sanger to speak about birth control. A former Socialist Party member and feminist, and a nurse who had seen firsthand the economic and health costs of large families, she was the most prominent national leader in the campaign to legalize contraception. Sanger's background, anathema to Klan values, included cosmopolitanism, avant-garde arts, radical politics, even free love. Conservatives vilified her. Moreover, she had defied laws against obscenity—birth control was still legally obscene at the time—served some time in jail and fled to Europe to escape further prosecutions. But by the mid-1920s she had brought the birth control movement into alliance with eugenics. She announced that her Birth Control League "was ready to unite with the eugenics movement whenever the eugenicists were able to present a definite program of standards for parenthood on an economic basis," according to the *New York Times*. Sanger was by no means a bigot. She accepted some eugenical categories, such as "feeble-minded," but never the Klan's racial and religious hierarchy. . . . She did, however, see eugenicists as allies in her campaign for reproduction control, and in that connection her interests coincided with those of the Klan. Sanger agreed to speak to the Klanswomen, although with considerable unease because she disliked the Klan's racism. They received her enthusiastically, and she reported receiving a dozen further speaking invitations from the WKKK.[33]

The fact that Sanger crossed paths with the WKKK says little about her politics; her policy was to speak to any group that would have her. Inviting her says rather more about the New Jersey Klanswomen. Because open endorsement of birth control was still a radical act at the time and Sanger herself was controversial, inviting her suggests that these Klanswomen may have been interested in reproduction control. Notably, the WKKK never joined in the "race suicide" rhetoric that denounced upscale white women who limited births. The invitation also suggests Klanswomen's autonomy from male leadership. . . .

Some Klanswomen even challenged one of the Klan's core premises—secrecy. All the Klan groups waffled on this principle, sometimes benefiting from the mystique of concealment, at other times from their public presence. Klanswomen, however, directly contested one kind of secrecy, that within marriage. They argued in the terms of modern, even companionate marriage that good spouses should have no secrets from each other. And they tied this complaint onto demands for economic equality. One woman complained to a Klan newspaper, "I help earn that money. I have a right to know where it goes. Yet my husband says he dares not tell me."[34]

Still, other evidence shows WKKK conformity to established gender rules. Women's sections in the Klan publication the *Kluxer* featured housewifely advice. "Style Tips" in one issue prescribed a dress code: no satin (despite the availability of satin robes), no fur; not too much rouge; never apply makeup in public; be attractive but conservatively so. . . . But the magazine encouraged women's activism . . . to keep Protestant prayer and "100% American" teachers in the schools. It emphasized that women could be both activists for the cause and exemplary housewives. . . .[35]

Women's Klaverns emphasized charitable work—raising money for orphanages, schools, and individual needy families or, occasionally, their members.[36] . . . Nevertheless, WKKK monetary contributions were, on the whole, negligible. Blee computed that one Klavern, by no means atypical, directed 0.7 percent of its expenditures to charity and concluded that boasts of charitable work were largely fundraising propaganda. Moreover, much of the WKK's giving amounted to placing Protestant Bibles in public schools. Few of the WKKK's or KKK's larger projects—orphanage, school, university—ever materialized.[37]

Family and charity remained Klanswomen's dominant conception of women's duties and contributions. The exceptions, their more modern and individual-rights assertions, may simply indicate different orientations among the

various chapters. But they also point to a contradiction long embedded in feminist principles: some feminisms challenge the gender order and the practice of identifying women primarily or even exclusively as mothers and wives; others, equally feminist, accept that gender order and promote women's rights within it. (The latter perspective has been called both maternalist and essentialist, because it rests on the assumption that women are naturally nurturing and self-sacrificing, the key qualities associated with motherhood.) Both types see women as victimized by male dominance, but in different ways. Klan feminists belonged to the latter stream. Not all Klanswomen were feminists by any means, but those who were argued that women's responsibility for raising children and protecting morals required political activism to change laws and social customs. Some Klanswomen called their charitable activism "social work," a label then meaning reform work, in a usage common among progressive women reformers up through the 1930s.

Women often led in the youth divisions of the Klan. They visited churches to recruit young people and to persuade parents of their duty to see that their children were imbued with the "right" values. The national Klan, possibly responding to women's pressure, established the Junior Ku Klux Klan, for boys only, in 1923. . . . By 1924 fifteen states had chapters. The membership fee was only three dollars. The WKKK created the Tri-K Klub for girls, with its own robes, rituals, codes, and symbols. Its "katechism" (the Klan loved turning *C* words into *K* words) resembled that of the Scouts—"loyalty, obedience, selflessness, and Christian patriotism." . . .

Like Scouting, Klan youth groups emphasized sports competitions for boys and crafts for girls. Both sexes could serve as flag bearers and could play in drum and bugle corps. Girls specialized in singing and rhythmic chanting. . . . Both Klansmen and Klanswomen adopted a maternalist line regarding the importance of bringing in girls: they would become the mothers who would produce the next generation of Klanspeople. They were to be taught not only true Americanism but also domestic skills and womanly chastity, and teenage girls could compete in beauty and popularity contests to become "Miss 100% America."[38]

Still, northern Klanswomen often campaigned differently than their male comrades. They placed a higher priority on disciplining immorality than their brothers did—another priority shared with progressive women. . . . Some of them succeeded in persuading towns and counties to ban or censor not only liquor but also dance halls, films, books, magazines, and Sunday store openings. . . . They abhorred interracial marriage, of course, for keeping families "pure" was squarely their responsibility. But they gave this cause a feminist twist, arguing that interracial sex and marriage were examples of male lust and its destructive impact on family life.

Klanswomen were usually unsuccessful, however, in getting Klansmen to bear down on immorality that victimized women. The limits of women's power in the Klan show how rarely northern Klansmen acted in support of abused Klanswomen. As a Wisconsin Klan leader said, "Sometimes women would want us to go against their husbands for drinking or running around with other women. We refused to do that."[39] The leader of an Oregon Klavern warned, "If you married Klansmen insist on going out with another man's wife be awful sure she doesn't belong to a Klansman. You may have an occasion to meet that gentleman in the Klavern and I am sure it would be a very embarrassing position"—in other words, he was concerned more with protecting his Klavern than with upholding morals.[40] [Historian] Nancy MacLean found that southern Klansmen sometimes punished men for abuse, nonsupport, and/or infidelity, but there is little evidence of this in the North.[41] Perhaps northern men were less abusive. More likely, northern Klanswomen were more embarrassed to admit their victimization, or were reluctant to undercut their premise that only immigrants, Catholics, and blacks were abusive. . . .

. . . The northern Klan was no enemy of government welfare provision. "Taxes," one pamphlet argued," should be looked upon by the taxpayer as the most important bequest he can make to his own children and to humanity."[42] In this respect the Klan's agenda resembled some aspects of women's progressivism. Woman suffrage added to its optimism that, rather than shrink the state, it could reform state activity so as to align it with Klan values. Moreover, in 1932 Klanspeople generally supported Franklin Delano Roosevelt's candidacy, despite his anti-Prohibition stance; this support may reflect the Klan's traditional—though not

consistent—alignment with the Democratic Party, but it might also reflect Klanspeople's support for emergency relief. It was only later that they attacked FDR with anti-Semitic labels, calling him "Rosenvelt" and the like.[43] These flexible principles also showed in the sharp decline of anti-Catholic rhetoric in the 1930s.

In much of their agenda, and in the contradictions they expressed regarding women's place in the polity, Klanswomen were indistinguishable from many other clubwomen, including Catholics, Jews, and African Americans. Women's Klaverns seemed to spend more energy arranging social occasions for themselves than did the men's. They organized teas, parties, and card games, and sometimes joint socials with nearby Klaverns. . . . And of course they did much of the work for the larger Klan events. . . .

Still, politics and political education remained a part of WKKK activity. While accepting that they were "not expected to be interested in certain problems of community welfare to the same extent that men should be interested," as one WKKK local put it, deferring to gender hierarchy, they nevertheless aimed to "assist all Protestant women in the study of practical politics. . . ."[44]

Klanswomen were probably divided in their attitude toward participation in conventional politics, which they considered corrupted by immigrant non-Protestants, but united in condemnation of the rebellion against Victorian standards of modesty that was steadily gaining strength. They feared what they saw as libertine behavior and unchaste media, though they rarely acknowledged that they arose from commercial enterprises. They were thoroughly, consistently unhappy with unchaste dress, with improper leisure activity, music, and movies, and with sexual and artistic radicalism. In this perspective, despite the fact that the Klan flourished in many cities, its women members considered big-city life destructive. It was undermining the mulitfaceted purity that was core to Klan ideology.

Where the WKKK differed most radically was not in its bigotry—for many organizations shared in that—but in how the members acted on it. Vigilante violence, of course, remained always men's work in their world. Still, in promoting the hatreds and fears that gave rise to it, they bear moral, if not legal, responsibility along with the men. Moreover, in the political and economic warfare waged against "aliens," Klanswomen participated equally with Klansmen.

NOTES

1. My interpretation of Klanswomen is deeply indebted to Kathleen Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley, 1991) and Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York, 1995).

2. Leila J. Rupp and Verta A. Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to 1960s* (New York, 1987); Maureen Honey, "Gotham's Daughters: Feminism in the 1920s," *American Studies* 31 (1990): 25–40.

3. Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals* (New York, 1929), 51–67.

4. Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 65.

5. Ibid., 28.

6. Quoted in Wendy Rielly Thorson, "Oregon Klanswomen of the 1920s: A Study of Tribalism, Gender, and Women's Power" (MA thesis, Oregon State University, 1997), 68.

7. Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 125.

8. Sarah Elizabeth Doherty, "Aliens Found in Waiting: Women of the KKK in Suburban Chicago, 1870–1930" (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 2012), 17.

9. *New York Times*, September 21, 1921.

10. Quoted in Wyn Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York, 1998), 162; see also, Doherty, "Aliens Found in Waiting," 17.

11. My discussion of Barr is primarily from Dwight W. Hoover, "From Quaker to Klan 'Kluckeress,'" *Indiana Magazine of History* 87 (June 1991): 171–95; and Steven J. Taylor, "Misc Monday: A Ku Klux Quaker?" *Historic Indianapolis*, Sept. 25, 2015.

12. Quoted in Hoover, "From Quaker to Klan 'Kluckeress,'" 171–72, from *Papers Read at the Meeting of Grand Dragons . . . at Their First Annual Meeting Held at Asheville, North Carolina, July 1923*, 135.

13. "Bishop Alma White, Preacher, Author; Founder of Pillar of Fire Dies at 84," *New York Times* June 27, 1946; and Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 75.

14. Alma Bridwell White, *The Story of My Life and the Pillar of Fire* (Zarephath, JN: Pillar of Fire, 1935), vol. I. Pentecostalism is a Protestant renewal movement that emphasizes a direct personal experience of God through baptism with the Holy Spirit.

15. Quoted in Merrit Cross, "Alma Bridwell White," in Edward T. James, ed., *Notable American Women* (Cambridge, MA, 1971), 3 and 581–83. See also "Fundamentalist Pillar," *Time*, July 8, 1946.

16. Bishop v. Drink," *Time*, Dec. 18, 1939; "The Pillar of Fire Mission," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 21, 1920; and Cross, "Alma Bridwell White."

17. Lately Thomas, *Storming Heaven: The Lives and Turmoils of Minnie Kennedy and Aimee Semple McPherson* (New York, 1970), 32.

18. Alma Bridwell White, *Heroes of the Fiery Cross*, 187; White, *The Ku Klux Klan in Prophecy*, 187. White republished three of her books in 1943 under the title *Guardians of Liberty*.

19. White, "America—the White Man's Heritage," *Good Citizen*, Aug. 1929.

20. White, *The Ku Klux Klan in Prophecy* and *Heroes of the Fiery Cross*.

21. White, *Woman's Chains* (Zarephath, NJ: Good Citizen, 1943).

22. White, *Guardians of Liberty*, I, 121; White, *Heroes of the Fiery Cross*, 173.

23. Qtd. in Jackie Hill, "Progressive Values in the WKKK," *Constructing the Past* 9, no. 1 (2008): 24.

24. Thorson, "Oregon Klanswomen," 4; Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 31, 140, 59ff; and Mark Paul Richard, "Why Don't You Be a Klansman? Anglo-Canadian Support for the Ku Klux Klan Movement in 1920s New England," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40 (2010), 508–16.

25. Quoted in MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*, 114–15.

26. Quoted in Thorson, "Oregon Klanswomen," 38.

27. Rebecca McClanahan, "Klan of the Grandmother," *Southern Review* 32 (Spring 1996), 344–62. We don't know if she was ever admitted.

28. Quoted in Kelli R. Kerbawy, "Knights in White Satin: Women of the Ku Klux Klan" (MA thesis, Marshall University, 2007), 66.

29. Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 32.

30. Quoted in Thorson, "Oregon Klanswomen," 21.

31. Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 120 and 140; Craig Fox, *Everyday Klansfolk: White Protestant Life and the KKK in 1920s Michigan* (East Lansing, MI, 2011), 96; Thorson, "Oregon Klanswomen," 5; McClanahan, "Klan of the Grandmother," 344-62; and Betty Jo Brenner, "The Colorado Women of the Ku Klux Klan," *Denver Inside and Out: Colorado History* 16 (2011): 64.

32. Thorson, "Oregon Klanswomen," 20, 23.

33. *New York Times*, April 1, 1925. A photograph of Sanger with Klanspeople circulates widely, especially online, but it is a fake that pastes a well-known image of Sanger onto an image of Klanspeople. Opponents of reproductive rights frequently put out "fake news" about Sanger, birth control, and Planned Parenthood, the successor organization to Sanger's Birth Control League.

34. Quoted in Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 24.

35. Kerbawy, "Knights in White Satin," 721.

36. Association of Georgia Klans, "The Charitable Works of the Ku Klux Klan."

37. Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 140–44; Brenner, "The Colorado Women of the Ku Klux Klan," 65; Doherty, "Aliens Found in Waiting," 136.

38. Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 161, 166–67.

39. Robert Goldberg, "The KKK in Madison, 1922–1929," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 58 (1974): 36.

40. Minutes in David A. Horowitz, *Inside the Klavern: The Secret History of a Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s* (Carbondale, IL, 1999), 90.

41. MacLean uncovered letters to the Athens, Georgia, Klan showing that white women looked to the Klan as a paragovernmental force that could discipline violent and irresponsible men. MacLean, "White Women and Klan Violence in the 1920s: Agency, Complicity and the Politics of Women's History," *Gender and History* 3 (Autumn 1991): 285–303.

42. Knights of the KKK, "The Obligation of American Citizens to Free Public Schools," author's possession, n.d.

43. Wade, *The Fiery Cross*, 258–59.

44. Kerbawy, "Knights in White Satin," 721; Jackie Hill, Progressive Values in the WKKK," 27.

DOCUMENT

The Equal Rights Amendment, 1921, 1923

After the battle for the vote concluded, former suffragists turned their attention to sex-based discrimination in the law. Led by Alice Paul's National Woman's Party, some former suffragists advocated for another constitutional amendment, this time to affirm rights for men and women as equals and as individuals. The proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was modeled after the Thirteenth Amendment, offering that "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction."

However, not all former suffragists believed that it was wise to enshrine sex equality into the Constitution. Florence Kelley and many of her Women's Trade Union League colleagues had struggled to pass sex-specific labor legislation in the 1910s. These labor activists worried that the ERA would threaten the new labor regulations, which restricted the number of hours a woman could work and improved working conditions for women in industry. The Supreme Court had affirmed that these laws were constitutional because it regarded women as a special class of workers in need of governmental protection because of their childbearing role. An ERA would invalidate sex-based labor laws, they feared, since comparable protection would not be extended to men. The ensuing debate—often waged between two sides that cared deeply about women's legal, economic, and social status—created deep and lasting divisions. Unable to agree on a unified agenda for four decades, veterans of the first women's movement expended energy in internal conflict, thereby diluting their political effectiveness. Not surprisingly, women's issues made little headway on a national scale until the 1960s.

The first debate over the ERA was critical not only because of its long-term consequences, but also because it highlighted that feminists could hold different opinions about the social significance of gender and the meaning of equality. Do you think that equality requires that men and women have the same rights and be subject to the same treatment, or does equality require different treatment? How should the law treat differences created by biology, especially with regard to pregnancy? How might workplaces be reimagined to permit men and women to have similar opportunities despite their biological differences?

Text of the first proposed ERA amendment, September 25, 1921:

"Section 1. No political, civil, or legal disabilities or inequalities on account of sex or on account of marriage, unless applying equally to both sexes, shall exist within the United States or any territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof.

"Section 2. Congress shall have no power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

[In 1923, Alice Paul revised the proposed amendment to read:]

"Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

Photo Essay: Adorning the Body

Women manage their physical appearance only in part in response to the aesthetics of changing fashions. What women wear and the spirit in which they wear it can code a range of changing judgments about their social roles, their political views, and their understanding of their bodies. (It is worth pondering why men's fashion has shifted far more slowly.)

As you examine the images that follow, consider the extent to which women's clothing has linked them to the issues that are discussed in this book's documents and essays. What connections do you draw between women's bodies and their clothing in different periods of time? In different regions of the country? Among different classes and types of people? What personal and political meaning do you find in your own clothing and the clothing that you see around you?

1. Long dresses dragged in muddy ground, signaling that the wearer was not expected to exert herself. By the mid-nineteenth century, as these dresses show, fashionable ball gowns featured wide, heavy skirts over petticoats and impossibly narrow waists. Wearing dresses like these required wearing corsets, often of whalebone, to hold the body rigid and constrict the breathing. ("Fashions for June," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 7, no. 37 [June 1853]: 143–44.)

2. Amelia Bloomer did not invent the short skirt and trousers that came to bear her name; known as the "Turkish style," it appeared sporadically in the 1840s. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's cousin Elizabeth Miller wore it when she visited Seneca Falls. Envying Miller's ease of movement, Stanton began to wear it, too. Bloomer was the editor of a women's rights journal, the *Lily*, which supported the principle of dress reform. "It seemed proper that I should practise [*sic*] as I preached," she would write years later. "At the outset, I had no idea of fully adopting the style . . . no thought that my action would create an excitement . . . and give to the style my name and the credit due Mrs. Miller. This was all the work of the press. I stood amazed at the furor." Bloomer would wear the costume on her lecture tours throughout the country for the next six years or so; "I found the dress comfortable, light, easy and convenient, and well adapted to the needs of my busy life," she insisted. But Stanton gave up the dress within three years because she found that ridicule deflected attention from her serious arguments about women's right to education, the ballot, and a wide range of work and better pay.*

This was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that critics of women's political positions attacked women's dress rather than debating women's ideas directly. Can you think of occasions in recent years when criticism of women's fashion was also a criticism of women's behavior? (Amelia Bloomer in the "short dress," ca. 1852–53. Courtesy of the Seneca Falls Historical Society, #1425)

* Dexter Bloomer, *The Life and Writings of Amelia Bloomer* (Boston: Arena, 1985), 67–70.

3. Women who adopted the Bloomer costume quickly were subjected to withering scorn, as in this cartoon from *Harper's*, a widely circulated magazine whose editors were certain they had the correct position on what women ought to wear. (See "Fashions for June," 465.) What message about women does the cartoon convey? ("Women's Emancipation," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 3, no. 15 [Aug. 1851]: 424.)

4. Street railways and long-distance railroads were among the benefits of the Industrial Revolution, but, as historian Barbara Welke writes, "The physical act of jumping or stepping from train or streetcar to the ground was qualitatively different for women than the same act undertaken by able-bodied men. Women . . . [were] often burdened by children or by pregnancy." At a time when men took pride in jumping on and off railroads and streetcars as they started to move or came to a stop, railroad and streetcar accident reports were "filled with stories of women falling because their skirts caught on a projection or were stepped on by another passenger as they alighted."* What dangers does this woman face? (Photograph taken July 11, 1913. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, George Grantham Bain Collection, LC-USZ62-91532.)

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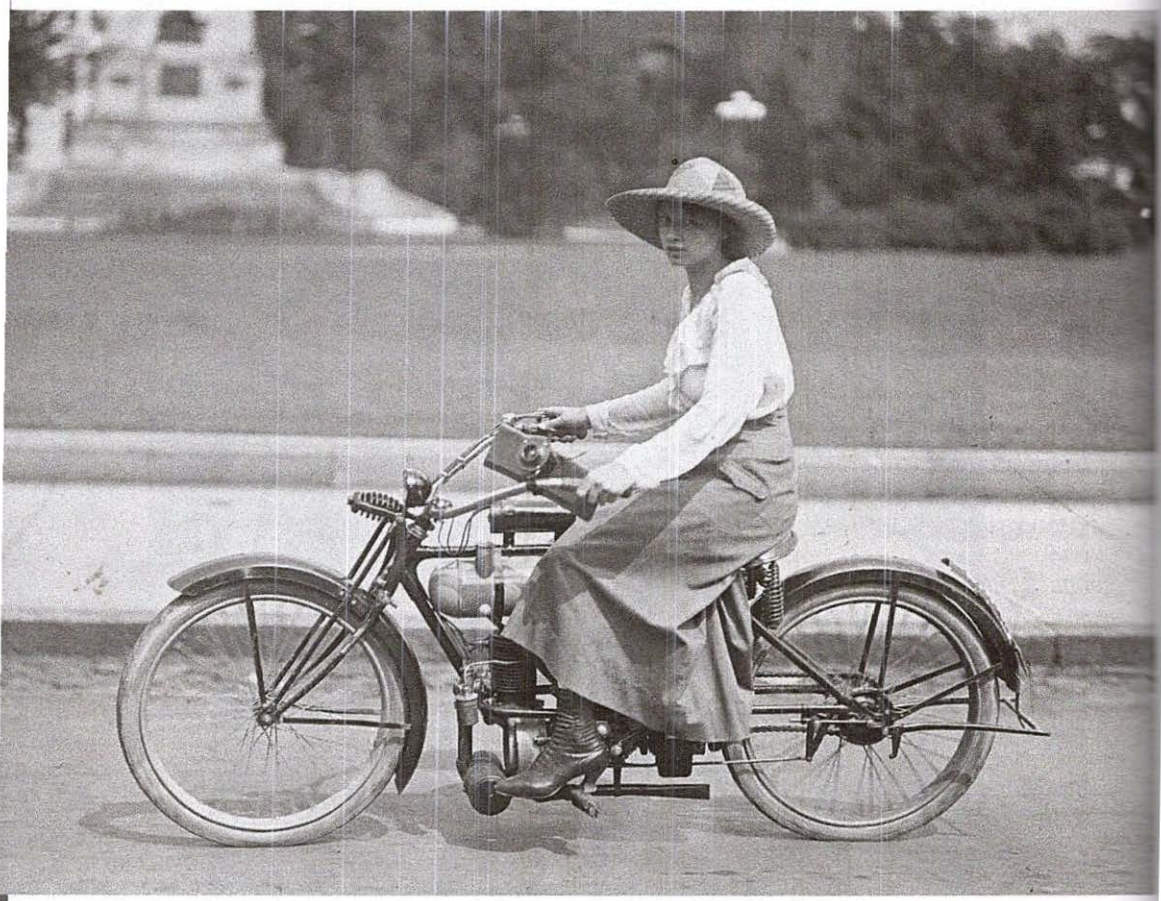
*Barbara Young Welke, *Recasting American Liberty: Gender, Race, Law, and the Railroad Revolution, 1865–1920* (New York, 2001), 55–56. This photograph appears on page 58.



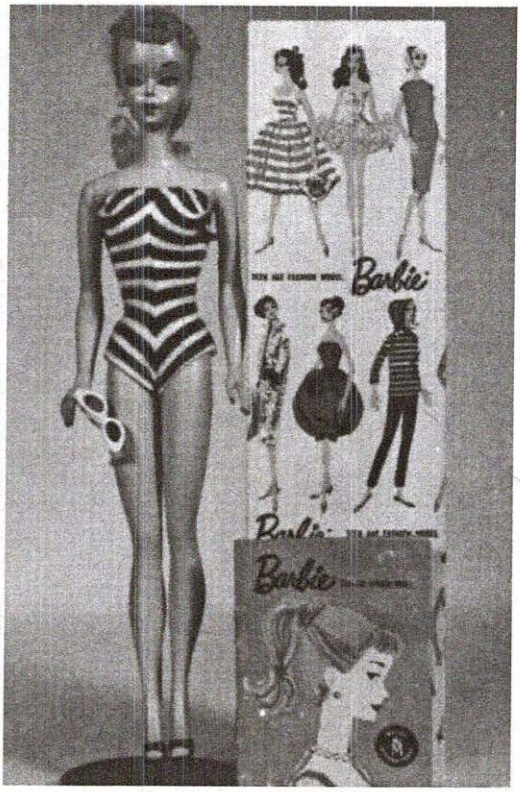
5. The bicycle offered women the opportunity to travel cheaply and independently in public space, undermining long-standing assumptions about proper feminine behavior.* Note this woman's clothing and the camera she carries. Almost as soon as the bicycle with two wheels of the same size was invented, women embraced it enthusiastically. Susan B. Anthony observed that "the bicycle had done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world." The bicyclist chose where she would go at the rate she wished to go. On the bicycle, the corset had to be abandoned; shorter skirts, even divided skirts and long bloomers, suddenly became a matter of necessity. "If women ride," wrote the reformer Frances E. Willard in 1895, "they must, when riding, dress more rationally than they have been wont to do. If they do this many prejudices as to what they may be allowed to wear will melt away, sensible and artistic wardrobe of the rider will make the conventional style of woman's dress absurd to the eye and unendurable to the understanding." How accurate was Willard's prediction? ("Woman on Bicycle," ca. 1917. Harris & Ewing, photographer. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.)

* Frances E. Willard, *A Wheel within a Wheel: How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle* (Chicago: Women's Temperance Union Publishing House, 1895), 39.

6. Women traditionally devised shampoos and cosmetics for themselves, often in their own homes. In the early twentieth century, a number of women entrepreneurs, among them Elizabeth Arden, Helena Rubenstein, and Madam C. J. Walker, invented the concept of the commercial beauty product, made in factories and mass marketed. Walker, who was the daughter of former slaves, was born in 1867; she was probably the first woman self-made millionaire in the nation. In 1905 she developed a scalp-conditioning formula for African Americans. At its peak in the second decade of the century, her business employed some three thousand people—in a factory in Indianapolis, in hair and manicure salons across the country, and as door-to-door saleswomen. Walker took pride in offering women well-paid alternatives to domestic labor and in her support for African American philanthropies, especially the antilynching efforts of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Bethune–Cookman College. This photograph by the distinguished photographer James VanDerZee was taken in her New York salon and offices in 1929, a decade after Walker's death. How would you describe the hairstyles of these Harlemites, who sported the sophisticated urban look that Madam Walker's products and styling supported? (Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York © Donna Mussenden VanDerZee.)

7. Army Air Forces sergeant Richard P. Bates uses this image of the movie star Betty Grable (1916–73) to instruct military recruits in the skills of map reading during World War II. The original caption included this line: "The picture of the girl is divided into sections with lines, each of which is numbered, and by checking the lines on it, as on a real map, soldiers can locate any given spot—knowledge which in actual combat can mean the difference between life and death." What messages about women's bodies does this use of her photo—in this pose—convey? (Photograph, *Life*, March 27, 1944, 38, courtesy of Corbis.) (For a subtle cultural analysis of the pinup, see Robert B. Westbrook, "'I Want a Girl Just Like the Girl Who Married Harry James': Women and the Problem of Political Obligation in World War II," *American Quarterly* 42 [Dec. 1990]: 587–614.)

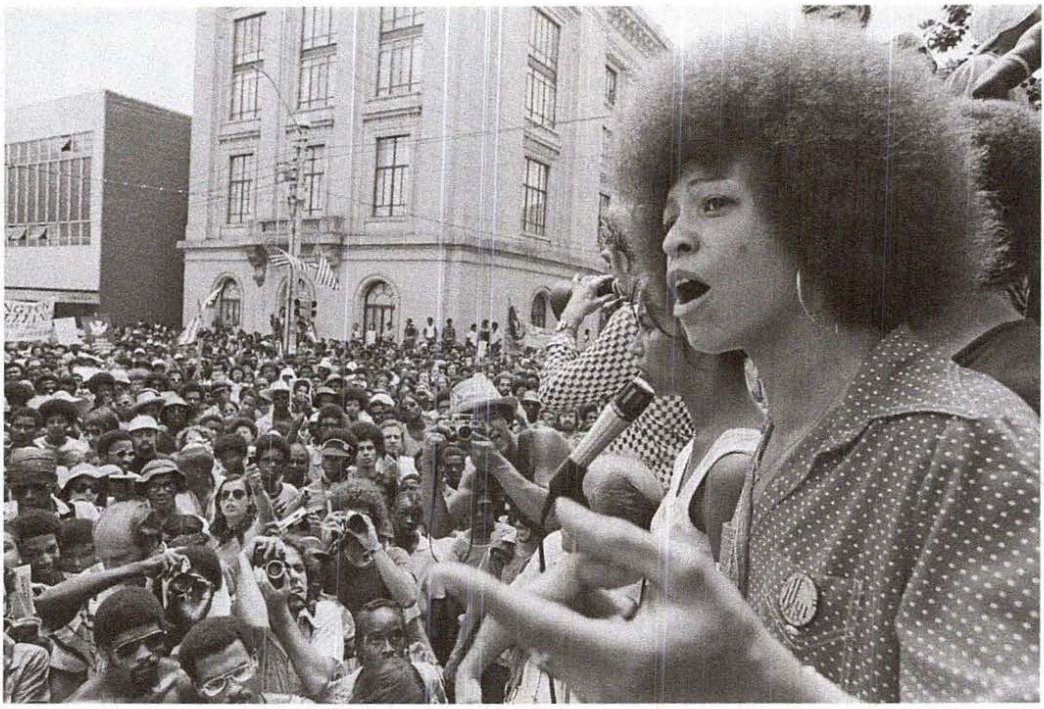
8. Barbie debuted in 1959 after much persistence and research by her creator, Ruth Handler. In the mid-1940s, Handler had cofounded a small company called Mattel. The company initially produced picture frames but soon began to specialize in dollhouse furniture and toys. By the mid-1950s, Handler had little success in convincing the company's male employees that there was a waiting market for adult-looking dolls aimed at prepubescent girls. She had noticed that her daughter Barbara, having outgrown baby dolls, enjoyed cutting out clothes and accessories from magazines to create adult paper dolls and assign them imaginary grown-up roles and professions. Handler was convinced that a three-dimensional adult doll would help girls become acquainted with the bodily changes they would experience during puberty. On a European family vacation, Handler discovered Lilli, a German-manufactured doll representing a buxom, blond young woman. The doll could be bought in various outfits, but the clothes were not sold separately. Mattel acquired the patent and rights for the doll and hired designers (including women) who embraced Handler's vision of a set of dolls for whom a wide wardrobe and accessories could be purchased.



The first Barbie measured 11.5 inches tall and was marketed as a "teen-age fashion model" and "a new kind of doll from real life." The purchaser chose between the blond and the brunette versions. Barbie (always written in a distinctive script) came in an attractive box illustrated with alluring wardrobe possibilities; inside was a miniature catalog with more details. She cost three dollars. Note the designers' genius: whereas Lilli's earrings and shoes were molded and painted on, Barbie's bare feet and pierced ears allowed for endless accessorizing options. The small-waisted, ever-smiling, preternaturally young doll soon made its way into the hands of millions of young girls, who were drawn to her long, malleable hair, her ever-expanding wardrobe, and her "boyfriend" Ken and their coterie.*

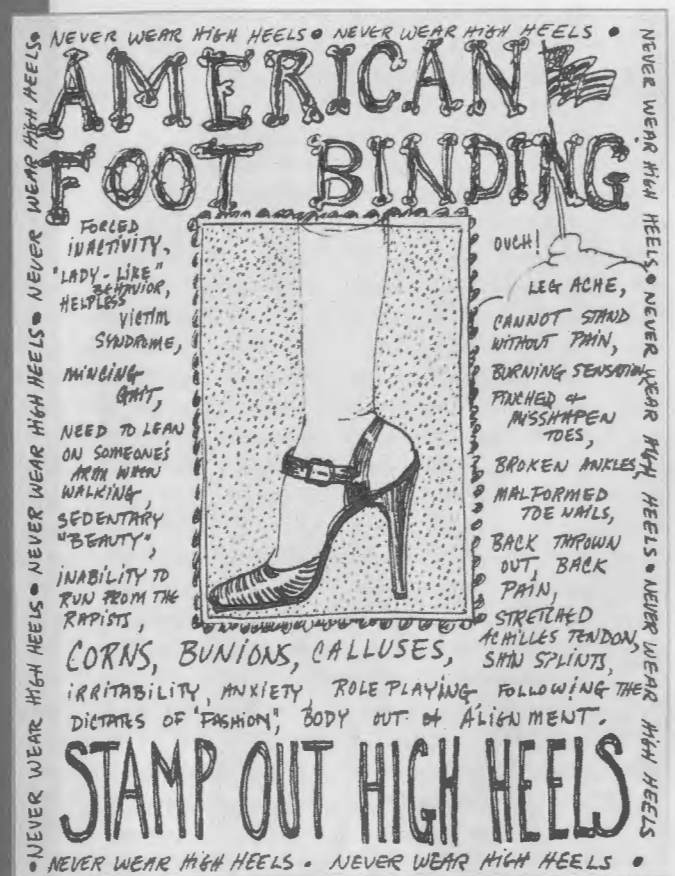
During the 1970s, feminists began to question the relationship between toys such as Barbie, body image, consumerism, and racial stereotypes. Many of these questions remain unresolved. To what extent do Barbie dolls teach young women to become consumers? Is it sufficient for Mattel simply to change the shade of Barbie's skin to appeal to children of various races and ethnicities? What connections do you think exist between Barbie and eating disorders among adolescents? If you played with Barbie dolls as a child, what types of scenes did you enact? How did you imagine adulthood through the lens of Barbie? (Photo by Joan Ashabraner. We are grateful to Joan Ashabraner for this image. For a provocative assessment of Barbie threaded with an interview with Ruth Handler, see Susan Stern's 1998 documentary, *Barbie Nation: An Unauthorized Tour* [video recording, New Day Films].)

* Marco Tosca, *Barbie: Four Decades of Fashion, Fantasy, and Fun*, trans. Linda M. Eklund (New York, 1998), 24–33.



9. From the 1600s onward, African American women felt pressure to adopt beauty regimens that made them appear "whiter." Light-skinned people, who often had straighter hair than dark-skinned African Americans, were granted more privileges on plantations during slavery. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many African Americans straightened their hair to appear respectable as they sought economic and social rights. By the 1960s, with the civil rights movement ever more visible and the black power movement on the rise, the emphasis on a look that bespoke respectability and conformity began to crumble. Many activist African Americans forged connections with their African past, adopting African styles of dress and hairstyles. Noted civil rights activist Angela Davis popularized the Afro hairstyle when she spoke across the United States. Here, Davis speaks at a street rally in Raleigh, North Carolina, on July 4, 1974. The Afro not only required a fraction of the care of previously popular hairstyles, but also embodied the recognition that "black is beautiful." Some older African Americans, including religious people and civil rights activists, criticized the Afro as confrontational, fearing that it would limit African Americans' upward social mobility in white-controlled environments. Instead, the model spread to other ethnic groups, helping to make a wider range of hairstyles fashionable. However, as many recent memoirs and blogs by African-descended women have recounted, the "hair wars" in the black family and community have not ended; see the wry commentary of A'Lelia Bundles, who is a great-great granddaughter of Madam C. J. Walker. ("Hair Peace: A 5-Part Manifesto," *The Root*, Mar. 26, 2009, https://www.theroot.com/hair-peace-a-5-part-manifesto-1790869147). (Courtesy of Corbis.)

10. Dolores Huerta, a cofounder of the United Farm Workers of America, articulated the grievances of thousands of exploited Mexican and Mexican American farm laborers who toiled in California fields. In this 1973 photograph, Huerta is shown using not only her voice to denounce harsh living conditions and inadequate pay, but also powerful imagery on her T-shirt. Consider how clothing can serve both as a political signal and as a historical artifact. What information does Huerta's T-shirt convey? How might you use this photograph as a historical source? ("There's blood on those grapes!" Photograph by Chris Sanchez, likely taken during the Gallo strike, Livingston, California, 1973. Courtesy of the United Farm Workers Collection #273, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University.)



11. Ever since patriot women boycotted elaborate and expensive British imports during the revolutionary era as a way of expressing their political principles, resistance to fashion trends has been a recurring theme in women's clothing choices. Challenging the fashion industry, women's liberation activists rebelled against uncomfortable and binding clothing. At mid-century, respectable professional dress codes (both formal and informal) required nylon stockings held up by girdles or garter belts, making breathing uncomfortable; narrow skirts that prevented running away from danger; and high heels that shortened muscles and created corns and bunions in the name of looking sexy. (Fifteen times as many women as men develop bunions requiring surgery.) Women who adopted looser, more comfortable clothing risked scorn and even the loss of their jobs. Until Title VII, it was not illegal to treat the display of beauty as a reasonable professional qualification for many lines of work. It took two decades, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, before flight attendants—who, it is estimated, walk as much as 225 miles up and down airplane aisles each year—were able to force most airlines to relax rules requiring them to wear shoes with 2 or 2 1/2-inch heels. (Male attendants could always wear loafers.)*

The "Stamp Out High Heels" poster was a grassroots expression of rebellion, addressing issues of health, safety, and cultural conformity. For example, in the 1970s the pants suit offered an important alternative to dresses, especially for women employed in professional-sector jobs. In recent decades, the clothes acceptable for women to wear to work and in public have become very diverse—in style, color, fabric, and so on. This diversity, plus the informal, athletic look so prevalent in women's clothes and shoes, owes much to 1970s feminist activism. How many of the claims and slogans featured in the poster do you agree with? ("American Foot Binding: Stamp Out High Heels," poster, Houston, n.d. Courtesy Duke University Library Special Collections, ALFA Collection, box 12. We are grateful to Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon, *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement* [New York, 2000], 40, for identifying this image.)

* See Marc Linder, "Smart Women, Stupid Shoes, and Cynical Employers: The Unlawfulness and Adverse Health Consequences of Sexually Discriminatory Workplace Footwear Requirements for Female Employees," *Journal of Corporation Law* 22 (1996–97): 296–97, 308–12.

12. Second-wave feminists encouraged women to take responsibility for their own well-being. As more was understood about breast cancer, it became clear that annual examinations by physicians were not enough to track its appearance; in the 1970s, as today, women are urged to examine their own bodies regularly. Over the years, unclothed women in art and advertising have presented their bodies to the male gaze; in a sharp departure from tradition, the model here is concerned with herself and her own health, encouraging women viewers to knowingly touch their own bodies as an act of self-preservation and self-empowerment. The advertisement appeared in the first issue of *Ms.* magazine. (Photo reprinted by the permission of the American Cancer Society, Inc., for historical purposes only. All rights reserved. See *Ms.* 1, no.1 [July 1972]: 35.)

Great Depression

LESLIE J. REAGAN

When Abortion Was a Crime

The frequency with which women—especially those who were married, native-born Protestant, and middle- or upper-middle-class—resorted to abortion fueled a movement to criminalize the practice. Motivated by a variety of factors that had little to do with the protection of women's health, which was the primary reason advanced by the physicians who led the movement, antiabortionists succeeded in making the practice illegal in the post–Civil War era. Some states permitted physicians to perform therapeutic abortions if the woman's health was threatened by carrying the pregnancy to term. In many states, however, the requirements for getting clearance to perform a therapeutic abortion in a hospital setting made this loophole virtually meaningless, especially when a vigilant district attorney was prepared to pit his interpretation against the physician's.

Leslie J. Reagan's prizewinning study of the practice and policing of abortion during the century it was criminalized (1867–1973) reveals that, despite the law, millions of abortions were performed during those years—and by no means all by "back-alley" butchers.

"My husband has been out of work for over six months and no help is in sight," wrote one mother to Margaret Sanger and the American Birth Control League; "I can't afford more children." Every year she performed two abortions upon herself, and she reported, "I have just now gotten up from an abortion and I don't want to repeat it again."[1] The disaster of the Great Depression touched all aspects of women's lives, including the most intimate ones, and brought about a new high in the incidence of abortion. As jobs evaporated and wages fell, families found themselves living on insecure and scanty funds. Many working people lost their homes; tenants had their belongings put out on the street. Married couples gave up children to orphanages because they could not support them.

As women pressured doctors for help, the medical practice of abortion, legal and illegal, expanded during the 1930s. Physicians granted, for the first time, that social conditions were an essential component of medical judgment in therapeutic abortion cases. Medical recognition of social indications reveals the ways in which political and social forces shaped medical thinking and practice. A handful of radical physicians, who looked to Europe as a model, raised the possibility of liberalizing the abortion law. . . .

If we move away from the dramatic narratives about abortion produced at inquests or in newspapers, which tell of the deaths and dangers of abortion, and step into the offices of physician-abortionists, a different story can be discerned. Abortion was not extraordinary, but

Excerpted from ch. 5 of *When Abortion Was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1860s–1973* by Leslie J. Reagan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). Reprinted by permission of the author and publisher. Notes have been renumbered and edited.

ordinary. The proverbial "back-alley butcher" story of abortion overemphasizes fatalities and limits our understanding of the history of illegal abortion. Case studies of the "professional abortionists" and their practices in the 1930s provide a unique opportunity to analyze the experiences of the tens of thousands of women who went to physician-abortionists. Many women had abortions in a setting nearly identical to the doctors' offices where they received other medical care. These doctors specialized in a single procedure, abortion. They used standard medical procedures to perform safe abortions routinely and ran what may be called abortion clinics. Furthermore, abortion specialists were an integral part of regular medicine, as the network of physicians who referred patients to these physician-abortionists demonstrates. . . .

The Depression years make vivid the relationship between economics and reproduction. Women had abortions on a massive scale. Married women with children found it impossible to bear the expense of another, and unmarried women could not afford to marry. As young working-class women and men put off marriage during the Depression to support their families or to save money for a wedding, marriage rates fell drastically. Yet while they waited to wed, couples engaged in sexual relations, and women became pregnant. Many had abortions.[2]

During the Depression, married women were routinely fired on the assumption that jobs belonged to men and that women had husbands who supported them. Discrimination against married women forced single women to delay marriage and have abortions in order to keep their jobs. One such woman was a young teacher whose fiancé was unemployed. As her daughter recalled fifty years later, "She got pregnant. What were her choices? Marry, lose her job, and bring a child into a family with no means of support? Not marry, lose her job and reputation, and put the baby up for adoption or keep it?" As this scenario makes clear, she had no "choice." Furthermore, it points to the limitations of the rhetoric of "choice" in reproduction: Social forces condition women's reproductive options.[3] . . .

Medical studies and sex surveys demonstrated that women of every social strata turned to abortion in greater numbers during the Depression. Comparative studies by class and race appeared for the first time in the 1930s. Induced abortion rates among white, middle- and upper-class married women rose during the Depression years. The Kinsey Institute for Sex Research, led by Paul H. Gebhard, analyzed data from over five thousand married, white, mostly highly educated, urban women. The researchers found that "the depression of the 1930's resulted in a larger proportion of pregnancies that were artificially aborted." For every age group of women, born between 1890 and 1919, the highest induced abortion rate occurred during "the depth of the depression." White, married women were determined to avoid bearing children during the Depression: They reduced their rate of conception as well.[4] . . . The findings of Kinsey researchers suggest that aborting first pregnancies early in marriage might have been a growing trend, particularly among more educated, urban white women.[5]

Married black women, like their white counterparts, used abortion more during the Depression. . . . Dr. Charles H. Garvin, an esteemed black surgeon from Cleveland, commented in 1932 "that there has been a very definite increase in the numbers of abortions, criminally performed, among the married."[6] . . . In 1935, Harlem Hospital, which cared for mostly poor black patients, opened a separate ward, "The Abortion Service," to treat the women who came for emergency care following illegal abortions. . . .

A study of reproductive histories collected from forty-five hundred women at a New York clinic between 1930 and 1938 suggested that when class was controlled, working-class women, black and white alike, induced abortions at the same rate.[7] . . .

The key difference between black and white women was in their response to pregnancy outside of marriage, not their use of abortion. Unmarried white women who became pregnant were more likely to abort their pregnancies than were African American women in the same situation. Instead, more black women bore children out of wedlock and did so without being ostracized by their families and community. . . .

The tolerance of illegitimacy among African Americans was tempered by class. As African Americans advanced economically, they held their unwed daughters and sons to more rigid standards of chastity. Similarly, by the time the Kinsey Institute interviewed black women in the 1950s, there were clear class differences in the use of abortion by unmarried black

women: Those with more education (and presumably more affluence) aborted at a higher rate than those with less education.[8]

. . . A study of working-class women in New York in the 1930s found almost identical abortion rates among Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant women.[9] However, researchers found striking differences in the reproductive patterns followed by women of different religious groups, a finding that seems to reflect class differences. Catholic and Jewish women tended to have their children earlier in their lives and began aborting unwanted pregnancies as they got older; Protestant women tended to abort earlier pregnancies and bear children later.[10] The Kinsey Report found for both married and unmarried white women, the more devout the woman, the less likely she was to have an abortion; the more religiously "inactive" a woman, the more likely she was to have an abortion.[11]

Access to physician-induced abortions and reliance upon self-induced methods varied greatly by class and race. Most affluent white women went to physicians for abortions, while poor women and black women self-induced them. Physicians performed 84 percent of the abortions reported by the white, urban women to Kinsey researchers. Fewer than 10 percent of the affluent white women self-induced their abortions, though black women and poor white women, because of poverty or discrimination in access to medical care, often did so. According to the Kinsey study on abortion, 30 percent of the lower-income and black women reported self-inducing their abortions.[12] . . .

Low-income women's and black women's greater reliance upon self-induced methods of abortion meant that the safety of illegal abortion varied by race and class. . . .

Since poor women and black women were more likely to try to self-induce abortions and less likely to go to doctors or midwives, they suffered more complications. . . . Women reported having no complications after their abortions in 91 percent of the abortions performed by doctors and 86 percent of those performed by midwives. In contrast, only 24 percent of the self-induced abortions were without complications.[13] . . .

As more women had abortions during the Depression, and perhaps more turned to self-induced measures because of their new poverty, growing numbers of women entered the nation's hospitals for care following their illegal abortions. The Depression deepened an earlier trend toward the hospitalization of women who had abortion-related complications in public hospitals. As childbirth gradually moved into the hospital, so too did abortion. . . . One intern at Cook County Hospital recalled that in 1928 she saw at least thirty or forty abortion cases in the month and a half she worked there; or, one woman a day and several hundred women a year entered the hospital because of postabortion complications. In 1934, the County Hospital admitted 1,159 abortion cases, and reported twenty-two abortion-related deaths that year.[14] . . .

Doctors and public health reformers began to realize the importance of illegal abortion as a contributor to maternal mortality. . . . [Obstetrician Frederick J.] Taussig estimated that approximately fifteen thousand women died every year in the United States because of abortion.[15] . . . In hospital wards, doctors saw women with septic infections, perforations of the uterus, hemorrhages, and mutilation of intestines and other organs caused by self-induced abortions or ineptly performed operations.

The hospital atmosphere . . . helped forge a liberal consensus within a section of the medical profession about the horrors of self-induced and poorly performed criminal abortions, together with an acceptance of performing abortions for needy patients or referring them to abortionists. . . .

Most cities had several physicians who "specialized" in abortion, and many small towns had at least one physician-abortionist. . . .

In the mid-1930s one businessman set up a chain of abortion clinics in cities on the West Coast. Doctors Gabler, Keemer, and Timanus, of Chicago, Detroit, and Baltimore respectively, were physician-abortionists who performed abortions for tens of thousands of women during the 1930s. The decades-long existence of these specialty practices points to the tolerance and accessibility of abortion during these years.

Physician-abortionists practiced in a legally and medically gray area. It was not always clear whether they performed illegal abortions or legal, therapeutic abortions. As physicians, the law allowed them to perform therapeutic abortions in order to preserve a woman's life, but abortion was illegal and frowned upon by the profession. What made physician-abortionists different from other doctors was the volume of abortions performed, often to the exclusion of other medical practice. As long as these physicians received referrals from other physicians, practiced safely, and avoided police interference, they might consider the abortions to be therapeutic. Yet any physician who regularly performed abortions also knew that the procedure was criminal and that he or she practiced on a fine line. . . .

It is difficult for the historian to gain access to patient records, and this is particularly true for an illegal procedure. Yet I have uncovered records of abortion patients and have reconstructed, for the first time, the daily practice of an underground abortion clinic and the characteristics of its clientele. Seventy patient records of women who had abortions at a Chicago clinic owned by Dr. Josephine Gabler have been preserved in legal documents. . . . The Gabler clinic (later run by Ada Martin) serves as a case study of a specialty practice and reveals the abortion experiences of many women who found physician-abortionists.[16]

Dr. Josephine Gabler was a major source of abortions for Chicago women and other Midwesterners in the 1930s. She graduated from an Illinois medical school in 1905 and received her Illinois medical license that year. She established herself as a specialist in abortion by the late 1920s, perhaps earlier. Over eighteen thousand abortions were performed at her State Street office between 1932 and 1941.[17] In other words, the clinic provided approximately two thousand abortions a year—about five a day, if it operated seven days a week. Dr. Gabler, and other doctors who worked at the State Street office, provided needed abortion services to women from the entire region, including patients from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. . . .

The Gabler–Martin clinic demonstrates that doctors have been more responsive to the demands of their female patients—even demands for an illegal procedure—than previously suspected. Over two hundred doctors, including some of Chicago's most prominent physicians and AMA members, referred patients to Gabler and Martin for abortions.[18] . . .

When Mrs. Helen B. learned of her pregnancy in 1940, she wanted an abortion. She "finally persuaded" her doctor that she needed an abortion and was given Dr. Josephine Gabler's business card.[19] The use of business cards itself emphasizes the openness of abortion practice in this period. . . .

Gabler and Martin showed their appreciation for referrals—and encouraged their colleagues and allies to keep referring—by paying commissions to those who sent patients. Investigators reported that the payments were usually fifteen dollars each, which was about a quarter of the average fee for abortion. . . .

The other major path to an abortionist's office was through women's personal networks. An abortionist's name and address were critical information, which women shared with each other. In this sample, of the cases where the source of the referral is identifiable, almost a third of the patients found their way to the clinic through friends. . . . Every woman who went to 190 North State Street for an abortion became a potential source of information for others in the same predicament. . . .

In many ways, the experience of getting an abortion at the State Street clinic was like going into any other doctor's office for medical care. Referrals from physicians, note taking by a receptionist, women dressed in white uniforms, instruments and delivery tables, and the instructions for after-care were all typical in a doctor's office—and familiar to women who had previously delivered babies in hospitals. The women received anesthesia and, apparently, a dilation and curettage of the uterus—the same procedure they would have had if they had a legal, therapeutic abortion in the hospital.

Nonetheless, the criminality of abortion made its practice clandestine. Two safeguards designed to shield the people performing abortions made the procedures in Martin's office different from legal, hospital procedures: covering the eyes of patients in order to make identifying the physician-abortionist impossible and warning women not to go to anyone else if they experienced complications. The clinic did not abandon its clients if problems developed following the abortion, but they did not want them going to physicians or local hospitals who might alert authorities.

The majority of women in the State Street patient records were married when they had their abortions. . . . Over half of the married women (thirty-two women, or 57 percent) had children. Over a third of these women had children under two years old. Mothers seemed strongly motivated to avoid having two babies in diapers at once. . . .

A second, and large, group of the married women (twenty-four, or 43 percent) had

no children at all. This is not what we would expect; we have learned that married women used birth control and abortion after they had children, not before. . . .

Could they represent a significant number of married couples who intended to have no children at all? Since the records do not say how long they had been married, it is possible that these were abortions of prebridal pregnancies. Perhaps some worried about extramarital affairs. Some may have been college students or married to students. Perhaps they needed an abortion because they could not risk losing their jobs. Probably most who had abortions in the early years of their marriages had children later. Class could shape reproduction in complicated ways. Working women and more affluent college women found it necessary to delay childbearing for different reasons and at different times.

The age range of the State Street patients reflected the diversity of women's reproductive patterns and needs. The ages of the women having abortions in this sample ranged from eighteen to forty-eight years. . . . Their average age was twenty-seven years, but over half were under twenty-five. In 1992, for comparison, most of the women who had abortions were unmarried and under twenty-five years old.[20] . . . The difference is that most of the women in the Martin case records ended their pregnancies within the context of marriage: 80 percent of the Gabler–Martin clinic patients were married; now, 80 percent are unmarried. Today, most of the women who have abortions do so when they are single and finishing high school or college and expect to bear children later.[21] . . .

It is difficult to determine the class of . . . the patients at 190 North State Street, but it seems to have been a mixed group. The records of this office show we cannot assume that working-class women were never able to get safe abortions from physicians. . . . Information about income or the occupation of the woman's husband, if married, was not included in the patient records, but the records show that at least a third of the women worked for wages. . . .

The racial composition of the women who relied upon the abortion services of Dr. Gabler is even more obscure. There is no racial information in the patient records. . . .

Gabler and Martin could provide illegal abortions openly because they paid for protection from the law. Bribery of police and prosecutors underpinned the abortion practice. We only know of the corruption of legal authorities in Chicago because police officer Daniel Moriarity tried to kill Martin in order to silence her.[22] . . .

The office at 190 North State Street where thousands of women obtained abortions from a skilled practitioner was not a rarity.[23] . . .

In Detroit, African American physicians might refer patients to Dr. Edgar Bass Keemer Jr. . . . Throughout his career as an abortionist, which lasted into the 1970s, Keemer served primarily poor women and black women. In thirty-five years, he performed over thirty thousand abortions.[24] . . .

In Baltimore, reputable physicians referred their patients to Dr. George Loutrell Timanus, one of two well-known physician-abortionists in [the city]. Dr. Timanus had a close relationship to Baltimore's white medical elite at Johns Hopkins University, where the faculty taught Timanus's techniques to their students and called him a friend. . . .

Doctors Gabler, Keemer, and Timanus represent a larger pattern of medical involvement in illegal abortion and an expansion of the medical provision of abortions during the 1930s. . . . [Their practices were not temporary, but established; they were not located in back alleys, but on main streets. Dr. Gabler had a business card; Dr. Timanus was listed in the phone book and his office had a sign in front.]

Thousands of women obtained abortions from physicians in conventional medical settings and suffered no complications afterwards. . . . A mixed group of patients—working-class and middle-class women, white and black—reached these trusted physicians.

NOTES

1. "Unemployment," *Birth Control Review (BCR)* 5 (May 1931): 131.

2. Lois Rita Helmbold, "Beyond the Family Economy: Black and White Working-Class Women during the Great Depression," *Feminist Studies* 13 (Fall 1987): 640–641; A. J. Rongy, *Abortion: Legal or Illegal?* (New York, 1933), 111.

3. Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York, 1982), pp. 256–257; quotations from typed letter from Charleston, IL 61920, April 20, 1985, "Silent No More" Campaign, National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), Chicago.

4. Paul H. Gebhard et al., *Pregnancy, Birth and Abortion* (New York, 1958), 113–114, 140, table 55. Since much of the data comes from the earlier Kinsey studies on sexuality and this report came out of his institute, hereafter I refer to this book in the text as the Kinsey report or study on abortion.

5. The percentage of first pregnancies aborted in this young generation was no more than 10 percent, but it was more than double the rate of earlier generations of women.

6. Charles H. Garvin, "The Negro Doctor's Task," *BCR* 16 (Nov. 1932): 270.

7. Endre K. Brunner and Louis Newton, "Abortions in Relation to Viable Births in 10,609 Pregnancies: A Study Based on 4,500 Clinic Histories," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 38 (July 1939): 82–83, 88.

8. Gebhard et al., *Pregnancy, Birth and Abortion*, 162. Regina G. Kunzel also finds class difference among African-Americans in their use of maternity homes; Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890–1945* (New Haven, CT, 1993), 73.

9. Brunner and Newton, "Abortions in Relation to Viable Births," 85, 90.

10. Ibid., 87, fig. 4.

11. Gebhard et al., *Pregnancy, Birth and Abortion*, 64–65, 114–118.

12. Ibid., 194–195, 198.

13. Regine K. Stix, "A Study of Pregnancy Wastage," *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 13 (Oct. 1935): 362–363.

14. Dr. Gertrude Engbring in Transcript of *People* v. *Heissler*, 338 Ill. 596 (1930), Case Files, vault no. 44783, Supreme Court of Illinois, Record Series 901, Illinois State Archives, Springfield; Augusta Weber, "Confidential Material Compiled for Joint Commission on Accreditation, June 1964," box 5, "Obstetrics Department—Accreditation 1964," Office of the Administrator, Cook County Hospital Archives. An "Abortion Service" was opened at Harlem Hospital in 1935. Peter Marshall Murray and L. B. Winkelstein, "Incomplete Abortion: An Evaluation of Diagnosis and Treatment of 727 Consecutive Cases of Incomplete Abortions," *Harlem Hospital Bulletin* 3 (June 1950): 31.

15. Fred J. Taussig, "Abortion in Relation to Fetal and Maternal Welfare," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 872.

16. This case study is based on patient records and other legal documents discovered in the Transcript of *People v. Martin*, 382 Ill. 192 (1943), Case Files, vault no. 51699, Supreme Court of Illinois, Record Series 901.

17. Supplemental Report, Statement of Gordon B. Nash, Assistant State's Attorney, Apr. 23, 1942, in Transcript of *People v. Martin*.

18. Of the eighteen doctors named in the patient records, eleven could be identified. (Sometimes only a last name was included on the record.) All eleven were AMA members and eight were specialists of various types.

19. Mrs. Helen B. in transcript of *People v. Martin*.

20. "Abortion Surveillance: Preliminary Data—United States, 1992," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: CDC Surveillance Summaries* 43 (Dec. 23, 1994): 930, 932, table I.

21. Recent abortion data show the trend to delaying childbearing. Teenagers make up a smaller proportion of the women having abortions than in the past: in 1972, 33 percent of the women who had abortions were nineteen years old or less; in 1992, teenagers were only 20 percent of the women having abortions, and women twenty-five or older made up 45 percent of the women having abortions. "Abortion Surveillance," 932, table I.

22. As a police officer, Moriarity received a little less than $2,500 per year. Quotations in George Wright, "Tells Bribe Behind Killing," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 2, 1941, 1.

23. Other doctors who appear to have specialized in abortion in Chicago include Dr. William E. Shelton, who may have been involved with Martin ("Dr. William Eugene Shelton," *Daily Tribune*, September 27, 1928; "Loop Physician Held in Abortion Conspiracy Case," *Daily Tribune*, Nov. 21, 1940); Dr. Joseph A. Khamis ("Doctor Accused Second Time as an Abortionist," *Daily Tribune*, Aug. 18, 1942); Dr. Justin L. Mitchell (*People v. Mitchell*, 368 Ill. 399); and Dr. Edward Peyser (*People v. Peyser*, 380 Ill. 404). All newspaper clippings in Abortionists Files, Historical Health Fraud Collection, American Medical Association, Chicago.

24. Ed Keemer, *Confessions of a Pro-Life Abortionist* (Detroit, 1980), 13, 18, 27, 29, 89–93.

BLANCHE WIESEN COOK

Storms on Every Front: Eleanor Roosevelt and Human Rights

A woman of limitless curiosity and humanitarian zeal, Eleanor Roosevelt (ER) was adored by Americans who admired her tireless advocacy for vulnerable people and reviled by those who did not believe that presidents' spouses (first ladies in particular) should engage in foreign or domestic politics. She began her adult life as a shy, insecure woman who had imbibed the racism and anti-Semitism of the privileged world to which she was born. Yet over the course of her lifetime, she became a feminist and a political champion of human rights, civil liberties, social justice, and world peace. Her activism played out on a world stage.

The transformation was well under way by the 1920s. Indeed, it was accelerated when Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) was paralyzed by polio in 1921 and Eleanor began serving as his representative in the political arena. Long a political activist, she became a shrewd analyst of the political scene. When FDR became president, ER found herself in an increasingly complex political context. She could try to persuade the president in private conversation; she could also use public pulpits of her own. She was the only first lady ever to write a long-running daily syndicated newspaper column, "My Day." In this essay, biographer Blanche Wiesen Cook narrates how ER responded as the Nazi threat grew and the State Department insisted on her silence. How did ER express her support for human rights during this era?

Between 9 and 15 November [1938], Jewish homes, schools, hospitals, synagogues, businesses, and cemeteries were invaded, plundered, burned. Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass, was a week of contempt, abuse, destruction.

If anybody doubted the intent of Hitler's words, so clearly revealed in his writings, speeches, and previous outrages, those November days in Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland shattered any illusion. The violence coincided with Armistice Day, 11 November, when the Allies ended World War I. The defeat of that war was for Hitler to be avenged with new blood, and unlimited terror.

The violence began on 28 October, when Germany expelled thousands of Polish Jews who had lived for decades within the historically changing borders of Germany. Nazis rounded up children and old people on the streets, emptied houses and apartment buildings, allowed people to take nothing with them except 10 marks ($4) and the clothes they wore, shoved them into waiting trucks and trains, and dumped them across the border onto the desolate flats of Poland's borderlands. More than ten thousand Jews were deported in this manner.

Among the deportees was the family of Zindel Grynszpan, whose seventeen-year-old son, Heschel, had previously fled the family home in Hanover to Paris. When he received a letter from his father recounting his family's ordeal, Heschel Grynszpan bought a gun and

Excerpted and revised by the author from ch. 27 of *Eleanor Roosevelt: The Defining Years, 1933–1938* by Blanche Wiesen Cook (New York: Viking/Penguin, 1999). Published by permission of the author and publisher. Readers will find ch. 16, "A Silence Beyond Repair," a critical framework for this selection.

on 7 November walked to the German embassy in Paris to assassinate the ambassador. Ironically, he was detained by a minor official, Ernst vom Rath, who was himself under investigation by the Gestapo for his opposition to the increasing anti-Semitic violence, and shot him. This murder was the immediate excuse used to launch the well-orchestrated burnings, lootings, and round-ups known as Kristallnacht.

Then on 12 November, German Jews were fined a billion marks—$400 million—as penalty for the murder. This "money atonement" was astronomical and rendered it virtually impossible for most Jews to retain sufficient savings to emigrate. Yet another decree ordered the victims to pay for the repair and restoration of their former shops, buildings, and homes—from which they were permanently banished.

These fines had another, more sinister purpose. Hitler had announced: "If there is any country that believes it has not enough Jews, I shall gladly turn over to it all our Jews." Now, if they left, they left penniless. Moreover, most countries had closed their doors, and those who would accept Jews would not accept paupers.

It was a major challenge for FDR, whose policy was to do nothing to involve the United States in European affairs, but who wanted to respond somehow to the thousands of refugees who stood for hours before the U.S. embassy seeking asylum, only to be routinely turned away.

Within days, Jews were stripped of their remaining human rights. They were no longer permitted to drive cars, travel on public transportation, walk in parks, go to museums, attend theaters or concerts. Passports and visas were canceled. They were stateless and impoverished. Charged for the violence and fined for the damage, the Jewish community now owed the Reich, collectively, one billion Reichsmarks. For a time, they were not molested in their homes. But there was nothing to do, no work to be had; no place to pray; no recourse from agony. Many committed suicide; most tried to leave.

For all moral and political purposes, Kristallnacht was the terminal event. Civility in the heart of western Europe lay in ruins, surrounded by broken glass, bloodied streets, desecrated temples, burned Torahs, ripped books of prayer to the one shared God. Hitler's intentions were flagrant, and the whole world was invited to witness. Twenty thousand Jews were removed to concentration camps, which the Anglo-American press named: Dachau near Munich, Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen north of Berlin, Buchenwald near Weimar. . . .

ER's formerly private protests against bigotry were increasingly for public attribution. Although she had resigned in silence from the Colony Club for its discrimination against Elinor Morgenthau, she now canceled a speaking engagement at a country club in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with a statement of distress that it excluded Jews.

While she counseled complete assimilation and urged Jews to "wipe out in their own consciousness any feeling of difference by joining in all that is being done by Americans" for justice and democracy, she also spoke on behalf of support for refugees in Palestine. . . . On 6 December 1938, ER appealed to fifteen hundred people assembled at the Hotel Astor under the auspices of a national committee for refugees chaired by William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, to help promote the Léon Blum colony in Palestine for the settlement of one thousand Jewish refugee families. . . .

While ER called for demonstrations of "thought and example," little was done, or said, by FDR's administration to indicate official outrage at Hitler's violence. No message of protest warning of boycott or economic reprisal was sent. Yet history abounds in such protests on behalf of victimized peoples. In 1903 and 1906, Theodore Roosevelt protested against Jewish pogroms in Russia, after Jacob Schiff lobbied for an official U.S. condemnation of the massacre of Jews in Odessa. . . .

FDR sent no similar message to Germany.

FDR did respond to the pitiless carnage and massacre in China. In December 1937, Japan destroyed Nanking in a vicious episode of rape, horror, and death. Half the population, an estimated 300,000 people, were tortured and killed. Whether the details were immediately known to FDR, even of Japan's 12 December sinking of the U.S. gunboat *Panay*, remains controversial. But on 11 January 1938, FDR sent a memo to Cordell Hull and Admiral Cary T. Grayson, head of the American Red Cross. He called for additional relief funds for the "destitute Chinese civilians" and for medical aid. "I think we could raise $1,000,000

without any trouble at all." On 17 January, the U.S. Red Cross launched an appeal for aid to the Chinese people, initiated by FDR's formal request for such a drive.[1]

No similar appeal was made by FDR to the Red Cross on behalf of Europe's Jews.*

Since he was considered by many the best friend American Jews ever had, FDR's reactions to the European events of 1938 are unexplainable. . . . Except for Father Charles E. Coughlin, who hailed the violence against "Jewish-sponsored Communism," the press was unanimous in its condemnation. . . .

. . . FDR agreed to allow all German aliens on visitor visas to remain in the United States for six months "and for other like periods so long as necessary." At the time there were between twelve thousand and fifteen thousand political refugees covered by his order, and "not all Jews, by any means," the president assured the press. "All shades of liberal political thought and many religions are represented."[2]

Anti-Semitism in FDR's State Department increased after Hitler's November atrocities. Breckenridge Long now dedicated himself to keeping refugees out of America. Curiously, FDR continually promoted Breckenridge Long, who had life-and-death control over visas and passports. Nevertheless, in 1938, for the first time, the United States filled its refugee quota.

ER and her asylum-seeking circle faced the urgent refugee crisis in a lonely political environment. Thousands of the earliest refugees who left in 1933 were still wandering Europe seeking safety and political asylum. After 31 January 1933, over 30 percent of Germany's 500,000 Jews had become refugees. After the March 1938 Anschluss, Germany's annexation of Austria, when the Nazis began to expel Austria's 190,000 Jews, the situation became critical. The flight of Czech Jews compounded the problem, and Kristallnacht ignited refugee panic.

FDR expanded his search for underpopulated and suitable lands upon which to place the world's unwanted Jews . . . but told his press conference that he had no intention of asking Congress to alter existing immigration quotas. . . .

During her own press conference, ER called for temporary emergency measures to do whatever was possible "to deal with the refugee problem, and at home, for renewed devotion to . . . the American way of life." Wary of her husband's strategies, she [rarely criticized] him directly. . . . "For ourselves, "[she said]," I hope we will do, as individuals, all we can to preserve what is a traditional right in this country—freedom for different races and different religions." . . .

[From 1938 to 1940, a committee of geographers, scholars, and members of the State Department explored the possibilities of sanctuary for Jews outside the United States, without success. ER was staggered by the contempt for human suffering expressed by the failure of other nations to welcome refugees.] In the bitter time before the burning time there was hope for rescue country by country. But there was no official objection to Hitler's intention to remove Jews from Germany and all his new territories. ER increasingly bypassed State Department restrictions; she worked, often covertly, with private groups and individuals. She campaigned for a less restrictive refugee policy, pursued visas for individuals, and answered and passed on to government officials every appeal sent to her.

Revolted by world events, ER called for entirely new levels of action. Her speeches became more pointed and vigorous, and she spent more time in the company of radical activists, especially members of the American Youth Congress whose ardent views now coincided most completely with her own.

For ER, AYC leaders represented hope for the best of liberal America. Christian theology students, Jewish children of immigrants, black and white activists from the rural South and urban North imagined a nation united for progressive antifascist action.

A week after Kristallnacht, ER . . . defended the AYC at the annual luncheon of New York's branch of the American Association of University Women and spoke of the need for courage and

* During the 1940s, the International Red Cross deflected complaints about its neglect of Jewish needs, given the magnitude of the mounting tragedy, with the explanation that the Red Cross "could not interfere in the internal affairs of a belligerent nation." Blood plasma for U.S. troops was segregated into "white" and "colored," "Christian" and "Hebrew." It was not desegregated until 1954.

fearlessness in perilous times. . . . ER's speech was bold: She rejected the current Red Scare tactics which branded the AYC communist and her a dupe or fool: Such name-calling had destroyed democracy in Europe, and she wanted democracy to survive here.

"People whose opinions I respect" had warned her not to attend the AYC convention.

> [But] I didn't think that those youngsters could turn me into a Communist, so I went just the same. . . .
>
> I listened to speeches which you and I could easily have torn to shreds. The Chinese listened while the Japanese spoke; the boy from India spoke with the British delegates. . . . Nobody hissed or left the room. I have been in lots of gatherings of adults who did not show that kind of respect. . . .

She spoke with many delegates, asked what they thought of the Soviet Union; she left convinced that there was interest in communism, but not domination by communists: "We who have training, and have minds that we know how to use must not be swept away" by fear and propaganda. The urgent problems before the United States and the world required scrutiny, debate, honest disagreement, democratic participation, not a wild and fearful flight from controversy. . . .

On 22 November 1938, ER embarked on a dangerous mission when she keynoted the radical biracial Southern Conference on Human Welfare, in Birmingham, Alabama. For the first time since the Civil War, Southern liberals were determined to face the race issue embedded within the region's struggling economy. Since 1890 there had been talk of a "New South," but always before, racial cruelties at the heart of peonage and poverty had been ignored in the interest of white supremacy. . . .

In the aftermath of Kristallnacht, there was a new level of commitment and urgency at the Birmingham meeting. Regional race and antiunion violence was behind the call for the SCHW, first conceived as a civil liberties conference by [pioneering progressive activists] Joseph Gelders and Lucy Randolph Mason. According to Virginia Durr, they wanted to deal with the "terrible things happening" to CIO organizers in Mississippi. Many people were beaten [and run out of town,] crosses were burned. . . .

While the South "led the world" in cotton, tobacco, paper, and other products, it was a disaster area. The average per capita income was half the nation's; the poll tax limited voting rights to 12 percent of the population in eight Southern states, including Virginia; the region's children were being undereducated. The South was hampered by backward and colonial customs; and its entrenched leaders wanted no changes.

The Southern Conference on Human Welfare determined to change the South and challenge segregation. Fifteen hundred delegates, black and white, sat anywhere they wanted Sunday night, 21 November 1938, in the city auditorium of downtown Birmingham. According to Virginia Durr: "Oh, it was a love feast. . . . Southern meetings always include a lot of preaching and praying and hymn singing. . . . The whole meeting was just full of love and hope. It was thrilling. . . . The whole South was coming together to make a new day."[3]

Somebody reported the integrated seating at the opening-night gala, and the next morning the auditorium was surrounded. . . . Every police van in the city and county was there. Policemen were everywhere, inside and out. And there was Eugene "Bull" Connor "saying anybody who broke the segregation law of Alabama would be arrested." Tensions escalated; violence was in the air. The delegates complied and arranged themselves into separate sections.

ER, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Aubrey Williams arrived late that day, out of breath. ER "was ushered in with great applause," looked at the segregated audience—and took her seat on the black side. One of Bull Connor's police officers tapped ER on the shoulder and told her to move. . . .

As if to announce fascism would not triumph here, ER refused to "give in" and placed her chair between the white and black sections. Pauli Murray recalled that ER's demonstration of defiance and courage meant everything to the young people of the South, who now knew they were not alone. Although the national press did not report ER's brave action, the weekly *Afro-American* editorialized: "If the people of the South do not grasp this gesture, we must. Sometimes actions speak louder than words."[4]

ER was given a little folding chair and sat in the middle of whatever meeting hall or church she attended for the rest of the four-day meeting. She said she refused to be segregated, and carried the folding chair with her wherever she went. According to Durr: "Policemen

followed us everywhere to make sure the segregation laws were observed, but they didn't arrest Mrs. Roosevelt."

ER's address to the SCHW stirred the packed auditorium:

> We are the leading democracy of the world and as such must prove to the world that democracy is possible and capable of living up to the principles upon which it was founded. The eyes of the world are upon us, and often we find they are not too friendly eyes.

ER emphasized "universal education" in which "every one of our citizens, regardless of nationality, or race," might be allowed to flourish.[5] . . .

The 1938 SCHW adopted thirty-six resolutions, all of which involved the plight of African Americans, and eight of which directly concerned racial issues, including freedom for the four Scottsboro boys who remained in prison; availability of medical services by African American physicians in all public health facilities; more funding for public housing and recreation facilities for African Americans; equal funding for graduate education in state-supported colleges; and—inspired by ER's demonstration—a resolution to support fully integrated SCHW meetings.

Perceived as "one of the gravest sins that a white southerner could commit," that direct assault against tradition created a furor. The antisegregation resolution divided the delegates, some of whom withdrew, and was branded communist, subversive, and un-American. On the other hand, it transformed national assumptions about the unspeakable: White supremacy, and its primary bulwark, segregation, were forevermore on the nation's agenda—put there by an integrated conference, led by Southern New Dealers.[6]

Traditional "race etiquette" was also challenged when Louise Charlton called on Mary McLeod Bethune to speak. According to Virginia Durr:

> She said, "Mary, do you wish to come to the platform?" Mrs. Bethune rose. She looked like an African queen. . . . "My name is Mrs. Bethune." So Louise had to say, "Mrs. Bethune, will you come to the platform?" That sounds like a small thing now, but that was a big dividing line. A Negro woman in Birmingham, Alabama, was called Mrs. at a public meeting. . . .

Virginia Durr, wife of Clifford Durr, the assistant general counsel of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and sister-in-law of Justice Hugo Black, addressed the meeting to denounce the South's refusal to educate its people and the prevailing ignorance so general throughout the country. The reasons for an uninformed public, she declared, were propaganda and a controlled press dominated by Wall Street. She accused the National Manufacturers Association of being a "huge propaganda machine" intent on the "liquidation of organized labor." . . .

[A week after the SCHW], the Nazi press announced that Germany had embarked upon "the final and unalterably uncompromising solution" to the Jewish question. In the Gestapo's official paper, *Das Schwarze Korps*, on 24 November, the front-page feature announced that it should have been done immediately, brutally, and completely in 1933. But "it had to remain theory" for lack of the "military power we possess today."

> Because it is necessary, because we no longer hear the world's screeching and because, after all, no power on earth can hinder us, we will now bring the Jewish question to its totalitarian solution.[7]

Two weeks after Kristallnacht, accepted without notable "screeching" from any government, Hitler felt sufficiently unrestrained to publish his intentions for all Jews caught in his widening web. First would come pauperization, isolation, ghettoization. They would all be marked for positive identification. Nobody would escape. Then, the starving, bedraggled remnant would become a scrounging, begging scourge. They would be forced to crime, would be an "underworld" of "politico-criminal subhumans," breeders of Bolshevism. At that stage "we should therefore face the hard necessity of exterminating the Jewish underworld. . . . The result will be the actual and definite end of Jewry . . . and its complete extermination."

While the announcement was made two years and eight months before it was actually implemented, the time to protest and resist was at hand. After it was reprinted in the U.S. and European press, many understood the implications of such crude words given the reality of the cruelties under way in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. Since Kristallnacht, race hatred had triumphed completely and Jews had been removed from all German institutions, doomed to a pariah existence in complete segregation. Jews could no longer dine with Gentiles—not in restaurants, not anywhere; nor could they buy food in the same stores. Nazis established separate stores where Jews were restricted in the purchase of life's staples—milk, bread.

Such laws cast a torchlight on American traditions. ER made the connections: brown shirts, white sheets; the twisted cross, the burning cross. Yet the internal affairs of a nation were deemed sacrosanct, nobody else's business. ER and other citizens no longer agreed with that diplomatic principle.

FDR remained virtually silent about human rights abuses, and did not end trade with Germany, but he began a vigorous rearmament program, emphasizing military planes and naval construction. Immediately after Kristallnacht, on 14 November, he reported to Josephus Daniels, his Wilson-era boss, that he was working on "national defense—especially mass production of planes." By December, he ordered the navy yards to run full-time, "two shifts or even three" wherever possible. It "is time to get action."

While ER approved of all defense programs, she also called for a worldwide educational crusade to address prejudice. . . . After the SCHW meetings, ER wrote her first articles specifically about Jews and race hatred. One, initially called "Tolerance," was for the *Virginia Quarterly* and attacked the kind of anticommunist hysteria that had resulted in fascist triumph and appeasement throughout so much of Europe. The other, which addressed the mounting hatred against Jews, was dated 25 November 1938. . . .

Untitled, ER's "Jewish article" called for a campaign of understanding to confront "the present catastrophe for Jew and Gentile alike. . . . In books . . . schools, newspapers, plays, assemblies we want incessant truth telling about these old legends that divide and antagonize and waste us."

As she struggled to understand "the kind of racial and religious intolerance which is sweeping the world today," ER rejected her former emphasis on assimilation. . . . Now ER assessed the historic hatred of Jews, their isolation, and forced ghettoization in the Middle Ages, and the ongoing contempt for Jews. . . . ER now pointed out that even when Jews attempted to assimilate they were condemned for "being too ostentatiously patriotic and of pushing themselves forward as nationals," as in Austria and Germany.

ER was also sensitive to the difficulties assimilated Jews faced among their coreligionists, who resented those who strayed from tradition. Never quite accepted into the majority culture, they were everywhere marginalized. . . . ER rejected ghettoization and deplored signs that appeared in many American neighborhoods that read "No Dogs or Jews Allowed."

Written from within the veil of her own stereotypes, ER concluded that the future was not up to the Jews.

> The Jew is almost powerless today. It depends almost entirely on the course of the Gentiles what the future holds. . . . If they perish, we perish sooner or later. . . .

She recalled that as a child her uncle Theodore Roosevelt once said "that when you are afraid to do a thing, that was the time to go and do it. Every time we shirk making up our minds or standing up for a cause in which we believe, we weaken our character and our ability to be fearless." . . .

ER challenged Americans to think and act politically, to engage in activist citizenship, to become their best selves. A sense of personal unimportance was encouraged by dictators. Democracy depended on "freedom from prejudice, and public awareness." It required education, economic security, and personal devotion, "a real devotion to freedom. . . . Freedom is something to guard jealously," but it can never be "freedom for me and not for you."

The bolder ER became, the tougher and more adamant her statements, the higher her public approval rating soared. On 16 January 1939, the *New York Times* published a poll taken by George Gallup regarding America's feelings about ER during 1938. The results were astounding. Two voters in every three voted in her favor (67 percent approved of her conduct, 33 percent disapproved). . . . According to the poll she had a greater approval rating than FDR. . . . Given the nature of the controversies ER engaged in and her challenge to work for the transformation of customs and traditions that subjected so many to poverty and powerlessness, America's response indicated a commitment to the very democracy she spoke about so earnestly. ER touched a nerve center in America, and the country would never be the same.

On 10 February 1938, ER [had] commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of

the Emancipation Proclamation by asserting that while Abraham Lincoln took the "first step toward the abolition of slavery . . . we still do tolerate slavery in several ways." Her words, addressed to nine thousand people at a meeting sponsored by the National Negro Congress, were electrifying:

> There are still slaves of many different kinds, and today we are facing another era in which we have to make certain things become facts rather than beliefs.

As Europe fell to fascism, ER and her new network of youth and race radicals heralded the greatest changes in America since the betrayal of Reconstruction.

In her 8 December 1938 column, ER criticized liberals, smug partisans, and patriots for celebrating incomplete victories. . . .

> As I listened [to speeches to promote the Leon Blum colony for refugees in Palestine] . . . I could not help thinking how much all human beings like to fool themselves. . . . [They] made us feel that . . . we were more virtuous and fortunate than any other people in the world. Of course, I concede this, and I feel for me it is true, for I have been free and fortunate all my life. While I listened, however, I could not help thinking of some of the letters which pass through my hands.
>
> Are you free if you cannot vote, if you cannot be sure that the same justice will be meted out to you as to your neighbor, . . . if you are barred from certain places and from certain opportunities? . . .
>
> Are you free when you can't earn enough, no matter how hard you work, to feed and clothe and house your children properly? Are you free when your employer can turn you out of a company house and deny you work because you belong to a union?

Her thoughts turned to refugees in this country, "of the little girl who wrote me not long ago: 'Why do other children call me names and laugh at my talk? I just don't live in this country very long yet.'" ER concluded:

> There are lots and lots of things which make me wonder whether we ever look ourselves straight in the face and really mean what we say when we are busy patting ourselves on the back.

With grit, determination, and a very high heart, ER helped launch America's crusade for freedom in the fascist era. She was fortified every day by her new allies, her abiding partnership with FDR, love for the people in her life, and love of the world.

NOTES

1. FDR to Cordell Hull, Jan. 11, 1938, in *FDR: His Personal Letters, 1928–1945,* Elliott Roosevelt and Joseph P. Lash, eds. (Millwood, N.Y., 1970), IV; 744–45; see also Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York, 1997).
2. *New York Times,* Nov. 19, 1938.
3. Linda Reed, *Simple Decency and Common Sense: The Southern Conference Movement, 1938–1945* (Bloomington, Ind., 1991), 15–16 and passim; Virginia Durr, *Outside the Magic Circle: The Autobiography of Virginia Durr* (Tuscaloosa, Ala. 1985).
4. Pauli Murray, *Song in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage* (New York, 1987), 113.
5. For ER's Nov. 22, 1938 speech at the SCHW, see Allida Black, ed., *Courage in a Dangerous World: The Political Writings of Eleanor Roosevelt* (New York, 1999).
6. Reed, *Simple Decency and Common Sense,* 46–48.
7. *New York Times,* Nov. 24, 1938; Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy* (New York, 1968); Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know* (Boston, 1993), 35.

DOCUMENTS

Comstock Act

This "Act for the Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of Obscene Literature and Articles of Immoral Use" was passed in 1873 at the urging of Anthony Comstock, the head of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. The first section prohibited the sale of the described materials in the District of Columbia and the territories; subsequent sections prohibited the sending of these materials through the mails or their importation into the United States. Enforcement, as historian Helen Horowitz has explained, was placed in the hands of a newly created "special agent in the United States Post Office with power to confiscate immoral matter in the mails and arrest those sending it." In the 1870s, many states passed their own versions of the federal law.

The link of "obscene literature and articles of immoral use" reflected contemporary practice. Erotic literature and pornography were often sold in the same shops that sold condoms and other birth control devices; these devices, and substances offering to induce abortion, were often advertised in the pages of pornographic literature. Anthony Comstock included in this category writings on sexual reform and free love. The law reflected a belief that both contraception and abortion were acts of interference with the natural order and with God's intentions. No distinction was made between drugs used for abortion and materials used for contraception or, indeed, pornographic pictures that encouraged masturbation; all were treated in the same terms. The law may have begun "as a measure to protect children against erotica," but it included "contraceptive information and materials and advertisements for abortion. . . . it was possible to construe this law as banning printed advocacy of free love."* Note the heavy penalties provided.

Be it enacted . . . That whoever, within the District of Columbia or any of the Territories of the United States . . . shall sell . . . or shall offer to sell, or to lend, or to give away, or in any manner to exhibit, or shall otherwise publish or offer to publish in any manner, or shall have in his possession, for any such purpose or purposes, any obscene book, pamphlet, paper, writing, advertisement, circular, print, picture, drawing or other representation, figure, or image on or of paper or other material, or any cast, instrument, or other article of an immoral nature, or any drug or medicine, or any article whatever, for the prevention of conception, or for causing unlawful abortion, or shall advertize the same for sale, or shall write or print, or cause to be written or printed, any card, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice of any kind, stating when, where, how, or of whom, or by what means, any of the articles in this section . . . can be purchased or obtained, or shall manufacture, draw, or print, or in any wise make any of such articles, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof in any court of the United States . . . he shall be imprisoned at hard labor in the penitentiary for not less than six months nor more than five years for each offense, or fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than two thousand dollars, with costs of court. . . .

* Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Rereading Sex: Battles over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 2002), 381, 385.

Public Laws of the United States of America, Passed at the Third Session of the Forty-Second Congress (Boston, 1873), 598.

Emma Goldman's Mugshot, 1901

This infamous 1901 mug shot of Emma Goldman, a prominent anarchist, was taken after she was arrested on suspicion of having organized the assassination of president William McKinley; she was released two weeks later, when authorities failed to find any evidence linking her to the crime. Fifteen years later, in 1916, Goldman, a Russian émigré (from present-day Lithuania), was arrested again, this time for distributing a pamphlet titled *Family Limitation* and delivering speeches about how to practice birth control. She was imprisoned for two weeks on charges that she had violated the Comstock Act by distributing obscene literature. Goldman understood contraception in political terms: it offered a means of liberating women by enabling them to control their own bodies and reduce their economic dependence on men. In 1919, Goldman was among nearly 250 émigrés deported to Russia as part of a purge of activist immigrants after the First World War. (Photograph from the Bain Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.)

Margaret Sanger, Contraception for All Women

Around the turn of the twentieth century, the contrast between the high fertility of newly arriving immigrants and the low birth rate among old-stock Americans prompted such leaders as Theodore Roosevelt to lament "race suicide" and to exhort women of the "proper sort" to selflessly perform their traditional, maternal functions. Viewed through women's eyes, however, these population trends looked different, as the following selection on the beginnings of the birth control movement illustrates. Although a few radicals such as Emma Goldman saw contraception as a means of liberating women by restoring to them control over their own bodies and thereby lessening their economic dependence on men, it was Margaret Higgins Sanger whose name would become most closely linked with the crusade for birth control.

Many factors propelled Sanger—a complex personality—to leadership. One of eleven children, she helped bury her mother, who died of tuberculosis. Young Margaret believed that her father's sexual demands had caused her mother's death. A nursing career also shaped Sanger's thinking. Arrested under the Comstock Act for printing a newspaper advocating contraception, she fled in 1914 to England with her husband and three children. There she met the famous British psychologist and sex expert, Havelock Ellis, who further convinced her that sexual experience should be separated from reproduction, enabling couples to enhance the quality of their sexual relationship. Returning to New York, the Sangers continued their activities on behalf of birth control. The opening of the Brownsville clinic in 1916, recounted here, resulted in still further confrontation with authorities, including arrests. The hunger strike of Sanger's sister, Ethel Byrne, a nurse at the clinic, was followed by Sanger's trial. Convicted of "maintaining a public nuisance," she was sentenced to thirty days in prison. When her lawyer asked for a suspended sentence in exchange for her promise not to break the law again, she announced, "I cannot promise to obey a law I do not respect." In January 1918, the New York Court of Appeals upheld her conviction, but interpreted the law in question broadly, allowing physicians to provide contraceptives to *married* women "to cure or prevent [venereal] disease." Sanger appealed unsuccessfully for the right of nurses to also provide contraceptives. Still, establishing the right of physicians to deliver birth control was a breakthrough; it was the foundation of the birth control movement in the twentieth century and would be a central element in the decision in *Roe v. Wade.*

Margaret Sanger, following her conviction by the New York Court of Appeals in 1918.
She and her supporters treated the outcome as a victory because the court allowed physicians to provide contraceptives to married women "to cure or prevent [venereal] disease." (Photograph reprinted by permission of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.)

After she divorced William Sanger in 1920, Sanger founded the American Birth Control League in 1921 (in 1942 it was transformed into the Planned Parenthood Federation of America). She soon married William Slee, a wealthy oil man whose resources would be an important source of support for her causes. These included the first doctor-staffed birth control clinic in the United States. Long before medical schools routinely taught the fitting of diaphragms, these clinics, staffed by physicians, made reliable contraceptive services widely available. In 1936 Sanger and her colleagues forced the courts to revisit the Comstock Act: a woman physician in New York ordered a package of diaphragms from Japan; the Customs Bureau seized them as obscene articles.

Years later, in the early 1950s, the wealthy feminist Katharine McCormick provided funds for experiments in endocrinology that led to the development of the birth control pill. At a time when few scientists thought an oral contraceptive was possible, Sanger and McCormick's insistence that every woman had the right to control her own body helped bring about a major breakthrough in medical technology. In 1960, the year of Sanger's death, "the pill" became available to the public. The timing was propitious, for it coincided with a period of sexual liberation that, while proving in some respects to be a mixed blessing for women, also coincided with new recognition of the intensity of their sexual drive and capacity for sexual pleasure.

Although Sanger saw the development of an oral contraceptive as another victory in a long and difficult struggle for reproductive freedom, others viewed the birth control movement differently. Some feared that birth control would contribute to promiscuity; others worried it would deny women the dignity that was theirs by virtue of motherhood. The Roman Catholic Church was unrelenting in its opposition, maintaining that the use of contraceptives is a sin. Sanger is still angrily attacked; her contribution to the lives of modern American women remains a matter of political debate. Birth control is not only a technical way of spacing and limiting children so as to benefit both mother and child but also part of a larger debate about the extent to which women should be able to control their own reproductive lives.

AWAKENING AND REVOLT

Early in the year 1912 I came to a sudden realization that my work as a nurse and my activities in social service were entirely palliative and consequently futile and useless to relieve the misery I saw all about me. . . .

Ignorance and neglect go on day by day; children born to breathe but a few hours and pass out of life; pregnant women toiling early and late to give food to four or five children, always hungry; boarders taken into homes where there is not sufficient room for the family; little girls eight and ten years of age sleeping in the same room with dirty, foul smelling, loathsome men; women whose weary, pregnant, shapeless bodies refuse to accommodate themselves to the husbands' desires find husbands looking with lustful eyes upon other women, sometimes upon their own little daughters, six and seven years of age.

In this atmosphere abortions and birth become the main theme of conversation. On Saturday nights I have seen groups of fifty to one hundred women going into questionable offices well known in the community for cheap abortions. I asked several women what took place there, and they all gave the same reply: a quick examination, a probe inserted into the uterus and turned a few times to disturb the fertilized ovum, and then the woman was sent home. Usually the flow began the next day and often continued four or five weeks. Sometimes an ambulance carried the victim to the hospital for a curettage, and if she returned home at all she was looked upon as a lucky woman.

This state of things became a nightmare with me. There seemed no sense to it all, no reason for such waste of mother life, no right to exhaust women's vitality and to throw them on the scrap-heap before the age of thirty-five.

Everywhere I looked, misery and fear stalked—men fearful of losing their jobs, women fearful that even worse conditions might come upon them. The menace of another pregnancy hung like a sword over the head of every poor woman I came in contact with that year. The question which met me was always the same: What can I do to keep from it? or, What can I do to get out of this? Sometimes they talked among themselves bitterly.

"It's the rich that know the tricks," they'd say, "while we have all the kids." Then, if the women were Roman Catholics, they talked about "Yankee tricks," and asked me if I knew what the Protestants did to keep their families down. When I said that I didn't believe that the rich knew much more than they did I was laughed at and suspected of holding back information for money. They would nudge each other and say something about paying me before I left the case if I would reveal the "secret." . . .

I heard over and over again of their desperate efforts at bringing themselves "around"—drinking various herb-teas, taking drops of turpentine on sugar, steaming over a chamber of boiling coffee or of turpentine water, rolling down stairs, and finally inserting slippery-elm sticks, or knitting needles, or shoe hooks into the uterus. I used to shudder with horror as I heard the details and, worse yet, learned of the conditions *behind the reason* for such desperate actions.

. . . Each time I returned it was to hear that Mrs. Cohen had been carried to a hospital but had never come back, that Mrs. Kelly had sent the children to a neighbor's and had put her head into the gas oven to end her misery. Many of the women had consulted midwives, social workers and doctors at the dispensary and asked a way to limit their families, but

they were denied this help, sometimes indignantly or gruffly, sometimes jokingly; but always knowledge was denied them. Life for them had but one choice: either to abandon themselves to incessant childbearing, or to terminate their pregnancies through abortions. Is it any wonder they resigned themselves hopelessly, as the Jewish and Italian mothers, or fell into drunkenness, as the Irish and Scotch? The latter were often beaten by husbands, as well as by their sons and daughters. They were driven and cowed, and only as beasts of burden were allowed to exist. . . .

Finally the thing began to shape itself, to become accumulative during the three weeks I spent in the home of a desperately sick woman living on Grand Street, a lower section of New York's East Side.

Mrs. Sacks was only twenty-eight years old; her husband, an unskilled worker, thirty-two. Three children, aged five, three and one, were none too strong nor sturdy, and it took all the earnings of the father and the ingenuity of the mother to keep them clean, provide them with air and proper food, and give them a chance to grow into decent manhood and womanhood.

Both parents were devoted to these children and to each other. The woman had become pregnant and had taken various drugs and purgatives, as advised by her neighbors. Then, in desperation, she had used some instrument lent to her by a friend. She was found prostrate on the floor amidst the crying children when her husband returned from work. Neighbors advised against the ambulance, and a friendly doctor was called. The husband would not hear of her going to a hospital, and as a little money had been saved in the bank a nurse was called and the battle for that precious life began.

. . . The three-room apartment was turned into a hospital for the dying patient. Never had I worked so fast, so concentratedly as I did to keep alive that little mother. . . .

. . . Day after day, night after night, I slept only in brief snatches, ever too anxious about the condition of that feeble heart bravely carrying on, to stay long from the bedside of the patient. With but one toilet for the building and that on the floor below, everything had to be carried down for disposal, while ice, food and other necessities had to be carried three flights up. It was one of those old airshaft buildings of which there were several thousands then standing in New York City.

At the end of two weeks recovery was in sight, and at the end of three weeks I was preparing to leave the fragile patient to take up the ordinary duties of her life, including those, of wifehood and motherhood. . . .

But as the hour for my departure came nearer, her anxiety increased, and finally with trembling voice she said: "Another baby will finish me, I suppose."

"It's too early to talk about that," I said, and resolved that I would turn the question over to the doctor for his advice. When he came I said: "Mrs. Sacks is worried about having another baby."

"She well might be," replied the doctor, and then he stood before her and said: "Any more such capers, young woman, and there will be no need to call me."

"Yes, yes—I know, Doctor," said the patient with trembling voice, "but," and she hesitated as if it took all of her courage to say it, "what can I do to prevent getting that way again?"

"Oh ho!" laughed the doctor good naturedly, "You want your cake while you eat it too, do you? Well, it can't be done." Then, familiarly slapping her on the back and picking up his hat and bag to depart, he said: "I'll tell you the only sure thing to do. Tell Jake to sleep on the roof!"

With those words he closed the door and went down the stairs, leaving us both petrified and stunned.

Tears sprang to my eyes, and a lump came in my throat as I looked at that face before me. It was stamped with sheer horror. I thought for a moment she might have gone insane, but she conquered her feelings, whatever they may have been, and turning to me in desperation said: "He can't understand, can he?—he's a man after all—but you do, don't you? You're a woman and you'll tell me the secret and I'll never tell it to a soul." . . .

I had to turn away from that imploring face. I could not answer her then. I quieted her as best I could. . . . I promised that I would come back in a few days and tell her what she wanted to know. The few simple means of limiting the family like *coitus interruptus* or the condom were laughed at by the neighboring women when told these were the means used by men in the well-to-do families. That was not believed, and I knew such an answer would be swept aside as useless were I to tell her this at such a time. . . .

The intelligent reasoning of the young mother—how to prevent getting that way again—how sensible, how just she had been—yes, I promised myself I'd go back and have a long talk with her and tell her more, and perhaps she would not laugh but would believe that those methods were all that were really known. . . .

I was about to retire one night three months later when the telephone rang and an agitated man's voice begged me to come at once to help his wife who was sick again. It was the husband of Mrs. Sacks, and I intuitively knew before I left the telephone that it was almost useless to go.

. . . I arrived a few minutes after the doctor, the same one who had given her such noble advice. The woman. . . died within ten minutes after my arrival. It was the same result, the same story told a thousand times before—death from abortion. She had become pregnant, had used drugs, had then consulted a five-dollar professional abortionist, and death followed.

The doctor shook his head as he rose from listening for the heart beat. . . . The gentle woman, the devoted mother, the loving wife had passed on leaving behind her a frantic husband, helpless in his loneliness, bewildered in his helplessness as he paced up and down the room, hands clenching his head, moaning "My God! My God! My God!"

The Revolution came—but not as it has been pictured nor as history relates that revolutions have come. . . .

After I left that desolate house I walked and walked and walked. . . bag in hand, thinking, regretting, dreading to stop; fearful of my conscience, dreading to face my own accusing soul. At three in the morning I arrived home still clutching a heavy load the weight of which I was quite unconscious.

. . . As I stood at the window and looked out, the miseries and problems of that sleeping city arose before me in a clear vision like a panorama: crowded homes, too many children; babies dying in infancy; mothers overworked; baby nurseries; children neglected and hungry—mothers so nervously wrought they could not give the little things the comfort nor care they needed; mothers half sick most of their lives—"always ailing, never failing"; women made into drudges; children working in cellars; children aged six and seven pushed into the labor market to help earn a living; another baby on the way; still another; yet another; a baby born dead—great relief; an older child dies—sorrow, but nevertheless relief—insurance helps; a mother's death—children scattered into institutions; the father, desperate, drunken; he slinks away to become an outcast in a society which has trapped him.

. . . There was only one thing to be done: call out, start the alarm, set the heather on fire! Awaken the womanhood of America to free the motherhood of the world! I released from my almost paralyzed hand the nursing bag which unconsciously I had clutched, threw it across the room, tore the uniform from my body, flung it into a corner, and renounced all palliative work forever.

I would never go back again to nurse women's ailing bodies while their miseries were as vast as the stars. I was now finished with superficial cures, with doctors and nurses and social workers who were brought face to face with this overwhelming truth of women's needs and yet turned to pass on the other side. They must be made to see these facts. I resolved that women should have knowledge of contraception. They have every right to know about their own bodies. I would strike out—I would scream from the housetops. I would tell the world what was going on in the lives of these poor women. *I would* be heard. No matter what it should cost. *I would be heard*. . . .

I announced to my family the following day that I had finished nursing, that I would never go on another case—and I never have.

I asked doctors what one could do and was told I'd better keep off that subject or Anthony Comstock would get me. I was told that there were laws against that sort of thing. This was the reply from every medical man and woman I approached. . . .

A "PUBLIC NUISANCE"

The selection of a place for the first birth control clinic was of the greatest importance. No one could actually tell how it would be received in any neighborhood. I thought of all the possible difficulties: The indifference of women's organizations, the ignorance of the workers themselves, the resentment of social agencies, the opposition of the medical profession. Then there was the law—the law of New York State.

Section 1142 was definite. It stated that *no one* could give information to prevent conception to *anyone* for any reason. There was, however, Section 1145, which distinctly stated that

physicians (*only*) could give advice to prevent conception for the cure or prevention of disease. I inquired about the section and was told by two attorneys and several physicians that this clause was an exception to 1142 referring only to venereal disease. But anyway, as I was not a physician, it could not protect me. Dared I risk it?

I began to think of the doctors I knew. Several who had previously promised now refused. I wrote, telephoned, asked friends to ask other friends to help me find a woman doctor to help me demonstrate the need of a birth control clinic in New York. None could be found. No one wanted to go to jail. No one cared to test out the law. Perhaps it would have to be done without a doctor. But it had to be done; that I knew.

Fania Mindell, an enthusiastic young worker in the cause, had come on from Chicago to help me. Together we tramped the streets on that dreary day in early October, through a driving rainstorm, to find the best location at the cheapest terms possible . . .

Finally at 46 Amboy Street, in the Brownsville Section of Brooklyn, we found a friendly landlord with a good place vacant at fifty dollars a month rental. . . . It was one of the most thickly populated sections. It had a large population of working-class Jews, always interested in health measures, always tolerant of new ideas, willing to listen and to accept advice whenever the health of mother or children was involved. I knew that here there would at least be no breaking of windows, no hurling of insults into our teeth; but I was scarcely prepared for the popular support, the sympathy and friendly help given us in that neighborhood from that day to this. . . .

With a small bundle of handbills and a large amount of zeal, we fared forth each morning in a house-to-house canvass of the district in which the clinic was located. Every family in that great district received a "dodger" printed in English, Yiddish and Italian. . . .

Women of every race and creed flocked to the clinic with the determination not to have any more children than their health could stand or their husbands could support. Jews and Christians, Protestants and Roman Catholics alike made their confessions to us, whatever they may have professed at home or in the church. Some did not dare talk this over with their husbands; and some came urged on by their husbands. Men themselves came after work; and some brought timid, embarrassed wives, apologetically dragging a string of little children. . . .

When I asked a bright little Roman Catholic woman what she would say to the priest when he learned that she had been to the Clinic, she answered indignantly: "It's none of his business. My husband has a weak heart and works only four days a week. He gets twelve dollars, and we can barely live on it now. We have enough children." . . .

As I walked home that night, I made a mental calculation of fifteen baptismal fees, nine funeral expenses, masses and candles for the repose of nine little souls, the physical suffering of the mother, and the emotional suffering of both parents; and I asked myself, "Was it fair? Is this the price of Christianity?" . . .

Ethel Byrne, who is my sister and a trained nurse, assisted me in advising, explaining, and demonstrating to the women how to prevent conception. As all of our 488 records were confiscated by the detectives who later arrested us for violation of the New York State law, it is difficult to tell exactly how many more women came in those days to seek advice; but we estimate that it was far more than five hundred. As in any new enterprise, false reports were maliciously spread about the clinic; weird stories without the slightest foundation of truth. We talked plain talk and gave plain facts to the women who came there. We kept a record of every applicant. All were mothers; most of them had large families.

It was whispered about that the police were to raid the place for abortions. We had no fear of that accusation. We were trying to spare mothers the necessity of that ordeal by giving them proper contraceptive information. . . .

The arrest and raid on the Brooklyn clinic was spectacular. There was no need of a large force of plain clothes men to drag off a trio of decent, serious women who were testing out a law on a fundamental principle. . . . We were not surprised at being arrested, but the shock and horror of it was that a *woman*, with a squad of five plain clothes men, conducted the raid and made the arrest. A woman—the irony of it!

I refused to close down the clinic, hoping that a court decision would allow us to continue such necessary work. I was to be disappointed. Pressure was brought upon the landlord, and we were dispossessed by the law as a "public nuisance." . . .

When the policewoman entered the clinic with her squad of plain clothes men and announced the arrest of Miss Mindell and

myself . . . the room was crowded to suffocation. . . . The police began bullying these mothers, asking them questions, writing down their names in order to subpoena them to testify against us at the trial. These women, always afraid of trouble which the very presence of a policeman signifies, screamed and cried aloud. . . . I assured them that nothing could happen to them, that I was under arrest but they would be allowed to return home in a few minutes. That quieted them. The men were blocking the door to prevent anyone from leaving, but I finally persuaded them to allow these women to return to their homes, unmolested though terribly frightened by it all. . . .

HUNGER STRIKE

Out of that spectacular raid, which resulted in an avalanche of nation-wide publicity in the daily press, four separate and distinct cases resulted:

Mrs. Ethel Byrne, my sister, was charged with violating Section 1142 of the Penal Code, designed to prevent dissemination of birth control information.

Miss Fania Mindell was charged with having sold an allegedly indecent book entitled "What Every Girl Should Know" written by Margaret Sanger.

I was charged with having conducted a clinic at 46 Amboy Street, Brooklyn, in violation of the same section of the Penal Code.

Having re-opened the clinic, I was arrested on a charge of "maintaining a public nuisance," in violation of Section 1530 of the Penal Code.

The three of us were held for trial in the Court of Special Sessions, with bail fixed at $500 each. This meant that our cases would be decided by three judges appointed by the Mayor and not by a jury. . . .

My sister was found guilty, and on January 22 she was sentenced to thirty days in the Workhouse. . . . [She] promptly declared a hunger strike. I knew that she would not flinch. Quiet, taciturn, with a will of steel hidden by a diffident air, schooled by her long training as a professional nurse, she announced briefly that she would neither eat, drink, nor work until her release. Commissioner of Correction Burdette G. Lewis promptly announced that she would be permitted to see no one but her attorney.

While the newspapers were reporting—always on the front page—the condition of the hunger striker, plans were hastened for a monster mass meeting of protest, to be held in Carnegie Hall. Helen Todd acted as chairman, and Dr. Mary Halton was an additional speaker. The hall was crowded by a huge audience of all classes. The women patients of the Brownsville clinic were given places of honor on the platform. The salvos of applause which greeted me showed that intelligent opinion was strongly behind us and did much to give me the courage to fight with renewed strength for the immediate release of Ethel Byrne.

This meeting was acclaimed by the press as a "triumph of women, for women, by women." The meeting was said to have struck the right note—that of being instructive and persuasive, instead of agitational.

In the meantime, Ethel Byrne's refusal to eat and drink was crowding all other news off the front pages of the New York papers. Her defiance was sharpening the issue between self-respecting citizens and the existing law, which was denounced on every street corner as hypocritical. In the subway crowds, on street-corners, everywhere people gathered, the case was discussed. "They are imprisoning a woman for teaching physiological facts!" I heard one man exclaim. . . .

"It makes little difference whether I starve or not," she replied, through her attorney, "so long as this outrageous arrest calls attention to the archaic laws which would prevent our telling the truth about the facts of life. With eight thousand deaths a year in New York State from illegal operations on women, one more death won't make much difference."

All this served to convince [a] panic-stricken Mr. Lewis [Commissioner of Correction in charge of Blackwell's Island] . . . . When she had gone 103 hours without food, he established a precedent in American prison annals. He ordered her forcibly fed. She was the first woman so treated in this country. . . .

The truth was that Mrs. Byrne was in a critical condition after being rolled in a blanket and having milk, eggs and a stimulant forced into her stomach through a rubber tube. I realized this as soon as I heard that she was "passive under the feeding." Nothing but loss of strength could have lessened the power of her resistance to such authority. Nothing but brutality could have reduced her fiery spirit to acquiescence. I was desperate; torn between admiration for what she was doing and misery over what I feared might be the result.

On January 31st, a committee headed by Mrs. Amos Pinchot, Jessie Ashley and myself went to Albany for the purpose of asking Governor Whitman to appoint a commission to investigate birth control and make a report to the state legislature. Governor Whitman, a wise, fair, intelligent executive and statesman, received us, and listened to our exposition of the economic and moral necessity for birth control; the medical theory behind its justification. He promised to consider appointing the commission. During the interview Miss Jessie Ashley introduced the subject of Mrs. Byrne's treatment on Blackwell's Island and the anxiety we felt about her condition. We tried to make him see the outrage committed by the state in making anyone suffer for so just a cause. The Governor offered Mrs. Byrne a pardon on condition that she would not continue to disseminate birth control information. . . .

When we left Albany that day, I had the promise of a provisional pardon for Mrs. Byrne, but best of all I had in my purse a letter from the Governor to the authorities at Blackwell's Island authorizing me to see her. I was shocked and horrified when, in the late afternoon of February 1st, I saw my sister. She was lying semi-conscious on a cot in a dark corner of the prison cell. . . .

There was not time to inform her of the conditions of her pardon, and moreover she was too ill to face the question. I still believe that I was right in accepting the conditions which the Governor imposed. There was no other course. I saw that she was dangerously ill, that nothing further was to be gained by her keeping on, and that her death would have been a terrible calamity. Her life was what mattered to me, regardless of her future activities. . . .

At any rate, by the time she was released the subject was a burning issue. Newspapers which previously had ignored the case, had to mention a matter important enough to bring the Governor of the State from Albany to New York.

Pauli Murray, The Making of Jane Crow

Pauli Murray was a remarkable woman. Born into a family that had included enslaved people, slaveowning whites, Cherokee Indians, and freeborn African Americans, she was raised by an aunt in Durham, North Carolina. Bright and energetic but poor, Murray graduated from the city's segregated schools in 1926. In a display of characteristic determination, she applied to Hunter College in New York City. Rejected because she was so poorly prepared, she enrolled in a New York high school and entered Hunter College a year later. The struggle to stay in school in the midst of the Great Depression was so intense that Murray, already suffering from malnutrition, nearly succumbed to tuberculosis. Shortly after her graduation from Hunter in 1933, she found brief sanctuary in Camp Tera, one of the handful of women's camps established by the New Deal, and then as an employee of remedial reading and workers' education projects funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

"World events were breeding a new militancy in younger Negroes like me," she would write; "One did not need Communist propaganda to expose the inescapable parallel between Nazi treatment of Jews in Germany and the repression of Negroes in the American South. Daily occurrences pointed up the hypocrisy of

Excerpted from *Song in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 1835, 205–9, 238–45, 361–2. Reprinted courtesy of the Charlotte Sheedy Agency, Inc. See also Rosalind Rosenberg, *Jane Crow: The Life of Pauli Murray* (New York, 2017).

a United States policy that condemned Fascism abroad while tolerating an incipient Fascism with its own borders." In 1938, she applied to the law school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, attracted by the work of its sociologists on race relations and farm tenancy. Many law school students supported her admission, as did the university's president, but state law mandated her rejection because of race.

Torn between her writing and law, Murray threw herself into working for social justice. Her participation in an unsuccessful struggle to obtain clemency for Odell Waller, a black sharecropper who had been denied the right to a representative jury because Virginia jurors were selected among those who had paid a poll tax, brought her to the attention of Leon Ransom of Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C. When Howard University offered her a scholarship in 1941, she entered law school "with the single-minded intention of destroying Jim Crow."

The following account of Murray's years at Howard University focuses on her discovery of sexism amidst her battle with racism. Murray went on to have an extraordinary legal career as a champion of racial and gender justice, serving as a consultant to the President's Committee on the Status of Women in preparing its 1963 report and on the National Board of the American Civil Liberties Union. In January 1977, she became one of the first women to be ordained an Episcopal priest. Not long after, she was invited to celebrate her first Holy Eucharist in the Chapel of the Cross in Chapel Hill, the same church where the daughter of a prominent slaveholding family had many years before brought for baptism an infant whose father was her own lawyer brother, and whose mother was her own servant, Harriet. The infant was Pauli Murray's grandmother. On her return to that church, "all the strands of my life came together," Murray wrote.

Ironically, if Howard Law School equipped me for effective struggle against Jim Crow, it was also the place where I first became conscious of the twin evil of discriminatory sex bias, which I quickly labeled Jane Crow. In my preoccupation with the brutalities of racism, I had failed until now to recognize the subtler, more ambiguous expressions of sexism. In the all-female setting of Hunter College, women were prominent in professional and leadership positions. My awareness of the additional burden of sex discrimination had been further delayed by my WPA experience. Hilda Smith, national director of the WPA Workers' Education Project was a woman, my local project director and my immediate supervisor were both women and it had not occurred to me that women as a group received unequal treatment. Now, however, the racial factor was removed in the intimate environment of a Negro law school dominated by men, and the factor of gender was fully exposed.

During my first year at Howard there were only two women in the law school student body, both of us in the first-year class. When the other woman dropped out before the end of the first term, I was left as the only female for the rest of that year, and I remained the only woman in my class for the entire three-year course. While I was there, not more than two or three women enrolled in the lower classes of the law school. We had no women on the faculty, and the only woman professional on staff was . . . the registrar, who had graduated from the law school many years earlier.

The men were not openly hostile; in fact, they were friendly. But I soon learned that women were often the objects of ridicule disguised as a joke. I was shocked on the first day of class when one of our professors said in his opening remarks that he really didn't know why women came to law school, but that since we were there the men would have to put up with us. His banter brought forth loud laughter from the male students. I was too humiliated to respond, but though the professor did not know it, he had just guaranteed that I would become the top student in his class. Later I began to notice that no matter how prepared

I was or how often I raised my hand, I seldom got to recite. It was not that professors deliberately ignored me but that their freewheeling classroom style of informal discussion allowed the men's deeper voices to obliterate my lighter voice, and my classmates seemed to take it for granted that I had nothing to contribute. For much of that first year I was condemned to silence unless the male students exhausted their arguments or were completely stumped by a professor's question.

My real awakening came . . . when I saw a notice on the official bulletin board inviting "all male students of the First Year Class" to a smoker at the residence of Professor Leon A. Ransom. The exclusion of women from the invitation was so pointed that I went to Dr. Ransom's office to seek an explanation. He told me blandly that Sigma Delta Tau, a legal fraternity limited to male students and members of the legal profession, had established a chapter at the law school and that the purpose of the smoker was to look over first-year men for likely prospects. Through their association with experienced lawyers these young men would enhance their professional development. I had not yet become aware of the sexist bias of the English language, and recalling that the national professional English "fraternity" to which I had been elected while in college included both sexes, I asked Dr. Ransom, "What about us women?"

To my surprise, Dr. Ransom merely chuckled and said that if we women wanted an organization we could set up a legal sorority. Angrily, I said it was ridiculous to speak of a legal sorority for two women, but he did not seem concerned about our plight. I left Dr. Ransom's office feeling both bewildered and betrayed, especially because he was one of the most liberal professors on the university campus and had always treated me as a person. He had encouraged me to come to law school and used his influence to have me awarded a scholarship. Yet he did not seem to appreciate fully that barring women from a [professional] organization . . . had the same degrading effect upon women as compelling us as Negroes to sit in the back of a bus or refusing to admit black lawyers to white bar associations. The discovery that Ransom and other men I deeply admired because of their dedication to civil rights, men who themselves had suffered racial indignities, could countenance exclusion of women from their professional association aroused an incipient feminism in me long before I knew the meaning of the term "feminism." . . .

The fact that an accident of gender exempted me from military service and left me free to pursue my career without interruption made me feel an extra responsibility to carry on the integration battle. Many other Howard University women were feeling a similar responsibility, which was heightened by the dramatic leave taking of sixty-five Howard men, who . . . report[ed] for military duty [during World War II.] We women reasoned that it was our job to help make the country for which our black brothers were fighting a freer place in which to live when they returned from wartime service.

From the nightly bull sessions in Truth Hall a plan of action emerged. . . . My role as student "legal adviser" was to make sure that our proposed actions were within the framework of legality so as not to arouse the official disapproval of the university administration. . . . The fact that we were doing something creative about our racial plight was exhilarating and increased our self-esteem. The Direct Action subcommittee attracted some of the leading students on campus, for it was important that those undertaking unorthodox activities maintain academic excellence. Also, we proceeded cautiously, aware that a misstep would compromise our goal. Instead of rushing precipitously into "hostile" territory, a group of students surveyed public eating places in the neighboring, mostly Negro community on Northwest U Street that still catered to the "White Trade Only." One of the most notorious of these lily white establishments was the Little Palace Cafeteria [which] had long been a source of mortification for countless unsuspecting Negroes, who entered it assuming that at least they would be served in the heart of the Negro section of the city.

. . . For a week prior to our move against the [Little Palace Cafeteria], we held campus pep rallies and drummed up support for our effort. . . . We decorated hot chocolate cups and used them around campus as collection cans to solicit the funds we needed for paper, postage, and picket signs. We held a midweek Town Hall meeting and brought in experienced political leaders . . . to lead a forum on civil rights legislation and methods of achieving it. We conducted classes on the legal aspects of picketing and disorderly conduct in the District of Columbia, spent hours in small groups discussing public decorum, anticipating and preparing for the reactions of the black public, the white public, white customers, and white management respectively. We stressed the importance of a dignified appearance, and the subcommittee directed that all participants dress well for the occasion. We also pledged ourselves to exemplary nonviolent conduct, however great the provocation.

Finally, on April 17, a rainy Saturday afternoon, we . . . began to leave the Howard University grounds in groups of four, about five minutes apart, to make the ten minute walk to the Little Palace Cafeteria. The demonstration was limited to a carefully selected group of volunteers—less than twenty students—who felt confident they could maintain self-restraint under pressure. As each group arrived, three entered the cafeteria while the fourth remained outside as an "observer." Inside, we took our trays to the steam table and as soon as we were refused service carried our empty trays to a vacant seat at one of the tables, took out magazines, books of poetry or textbooks . . . and assumed an attitude of concentrated study. Strict silence was maintained. Minutes later the next group arrived and repeated the process. Outside, the observers began to form a picket line with colorful signs reading "Our Boys, our Bonds, our Brothers are Fighting for YOU! Why Can't We Eat Here?" "We Die Together, Why Can't We Eat Together?"; "There's No Segregation Law in D.C. What's Your Story, Little Palace?" Two pickets carried posters . . . depicting two workers—one black and the other white working together as riveters on a steel plate. The inscription on the poster read "UNITED WE WIN!"

My heart thumped furiously as I sat at a table awaiting developments. The management was stunned at first, then after trying unsuccessfully to persuade us to leave, called the police. Almost immediately a half-dozen uniformed officers appeared. When they approached us we said simply, "We're waiting for service," and since we did not appear to be violating any law, they made no move to arrest us.

After forty-five minutes had passed and twelve Negro students were occupying most of the tables of the small cafeteria, Chaconas [the restaurant's proprietor] gave up and closed his restaurant eight hours earlier than his normal closing time. Those of us who were inside joined the picket line and kept it going for the rest of the afternoon. Chaconas told [a] reporter . . . for the *Chicago Defender*: "I'll lose money, but I'd rather close up than practice democracy this way. The time is not ripe." . . . Several days later, [Chaconas] admitted that he had lost about $180 that [day], a considerable sum for a small business.

Actually, the incident did not arouse the furor we had feared but revealed the possibilities for change. When told why the place was closed and being picketed, a white customer named Raymond Starnes, who came from Charlotte, North Carolina, said, "I eat here regularly, and I don't care who eats here. All I want is to eat. I want the place to stay open. After all, we are all human." Another white bystander, asked what he thought of the students' action, replied, "I think it's reasonable. Negroes are fighting to win this war for democracy just like whites. If it came to a vote, it would get my vote."

When Chaconas opened his place on Monday morning, our picket line was there to greet him, and it continued all day. Within forty-eight hours he capitulated and began to serve Negro customers. We were jubilant. Our conquest of a small "greasy spoon" eating place was a relatively minor skirmish in the long battle to end segregation in the nation's capital—a battle that was ended by a Supreme Court decision ten years later, but it loomed large in our eyes. We had proved that intelligent, imaginative action could bring positive results and, fortunately, we had won our first victory without an embarrassing incident. . . .

Significantly, the prominent role of women in the leadership and planning of our protest was a by product of the wartime thinning of the ranks of male students. Twelve of the nineteen Howard University demonstrators at the Little Palace on April 17 were female. . . . Many of those young women . . . would continue to make breakthroughs in their respective fields after their college days. . . . Patricia Roberts carried the impact of her civil rights experiences from Howard University to the cabinet level of the federal government [Patricia Roberts served as President Carter's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development from 1977 to 1979]. . . .

I had entered law school preoccupied with the racial struggle and single mindedly bent upon becoming a civil rights attorney, but I graduated an unabashed feminist as well. Ironically, my effort to become a more

proficient advocate in the first struggle led directly into the second through an unanticipated chain of events which began in the late fall of my senior year.

One day Dean Hatie called me into his office to discuss what I planned to do after graduation. To my utter surprise, he spoke of the possibility of my returning to teach at the law school after a year of graduate study, and with that possibility in mind he recommended that I apply for a Rosenwald fellowship. . . . At least half of the Howard Law School faculty had studied at Harvard . . . and it had become a tradition at Howard to groom an exceptionally promising law graduate for a future faculty position by sending him to Harvard "to put on the gloss" of a prestigious graduate degree in law. . . .

Naively unaware of Harvard's policy toward women, I was stunned when my schoolmates began kidding me. "Murray," someone said, "don't you know they're not going to let you into Harvard?" Harvard, it became clear, did not admit women to its law school.

Then my hopes were raised by a rumor which circulated around campus that Harvard was opening up to women students. Accordingly, when filling out my application to the Rosenwald Fund, I wrote in the space provided for choice of law school: "I should like to obtain my Master's degree at Harvard University, in the event they have removed their bar against women students. If not, then I should like to work at Yale University or at any other University which has advanced study in the field of labor law." I also wrote to the secretary of Harvard Law School, requesting confirmation or denial of the rumor I had heard. The answer was prompt. On January 5, 1944, the secretary's office wrote back: "Harvard Law School . . . is not open to women for registration."

This verdict was disappointing, of course, but with all the other preoccupations of my senior year, the matter probably would have rested there if I had not won the Rosenwald fellowship or at least if the names of the award winners had not been published nationwide. The announcement . . . listed me among fifteen white Southerners and twenty-two Negroes . . . who received awards "for creative talent or distinguished scholarship." Mine was the only award in the field of law, and all the news stories reported that I was to do graduate study in labor law at Harvard University.

I was embarrassed to receive congratulatory messages from a number of people who were either unaware of Harvard's restrictive policy or assumed I had broken the barrier. At the same time, some of the men at Howard stepped up their banter, not without a touch of malicious. Until then I had been able to lick my wounds in private, but the public disclosure of my dilemma mortified me and presented a challenge I could not pass over lightly. If my schoolmates expected me to dissolve into tears under their stinging gibes, they were disappointed. I simply sat down and wrote a letter of application to Harvard Law School. . . .

In due course there came from Professor T. R. Powell, who chaired Harvard Law School's Committee on Graduate Studies, a letter that must have been dictated with an impish smirk. As nearly as I can recall, it ran: "Your picture and the salutation on your college transcript indicate that you are not of the sex entitled to be admitted to Harvard Law School." To appreciate the impact of this letter upon me, it is only necessary to remember the similar letter of rejection I had received in 1938 from . . . the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill: "Under the laws of North Carolina and under the resolutions of the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina, members of your race are not admitted to the University."

The personal hurt I felt now was no different from the personal hurt I had felt then. The niceties of distinction that in one case rejection was based upon custom and involved my sex and in the other was grounded in law and involved my race were wholly irrelevant to me. Both were equally unjust, stigmatizing me for a biological characteristic over which I had no control. But at least in the case of racial rebuffs long experience had taught me some coping mechanisms and I did not feel alone in that struggle. The fact that Harvard's rejection was a source of mild amusement rather than outrage to many of my male colleagues who were ardent civil rights advocates made it all the more bitter to swallow.

The harsh reality was that I was a minority within a minority, with all the built-in disadvantages such status entailed. Because of the considerable snobbery that—even apart from race and sex—existed in the highly competitive field of law, one's initial entry into the profession was profoundly affected by the law school one attended. This was particularly true for anyone who had ambitions to teach law. Since in my case the most common hurdles—lack of funds and a poor scholastic record—did not apply, I felt the injustice of the rejection even more strongly. I knew that however brilliant a record I had made at Howard, among my teaching colleagues I would never be considered on equal academic footing with someone who could boast of Harvard training. . . .

Then began the disheartening effort to budge a sluggishly corpulent bureaucracy on which my protests and appeals made about as much impression as a gnat on an elephant's hide. Harvard, being a private institution, was immune from legal attack and thus I had only the force of reason and logic with which to plead my case. . . . Since my exclusion from Harvard was based solely on gender, my appeal necessarily was strongly feminist in tone:

> I have met a number of women and have heard of many more who wished to attend Harvard and yet were refused. This fight is not mine, but that of women who feel they should have free access to the very best of legal education. . . .
>
> Women are practicing before the Supreme Court, they have become judges and good lawyers, they are represented on the President's Cabinet and greater demand is being made for women lawyers in administrative positions as the men move into the armed forces. They are proving themselves worthy of the confidence and trust placed in them. . . . They are taking an intelligent view toward the political events at home and abroad, and statistics show they are in the majority of the voting population this year. A spotcheck on memory would indicate there are only four important places they are not now holding—(1) As graduates of Harvard University, (2) as President of the United States, (3) as a member of the United States Supreme Court, and (4) as workers in the mines. Although [by admitting women] Harvard might lose in the sense of a loss of tradition, it might gain in the quality of the law school student personnel.

Meanwhile, two influential (if wholly unanticipated) male supporters sympathetic to the rights of women materialized. One was President Franklin D. Roosevelt! I had sent copies of the correspondence with Harvard to Mrs. Roosevelt, suggesting that the President might be amused at this attempt to storm the walls of his alma mater, never dreaming it would evoke more than a chuckle on his part. FDR was not merely amused; he actually wrote a letter on my behalf to President James B. Conant of Harvard University.

It would take more than one of that institution's most illustrious graduates to overturn a three hundred year tradition of male exclusiveness, however. President Conant's reply, sent on to me by FDR's secretary, only confused the issue. The letter assured President Roosevelt that I was free to do graduate work at Radcliffe, and even sent along a Radcliffe catalogue, never mind the obvious fact that Radcliffe did not offer graduate courses in law. I was flattered that the President of the United States had intervened on my behalf, but I was no nearer my goal. Mrs. Roosevelt was unequivocally in my corner and wrote me a note saying: "I loved your Harvard appeal."

Lloyd K. Garrison, who was to become a lifelong friend and sponsor, was my second unexpected supporter. Mr. Garrison . . . was then a member of the National War Labor Board, which he later chaired. He was also a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers. I first met him through an ambitious undertaking of our student organization, the First Annual Court of Peers Dinner. . . . Mr. Garrison was our guest speaker, and as chief officer of the Student Guild it was my function to preside over the dinner and sit next to him at the speakers' table. . . . He was intensely interested in my effort to get into Harvard but warned me that I did not have a chance against the archconservative Harvard Corporation. Under the circumstances he encouraged me to follow an alternative plan for graduate study elsewhere, in the meantime pressing my appeal.

[Secretary] A. Calvert Smith informed me that the Harvard Corporation would review my appeal on July 10, by which time I had already applied to Boalt Hall [School] of Law, University of California at Berkeley, one of the few schools in the country whose wartime faculty of distinguished scholars remained relatively intact. On July 12, Mr. Smith wrote me to say that . . . "Whether or not women should be admitted to the Law School is . . . a decision for the Faculty of the Law School." Mr. Smith indicated that since no recommendation from the faculty of the law school was then before the Corporation, "it does not feel itself in a position to take any action on your application."

By sidestepping my appeal, the Harvard Corporation had rid itself temporarily of an annoying question, but it had also called into play a theory about the significance of individual action I had once announced half seriously . . . : "One person plus one typewriter constitutes a movement." If I could not compel admission to Harvard, at least I could raise the issue in such a way that its law school would be unable to avoid

it. I was also learning the process of patiently following whatever administrative procedure was available even when there was every reason to believe the result would be futile.

My next letter was addressed to the Faculty of the Harvard Law School, summarizing the correspondence to date and requesting a meeting of the faculty.... I included a copy of my appeal to the Harvard Corporation and closed on a humorous note: "Gentlemen, I would gladly change my sex to meet your requirements but since the way to such change has not been revealed to me, I have no recourse but to appeal to you to change your minds on this subject. Are you to tell me that one is as difficult as the other?"

... After I left Washington, Dean Hastie wrote: "My best information on the Harvard situation is that the faculty is sharply divided on the matter of admitting women and will probably take the position that no action should be taken while a majority of the permanent faculty are on leave for war work." Lloyd K. Garrison's analysis prepared me for the inevitable. He wrote:

> From what I could pick up in Cambridge, my guesses are:
>
> (1) That the corporation will do nothing unless the Law School takes the initiative in asking that the rules be changed to admit women.
> (2) That the Law School will do nothing ... certainly not until Dean Landis gets back next fall and probably not then.
> (3) That this is due to a combination of long tradition, an excessively high enrollment which has become an increasing headache [and]
> (4) A touch of some undefinable male egoism, which is, I think, rather particularly strong in and around Boston as compared let us say with the middle west where we take our co-education for granted.
>
> At my last meeting on the Board of Overseers [at Harvard] there was a great debate as to whether women should be admitted to the Medical School and, so I was told (I had to leave the meeting early), the proposal mustered only two votes out of a dozen....

I was in California when the faculty of the Harvard School of Law met on August 7, 1944 and took action on my petition for review. A few days later, Acting Dean E. M. Morgan informed me of their decision. His letter said in part:

> In October, 1942, the Faculty thoroughly considered a proposal ... to change the general rule. The first proposition was to admit women only during the emergency. This was almost immediately and unanimously rejected. The second proposal was for a permanent policy admitting women on exactly the same basis as men.... There was much difference of opinion, but it was finally unanimously voted that no action looking to a change in the present practice be taken until after the emergency and after the School has returned to normal conditions with its full Faculty in residence.... Accordingly, it has been necessary to deny all applications for admission by women....

Having lost my first battle against "Jane Crow," I was somewhat comforted to learn indirectly that the effort was not entirely wasted. That fall when I registered at the University of California's Boalt Hall [School] of Law, I was surprised to discover that news of the Harvard affair had traveled across country, and I was greeted with the remark, "So you're the woman who caused the Harvard Law School faculty to split 7–7 on your application." I also learned later of Harvard's announcement that women would be admitted to its medical school in 1945.

Fortunately, my controversy with Harvard was unresolved when I graduated from Howard in June, and it did not affect the high excitement of the ceremonies. Aunt Pauline came from Durham and Uncle Lewis Murray from Baltimore, each ... vying to share the honor of a niece who had "turned out so well." The high point of Aunt Pauline's visit was having tea at the White House with Mrs. Roosevelt. Then on Commencement Day an unexpected recognition electrified the huge outdoor gathering. Harry McAlpin, a reporter for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, captured the mood of the occasion in a story headlined "Flowers from the First Lady." He wrote: "Flowers a huge bouquet of them delivered near the close of the Howard University commencement exercises last Friday, overshadowed all the previous proceedings of the impressive occasion. They were from Mrs. Roosevelt, wife of the President of the United States. They were for brilliant, active, strong willed Pauli Murray, graduate cum laude of the Howard Law School." ...

On Sunday morning Aunt Pauline and I attended Holy Communion at the Church of the Atonement.... Mrs. Roosevelt's flowers graced the altar and later were taken to hospitals to cheer the sick. No one could have conceived that morning that thirty five years later I would be serving in the same church as an Episcopal priest.

Women and War

BETH BAILEY AND DAVID FARBER

The Women of Hotel Street during World War II

On the Sunday afternoon of December 7, 1941, the nation listened as radio announcers spoke in shocked tones of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. World War II would transform these then remote, ethnically diverse islands as the US military made Hawaii its midpoint stopover in the Pacific. For those returning from combat as well as for those going into it, the place to go in Honolulu was Hotel Street.

The following essay focuses on the women of Hotel Street, particularly the sex workers who populated its brothels. Note the conditions of work, the military authorities' complicity and concerns, and the conflict between the military and the local police, who acted as agents of the local elite. Note, too, how prostitutes maneuvered to improve their lives. How did the Hotel Street prostitutes inadvertently serve to undermine Hawaii's racial hierarchy? In what other respects did their strategy foreshadow that of postwar civil rights activists?

Hotel Street was the center of Honolulu's eponymous vice district, through which some 30,000 or more soldiers, sailors, and war workers passed on any given day during most of World War II. . . . On Hotel Street, some of the most complex issues in America's history came together. Systems of race and of gender (complicated by both sex and war) structured individual experience and public policy. At the same time, the story of Hawaii's vice district revolves around the changing role of the State, as it asserted its interests in counterpoint to local elites. For most of the war Hawaii was under martial law, ruled by a military governor. Even if not fully by intention, agents of the federal government—ironically in the form of the military and martial law—emerged as limited guarantors of equality and created openings for social struggle. . . . A critical part of this struggle for power centered on prostitution and its control. . . .

Hotel Street was more than just brothels, but it was the brothels, for most of the men, that gave the district its identity and its dark magic. During the war years fifteen brothels operated in this section of Chinatown, their presence signaled by neatly lettered, somewhat circumspect signs ("the Bronx Rooms," "The Senator Hotel," "Rex Rooms") and by the lines of men that wound down the streets and alleyways. The brothels were not new; they had developed along with Honolulu's status as a port city, and had, in recent years, served both the growing military population and the plantation workers who came to town on paydays.[1]

Prostitution was illegal in Hawaii. Nonetheless, it existed as a highly and openly regulated system, involving the police department, government officials, and the military. Red-light districts in Honolulu had survived a Progressive Era campaign to close them down and

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flourished in the face of the World War II–era May Act until late 1944, when an emerging new political elite succeeded in closing the houses.[2]

Some of the reasons for the brothels' survival are found in Hawaii's multiracial and multicultural society. To many of the people who made up the islands' varied population, prostitution was not a "social evil." And many of the islands' white elite, the "respectable" people who would have provided the necessary pressure to have the brothels closed down, approved of a regulated system of prostitution. The brothels, many believed, kept the predominately lower-class white soldiers and sailors and especially the overwhelmingly male and dark-skinned populations of plantation workers [who lived in communities with few women] away from the islands' respectable women, who were, by their definition, white.[3] The head of the Honolulu Police Commission (which was comprised solely of leading white businessmen) said it directly: too many men in and around Honolulu were "just like animals."[4] An editorial in *Hawaii*, a magazine published and supported by the *haole* elite, explained further: "If the sexual desires of men in this predominantly masculine community are *going to be satisfied*, certainly not one of us but would rather see them satisfied in regulated brothels than by our young girls and women—whether by rape, seduction or the encouraging of natural tendencies."[5] The brothels, they thought, helped keep the peace.

The military was pleased with the system, for regulated prostitution kept venereal disease rates relatively low in Hawaii. During World War II, this consideration became especially important. Like any other illness, venereal disease hurt the war effort by cutting into military manpower. At the end of World War I more men left military service with a contagious venereal disease than had been wounded in battle. While the military officials in Hawaii *never* said publicly and directly that they supported regulated vice districts, the military participated fully in the regulation process, putting houses off limits to the men if they broke rules that would compromise venereal disease control, and setting up prophylaxis stations in Honolulu. Each brothel had a sign in its waiting room reminding the men where the "pro" stations were and why it was important for them to make use of the service. The prophylaxis stations were free and open to all—civilian and military—and the Hotel Street stations could handle 1,500 men an hour.[6]

The police department, while to some extent acting on behalf of the *haole* elite, also benefitted from the system. Like most police departments, the Honolulu police understood that shutting down the vice district would not end prostitution. Police officials believed that unregulated, dispersed prostitution would more likely be rife with pimps, procurers, and other men who used violence to enforce their criminal order on both the prostitutes and their customers, thus creating much unpleasantness for the police department. In Honolulu, the chief of police personally decided who might open a brothel and who would suffer penalties. The department, according to several sources, received steady payoff money to overlook the varied forms of vice that accompanied the quasi-legal acts of prostitution.[7]

The central charge of the police department was to keep the district orderly and to keep the prostitutes out of sight of respectable Honolulu. The majority of official Honolulu prostitutes were white women recruited through San Francisco. Both police and madams preferred it that way, for women from the mainland had fewer choices but to go along with the system. Each prostitute arriving from the mainland was met at the ship by a member of the vice squad. After she was fingerprinted but before she received her license, she was instructed in the rules that would govern her stay on Hotel Street:

> She may not visit Waikiki Beach or any other beach except Kailua Beach (a beach across the mountains from Honolulu).
>
> She may not patronize any bars or better class cafés.
>
> She may not own property or an automobile.
>
> She may not have a steady "boyfriend" or be seen on the streets with any men.
>
> She may not marry service personnel. She may not attend dances or visit golf courses.
>
> She may not ride in the front seat of a taxicab or with a man in the back seat.
>
> She may not wire money to the mainland without permission of the madam.
>
> She may not telephone the mainland without permission of the madam.
>
> She may not change from one house to another. She may not be out of the brothel after 10:30 at night.[8]

. . . To break these rules was to risk a beating at the hands of the police and possible removal from the islands.

Before the war, few white women served in the houses for more than six months before they returned to the West Coast. The Honolulu service, while lucrative, was not paradise. A few months was often all a woman could take. Some probably earned what money they had hoped for and left the trade. One "sporting girl," writing at the time, said that the police forced prostitutes to leave the islands after about six months "whether the girl's record was up to standard or not . . . [because] she got to know too much in that length of time." Once a prostitute left Hawaii the police prohibited her from returning for a year.[9]

Not all the prostitutes in the Hotel Street district were white. At the Bronx, which was one of the largest houses during the war years, approximately twenty-five prostitutes worked. About half were white women from the mainland and the other half local women. Five of the women were Hawaiian or part Hawaiian. Two were Puerto Rican. The Bronx also had six Japanese prostitutes, which was highly unusual and probably due to Tomi Abe, the Japanese-American woman who ran the Bronx during the war. Most of the madams were white women from the mainland, with names like "Norma Lane," "Peggy Staunton," and "Molly O'Brian." The owners of the buildings in which the brothels operated were almost all Chinese or Chinese American, but almost none were actively involved in running the brothels.[10]

A less fully regulated set of brothels existed across the river—a very narrow river—from the Hotel Street district. Brothels such as the "Local Rooms" were staffed by local women [of color] only and charged lower prices. Despite their cheaper rates these brothels were much less popular, for their venereal disease rates were astronomical. Men referred to the prostitutes as "white meat" or "dark meat."

During the war, most of the brothels only served white men. Before the war, the brothels had also maintained a color line, but of a more complicated soft. The major Hotel Street brothels used a two-door system, one for whites (almost all of whom were soldiers and sailors) and the other for local men. This segregated system, in a city where segregation was not commonplace, was aimed at the servicemen. Many were Southern, most had been raised with racist beliefs. Some did not like to think of colored men preceding them in the vagina was rough, and the men likely to be drunk and easily moved to violence, segregation was deemed the safest policy.

With the influx of servicemen and war workers following Pearl Harbor, demand for prostitutes soared. With so many white men lining up outside the brothels, the two-door policy was abandoned for the duration and men of color were simply not served. A couple of brothels in the district did not observe a color line and were open to all who could pay. But almost always the men of color had to pay more.

The color line, as far as the white servicemen and war workers saw it, ran only in one direction. While they did not want to share prostitutes with men of color, some white men preferred the "exotic" women.

While the regulated brothels of Hotel Street had been lucrative, thriving businesses through the 1920s and 1930s, the war changed the scale of success. War conditions presented an amazing economic opportunity to the sex workers of Hotel Street. During the war, approximately 250 prostitutes were registered with the Honolulu Police Department—as "entertainers." They paid $1 a year for their licenses and could make $30,000–$40,000 a year when the average working woman was considered fortunate to make $2,000. The houses took in over $10 million each during the war years, and the twenty-five to thirty madams who ran and/or owned them each took away between $150,000 and $450,000 every year. As a group, the prostitutes and madams of Hotel Street were incredibly successful economically.

But the conditions of sale, "$3 for 3 minutes," suggests how hard they must have worked. Most houses enforced a quota for each woman of 100 men a day, at least twenty days out of every month. The risks of sexually transmitted diseases were extremely high; in 1943, 120 professional prostitutes were hospitalized 166 times for a contagious venereal disease. A bad dose put the woman into the hospital—she had to go—for at least two weeks.[11]

Some women could accept the physically brutal and health-threatening conditions. They fixed their attention on the payoff. Others found the life, the numbers of men, and the social contempt degrading. Many sought distance from what they did by shooting morphine or by smoking opium. . . . Opiates gave them back some of the feelings of inviolability their roles

During the war, even more than before, the women of Hotel Street did their best to exercise as much practical control as they could over their punishing livelihood and over the men who paid them for their services. First of all, the brothels were all owned and operated by women. The prostitutes maximized their economic control by allowing no pimps and there were no behind-the-scenes male owners. Even the doorkeepers at the brothels were women, often powerfully built women of Hawaiian descent. While the brothels existed for men, women controlled access.

The men who wanted sex had to wait in line, sometimes for hours, and in full public view. Because the curfew limited brothel hours, all of this took place only during daylight hours. From souvenir shops and beauty parlors and upstairs windows, the older Chinese women of the district watched and laughed at the lines of white men. Lines were generally quiet, but the shoeshine boys kidded the men who seemed visibly nervous, and quite a few of the men were drunk. But those who fortified themselves with drink faced a further obstacle: the women who kept door at the brothels rejected any man they did not trust to behave properly or to perform quickly. Adeline Naniole, the Hawaiian woman who kept door at the Bronx through part of the war, kept out any man who seemed too drunk. . . . "I don't think you can make business," she would say.[2]

Inside, the system was streamlined for maximum efficiency and control. At the head of the hall that led to the prostitutes' cubicles, a madam stood behind a money booth. Some of the booths were caged; there was no pretense that the houses offered gracious entertainment. The madam collected $3, almost always in singles, and gave the man a token, usually a poker chip. He then waited for an available woman.[13] . . .

Even in the sex act, most men felt little control. That was partly due to the setup: in the interest of time, women rotated from room to room; thus, no time was lost in cleaning up and waiting for the man to dress. When a man's turn came, he went into a cubicle—a regular room divided in half by a flimsy sheet of plywood or wall board that reached only two thirds of the way to the ceiling. The room was bare except for a single cot, a table with a wash bowl, and a wastebasket. Sometimes, if the maids had been overwhelmed by the pace of business, soiled towels littered the floor. Often the man undressed and waited alone while the prostitute finished up in the cubicle on the other side of the half wall. The man could hear what went on the other side, and he knew that he would be heard in turn.

As time was money, and three minutes was the limit, prostitutes used various strategies to control the sex act itself. After quickly inspecting and washing the man's genitals (as a patron of other brothels described the routine):

> She'd lay on her back and get you on top of her so fast, you wouldn't even know you'd come up there on your own power. She'd grind so that you almost felt like you had nothing to do with it. Well, after that, she had you. She could make it go off as quickly as she wanted to.[14] . . .

About a quarter of the men chose fellatio, a fact that worried the senior shore-patrol officer in charge of the district, for he believed that "it is not a far cry from such sex perversions ['buccal coitus,' he termed it] to homosexual acts."[15] The women, their minds on the lines outside their doors and always seeking control, seemed to prefer fellatio—it was quicker. For many of the men, sexually inexperienced and fresh from months at sea or long weeks in a battle zone, three minutes was more than enough. As one veteran recalls, "They put it in and they're gone. Sometimes they're gone washing off in the pail.[16] . . .

Despite the impersonal inefficiency of the system, it could break down. One regular customer told his favorite, a half-Chinese, half-Mexican prostitute, at the end of a three-minute session, "Judy, you're the bummest fuck I ever had." As he tells it, she was so angry she spent the rest of the night proving him a liar—for free. It meant a lot; he named his daughter after her.[17] . . .

In the houses, men's money bought women's sexual favors; that was undeniable, and to that extent the men commanded and controlled the women. Women's bodies were commodified. Yet the system was structured to emphasize the women's control over the men. Standing in line, facing the doorkeeper, taking one's place in the day's quota of 100 anonymous acts: none of those experiences served to confirm a sense of male power or control. . . .

While the prostitutes and madams asserted control within the brothels during the war, it is perhaps more significant that they also attempted to challenge the larger system of controls and

regulations within which they lived. After the Pearl Harbor attack the Hotel Street district, like much of the city, was shut down for a few weeks. Soon after the houses reopened, with the troops pouring through Honolulu and the men's pay upped from the prewar scale, the women raised their fee to $5 for three minutes. As they saw it, market conditions had changed.

Word of the price hike immediately reached Frank Steer, at that point an army major who had come to the islands in September 1940 to head the military police. Steer . . . served during the war as provost marshal under the state of martial law imposed on Hawaii after the Japanese attack. Under martial law, he had final authority over matters of vice. . . . Steer had no problem with the existence of brothels, but he did have a problem with the price hike. Raising prices on the fighting men was bad for morale and, as he saw it, unfair. Steer ordered the prices dropped: "The price of meat is still three dollars," he told the madams, and they backed down. They trusted Steer, and they knew he was their ally against the dictates of the police department. But though the prices returned to normal, Hotel Street business would not.

Right after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the women of the houses had rushed to the hospitals and temporary facilities set up for the burned and wounded men. Some of those who came to help were turned away when they admitted their occupations or gave their addresses—the official reason was fear of infection. But more than a few prostitutes nursed the men and did what they could to help. The madams turned over the brothels' living quarters to the overflow of wounded, and for a few days Hotel Street looked like a Red Cross annex.[18]

With their beds filled—and with normal lines of authority disrupted—the women took a chance. They moved out of the district and out of the shadows. They bought and leased houses all around Honolulu—up the rises (mountain slopes), down by the beaches, in fashionable neighborhoods. They told anyone who asked that the district was too risky, that it was a firetrap if the Japanese came back. The explanation was not just a cover; many on the islands believed invasion was imminent. Several prostitutes passed up the promised boom times and joined other women, longtime residents and wives of army and navy officers, who arranged passage on the 20 December special evacuation transport bound for San Francisco.

For several weeks, even as the brothels reopened and long after the wounded had moved out of the prostitutes' living quarters, no one seemed to pay any attention to the women's quiet movement out of the district. The women of Hotel Street, long subject to the dictates of the vice squad, had reason to hope that those days were over.[19]

At first, the women who had moved out of the district attracted little attention; gradually that changed. One businesswoman worked out a lucrative scheme: through an agent, she would buy a house in a fashionable neighborhood and then make clear to her neighbors what her line of work was. The investments paid off handsomely and rapidly, as the neighbors banded together to buy her out at a premium.[20]

Other women, their minds less on business than on pleasure, simply began to enjoy their earnings. They flouted the rules—rules that had not been officially relaxed—appearing in "respectable" public places, having "wild" parties, doing as they wished. The military police, under martial law holding more authority than the civilian police, let such behavior pass.[21]

The police, especially their chief, William Gabrielson, were outraged at the new order of things. Prostitutes had invaded every neighborhood. Hawaii's carefully calibrated social stratification was being mocked. Mainland whores—white women—were out in public, demonstrating how little difference white skin had to mean in the way of moral superiority or some sort of "natural" right to rule the majority of Hawaii's people of darker hues. Already the hordes of working-class white soldiers, sailors, and war workers had damaged the equilibrium that gave stability to the island's ruling white elite. Now the white prostitutes made a mockery of the whole racist and racialist system. Their too-public presence signaled to all who watched that one set of controls was being challenged. The prostitutes' rejection of hierarchy seemed a foreshadowing of what could happen on a larger scale politically, economically, and culturally after the war. Worse yet, supporting the new laissez-faire approach to the prostitutes was General Emmons, the military governor. . . .

For General Emmons, and for Major Steer, maintaining orderly troops, low rates of venereal diseases, and a reasonably high morale superseded long-range thinking about racial

or ethnic boundaries and the elite's postwar control of the islands. . . . The men, judging by the hundreds of thousands of them who went up and down the Hotel Street brothel stairs in the months after the Pearl Harbor attack, wanted prostitutes. The regulated brothels supplied the prostitutes and ensured that they were relatively disease-free (the Hawaii military district had the lowest venereal disease rates in the armed forces). The prostitutes had nursed the wounded and given over their rooms after Pearl Harbor. They had accepted the command not to raise their prices. Many high-ranking military officers believed that "any man who won't fuck, won't fight"; they saw the women of Hotel Street as important to morale and to maintaining a manly spirit among the "boys."[22] All in all, Emmons, Steer, and others who played a role in enforcing martial law believed that keeping the prostitutes safe from needless harassment and hypocritical near-bondage was a commonsense way of keeping the more or less disease-free houses operating smoothly under what were obviously extraordinary conditions.

The matter came to a head quickly. In April of 1942, chief of police Gabrielson ordered his men to evict four prostitutes living together in a house in Waikiki, one of the areas most strictly off-limits to prostitutes in the prewar years. Waikiki before the war was not the bustling tourist center it would become. It was an exclusive resort for the well-to-do, and Jews and people of color knew better than to try to stay in any of its three luxurious hotels. Although a mixture of Hawaii's ethnic/racial groups lived in its residential section, Waikiki was carefully maintained as a respectable area. The war had changed Waikiki: tourism halted for the duration, and servicemen had taken over even one of the exclusive hotels. At least a few of the Hotel Street prostitutes saw an opportunity in wartime Waikiki—for pleasure, if not for profit.

When Gabrielson's man told the women to leave, they complained to Captain Benson of the military police, who seemed well acquainted with their affairs. He told them that the police did not run things anymore, and that his commander did not care where they lived as long as they did not ply their trade outside the Hotel Street district. All this was relayed to Gabrielson, whose angry queries were met with official but vague statements that the military police would take care of such issues in the future.[23]

Gabrielson, angry but thinking strategically, issued Administrative Order No. 83, acknowledging the military control of vice in Honolulu. He then had the memo leaked to the Honolulu *Star-Bulletin*. He wanted to watch the military squirm.

To reiterate what must have slipped many minds in the face of the public and highly regulated system, prostitution was illegal in Honolulu. It was also outlawed through the federal level May Act, which . . . stated that the federal government would, where local officials were unwilling or unable to the job themselves, stamp out prostitution aimed at the servicemen. The May Act was not just window-dressing; it was rigorously enforced throughout the country. Though most of the military administration in Hawaii preferred the regulated brothels to what they saw as the alternative, more dangerous system, no one wanted to take the credit for running the brothels and breaking federal law—least of all General Emmons, the military governor of Hawaii. . . .

In a letter to Police Chief Gabrielson . . . Emmons made his position clear:

> I desire to inform you that your understanding regarding the responsibility for vice conditions in the City and County of Honolulu is in error. . . . No directive had been issued to the Police Department in any way limiting its responsibility for any phase of law enforcement. . . . Cancel Administrative Order No. 83.

Chief Gabrielson, with pleasure, resumed control. But the issue had been settled only on the administrative level. The MPs and the vice squad continued to skirmish, with the vice squad trying to round the women up and return them to their living quarters in the quarter, and the MPs undermining those efforts whenever possible. The MPs told the women they were within their rights.

The women of Hotel Street were caught in the middle. They did not want to go back to the prewar order. It was one thing to choose to service 100 men a day, but it was another to abide by rues that denied them their basic freedoms. They framed the issue that way, and they went on strike.[24]

For close to three weeks in June of 1942 a group of prostitutes walked a picket line outside the police department headquarters, which was just a few blocks from the district. The police headquarters also housed Major Steer and his MPs. The women carried

placards protesting their treatment and the rules that restricted their freedoms. This strike was not for better pay but for better treatment, for fuller rights of citizenship.

While no documentation of their *specific* arguments at that time exists, a clear line of reasoning appears in an angry appeal to Honolulu's citizens written by a prostitute in the fall of 1944. In it, she asserted her right to freedom of movement and to adequate police protection, basing her claims on a traditional liberal concept of citizenship. "We pay some of the highest taxes in this town," she wrote. "Where, I ask you, are the beneficial results of our taxes?"

This woman and many of her coworkers believed they were doing vital war work. In addition to the obvious but controversial contributions, the prostitutes had acquitted themselves well after the Pearl Harbor attack and had been willing participants in war-bond drives. One madam had received a special citation from Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morganthau for selling $132,000 in war bonds, most of them, no doubt, to fellow sex workers. The prostitutes believed their good citizenship and patriotism should be recognized as such.[25] The striking prostitutes gambled that the military police would keep the police department from using force against them and that their military supporters would back them up. What they did took courage, for they had no public allies.

Establishment Hawaii did its best to ignore the strike, and the newspapers carried not a single word about it. General Emmons, however, saw the situation as both embarrassing and serious, and moved quickly to resolve it. . . . Though he had the power under martial law to order the police to do as he wanted, he instead argued his case in what one participant called a "constructive and cooperative" manner. His arguments were simple and straightforward, avoiding the complicated terrains of morality and the political order and focusing instead on the women's working conditions. He said that "the girls are overworked and need periods of rest; that their work is not during daylight hours; that formerly they *could* go to the Coast for a rest and could be replaced by new girls arriving by steamer; that this is not possible today." Emmons *also* offered, on behalf of the military, to take over the unpleasant task of ensuring that the women had their regular medical checkups and inspecting the houses for breaches of the sanitary code. The police department, he assured all concerned, would have the right to enforce all other laws and regulations that applied to the women. The police commission and Chief Gabrielson, who really had little choice in the matter, accepted the compromise. The prostitutes ended their strike. Their right to appear in public and to live outside the brothels, while fragile, was won.[26]

Ultimately, the struggle over Hotel Street was not played out in terms of gender, or even with the prostitutes as players. As the prostitutes had seen an opportunity in the context between the military government and the police department, which acted as an agent of the traditional *haole* elite, so too another group saw an opportunity in the divided lines of authority. During the war years a new elite was taking shape, drawn largely from the more liberal range of the *haole* community. By mid-1944, with Hawaii completely out of harm's way and Allied victory seemingly a matter of time, some in Hawaii had begun to look to the future, toward statehood and economic development.

In trying to orchestrate Hawaii's future and maneuver toward statehood, [they] worried about ungovernable prostitutes and regulated brothels. Open prostitution somehow seemed to confirm mainland stereotypes of Hawaii as a primitive, licentious place populated by dark-skinned "natives." . . . One of the [group's] earliest goals was to demolish the unbridled vice district.

The Social Protection Committee of the Honolulu Council of Social Agencies [which] led the way in fighting the regulated brothel system . . . resembled the kind of well-educated, modern reformers who had closed down regulated brothel systems in dozens of American cities during the Progressive Era.[27] On 1 August 1944, the committee issued a bulletin, "Prostitution in Honolulu," that described (in absolutely untitillating prose) the Hotel Street system. The bulletin included a map that showed where every known prostitute in Honolulu lived. The message was clear: the prostitutes live in YOUR neighborhood.[28] . . .

As military control waned, the first phase of the antiprostitution campaign went into effect. All prostitutes were ordered to vacate houses in residential areas and to move back into the district, to the houses in which "they carry on their trade." News of this dictate was carried in the Honolulu newspapers.[29]

One month after the prostitutes had been ordered back into the district, Governor Stainback joined the antiprostitution campaigns, . . . in part, as [a way of] attack[ing] military control [and, in part, as an effort to link] interests with the progressive elite. . . . On 21 September 1944, in one of his first major reversals of military policy, Governor Stainback ordered the regulated brothels shut down. The Social Protection Committee had maneuvered very cleverly, using their greatest weapon: publicity, or at least the threat of publicity. In letters to Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Furlong, and General Richardson, the committee asked whether each supported the system of regulated brothels. The admirals and the general replied, in writing, that they did not support the system. This was, of course, official policy, even though military practice was quite different. When Stainback closed the brothels, the military offered no resistance. A public debate about the issue, in the face of a determined campaign by an influential group of citizens, was not something anyone in the armed forces could weather. The leaders of the Social Protection Committee knew that.[30]

The actual closing of the brothels went smoothly. On 22 September three uniformed members of the vice squad visited the brothels during working hours, between 11 A.M. and 1:30 P.M. The madams had already heard about the governor's order issued the day before and so had the customers. Business had virtually come to a halt in most houses. The vice-squad officers informed the madams that after 2 P.M. any acts of prostitution committed on their premises would subject them to arrest. The prostitutes were told not to practice their trade, in the houses or elsewhere, and to move out of the district as soon as possible.

According to newspaper reports, many of the prostitutes welcomed the end of an era, and not without humor. One greeted the announcement that she could no longer "practice prostitution" with the old witticism, "I don't practice, I'm an expert." Another woman, wearing "an abbreviated red apron, short-short skirt and a pair of cowboy riding boots," gave a loud "whoopie" at the news. Madams took the news in a variety of ways. . . . But in general, they seemed to feel they had little about which to complain. One, and probably not the most successful, had voluntarily paid taxes on an income of $383,000 in 1943. . . . No one had expected the wartime boom to last; most prostitutes and madams had only meant to make the most money they could while it lasted. With the new clampdown in effect, some prostitutes left Honolulu as soon as they could arrange transportation back to the mainland. [Others continued to work outside of brothels.] . . .

The struggle of the Honolulu prostitutes, in retrospect, was charged not only by the usual issues surrounding illicit sex trade and lines of authority, but by concerns specific to prestatehood Hawaii. The women who made such claims on the citizens of Hawaii were white women, and their public presence and vocal demands called into question all the associations of race and gender and the ideology of the purity of white women to be defended against the sexual threat of colored races that were implicit and sometimes explicit in underpinning Hawaii's social structure. In the history of prostitution in America, many have justified the "sacrifice" of lower-class women to "protect" the purity of women of the middle and upper classes. The system in Hawaii was in many ways similar, except that race played a crucial role, and the racial lines were more complex in Hawaii than on the mainland. The public struggles—and yes, excesses—of these "impure" white women called the whole ideological system into question.

At least in small part the system had been dependent on the complicity of the white prostitutes. The prostitutes were seen as a means to keep the low-status white service personnel and the plantation workers sexually satisfied. It was crucial to the system that the prostitutes not claim any public role in Hawaii. In fact, in exchange for a great deal of money, the prostitutes (despite their white skin) were supposed to accept total pariah status. They were not to live or visit outside the vice district; they were supposed to remain silent and hidden. They could amass capital, but they could not exercise their economic power in Hawaii. They were required to return to the mainland. But with their strike and with the aid of the military government, the prostitutes had demanded—and in part had gotten—the rights economic power normally guaranteed in the United States. . . .

The prostitutes' strike was only one small and indirect part of a larger movement toward a more pluralistic postwar society in Hawaii. But it is especially significant because it brought together issues of race and gender

in such a way that it worked to undermine the ideology of racial superiority. White prostitutes demanded full rights of citizenship, and while the very public fact of their race had, in some small way, helped to undermine Hawaii's racial hierarchy, their race was not sufficient to guarantee their rights. Instead, the public power they were able to display for a short while in wartime Hawaii depended on the utility the federal authorities found in them.

The prostitutes' temporary victory—their ability to emerge from the dangerous shadows and to operate as legitimate, fully protected war workers—could not have happened without the intervention of the State, in the form of the military government. The concern of the federally authorized participants was not with the rights of prostitutes (though several seemed to have some respect or liking for members of the profession), but with winning the war. [What that] intervention . . . signaled [was] the increased and continuing willingness of the federal government to impose its nationally minded agendas upon local entities. . . . The ways in which socially marginal groups like the prostitutes of Hotel Street could succeed in furthering their struggles by publicly aligning themselves with the relatively autonomous federal government's often mercurial concerns would become an ever-more critical characteristic of social change movements in the postwar years.

NOTES

1. Herman Gist, interviewed by David Farber, Germantown, Md., Dec. 1989.

2. Barbara Meils Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition* (New York, 1987).

3. Memo from Commissioner Houston to the Honolulu Police Commission, "Abatement of Houses of Prostitution in the City and County of Honolulu" [ca. Sept. 1, 1941], Lawrence M. Judd Papers [hereafter LJ], Hawaii State Archives (HA).

4. Quoted by James Cummings in a letter to Dr. Theodore Richards, July 11, 1944, "Prostitution" file, Governor Stainback Papers, HA.

5. "Why Talk about Prostitution," *Hawaii* (July 31, 1944): 5.

6. Eric. A. Funnel, "Venereal Disease Control: A Bedtime Story," *Hawaii Medical Journal* (Nov.–Dec. 1942): 67–71; Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue*.

7. Frank Steer interviewed by David Farber, Kailua, Oahu, Hawaii, June 1989; Brian Nicol, "Interview with Col. Frank Steer," *Honolulu* (Nov. 1981): 83.

8. Jean O'Hara, "My Life as a Honolulu Prostitute," ([ca. Nov. 1944]), Hawaii Collection of the University of Hawaii (HC-UH), 15–16.

9. Ibid., 15–18.

10. Letter to Governor Stainback by Senator Alice Kamokila Campbell, Feb. 5, 1945, "Prostitution" folder, Governor Stainback Papers (GS), HA.

11. Social Protection Committee, *Prostitution in Honolulu, Bulletin* 1 (Aug. 1, 1944): 2–3.

12. Quote from former brothel employee Adeline Naniole, interviewed by Vivian Lee, March 2, 1979, Women Workers in Pineapple, Ethnic Studies Oral History Project, University of Hawaii, 769; interviews with Colonel Steer, Herman Gist, and Robert Cowan.

13. Dr. G. Gary Schram, "Suppressed Prostitution," *Honolulu Advertiser* (Oct. 6, 1944); interviews with "C" (July 1990, by telephone); Herman Gist, Elton Brown (Nov. 1990, by telephone).

14. Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood* (Baltimore, 1982), 96.

15. Lt. Commander Carl G. Stockholm, "The Effects of Closing Houses of Prostitution on the Navy" (paper given at the Meeting of the Social Protection Committee), Feb. 7, 1945, HC-UH.

16. Elton Brown, telephone interview, Nov. 1990.

17. Ibid.

18. "Hotel Street Harry," *Midpacifican* (August 15, 1943): 10; Frank Steer interview, June 1989; Peggy Hickok, "In the Midst of War," *Hawaii* (June 30, 1942): 17.

19. O'Hara, "My Life."

20. "Hotel Street Harry," *Midpacifian* (Jan. 15, 1944): 10; Naniole, 771; and "Police Clamp Lid on Houses," *Honolulu Advertiser* (Sept. 24, 1944): 1.

21. O'Hara, 41.

22. Elizabeth Fee, "Venereal Disease: The Wage of Sin?" in Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, *Passion and Power* (Philadelphia, 1989), 189.

23. 014.12 Civil Authorities, Decimal File 1941-45, RG 338, MGH, National Archives (NA).

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25. O'Hara, "My Life," 47.

26. 014.12 Civil Authorities, Decimal File 1941-45, RG 338 MGH, NA.

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29. "Residential Areas Banned Prostitutes," *Honolulu Advertiser* (July 20, 1944).

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ALICE KESSLER-HARRIS

Rethinking Women's Work during World War II

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, the unemployment lines characteristic of the 1930s vanished. Labor shortages enabled women to reenter jobs in industry. During the war, they experienced new vocational opportunities; encountered fewer barriers based on marital status, age, and race; and enjoyed public praise for their patriotic contributions to the economy. The federal government encouraged women's industrial work, personifying the worker as "Rosie the Riveter" in a widely disseminated poster.

While the war offered a novel opportunity to dismantle the sex segregation of jobs, the long-term results proved disappointing. Most Americans, men and women, expected that when men came home, women would happily exchange their industrial tools for brooms, vacuum cleaners, and baby bottles. This belief did not square with the economic realities for most American families: polls showed that up to 85 percent of the women who worked for wages during the war needed to continue working and hoped that they would be next in line after veterans returned to their jobs.

In the following essay, labor historian Alice Kessler-Harris analyzes employment data to reveal that women's wartime work can be interpreted both as exceptional and as extending prewar trends. How were women forced or coerced to leave well-paying jobs after the war ended? When you study the essay's endnotes, observe how many women scholars and government officials wrote about wartime employment in the 1940s. Consider that many of these professional women were likely the beneficiaries of the expansion of higher education for women during the Progressive Era.

Depression and war have opposite effects on the economy. One prompts efficiency, constraint, cautious investment; the other encourages industrial expansion—even a spirit of reckless gambling. . . . Where workers had to plead for jobs in the thirties, in the early forties industry begged for workers. And when the army had soaked up the residue of unemployed men, employers turned to women. Unprecedented opportunity now confronted women who months earlier had pleaded for work. Was this to be a breakthrough?—a turning point that would signal the end of discrimination against women in the labor market?

It certainly looked like it. In many ways, this war duplicated the experience of World War I. Women found jobs in areas previously closed to them and, once there, proved to be effective workers. The statistical data reveal a dramatic influx of women—five million between 1940 and 1944—into the labor force and new openings in the heavy industries that had been tightly defended against them. [Many] historians . . . have concluded, as a result, that World War II was, in [William] Chafe's words, "a milestone for women in America." From that perspective, the war serves to explain and justify the new expectations of [women in] the fifties.[1] . . . The war, [Sheila Tobias and Lisa Anderson] argue, opened doors, changed attitudes, made women aware of possibilities they had not previously considered.

Excerpted from ch. 3 of *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). Reprinted by permission of the author and publisher. Notes have been edited and renumbered.

To some extent [the claim that World War II was a milestone for women as paid workers] is undoubtedly true. As in World War I, women who had always worked fought hard to retain their gains when the war ended. But viewing the war this way places too much weight on the role of a single unpredictable event in altering women's behavior. . . . In fact, women had already begun to change their working patterns in the two preceding decades. They responded to war not as shiny new instruments honed to do their bit in a larger design, but out of the continuity of their own historical experience. In the 1920s and 1930s, different women had struggled to participate in the labor market in their own ways—some seeking the challenge of a career, others organizing for higher standards of living. The war provided opportunities for both kinds of women to continue these struggles. It did not relieve the tensions surrounding their dual roles but did cast a different light on them.

The second World War provides a place to see these tensions from a different perspective than the depression. Asked their reasons for wage-earning in both periods, women offered the same explanations. Wage work contributed to family life; financial need justified potential neglect of the home. . . . Where the depression had prompted women to apologize for paid work—to present it as a last resort to preserve family life—the war focused attention on women's positive contributions to labor force needs. Satisfying family requirements, once a seemingly insurmountable barrier to wage work, became a practical problem to be solved quickly so that the nation could meet the war machine's insatiable hunger for personnel.

The changed perspective made all the difference in the reception women met in the labor force, and there is no doubt that the war raised the level of their material well-being. But whether it permanently altered their relation to wage work is another question. Women would not willingly have given up their family roles even if social sanctions were lifted and support services helped them to do so. And employers and male workers could not readily overcome a tradition of segmentation so closely related to masculinity. Economist Theresa Wolfson put it this way: "It is not easy to forget the propaganda of two decades even in the face of a national emergency such as a great war. Women themselves doubted their ability to do a man's job. Married women with families were loath to leave their homes; society had made so little provision for the thousands of jobs that a homemaker must tackle. And when they finally come to the plants, the men resent them as potential scabs."[2] The resulting ambivalence led women to weigh the tremendous pressure to take jobs against the sacrifices required of their time and by their families. . . .

As the European war stimulated production in 1940 and 1941, the residue of unemployment began to lessen, though men, not women, benefited from the early build-up. Women were told to "Do the home job better" or channeled into volunteer jobs. . . . As government programs began early in 1941 to "warm up" the unemployed to heavy industry, twenty men were offered places to every woman. Some 700,000 workers received training in industrial skills in the last half of 1941. Only 1 percent of these were female. Employers believed women were not suited to most jobs and declared themselves unwilling to hire women for 81 percent of available production jobs.

Attitudes began to change after Pearl Harbor. Early in 1942, it became clear that the draft would decimate the ranks of production workers. The government issued a nondiscrimination directive. For the first time, employers sought out women for nontraditional jobs and occasionally offered the kinds of services that made wage work more viable for those who had . . . children to care for. They sometimes provided day care centers on site. Shopping and banking facilities appeared in plants. Convenient transportation and hot lunches attracted women to factory work. As men left jobs for the armed services, women entered them. Still, from September 1942 to September 1943, the number of people in the work force remained at the 1940 level.[3]

By mid-1942 planners recognized that this was not enough. Calculating that only 29 percent of America's fifty-two million adult women had jobs, the War Manpower Commission started a campaign to recruit women in areas of labor shortage. . . . The federal government lowered the age limit for the employment of women from eighteen to sixteen years. Patriotic appeals to women accompanied tales of their special stake in winning this war in order to stop Hitler from reducing women to "sex slaves" or driving them

back to their kitchens. The Women's Bureau described desperate entrepreneurs who harangued women at street corners to come to work, or bribed high school principals to send workers to their plants. The radio did its bit, popularizing tunes like "Rosie the Riveter," which told listeners about "red, white and blue" Rosie who was "making history working for victory." . . . By February 1943, *Fortune* magazine declared the margin for victory to be "woman power" and suggested drafting them if they did not come forward voluntarily to work in industry. And in July 1943 the War Production Board declared itself in need of a million and a half more women within a year.[4]

Women responded to these appeals in large numbers but not with the kind of unthinking enthusiasm that the statistics seem to demonstrate. Fully three-quarters of the women who worked for pay during the war had worked before, and one and a half million more would have entered the labor force anyway in the normal course of events. Less than five million of the nineteen million women who worked for wages at some time during the war emergency had not been in the labor force before the war began.[5]

What looks like massive mobilization of women in the war years breaks down on examination to something less startling. Nearly eleven million women held jobs in 1940. At the peak of wartime production in 1945, 19.5 million women were actually earning wages: an apparent increase in absolute numbers of nearly 8.7 million people or 80.5 percent. But a closer look at the figures forces us to modify our assessment of the real change this number implies. In addition to the women actually working in 1940, the Census Bureau counted some three million unemployed and looking for work. An [estimated one million additional women] were discouraged but would have worked if they thought jobs were available.[6] . . . The difference between the resulting figure of 14.8 million and 19.5 million reduces the increase in women workers to 43 percent or 4.7 million new workers in the war years.

But we need to make still further modifications. What percentage of the 4.7 million would have entered the labor force anyway as a result of population growth and maturity? And what percentage would have entered as a product of the continuing twentieth-century trend of women moving into the work force? The first figure can be calculated on the basis of population growth. In 1940, 27.6 percent of the female population over fourteen was in the labor force. They constituted 25.3 percent of all workers. If the same percentage had been in the labor force in 1945, when the population of women numbered 52,860,000, an additional 750,000 workers in round numbers would have joined the labor force, war or no war. But the proportion of women wage earners had been increasing steadily since 1900 and in all likelihood would have climbed in this decade as well. From 1900 to 1940, the female labor force participation rate had increased 23.5 percent, or an average of nearly 6 percent each decade—though there were in fact wide fluctuations from decade to decade. For the half-decade from 1940 to 1945 we can safely add another 3 percent, or 400,000 women, to the 1940 figure as normal growth. In fact, the figures would in all likelihood have been higher, given the possibility that the depression . . . had created a backlog of women eager to try their wings. Subtracting these two groups, then, one might argue that only 3.5 million workers who might not otherwise have entered the labor force did so in the war years—an addition of 25.28 percent to the female work force above the natural and expected increases. Seventy-five percent of these new female workers were married.

Wartime figures reflect the latent tendency of women to seek wage work when normative pressures to stay at home are removed. Considering the unusual (if still inadequate) child care and food services available; the absence of men to whom women ordinarily catered; attractive wages and job opportunities; and a temporary suspension of overt animosity, these data may represent a peak of the number of women willing to work for wages in that period. In the two years after the war ended, women's participation in the work force dropped by a factor of 19 percent—a figure only a trifle lower than the estimated "additional" women who entered wage work as a result of the war. In other words, after the wartime emergency receded, most of the women who remained in the labor force would have been working for wages anyway. There is no way of knowing if the three and a half million new women workers were the same women who dropped out, or were forced out, of the labor force when the war ended. But it seems clear that wartime surveys reporting that 75 to 85 percent of wage-earning women wanted

to keep their jobs at the war's end probably reflected the normal proportion of wage-earning women. Of the two million additional women (above the 1940 level) still in the labor force in 1947, the Women's Bureau estimated that all but 250,000 would have been working in any event. By 1950, the rate of women's participation in the work force had increased to 32 percent—for a net gain of 16 percent over the entire decade. The Census Bureau estimated that without war, natural factors would have yielded seventeen million wage-earning women in 1950. There were in fact eighteen million in that year—only a slight increase above expected growth.[7]

Much has been made of the number of women who entered the work force as an indication of changes in attitude and breakdown of traditional socialization patterns. But from another perspective the figures reflect continuity with previous attempts by some women to break out of traditional roles. Married women had entered the work force during the depression. In the war years, older married women contributed most of the increase that occurred among female workers. Despite publicity given to children left in locked cars while their mothers worked, a government report noted in 1943 that "practically no net expansion occurred among women between 20 and 30 years of age, and only a 6 percent increase of actual over normal employment is estimated for women in the next five-year bracket." In contrast, women over forty-five appeared in the labor force in numbers about 20 percent above what would normally be expected. And of the nearly five million women at work in the spring of 1945 who had not been in the labor force five years earlier, three million were over thirty-five.[8]

These rapid rises in participation rates exceeded those of any other age group in the labor force. They were more rapid for the married than for the unmarried, indicating both the degree to which single women had already been engaged in paid labor and the latent trend for the married with no children at home to want to work. This tendency continued after the war. By November 1946, half of all wage-earning women were over 34.8 years old. And the inclination of younger married women to leave the work force when husbands returned home meant that the proportion of older workers in the labor force would continue to rise. By 1950 there had been a net drop in the rate at which married women aged 25–34 went out to work. Correspondingly, half again as many women aged 45–54 were working for wages as had worked in 1940.[9]

Given the high level of previous work experience among most women in the labor force during the war, it is not surprising that the emergency presented itself as an opportunity to get ahead. Memories of the depression urged women wage earners to get what they could while they could. So for those who had been accustomed to working, war-born opportunities encouraged an aggressive stance and resulted in real gains, at least for the duration of hostilities. African American women, older women, and professional women all took advantage of a reduction in discrimination to enter well-paying jobs.

For Black women, the change was especially dramatic. For generations, they had been denied access to good, skilled jobs that now opened to them. The proportions who entered the labor force did not expand as rapidly as those of white women, reflecting high prewar participation rates. But Black women took advantage of their previous work experience and the labor shortage to move into more desirable jobs. About 20 percent of those who had been domestic servants found work in areas that had previously snubbed them. Where white women moved from laundries into factories, especially in the South, Black women readily took the jobs they vacated. But it took effort to move up into factory jobs. The threat of a mass demonstration in Washington in 1941, while the United States was building up its armaments in preparation for war, drew public attention to discrimination against all African Americans. To head off demonstrations, the federal government created the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) in July 1941.

Sustained by the FEPC as well as by rulings of the War Manpower Commission against discrimination, and actively aided by the National Council of Negro Women, Black women pressed for lucrative factory jobs. In cities like Detroit, where defense work was widespread, large factories imported huge numbers of rural whites to fill jobs for which they initially refused to hire African Americans. Black women there led a series of demonstrations, beginning early in 1942 and lasting for nearly two years, to force local authorities to hire them. These demonstrations—for housing as well as jobs—culminated in the storming of a Ford plant by two busloads of women protesting

discriminatory hiring policies. Progress was slow. Yet for once, protesters had the active support of union locals, some civic agencies, and government policy. Members of UAW locals threatened to walk out of one plant in 1943 unless Black women got jobs. At another plant, union representatives took nine months to win an agreement to hire Black women, and then only after a threat of citywide action. The War Production Board and the U.S. Employment Service repeatedly urged employment of [African Americans].[10]

By war's end the position of Black women workers had improved substantially. They never got some of the best-paying jobs—in steel mills, as welders, ship fitters, and riveters. But the numbers involved in low-paid and low-status domestic work dropped by 15 percent while the number of factory operatives more than doubled, and clerical, sales, and professional workers substantially increased.[11] Ninety percent of the black women at work after the war had been in the labor force in 1940. Their movement into better jobs reflects not changed attitudes but their ability to take timely advantage of enlarged opportunities.

Professional women were equally aggressive. Historian Susan Hartmann has documented the extent to which they worked through their clubs and organizations to press for economic equality. Groups like the American Association of University Women and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs met with the Women's Bureau to design "programs to promote the training, equal treatment and full utilization of women in war production," as well as "to plan for the retention of women's gains after reconversion." These organizations had little understanding of, or sympathy for, the economic problems of poor women or the racial discrimination faced by [women of color.] Rather, they pushed to get [white] women into policy-making positions in war agencies, even denying the need for special Black representation on the Women's Advisory Committee [to the War Manpower Commission]—the only direct pipeline for women into the wartime agencies concerned with utilizing labor effectively. Despite the opposition of organizations representing poorer women, business and professional women continued to support the ERA and paid little attention to such mundane issues as day care.[12] For them, the important thing, as always, was not resolving the home and family issues that might equalize work force opportunities for all women but improving their own relative economic positions. They became entrenched in civil service jobs at the federal and state levels, made inroads into banking and insurance, and moved into administrative jobs in education and health. Though gains remaining after the war ended were relatively small, professional women had nevertheless succeeded in moving out of the holding pattern in which the Depression had placed them.

Two other pieces of evidence suggest that what happened in the war and immediate postwar years represented a response to emergency rather than a shift in attitude. The first emerges from a look at what women did when hostilities ceased; the second, from examining what happened to them in the demobilization period.

When war production ended, large numbers of women simply quit their jobs. The rate at which women chose to leave jobs was at least double, and sometimes triple the rate at which they were discharged. And it was consistently higher than quit rates for men. In the food, clothing, and textile industries, where they had traditionally been employed, women quit jobs at an incredible pace. Women in well-paid jobs—chemical, rubber, and petroleum—quit more slowly than from any other manufacturing jobs.[13] Apparently, more experienced workers who had moved into better-paid jobs wanted to keep their jobs. More newer workers who had spent the war in traditionally female sectors willingly gave their places up.

Employers countered low quit rates by laying off women in the heavy industrial sectors where returning soldiers wanted jobs back. In the two months immediately following V-J Day, women were laid off at a rate . . . double that of men. . . . The biggest involuntary reduction came in the jobs where they had made the biggest gains in wartime and which presumably represented the biggest shift in social attitude—the durable heavy goods industries. Iron and steel manufactories, automobile and machinery makers fired women faster than they fired men. On the other hand, employers clearly sought to retain female employees in the nondurable goods sectors, where they were laid off more slowly than men.

Women's net gains in the war years were, therefore, negligible. They managed to retain a slightly greater share of manufacturing jobs, especially in the durable goods industries, but the general pattern of their employment

remained the same as before the war. Even within manufacturing, the big gains occurred in electrical goods, where the task of assembling tiny parts was said to be suited to nimble fingers. The shift to clerical and office jobs continued. Few women retained skilled crafts jobs. The Women's Bureau concluded a study of Bridgeport, Connecticut, after the war sadly: "Only a few women have been allowed to continue in the newer fields of employment, and thus to continue to use skills learned during the war."[14] Older women, married women, women without at least a high school education, and Black women again had a hard time finding jobs.

Wartime necessity required women's wage work. But it did not release women who worked from the pressure to adhere to old social roles. Women's own urges for better jobs and wages met their match in the pleas for patriotism and service to the community that came from employers, the Labor Department, and the War Manpower Commission. These rationales for wage work produced policies that effectively skirted women's desires for work for its own sake. The never-ending fear that women might be unwilling to leave when the war ended led government policy makers and employers to make it clear that women ought to work only temporarily. And this too required continuing patterns of behavior that perpetuated the divided labor market with all of its psychic underpinnings.

Because of the ambivalence surrounding women's work, policies designed to make it easier for them to enter the labor force emerged erratically. Women found themselves without representation on the influential War Manpower Commission. Instead, the Commission created a Women's Advisory Committee in September 1942. That committee was authorized to recommend policy regarding women. But its recommendations were channeled through a Management–Labor Committee and thence to the WMC. The commission turned down Mary Anderson's request for one or two representatives on the Management–Labor Committee, offering instead a seat without a vote to Margaret Hickey, who chaired the Women's Advisory Committee. Three steps removed from the seat of power, the WAC operated in a vacuum.[15] . . .

. . . Women in good jobs found themselves facing male pressure to be feminine, and sometimes hostility for violating traditional roles. . . . Administrators focused attention on the ways women managed to remain feminine despite hardships. The director of War Public Services for the Federal Works Authority (FWA)—in charge of expanding facilities for the war effort—told an interviewer in 1943 that women war workers deserved special commendation for the attention they paid to grooming. "They bring glamor to the job," she said. The personnel manager of a plant confirmed the importance of grooming: "We like the girls to be neat and trim and well put together. It helps their morale. It helps our prestige, too."[16] Women workers sustained and supported this stance. They struggled to be able to wear their own clothing, even where it might be dangerously floppy. One plant posted drawings of scalped women to get them to tuck hair into bonnets or nets. Overt hostility kept women in their places, too. . . . Catcalls, whistles, and hisses faced women who walked onto the production floor for the first time. Young girls who became pages on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange met wolfish whistles.

Employers adopted promotion and training policies that played into these role divisions. At the suggestion of the War Department, female training included frequent analogies to household work. Supervisors attempted to convince new recruits that any woman who could use a needle could handle a welding rod, or that cutting out sheet metal resembled cutting a pattern for a dress. Employers' willingness to use women was governed by immediate needs. They refused to integrate women into training programs that might provide access to skills beyond those essential for their initial tasks. For temporary help, management reasoned, that would have been a wasted investment. One group of women complained in late 1944 that "management is engaging in a vicious and deliberate campaign to induce women to quit by transferring them from one department to another, by assigning women the least desirable jobs, and by an unceasing psychological drive to harass women out of the plants."[17]

The struggle for equal pay illustrates another level of ambivalence. For years, trade unions had argued for equal pay for women only when the jobs of [mostly male] unionists were threatened by women's lower wages. Women's quest for equal pay on the grounds of equity had met little response. Now women were literally taking men's jobs, as earlier it

had been feared they would do. To pay them at a man's scale undermined the barriers that divided women's work from men's. To pay them below it undermined the value of the job and threatened men's wage scales when they returned to reclaim their jobs. Manufacturers under contract to the government, and paid on a cost-plus basis, could readily agree to raise wages. Those in the private sector preferred to retain barriers. Trade unions concerned with job protection tended to fight for equal pay [during the war.] . . . Wishing to avoid chaos in the labor market as well as to promote "mobility of the labor force and maximum utilization of women workers," government agencies agreed to support labor and attempted to persuade management to go along with equal pay. A Bureau of Labor statistician acknowledged

Frances Green, Margaret "Peg" Kirchner, Ann Waldner, and Blanche Osborne emerging from their four-engine, B-17 Flying Fortress, "Pistol Packin' Mama," during ferry training at Lockbourne Army Airfield, Ohio, 1944. See the name these pilots gave to their plane. They were among the 1,074 Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) who flew noncombat missions during World War II. Although 38 died in the line of duty, WASPs were not eligible for military insurance or GI benefits. At the end of the war, the WASPs were disbanded. Not until 1978 were the survivors offered veteran's status. In 2009, when barely 300 of the original 1,000 WASPs were still alive, the WASPs were awarded a Congressional Gold Medal. (Courtesy of the National Archives, Washington, D.C.)

the realities involved when she wrote in 1947 that there were three reasons for granting equal pay to women: justice, sustaining men's wage rates, and increasing purchasing power. The second, she argued, was by far the most powerful.[18]

Recognizing the pressures to sustain wages in a period when wage rises were strictly limited, the National War Labor Board issued General Order No. 16 in November 1942, permitting employers to "equalize the wage or salary rates paid to females with rates paid to males for comparable quality and quantity of work." But the Congress failed to pass a companion bill that would have prohibited wage differentials based on sex. And only five states—with about a quarter of the nation's female wage earners—enacted their own laws. Furthermore, since these laws were concerned primarily with . . . sustaining men's wages, they . . . prevent[ed] women from [undercutting] men's earnings, [but did not address] the major source of discriminatory wages for women—the historic differentiation of male and female jobs, where jobs defined as female carried a lower wage rate. As a result, the gap between men's and women's wages increased during the war. Women were earning far more in dollar terms than before the war, and more than they would earn thereafter. Still, the average full-time woman worker earned only 55 percent of what her male co-worker earned: a drop from the 1939 figure of about 62 percent.[19]

Women protested the vagueness of federal guidelines and agitated for additional protection. In Dayton, Ohio, angry women told Elizabeth Christman of the Women's Bureau that despite federal guidelines on equal pay embodied in General Order No. 16, the Frigidaire plant in which they worked continued to hire women at lower rates than [what] men would be paid for the same jobs, and to violate their seniority. . . . Christman reported that hundreds of grievances had been filed by female employees of General Motors in Ohio against rate discrimination. The same women objected to the War Labor Board's use of "comparable" to define work that should be paid equally. They wanted to substitute "same pay for same work" in order to avoid misunderstanding and confusion.[20]

Like the struggle for equal pay, the struggle for access to trade unions suffered from the ambiguity of women's [work during a] wartime emergency. Unions that had never had women members, like the International Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Welders and Helpers, continued to deny them membership until it was clear that the war emergency necessitated it. Unionized men complained that women would "spoil the job" or "break the morale of the plant." Women who did not understand informal work rules tended to exhaust themselves in rapid bursts of work and to work without stint. Some unionists struck to prevent women from being hired. Others, like those in steel, auto, rubber, and machine tools, accepted or actively recruited women into their ranks but denied them upgrading and frequently continued discriminatory job classifications.[21] . . . Women complained that men were not fighting hard enough for such things as equal pay. And they wanted maternity leaves without loss of seniority, good day care centers, and time off to care for sick children.

Yet the women who joined unions benefited nonetheless. In the aftermath of the great organizing drives of the 1910s, unionization had spread over the industrial Northeast. Union shops and maintenance of membership agreements—under which incoming workers automatically joined the collective bargaining unit—provided unions with a steady influx of members as war industry expanded. Recruiting three and a half million women into heavy industry where they had not previously been employed increased fourfold the number of female union members within two years. Economist Gladys Dickason estimated that at the beginning of the war only 800,000 wage-earning women were unionized. They made up 9.4 percent of unionized workers. By 1944 more than three million women constituted 22 percent of trade union membership.[22]

Whether they fared well or ill was a matter of union politics. The strongest voice for egalitarian policies came from the left wing of the union movement. The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, whose membership was 35 percent female by 1944, had an equal proportion of women on its executive council and managed to end discriminatory pay entirely. The United Rubber Workers included an equal pay clause in 142 of its agreements. The United Auto Workers developed perhaps the most complete policy-making apparatus. It attempted to get women involved in the union administrative structure. It held rallies where it encouraged women to be active in their shop committees as well as in their communities.

In the spring of 1944, the UAW War Policy Division set up its own Women's Bureau to serve the union's 300,000 female members. R. J. Thomas, UAW president, announced that the new bureau was to "give special consideration to seniority, safety standards, maternity leave practices, and other problems relating to the employment of women."[23] . . .

From the beginning, the [Women's] Bureau concerned itself with the tricky issue of how to involve women in general trade union issues while it prepared them for inevitable postwar layoffs. Mildred Jeffrey, at its head, began studying "the effects of cutbacks on unemployment of women workers" as early as May 1944. She described the situation then as "already acute in some areas" and urged a national conference to defuse their objections to being fired. She wanted "our women," she wrote, to "fully understand the problems which the International faces."[24]

The conference that met in December covered a wide variety of issues. Its 150 representatives passed resolutions asking for "in-plant" cafeterias to sell hot food and requesting counseling services that would include advice about family problems as well as work. . . . Members asked for maternity leaves without loss of seniority, insurance plans that included maternity benefits, improved child-care facilities designed to continue after the war emergency, a guaranteed annual wage, and unemployment benefit policies that did not discriminate against women.[25]

For all these ambitious long-range goals, when it came to the issue of [postwar] layoffs, women workers acquiesced. They readily acknowledged that the union faced a difficult problem in reconciling the competing interests of returning veterans with those of newly hired women. Female representatives recognized that women would be "the first to feel the impact of reconversion lay-offs" yet went on to endorse a seniority system that gave job preference to a man who had worked under UAW jurisdiction for even the briefest period before the war over a woman who had been in the union for the duration.[26] Better than most unions, the UAW attempted to serve its female members. It protected and extended their rights as union members. Yet, though it supported federal bills for full employment, it too succumbed to a pattern that saw most unions unceremoniously discard their female members at war's end.

Ambivalence toward women working during the war showed up even in the provision of support services necessary for them to work effectively. While almost everybody acknowledged the difficulties involved when a woman undertook wage labor in addition to household chores, few offered concrete suggestions for lightening the load. In fact, the opposite happened. Defense contractors asked for, and routinely got, permission to suspend maximum-hour legislation, and a woman with children to care for might be coerced into working nine or ten hours a day in a six-day week. If she took a day off for family needs, she was berated as unpatriotic. In its concern to attract "womanpower," *Fortune* sympathized with the working mother who had "marketing, cooking, laundering and cleaning to attend to" and wondered how long she could "stand up under a twelve- or fourteen-hour day."[27] Yet when it came to setting up services, only a few plants extended more than limited help. Lest women become accustomed to amenities and too comfortable at work, little attempt was made to accommodate them even at the peak of national need. Communal kitchens and shared cleaning were rare. Most factories provided hot lunches only after a struggle. And though occasionally one reads of banking services brought to the door, only the model plants of Kaiser Industries offered anything like the British experience of factory-delivered laundry services, packaged ready-to-eat foods, and special shops.[28] . . .

Provision of even limited services stopped short when it came to help with mothering. The War Manpower Commission declared its policy to be one of actively recruiting women without children under fourteen and then added that "this principle should not be construed to mean that women who are responsible for the care of young children and who desire to work are to be deprived of an opportunity for training or employment."[29] But such language militated against an active campaign for child-care facilities. And the Commission went on to appeal to mothers of young children to remain at home and to ask employers not to recruit them until "all other sources of local labor supply have been exhausted in order that established family life will not be unnecessarily disrupted."[30] The Commission never spoke consistently, however, In one critical industrial area, the War Production Board noted, the WMC pleaded with women to get

into the war plants, while local leaders urged them to leave the plants and stay home with their children.

The women who worked in industry had no direct influence on developing federal child-care policy. The Children's Bureau in the Department of Labor included female early-childhood experts, and professional women and social workers sat on the Women's Advisory Committee, but much of their advice was simply ignored. . . . Left almost entirely to bureaucrats, child care became a political football, tossed about in the public press as it became the focal point of hostility to women earning wages. . . . [According to a trade union chaplain,] "Too many mothers of families are working in war plants, not because of necessity nor for reasons of patriotism but because they are drawn by the lure of huge wages." Behind the specter of the disrupted family followed that of juvenile delinquency. In the spring of 1943, a seventeen-year-old was arrested for paying thirteen-year-old girls twenty-five cents apiece to "play" with men. Had all their mothers been at home, it was argued, this could never have happened. As if to underscore the concern, the Senate Subcommittee on Education and Labor held hearings on juvenile delinquency in the winter of 1943.[31]

Confused by the mixed messages and divided over the child-care issue, Congress vacillated. At first it seemed satisfied to leave the problem in the hands of local communities—a solution approved by the Children's Bureau, but which completely failed to provide facilities for all those who needed them. Not content to leave child care in such disarray, and prodded by publicity about inadequately supervised children, President Roosevelt freed emergency construction funds, under the 1941 Lanham Act, to build facilities for child care. . . .

Problems of coordinating separate federal and state agencies combined with ambivalence at all levels to produce an underfunded and entirely unsatisfactory program. The first project under the FWA's childcare program was approved in August 1942. But funds were "slow and insufficient" and even when the flow started, limited staffing reduced the numbers of children centers could care for and limited their hours. . . . By August 1943, although 53,000 children were enrolled in FWA centers, reports began to spread that they were underutilized: the *Chicago Times* ran a story headlined "WAR NURSERIES LACK CHILDREN: TWO MAY CLOSE." The centers were spottily and inconveniently located. Their hours were too short. Their fees were often too high. . . . Nursery workers, often rapidly selected and poorly trained, were identified in the public mind as poor people more interested in income than in children. By September, the FWA acknowledged that the centers were operating at only a quarter of capacity.[32]

. . . Those who sought to provide services for working mothers did so apologetically. "We have," said Florence Kerr, then director of the FWA child-care project, "what amounts to a national policy that the best service a mother can do is rear her children in her home. . . . But we are in a war. . . . Whether we like it or not, mothers of young children are at work. . . . So we do need care centers." Because they reflected the conviction that mothers of young children had no business in the labor force, the programs were geared not to the needs or mothers but to those of employers. They were, as one panel of educators and union leaders reported, "not intended as a substitute for the home, but rather as an aid to parents who face unusual problems arising from the war emergency." . . . The FWA came up with a most appealing slogan to handle the contradiction implicit in seeking funds for children whose mothers really ought to have been at home. "Men are needed on the battle front. Women are needed at the home front. Men are needed with minds clear and steady. Women are needed with attention for their work undivided."[33] To help their husbands, mothers needed day care.

Insistence on maintaining feminine roles had serious consequences. Since their right to be at work was never fully asserted, women were left vulnerable, after the war, to the removal of such pitiful services as existed. And this insistence accounts for the reluctance of many women to help out during the war. Faced with the failure of a massive campaign to recruit women in the Detroit area in the fall of 1942, the War Manpower Commission turned to the Women's Advisory Committee to help find "the reasons for the slow response." The Committee replied swiftly. Women would not leave their homes, they argued, "in really large numbers until they had assurance that supplementary community adjustments in the form of child-care centers and other community

facilities would be provided, and also, in some instances, until they had better assurance of employer acceptance."[34]

[There is little evidence to] suggest that the war was either a turning point or a milestone. Neither the lives of women nor the way industry responded to them in the immediate postwar years suggests such a conclusion. Questions the war had brought to the fore—like equal pay, child care, and community services for wage earning women—lost immediacy as women faced the reality of poorly paid jobs or none at all. The question of whether women should or should not work once again assumed ideological proportions as the labor market offered women more limited opportunities and taking advantage of them created some family stress.

Reactions to the end-of-war layoffs varied. Young women tended to accept cuts philosophically. On Wall Street, sixty-six young women who had worked as pages and clerks on the floor of the stock exchange for the first time all expected to lose their jobs as the war ended. A sympathetic reporter commented, "Most of the girls really don't care. . . . they have learned that Wall Street is not yet adjusted to the presence of women between 10:00 A.M. and 3 P.M."[35] Experienced women who lost good jobs were not as quiet. They stormed employment agencies, wrote angry letters, demanded action from the Women's Bureau, and queued endlessly for jobs. To no avail.

Women who had never worked before tended to move back to the home. It came as no surprise to them, according to Frieda Miller, who had succeeded Mary Anderson as director or the Women's Bureau in 1944, that they were the first to be fired, nor did they particularly want to "get ahead at the expense of veterans." Women of childbearing age gave birth to the baby boom. But the normal increase in the number of women eager to find jobs was enough to rekindle the old debate as to whether or not they ought to work. As in the 1930s, even those who supported wage-earning for women made sharp distinctions between the need to work and the desire to do so. A 1946 *Fortune* survey asked if "a married woman who has no children under 16 and whose husband makes enough to support her should or should not be allowed to take a job if she wants to." Only a third of the men and two-fifths of the women queried believed they should be allowed to take jobs. *Fortune* noted a sharp class division—more than half of the prosperous women answering favored women's freedom to work. But only 35 percent of the poor women agreed. They cited two main reasons in explanation: people who needed jobs would be deprived of them, and a woman's place was in the home.[36]

But which women needed jobs? asked Lucy Greenbaum in the *New York Times Magazine*. They were, she answered, those whose husbands would not return from the war, or who would return injured; or those who would never marry because the war had decimated the ranks of men. Then she added a new category. There were those who *wanted* to work: those who found happiness in a job, who found the child-rearing role unduly restrictive or who, having experienced the relative independence and responsibility of wage earning, would simply refuse "to retreat to the home."[37]

Against the women who wanted to work, traditionalists directed a stream of vituperation in the immediate postwar years. Family life depended on their staying at home, so it was morally wrong for such women to seek jobs. Women, argued Agnes Meyer in the *Atlantic Monthly*, were needed "to restore a security to our insecure world." She called on them to resist pressure to enter the labor market and to renounce any job except that of housewife and mother. "What ails these women," she asked, "who consciously or unconsciously reject their children? . . . The poor child whose mother has to work has some inner security because he knows in his little heart that his mother is sacrificing herself for his well-being. But the neglected child from a well-to-do home, who realizes instinctively that his mother prefers her job to him, often hates her with a passionate intensity." This was, according to Marynia Farnham and Ferdinand Lundberg, authors of the best-selling *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*, as it should be. Women, they suggested, "would do well to recapture those functions in which they have demonstrated superior capacity. Those are, in general, the nurturing functions around the home."[38] . . .

If women, despite their natural bent, insisted on entering [male-dominated] fields, the consensus held that they deserved to be discriminated against. The psychic maladjustment that led them to leave their homes made them intrinsically poor risks in the office. They were emotionally unstable, quarreled too much, and fomented feuds in the office. They lacked the "gift for teamwork that makes for

coordinated research" and did not have "the focused imagination that makes a man work steadfastly on a long project." As professionals they were indecisive, as unionists they were disloyal. Worst of all, their interest in work distracted attention from what should have been a primary concern with the home.[39]

Few advocates of jobs for women engaged in debate at that level. Instead they responded in two ways. Women's Bureau and government policy makers proposed . . . counseling . . . women into jobs expected to have little attraction for men. Frances Perkins, then Secretary of Labor, urged that some doors through which women had passed during the war be kept open after it ended. She advocated public health and welfare work "as professions in which 'excellent' opportunities should be available to women."[40] Frieda Miller argued that women "would like to retain, some if not all, of the gains" made during the war. But the Women's Bureau was pragmatic about the possibilities. In 1944 it prepared a policy statement describing what would happen to women's jobs in power laundries, where they had taken over virtually all operations. "Work as washman and extractor operator may be crossed from the list for women unless the pay is so low as not to attract competent men. The Army has given many men training in these jobs, and servicemen should have first chance at the work if they want it. . . ."

For other women the fight to retain wartime gains revolved around their pay. By war's end, as we have seen, equal pay had been accepted in principle by some trade unions and five states. In Congress, Representatives Mary Norton, Claude Pepper, and Wayne Morse introduced a bill in 1945 to insure equal pay and opportunity to women. The Women's Bureau and the WTUL waged aggressive campaigns for this bill, the Women's Equal Pay Act, and for similar legislation, from 1945 on. But opposition from chambers of commerce and management associations prevailed. By the early 1950s, equal pay was as distant as it had ever been. Maurice Tobin, then Secretary of Labor, demonstrated to an Equal Pay Conference how little progress had been made. "Dear Mr. Blank," he read, quoting . . . from a company manager to an employment agency,

> We have an opening here for a combination program director and salesman. This position can be filled by either a man or a woman. We will pay a woman $20 a week for doing the office work and give her $10 a week drawing account, thus guaranteeing her $30 a week. We will pay her 20 percent commission on all sales. We will start a man at $30 a week for doing the office work, and $30 a week drawing account, and also pay him 20 percent on all sales. . . . The gal especially should be attractive.[41]

More radical feminists asked for full employment. The real issue, argued writer Edith Efron, was not one of turning a woman into a sort of pseudo-man who "talks, works, thinks, acts, reacts like a male." The real question . . . was not "'How come no jobs for women?' but 'How come not enough jobs?'" . . . *The Independent Woman*, organ of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, raised the issue of the right to work again. "We think that it is a right that belongs to the individual, man or woman, to decide whether or not he or she wants to work. Industry, business or government should not make that decision. If there is a job to be done, the worker should be accepted according to training and ability."[42]

But most of the American public did not agree. Less than 22 percent of the men and 29 percent of the women interviewed by *Fortune*'s pollsters thought that women "should have an equal chance with men" for any job. Only 46 percent of the men and less than 50 percent of the women thought even women who had to support themselves should have an "equal chance." And substantial numbers of both sexes thought men should always have the preference no matter what the woman's economic position.[43]

As in World War I, men who worked next to women grudgingly conceded their ability to do a job. But demonstrations of effectiveness at tough jobs did not change attitudes about women's work in general or about their primary role at home. At best, militant women staged a holding action—slightly increasing the numbers out at work as they returned to stratified jobs and continuing to struggle for equal pay. The strength of the propaganda campaign to get women out of the work force reflects the extent to which perceptions of family needs still governed women's work, paid or unpaid. As family members eager to enhance economic security, women fought to retain paying jobs; but as family members anxious to preserve jobs for male breadwinners, both men and women fought to return women to the sanctity of the home.

The war turned out to be less a milestone than a . . . response to the call for patriotism, to lucrative jobs, to husbands' absences, and to more readily available household and child-care services. The milestone came after. It was marked by the dawning recognition within families that women's functions of cushioning depression and fighting inflation, traditionally performed by economies within the household, might be more effectively handled by wage-earning. A woman's income, still supplementary, and her job, still less than a career, could make the difference between sheer survival and minimal comfort. If the entry of women into war work was a response to opportunity, the continuing rise in their work force participation after [the war] reflects a response to increasing economic demands on the family. Briefly, a re-ordered set of ideas—what Betty Friedan called the "feminine mystique"—managed in the 1950s to reconcile the competing interests of home and work. Though middle-class and working-class communities responded to postwar ideology differently, the home remained central to the aspirations of most women. It [would take] a new set of pressures on the family and a dramatic shift in the labor market to challenge that ideology.

NOTES

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14. *Women Workers after V-J Day in One Community: Bridgeport, Connecticut*, Women's Bureau Bulletin 216 (1947): 30; *Handbook of Facts on Women Workers*, 3.

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16. Mrs. F. Kerr to Bess Wilson, April 17, 1943, box 229, FWA-NA; Josephine Von Miklos, *I Took a War Job* (New York, 1943), 178.

17. "Seniority," Dec. 8–9, 1944, box 27, War Policy Collection, UAW, WPC.

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35. Lucy Greenbaum, "Wall Street: Man's World," *New York Times Magazine*, May 13, 1945, 16.

36. Frieda S. Miller, "What's Become of Rosie the Riveter," *New York Times Magazine*, May 5, 1946, 21; "The Fortune Survey: Women in America, Part I," *Fortune* 34 (Aug. 1946): 8.

37. Lucy Greenbaum, "The Women Who 'Need' to Work," *New York Times Magazine*, April 29, 1945, 16.

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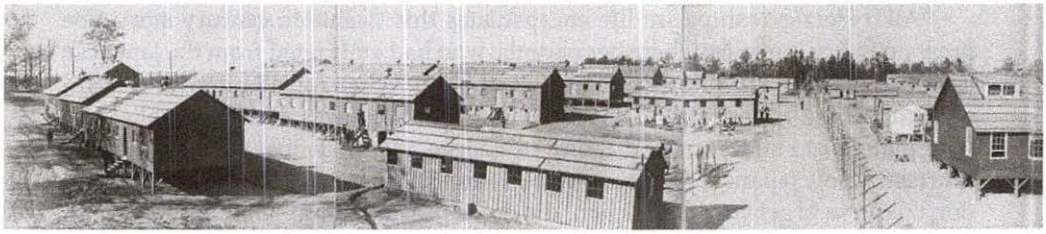
43. "The Fortune Survey," 8.

DOCUMENT

The Forced Removal of Japanese Americans

Photographer Dorothea Lange took several photographs of the Mochida family awaiting an evacuation bus in Hayward, California. Each member of the family was given an identification tag so that, if separated in the many phases of the forced removal, they could be reunited at the camp to which they had been assigned. Lange wrote in her notes that Mr. Mochida "operated a nursery and five greenhouses." On returning to the West Coast after being released from the camps at the end of the war, most Americans of Japanese descent were unable to receive compensation for the property they had had to leave behind. (Photograph courtesy of the National Archives, Identifier 537505.)

The image above is among the thousands of photographs, paintings, sketches, oral interviews, and other artifacts documenting Japanese Americans' experiences at the ten concentration camps established by the federal government during World War II. Two of these camps were located in marshy areas of Arkansas—Rohwer and Denson; the others were set up in bleak, isolated western sites, some on Indian land: Manzanar and Tule Lake, California; Heart Mountain, Wyoming; Topaz, Utah; Poston and Gila River, Arizona; Minidoka, Idaho; and Amache, Colorado. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, under the direction of the



This photograph of the Fort McPherson, Georgia, concentration camp was taken on September 18, 1947, for the War Department. Most barracks measured twenty by one hundred feet and were divided into four to six rooms furnished with steel army cots. (Photograph courtesy of the National Archives, Identifier 55249688, Container 162.)

Department of Justice, maintained an additional eight camps in Texas, New Mexico, North Dakota, Idaho, and Montana. We invite you to curate your own exhibit by drawing from the digital collections at websites such as that of the nonprofit organization Densho (which is a Japanese term meaning "to pass on to the next generation"; http://densho.org) and the National Archives (https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/japanese-relocation#documents). See also the graphic memoir by artist and internee Miné Okubo, *Citizen 13660* (Seattle, 1983; orig. pub. 1946).

The US entered World War II on December 7, 1941, after the Imperial Japanese Air Service launched a surprise strike on the US military base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, which at the time was a US territory, but not a state. In February 1942, president Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, ordering West Coast residents of Japanese descent removed to "relocation" camps inland, even though most Japanese Americans who lived on the West Coast were US citizens. Xenophobic advocates of relocation feared that all people of Japanese descent secretly supported Japan and posed a security threat to the United States.

Nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese-born residents who lived in the United States were incarcerated during the war. Forced to leave their homes and businesses at great financial cost, both Japanese immigrants, the Issei, and their American-born children, the Nisei, faced the trauma of sudden and disorienting banishment and deep losses.

The experiences of incarceration reshaped both generational and gendered dynamics in many Japanese American families. Historian Valerie J. Matsumoto explains that it became difficult to sustain family unity in the cramped, uncomfortable barracks, where tensions about food, privacy, and sanitation marked everyday life. During wartime confinement, men and women, parents and children, earned equivalent low salaries—usually sixteen dollars per month—for performing the same labor, often working side by side in fields or mess halls. While many Nisei children had chafed at their parents' conservative values before the war, these tensions were amplified in the concentration camps, where young men and women had more opportunities to socialize and the camp administrative structure eroded the authority of the Issei. Continuing from the 1930s, increased numbers of Nisei women rejected their parents' view of marriage as a pragmatic union arranged by families and instead insisted on love as a precondition for marriage. (Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women during World War II," *Frontiers* 8 [1984]: 6–14; see also Chapter 4, "Nisei Women's Roles in Family and Community during World War II," in Matsumoto, *City Girls: The Nisei Social World in Los Angeles, 1920–1950* [New York, 2014], 143–80.)

Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga's life encapsulates this twentieth-century story. She grew up in Los Angeles, where her parents, who had emigrated from the Japanese island of Kyushu, ran a hotel and a produce stand. When forced removal was announced in the winter of 1942, Aiko Louise Yoshinaga was a high school senior who planned to study art and music in college. Her principal called Aiko and fourteen fellow Japanese American classmates to a meeting, telling them, "You all don't deserve to get your high school diplomas because your people bombed Pearl Harbor." Rather than be separated from her boyfriend, Yoshinaga married him without her parents' knowledge, and they were shipped together to the Manzanar camp. There, she "gave birth to a daughter, spent hours washing sand and dust from her newborn's diapers, and saw her father only on his deathbed, while he was ailing at a separate camp in Arkansas." (Harrison Smith, "Aiko Herzig Yoshinaga, Whose Research Led to Internment Reparations, Dies at 93," *The Washington Post*, July 26, 2018).

By the 1970s a movement of various activist groups was pushing for reparations and an apology from the US government for the wartime treatment of Japanese Americans. Living at the time in New York, Yoshinaga, who had recently married lawyer Jack Herzig, read former internee Michi Nishiura Weglyn's pathbreaking study, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps* (1976), which inspired Herzig-Yoshinaga to study the events that led up to incarceration. After moving to Falls Church, Virginia, in 1978, Herzig-Yoshinaga and her husband worked as researchers for the National Council for Japanese American Redress, where they studied and cataloged records about the wartime confinement at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. In all, she identified about eight thousand documents, including a rare surviving copy of a 1943 draft government report revealing that the policy of incarceration was motivated not by military necessity but by assumptions about the nature of the Japanese "race." Not surprisingly, in 1981, the congressional commission charged with investigating the wartime treatment of Japanese Americans hired Herzig-Yoshinaga as a researcher. The documents that Herzig-Yoshinaga identified provided a vital paper trail for the investigation. In 1983, the commission issued a blistering report, concluding that the incarcerations were caused by "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership" and not because Japanese Americans posed a security threat.

In 1988, president Ronald Reagan issued a formal apology and signed a federal law granting $20,000 to each of the approximately 82,000 surviving incarcerees. As a capstone to her endeavors showing that "one person can make a difference," Herzig-Yoshinaga contributed to an effort to shine a light on the terminology that we use to discuss incarceration in all sorts of contexts. As she told the *Washington Post* in 1988, "For 40-plus years I've used the word 'evacuation,' because I was brainwashed to. [Now] I'm trying very hard to use words like 'banishment,' 'exile,' 'forced removal.' In the camps, they called us 'resident colonists.'" (Quoted in Marjorie Williams, "The 40-Year War of Aiko Yoshinaga: A WWII Internee, Coming to Terms and Seeking More Than Reparations," *The Washington Post*, August 4, 1988). In 2009, she contributed to a dictionary project that urged writers to replace euphemisms like "relocation center" with more powerful and accurate terms, like "gulag" or "concentration camp" so that readers would understand what happened to Japanese Americans during the war. (Smith, "Aiko Herzig Yoshinaga," *The Washington Post*, July 26, 2018). As Herzig-Yoshinaga explained in 1988, "We must learn to tell it as it happened." Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga died in 2018 in Torrance, California.