THE AMERICAN CHILD MAGAZINE: CRUSADER AGAINST CHILD LABOR, 1915 TO 1930

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ABSTRACT

THE AMERICAN CHILD MAGAZINE:
CRUSADER AGAINST CHILD LABOR,
1915 to 1930

By

Susan Anne Fullerton

This study examines The American Child, a unique periodical dedicated to abolishing child labor in America. As the official publication of the National Child Labor Committee, the magazine fought for legislative reform in the states, where child labor laws were mediocre or non-existent, and attempted to enlighten an apathetic public to the plight of the child worker.

The magazine sought to abolish the labor of all children under age 14. A second goal was to guarantee children under age 16 an eight-hour day between the hours of 6 a.m. and 7 p.m., and exempt them from work in mines and quarries. Intensive campaigning of the American Child between 1912 and 1924 resulted in the passage of two federal bills forbidding child labor and consideration of a much publicized federal children's amendment. Both bills were later declared unconstitutional and the amendment has not yet been ratified by the necessary three-fourths majority of the states.

The National Child Labor Committee, formed in 1904, began publishing the Child Labor Bulletin in June 1912, as a service to its members. As the reform movement broadened in scope and gained popularity, the bulletin was adapted to appeal to the general public and in May 1919, was renamed The American Child, "a journal of constructive democracy."

Through content analysis of the American Child, the study traces the magazine's beneficial effects on child labor conditions and improvement of the public attitude regarding the labor of children. Between 1900 and 1930, the number of child workers was reduced from over two million to about 200,000. The American Child's contribution to this reduction is ascertained through examination of contemporary periodicals and newspapers.

General histories of labor, social work, education, and public welfare recognize the magazine's invaluable contribution to amelioration of the child labor problem. Owen R. Lovejoy, outspoken editor of the American Child from 1912 to 1926, and secretary of the NCLC from 1904 to 1926, is well remembered in history as "the children's statesman."

Crusade for the Children, a history of the NCLC written by Walter I. Trattner, was especially helpful in providing pertinent data and background information used in this study.

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Director of Thesis

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By

Susan Anne Fullerton

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MASTER OF ARTS

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to my parents

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INTRODUCTION

The National Child Labor Committee and its publication, The American Child, fought most vehemently for child labor reform during the first three decades of the 20th Century, continually emphasizing the need to safeguard children throughout the land. The Committee did not attempt to effect public control over industry or to reshape America's social order, but fought valiantly to enlighten an apathetic public and introduce effective child labor legislation in the states and the nation. Through the American Child, the Committee told citizens of the evils of child labor and the danger to society of the waste of children, America's most valuable resource.

At the request of children's organizations and social workers, the Committee and its magazine attempted to formulate a charter of childhood which would harmonize and coordinate the various phases of child welfare and child labor reform into a uniform national standard.[1]

At its formation in 1904, the Committee identified the problem, collected data, and began the fight for improved child labor laws. Legislation was placed foremost on the agenda, due to the deplorable conditions of child labor in the states. In 1904, there were more than two million child workers, under age 16, many of whom worked twelve hours

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[1] "Conference on Child Labor," School and Society, May 22, 1915, p. 740.

a day, six days a week, under dangerous and unhealthy conditions for pennies per hour.

The broad child labor and child welfare movements were part of a wide campaign for general social betterment. The NCLC and its American Child also fought for improved child health, children's aid societies, prevention of juvenile delinquency, children's recreational areas, and better educational facilities.[1]

The American Child was written, edited, and published by a staff of NCLC members at the Committee's office in New York City. Every year, more than a dozen NCLC members toured the country, campaigning for child labor committees and surveying the deplorable conditions under which children worked. The NCLC defined child labor as "the work of children under conditions which interfered with their physical development and education, and thus prevented them from becoming happy and socially useful adults."[2]

The precise role of the NCLC concerned the publication of data, but was difficult to define. At the time of the Committee's inception, there were no generally accepted standards of protection against child exploitation. Between 1904 and 1954, the NCLC and the American Child published more than 400 studies revealing child labor conditions in America.[3]

The contribution of the NCLC and its publication are summed up

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[1]Robert H. Bremner, From the Depths (New York, 1964), p. 213.

[2]Walter I. Trattner, Crusade for the Children (Chicago, 1970), p. 9.

[3]National Child Labor Committee, 50th Anniversary Report (New York, 1954), p. 1.

in the praise of three newspapers which applauded the NCLC's twenty-fifth anniversary in 1929. The New York Times said, "Under the militant leadership of the NCLC, great progress has been made through state legislation in liberating the child from menaces to its health and physical development and preserving its educational birthright." The New York Post concurred, saying, "For what it has done to rescue children from mine and factory, and to see that every American boy and girl has a fair start in life, the NCLC deserves the gratitude not only of the boys and girls who are directly benefited, but of the entire public." And, from the Fall River (Mass.) Herald-News, "The NCLC has unquestionably exerted a powerful influence in behalf of working children. It has presented its appeal persistently in all places where public opinion needed to be aroused in order to bring about reforms in the law."[1]

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[1] "Reflections from the Press," The American Child, September, 1929, p. 5.

CHAPTER I

THE AMERICAN CHILD

Overview

The American Child, originally called the Child Labor Bulletin, was the official organ of the NCLC. It sought to publicize the Committee's views and statistical findings in the areas of child worker abuse and child labor legislation. In June 1912, a skeleton crew of NCLC members began publication of the Child Labor Bulletin, a magazine to inform members of the progress of the child labor reform movement in the states and the nation.

Membership had grown from 46 in 1904 to 5,006 in 1912. There was an increasing demand for more frequent publicity, and publication of data and NCLC successes in the field. Previously, child labor information and reports on the NCLC's annual conferences had been published yearly in the Annals of America, lengthy bi-monthly volumes put out by the American Academy of Political and Social Science, and in pamphlets authored by NCLC members.

The Bulletin was edited by Owen R. Lovejoy, capable secretary of the NCLC and renowned public speaker. Lovejoy soon came to be known as "the children's statesman."[1] His staff included Felix Adler, chairman

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 62.

of the NCLC, and Homer Folks, Florence Kelley, Samuel McCune Lindsay, and Wiley H. Swift, members of the NCLC Board of Trustees. Prominent Americans, among them governors, senators, congressmen, bishops, editors, labor leaders, and social workers, contributed articles to the fledgling publication.

According to the NCLC, the Bulletin's purpose was to publicize the various aspects of child labor reform, note the progress of the movement, solicit news items and reports on child labor, and promote the cause of child labor reform. Members believed that "the effort to develop an intelligent interest in the enforcement of child labor laws is as important as the work of investigation to reveal existing conditions and of campaigns to secure good laws."[1]

By 1921, 300 libraries subscribed to the Bulletin and complete files of the magazine could be found as far away as the University of Tokyo. The magazine was generally regarded as the authoritative child welfare organ in America.[2]

Circulation peaked at 14,000 in 1925. NCLC membership at that time was about 9,000 and a special press service carried American Child articles and editorials to 1,300 American dailies.[3] During the battles over the two child labor bills in Congress between 1916 and 1922, subscribers eagerly followed the bills' progress as noted by the magazine, but interest and circulation waned with defeat of the legislation.

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[1] "News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, June 1912, p. 1.

[2] "News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, February 1915, p. 1

[3] "Report of the Secretary," The American Child, November 1925, p. 11.

The quarterly issues, sounding boards for the NCLC, at first featured detailed, descriptive articles written by NCLC investigators. These heart-rending treatises were aimed at the emotions of Americans, enlisting support in the fight against child exploitation. As national periodicals picked up the articles, more Americans chose to subscribe to the Bulletin for $2 per year and acquaint themselves with the unknown evil lurking behind America's industrial magnificence.

The need for more concise and readable articles soon led the editors to encapsulize lengthy stories and tabulate data into easy-to-read charts and tables. Circulation grew annually, as did distribution of NCLC literature. Child Labor Day, initiated by the NCLC in 1908 and celebrated every year on the last Sunday in January, received wide publicity in newspapers and magazines. Requests for child labor day literature were noted in the annual reports of Secretary-Editor Lovejoy.

In 1915, there were 6,279 requests for literature from 48 states. Press notices of child labor day activities were sent to 1,250 newspapers and 42,265 pamphlets urging federal action were circulated. NCLC membership was 8,300.[1]

In 1917, the Bulletin celebrated the adoption of a federal child labor bill by issuing 121,802 pamphlets and sending 185 special stories to 550 periodicals. Membership in the NCLC was 10,124.[2]

As the Bulletin gained popularity and readership, specialists were added to the staff to enhance readability and content of more

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[1] "News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1915, p. 149.

[2] "Publicity," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1917, p. 152.

specific articles. Jane Addams of Hull House authored articles on problems of city and tenement child workers. Juvenile court judge Benjamin B. Lindsey added information on juvenile crime and the courts system. Labor leaders such as Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor, James F. Barrett of the Typographical Union, and George L. Berry of the National Pressman's Union, supported child reform as viewed by organized labor. Congressmen Edward Keating and Robert Owen wrote articles enlisting support for legislation to forbid child labor. Specialists in school administration, from the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the N.E.A., added their views on child labor and compulsory school attendance.

The Bulletin accepted and printed contributions from interested Americans both for and against child labor reform. "Child labor reform is becoming socialized and patriotic," wrote Managing Editor Raymond G. Fuller.[1]

Lewis W. Hine, renowned photographer of the plight of the poor, was hired as the official photographer for the NCLC. His colorful and passionate candid pictures helped arouse public sentiment against the torment of the child laborers. The Bulletin often featured Hine's pictures on its cover and to supplement articles, further illustrating the unhappiness of child workers.

The NCLC had fought for the adoption of a federal Children's Bureau for six years and in 1912, the Bulletin wecomed the new agency as a valuable research assistant and associate in the fight for child

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[1]Introduction, The American Child, May 1919, p. 1.

labor reform. Julia C. Lathrop, chief of the Children's Bureau, later wrote to Editor Owen R. Lovejoy, praising the magazine's work in their shared endeavor.

> The American Child is always interesting. Fresh material and readable presentation characterize its pages and it performs well the invaluable service of popularization. No one should read it who is unwilling to have his sense of responsibility for the children of the nation painfully quickened.[1]

In May 1919, the Child Labor Bulletin was renamed The American Child. The revamped magazine went from well over twenty monotonous folio-sized pages of lengthy reports to four tabloid-sized pages of well-designed columns and regular features. More general information was included, along with discussion on every subject concerning the welfare of American children of school age. Interest in child labor legislation was growing, as was the magazine's appeal to the general public. The new emphasis was intended not only to please NCLC members, but to satisfy an increasing enrollment of readers who realized the danger and problems of child labor for the first time. In 1919, 133 newspapers printed American Child excerpts.[2]

Continuing the rejuvenated, accelerated campaign, the editor tripled his investigatory staff and in December 1922, Lovejoy doubled the number of pages to eight. Almost fifty regular staff members rededicated themselves to promoting a federal children's amendment. The Supreme Court had annulled two previous child labor reform bills. This

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[1] "Shop Talk," The American Child, February 1921, p. 367.

[2] "News Notes," The American Child, November 1919, p. 84.

legislative action had aroused more Americans to the cause and the American Child wisely chose to capitalize on the new interest.

Praise for the magazine's accomplishments came from people in all professions. "The interest you are developing, not merely in the work that is being done to correct evils and safeguard children in industry, but the efforts you are making to broaden the general field of interest in child life and education, commends the magazine to me very strongly," wrote Joseph K. Hart, associate editor of The Survey Magazine.[1]

Arthur F. Lederle, supervisor of School Attendance in Detroit, wrote, ". . . it (the magazine) is up to date, sensible, and attacks problems at the source. The fearless and impersonal attitude of your investigators also is apparent in the work undertaken by members of your staff."[2]

Professor E. C. Linderman, field secretary for the American Country Life Association, called the magazine a running history of the theory and practice underlying the child labor movement. He said,

> The American Child is a quarterly journal which covers a wide range of child welfare interests. It is well edited and contains information valuable to social workers, physical directors, physicians, teachers, legislators, sociologists, employers of labor, and all persons interested in child welfare as one of the avenues of social progress.[3]

Not everyone was so quick to praise the magazine's efforts. Manufacturers and farmers denied the derogatory effects of child labor,

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[1] "Shop Talk," The American Child, p. 367.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

maintaining that the need for regulation was overstated and conditions were exaggerated. Industrialists were proud to add to the income of a child who wanted to work and had no interest in schooling. Those opposed to regulation claimed that gainful employment kept children off the streets and led to maturity and responsibility at an early age.

The American Child countered with facts and figures showing that child labor was an injustice to American children. It was injurious to their health, education, and good conduct. The factory child was subjected to noxious industrial smokes and gases, exposed to accidents, and lost his childhood and any opportunity for play or education. His work was not educational work but overwork. Child labor also led to adult unemployment, lowered wages, poverty, and economic waste.

In 1915, the magazine counted 200,000 children under 16 at work in factories with 50 percent working illegally from nine to eleven hours daily.[1] Said Lovejoy, "The only motive that any manufacturer has in employing child labor is the profit to be secured."[2] The Journal of the National Education Association agreed, saying, "The aims and conditions of work should be determined by the principles of education, and not by those of the counting house."[3]

Farm labor, shrouded with prejudice and misconception, was usually considered quite wholesome for children and was one of the most

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[1]"News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, February 1915, p. 27.

[2]"Annual Conference on Child Labor," Child Labor Bulletin, February 1919, p. 255.

[3]"The First Victory," The American Child, April 1924, p. 6.

difficult obstacles to child labor reform. Farm periodicals defended children in agriculture. The editors of the Farm Journal said in 1924, "There is a kind of mush-headed opinion abroad in the land that seems to consider work an evil, and hard work a device of Satan."[1]

Two well-known essayists pleaded for the children on Southern farms. "Give us worse cotton, but give us better men," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson. From England, Thomas Carlyle intoned, "Deliver me those rickety, perishing souls of infants and let the cotton trade take its chances."[2]

Articles by American Child staffers were soon in great demand in national magazines. Informative and appealing pieces by R. G. Fuller, Owen Lovejoy, and Florence Taylor were serialized and printed in Good Housekeeping, The Nation, The Literary Digest, and other well-read periodicals.

Newspapers, however, were not so eager to further the cause of child labor reform. William Randolph Hearst of the New York American denied the influence of newspaper advocacy, saying, "anything practical must be done by legislation."[3] In Newspaper Crusaders, Silas Bent says that most newspapers were against child labor reform for "the obvious but unconfessed reason that it (regulation) might interfere with newsboys."[4] Editors were also fearful of alienating manufacturers who were

[1]"The Anvil Chorus," The American Child, March 1924, p. 3.

[2]Julia E. Johnsen, comp., Selected Articles on Child Labor (New York, 1925), p. 81.

[3]"Labor's Only Friend--Hearst's New York American," New York Times, Oct. 15, 1906, p. 8.

[4]Silas Bent, Newspaper Crusaders (New York, 1939), p. 234.

major contributors to their advertising budgets.

The American Child included "newspaper enlightenment" as one of the unfinished tasks in the fight for child labor reform. Its editors often referred to their long experience with "atrocious garbling and misquotation of facts by American dailies."[1] Surveys counted between 200,000 and 300,000 newsboys working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, for about $4.[2] Such adverse publicity induced editors to avoid an active part in the reform crusade, and they cleverly referred to newsboys as little independent merchants.

Generally, the American Child was a much-quoted child labor authority, in demand by public speakers, child welfare agencies, educational authorities, social reformers, and public welfare organizations. Its surveys and reports were utilized by the Children's Bureau, the National Consumer's League, the National Conference of Social Work, the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Labor, the National Child Health Association, and an increasing number of state and local child labor committees.

Contents

The Child Labor Bulletin was a loosely organized publication with no specific format from quarter to quarter. Every issue contained at

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[1]"News from the Child Welfare Field," The American Child, February 1921, p. 292.

[2]"Child Labor in Our Cities," Good Housekeeping, November 1922, p. 145.

least one report submitted by an NCLC member who had conducted a survey of child labor conditions in a particular state and area, such as agriculture in South Carolina, coal mining in Pennsylvania, or glass production in Connecticut.

A study of working girls in Cincinatti, conducted by an NCLC publicity agent, revealed 13-year-old seamstresses laboring ten to twelve hours in dimly lit, unventilated work rooms for less than $3 per week. Helen C. Dwight reported, "Many of (the tasks) require so little either of skill or of intelligence that not much selection need be made." Any young girl who could wield a needle and thread qualified to earn pennies per hour, with a twenty-minute lunch break daily.[1]

Surveys in industry exposed unbelievable conditions under which children worked. Children in the glass industry stooped constantly in intolerable heat amid dust and fumes, often sustaining cuts, burns, and obscured vision from flying particles of glass.

A study by Raymond G. Fuller, the Bulletin's managing editor, reprinted in a Good Housekeeping series, told of 608 New York City tenement child laborers stringing 1,000 beads per hour, eight hours per day, seven days per week, for between $2 and $5 weekly.[2]

Reports on child health and education were also a vital component of the Child Labor Bulletin. A Cleveland Education Survey, published by the Division of Education of the Russell Sage Foundation and reprinted

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[1]"Girls at Work and Why They Work," Child Labor Bulletin, February 1915, p. 10.

[2]Raymond G. Fuller, "Child Labor in Our Cities," Good Housekeeping, November 1922, p. 65.

in the Bulletin, cited industrial neglect and violation of school laws as a typical problem of child labor law enforcement.[1] The report called for better cooperation between schools and industry.

George D. Strayer, president of the NEA, urged national aid to education, while noted educators including Anne S. Davis, chief vocational advisor for the Chicago Public Schools; A. C. Monahan, specialist in rural school administration for the U. S. Department of Education; Dr. John Dewey, professor at Columbia University; and the Honorable P. P. Claxton, Commissioner of Education in Washington, D. C., exhorted Bulletin readers to fight for improved child education and welfare.

Dr. George P. Barth, director of school hygiene in Milwaukee, reported one-eighth of Milwaukee school children at work under improper health supervision.[2] The Child Health Organization, affiliated with the NCLC, urged better supervision of child health and nutrition, and condemned the use of children to collect donations for the war effort.[3]

Samuel Gompers was not the only labor leader who fought child labor. Charles J. Fox, chairman of the Maryland State Board of Labor and Industries, and John Price Jackson, commissioner of Labor and Industry in Pennsylvania, urged more stringent enforcement as the key to child labor reform.[4]

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[1] "The Next Chapter in Child Labor Reform," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1916, p. 159.

[2] "Health Supervision of Child Workers," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1918, p. 215.

[3] "News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, August 1918, p. 86.

[4] "Proceedings of Annual Conference," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1917, pp. 5 and 9.

Women's Clubs throughout the nation eagerly lent their support to the cause. Mrs. Thomas W. Lingle, president of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, wrote in the Bulletin, "Child labor is one of the unexpected evils resulting from the great industrial revolution; the manufacturer, the purchaser, and the parent are responsible."[1] Mrs. Eugene Reilly, recording secretary of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, said in the same issue, "The club movement is now a great social and civic force . . . it exists for the preservation of the child, the woman, and the home."[2]

Prominent judges, legislators, and government officials also authored pieces for the Bulletin. Among these were Justice Felix Frankfurter; Benjamin B. Lindsey, juvenile court judge; James J. Davis, U. S. Secretary of Labor; and Franklin D. Roosevelt, governor of New York.

Other regular features included "News Notes," a column consisting of child labor legislation progress in the states, comments selected from periodicals and newspapers, and successes and defeats of the NCLC in various child labor and welfare areas. Another informative, but somewhat sporadic feature contained "News from the Child Welfare Field," with information contributed by social workers and concerned reformers.

May issues gave detailed reports on the proceedings of NCLC annual conferences which were held every February in randomly selected cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Detailed

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[1]"Effects of Child Labor on Social Standards," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1916, p. 21.

[2]"National Responsibility for Child Labor," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1916, p. 59.

information on speakers, excerpts from lectures and discussions, and child labor reform victories reported by delegates were shared with Bulletin readers.

Every November issue included the annual report of the secretary of the NCLC. Owen R. Lovejoy, editor of the Bulletin, held this position from 1904 until his resignation in 1926. Lovejoy detailed statistics on magazine circulation, NCLC membership, requests for child labor material, publicity for the cause, and the number of pamphlets, reports, and articles distributed by the Bulletin in that year.

When the Bulletin was revamped and renamed The American Child in May 1919, the length of most articles was shortened. The general intent was to appeal to a larger public. The new magazine was devoted to the "whole child," with up-to-date news and discussion by experts on education, child labor, juvenile delinquency, recreation, juvenile courts, and laws affecting children.[1]

Circulation continued to climb slowly and the renewal rate for NCLC membership remained steady at about 80 percent. In 1915, membership totaled 8,706 with 1,923 new members. In 1917, of 10,124 NCLC members, 2,056 had joined that year. In 1919, there were 12,780 members, with 4,304 new members.[2]

The drastically shortened magazine now numbered four concise pages. This radical change induced the casual reader to more readily

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 155.

[2]"Annual Report of the Secretary," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1915, p. 150; November 1917, p. 153; and November 1919, p. 102.

scan the data and quotes concerning child labor. Previously, it had taken considerable dedication and interest for readers to plod through 20- or 30-page articles written by NCLC emmbers who returned with reports from the child labor field, eager to see their work reprinted in full in the Child Labor Bulletin.

As always, Lovejoy was a wise editor and talk of a national children's amendment increased circulation, as did the reduction in monotonous reading material. The columns remained the same, with data and information presented in a more readable, appealing, and succinct manner. To capitalize on the increasing interest in child labor legislation and reach more readers with more information, the publishers enlarged the magazine in December 1922 to eight pages. The format was similar, with additional information the only factor contributing to the increased length.

The time was ripe to assail the public with information and engender public sentiment for sponsorship of a national amendment. News-hungry readers eagerly awaited information on legislation, their appetites whetted by the Supreme Court annulment of the two child labor bills passed in Congress in 1916 and 1919. Also in December 1922, the optimistic Lovejoy, with the approval of the NCLC, transformed his quarterly "journal of constructive democracy" into a monthly "bulletin of general child welfare." Again, the format remained the same. Circulation increased somewhat, but peaked in 1925 at 14,000. After 1925, interest in the laggard amendment declined and NCLC membership and American Child circulation both suffered and never regained their former standing.

The American Child contained no commercial advertising.

Occasionally, there was a half-page appeal column with a plea for concerned readers to subscribe to membership in the NCLC through a donation of $2 or more. Publication depended on voluntary contributions and yearly donations from NCLC members who renewed their membership. There were three categories of members. A guarantor member paid $100 or more per year, a sustaining member donated $25 to $100, and for $2 to $25 a citizen could join as an associate member. Associate membership was the most popular and by 1906, the NCLC listed 981 associate members in forty states.[1]

After the reduction in the magazine's length and enlargement in page size, the general appearance improved remarkably. The addition of cutlines, sketches, attractive columns and headings, and an occasional Hine photograph added much to reader appeal and readability. Placement of the shorter, more attractive articles was balanced in regular columns and conscientiously planned to enhance general appeal. When the pages were enlarged, the printers changed to a higher quality rag content paper and the quality of the printing was improved. The pages were no longer sewn, but folded together without binding.

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 75.

CHAPTER II

THE PUBLISHERS AND THE PROBLEM

The child labor problem was not a vital concern of Americans until the beginning of the 20th Century. At that time, social reform and public amelioration were popular causes and compassion for unfortunate child workers ranked high in the minds of progressive reformers. The National Child Labor Committee was organized on April 15, 1905, by forty-six men and women who met at New York's Carnegie Hall and dedicated themselves to a quick campaign of abolishing child labor in America.[1]

Felix Adler, highly respected founder and head of the Kindergarten and Ethical Culture Movements, and professor of sociology and political ethics at Columbia University, was appointed chairman of the Committee. Adler had served on the child labor committee in New York where he helped introduce and pass five child labor bills in less than a year. This legislation made New York the state with the highest child labor standards in America.

During his seventeen years as chairman, Adler led the NCLC's fight against child labor with research, public education, and minimum standards for legislation in the states as his goals. "We are engaged in a holy war having for its objective the stability of civilization as well

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 58.

as the welfare of children," said Adler.[1]

Dr. Samuel McCune Lindsay, an industrial relations expert and former associate editor of the Annals of America, became one of the Committee's permanent secretaries. His personal prestige and acquaintance with Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft lent prominence to the Committee's initial undertakings. Lindsay later chaired the NCLC from 1923 to 1935.

The former Commissioner of Education to Puerto Rico soon established an impressive library and bibliography of child labor articles, information, and reports. His findings concerning state laws and industrial and agricultural conditions were passed on to newspapers and periodicals through annually issued reports and sporadic pamphlets discussing the child labor problem. Lindsay felt that the NCLC was a "great moral force for the protection of children."[2]

The full-time general secretary for the South was Alexander J. McKelway, Charlotte, North Carolina, minister, and editor of the Presbyterian Standard and the Charlotte News. He became a skillful lobbyist and dynamic reformer in the heart of the southern mill district where child abuses were most flagrant.

Owen R. Lovejoy, another former minister, was chosen general secretary for the North. He was an excellent public speaker and enjoyed traveling throughout the nation, lecturing on the evils of child labor. Lovejoy's efforts soon won him the title, "the children's statesman."[3]

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 57.

[2]Ibid., p. 3.

[3]Ibid., p. 62.

In 1912, he was chosen to edit the Child Labor Bulletin, and did so quite capably until 1926.

Several months later Homer Folks, executive secretary of the New York State Charities Aid Association and former Commissioner of Public Charities in New York, was appointed vice-chairman of the Committee. Folks was chairman of the NCLC from 1935 to 1944.

Other prominent and influential charter members of the NCLC in 1904 included former President Grover Cleveland; Jane Addams and Lillian Wald, noted humanitarians; Benjamin B. Lindsey, famed juvenile court judge; Adolph S. Ochs, publisher of the New York Times; Clark Howell, editor of the Atlanta Constitution; Mrs. Sarah S. Platt, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs; Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University; John G. Brooks, president of the American Social Science Association; and three union men, Stanley McCormick of International Harvester; Edgar E. Clark of the Railway Conductors Union, and J. W. Sullivan of the International Typographical Union.[1]

The 1900 census revealed approximately two million children at work in the nation. Practically every state had some legislation on the subject, but most laws were inadequate and poorly enforced if at all. Joy E. Morgan, managing editor of the Journal of the National Education Association, sided with the NCLC, but was not so optimistic about a quick campaign to abolish child labor. "It will be one of the most bitterly fought battles in American Constitutional history," said Miss Morgan.[2]

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, pp. 64-65.

[2]Johnsen, Selected Articles on Child Labor, p. 269.

The NCLC advanced with ever-increasing momentum in its fight to turn public sentiment against the traditions of greed and indifference which nurtured child labor. The child-saving movement also sought to eliminate poverty, slum housing, and inadequate educational facilities; and to promote the establishment of continuation and night schools, improved children's recreational facilities, and better mental and physical health standards for children.

By the end of 1904, the Committee had achieved considerable success. Seventeen states had adopted 14-year age limits, six had abolished night work for children under 16 years of age, and two states had adopted an eight-hour day.[1] In most other states, child labor law reform was a much-discussed topic, but legislators needed further prodding from the NCLC and concerned local citizens. New York, Illinois, and Massachusetts were considerably ahead of the rest of the nation concerning the protection of child workers. A preliminary model child labor bill, drafted by the Committee, combined the best features of these states' laws.

The standards envisioned for working children included a minimum age of 14, a 16-year age minimum for workers in mines and quarries, an eight-hour day, no night work between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m., and documented proof of age on working permits. By 1914, only nine states met all these standards.[2]

Southern states were prime offenders in the exploitation of child workers. The four leading textile-producing states had the lowest

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[1]Grace Abbott, "Looking Fore and Aft in Child Labor," The Survey Magazine, December 15, 1929, p. 333.

[2]Bremner, From the Depths, p. 219.

standards in the nation. Georgia had no age limit for children in industry. In Alabama and North and South Carolina, the age limit was 12. Alabama and North Carolina permitted a 66-hour maximum work week, Georgia had no hours regulation. South Carolina was the only one of the four states which prohibited night work for children under 12.[1]

"It confuses our sense of value, so that we come to think that a bolt of cheap cotton is more to be prized than a child properly nourished, educated, and prepared to take his place in life," said reformer Jane Addams.[2]

On February 21, 1907, the NCLC was incorporated by a special act of Congress. Adler thought that this would prove that the Committee was non-sectional in aim and support. The federal charter gave a national stamp of approval to Committee proceedings and officially authorized the NCLC to help "safeguard American childhood as affected by industry and agriculture."[3]

Before establishment of the Child Labor Bulletin, the NCLC printed six million pages annually.[4] Pamphlets, reports, and child labor handbooks were liberally distributed. Requests for information poured in from every state and some foreign countries. By 1912, the NCLC had provided information and assistance which contributed to the passage or

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 79.

[2]Bremner, From the Depths, p. 216.

[3]National Child Labor Committee, 50th Anniversary Report, p. 7.

[4]Trattner, Crusade, p. 114.

amendment of child labor laws in thirty-nine states.[1] "In its first ten years of work, the NCLC saw the greatest advances ever achieved in the adoption of state laws on child labor," said Frank J. Bruno in his book Trends in Social Work.[2]

Among those who supported the NCLC were the American Federation of Labor, the NEA, the National Consumer's League, the American Association for Labor, the NAACP, the Masons, the Pure Food and Drug Association, the League of Women Voters, the International Child Welfare League, the Children's Bureau, the American Bar Association, the American Medical Association, and the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.

The NCLC discovered many causes for the deplorable conditions under which children worked. According to Adler, child labor was always the by-product of the change from agriculture to industry. He called child labor the "seamy side of efficiency," pleading for industry to respect the human factor in children. "Child labor has no place in a democracy," said Adler.[3]

Alexander McKelway maintained that children should not be denied their moral right to education and free development under normal conditions of childhood. "The manufacturer too often, the parent nearly always, and sometimes the child is on the side of the mill," said McKelway.[4]

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 114.

[2]Frank J. Bruno, Trends in Social Work (New York, 1948), p. 164.

[3]"War, Revolution, and Child Labor," The Survey Magazine, March 31, 1917, p. 1.

[4]Max H. Wilensky, "The Child Labor Situation," Forum, March 1917, p. 318.

Owen R. Lovejoy, editor of the American Child, saw the causes for child labor as ignorance and short-sighted individualism.

> The scattered attacks made against the exploitation of children are gathering in one concerted drive and the beginning of the real battle is in sight. The territory of childhood is the prize.[1]

Raymond G. Fuller, managing editor of the American Child, saw a need for social vision and a clearer conception of the child labor evil and objectives of reform. "The evil of child labor is not to be measured wholly in terms of what it does to some child, but measured in terms of what society ought to do for the child."[2] Every issue of the American Child included vehement denials of any beneficial effects of child labor without proper direction and supervision. "Child labor, where ever it exists, from the point of view of civilization, or national progress and humanity, is intolerable."[3]

A New York Times article, reprinted in School and Society magazine, summed up the causes of child labor.

> Poverty is the cause. Parents, employers, and the public generally are blind to the real effects of child labor and to the value of the right kinds of work and play.[4]

The work of the NCLC was commended by sympathetic periodicals. Cosmopolitan formed a child labor federation with the slogan "Child Labor

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[1]Owen R. Lovejoy, "What Remains of Child Labor," The New Republic, November 11, 1916, p. 39.

[2]Raymond G. Fuller, "The Psychological Approach to the Child Labor Problem," American Child, August 1920, p. 119.

[3]"The High Cost of Child Labor," American Child, February 1915, p. 43.

[4]"The Increase of Child Labor," School and Society, September 8, 1923, p. 296.

Must Go," the Woman's Home Companion sponsored an Anti-Child Slavery League which was absorbed in 1906 by the Committee.[1] School and Society praised the Committee's work saying, "Few lines of social endeavor can show such a record."[2] In August 1915, the Journal of Home Economics urged all home economists to secure facts from the NCLC and then write to their state representatives to protest local child labor conditions.[3]

The federal government was generally concerned over the child labor problem, although progress was always slow. The NCLC campaigned for six years for federal establishment of a Children's Bureau in the Department of Labor to "report on all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life."[4]

A 1910 U. S. Department of Labor Report on the Conditions of Woman and Child Wage Earners pointed out the need for better child labor standards and supported the NCLC in its campaign for establishment of the Children's Bureau. When the report was finally published, only fourteen volumes were printed and the 2,000 copies which were released remained in the hands of Senators and Congressmen.[5] Legislators often suppressed the facts because of the influence of powerful industrial and agricultural lobbies in their states. People began to wonder if

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 243.

[2]"Child Labor Conditions," School and Society, July 6, 1929, p. 13.

[3]Frederick G. Bonser, "The Home and Child Labor," Journal of Home Economics, August 1915, p. 371.

[4]Edwin Markham, Benjamin B. Lindsey, and George Creel, Children in Bondage (New York, 1969), p. 397.

[5]Ibid., p. 22.

the NCLC's child labor hubbub was the work of muckrakers, professional agitators, and maudlin sentimentalists. State child labor committee reports often minimized the situation, fearing charges of sensationalism by those ignorant of the shocking reality of child labor abuse.

White House Conferences on dependent children and child welfare were held in 1909, 1919, and 1929. The first conference was organized by NCLC Vice-chairman Homer Folks and delegates united to campaign for the proposed Children's Bureau.[1] The second conference was sponsored by the Children's Bureau and stressed state aid to needy children. With the assistance of the NCLC, a resolution was drafted to forbid child labor under the age of 14, and night child labor under the age of 18.[2] The third conference came at the time of the NCLC's twenty-fifth anniversary celebration and several members of the Committee spoke before the delegates. Praise for the work of the NCLC was abundant.

Although child labor was a debated topic at all three conferences, the meetings generally did little more than help publicize the cause of reform. Before the first conference, Lovejoy predicted that "child labor is the only subject on which there will be an array of interests opposed to the practical measures designed to protect children."[3]

The work of the NCLC, neither imaginative nor dramatic, encountered numerous obstacles from parents, industrialists, and an apathetic public.

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[1]Bremner, From the Depths, p. 222.

[2]Beatrice McConnell, Child Labor: 1912 to 1937 (Washington, D.C., 1937), p. 2.

[3]"Adults Idle as Children Labor," The Literary Digest, January 11, 1930, p. 14.

Higher standards and more scientific administration of laws were basic goals of the reform movement. The Committee unhappily realized that the American public evidenced "a deliberate refusal to know what may be easily learned, or worse, a deliberate but somewhat skillful evasion of the main question by pretending not to know."[1]

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[1] "Two Conceptions of Child Employment," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1916, p. 52.

CHAPTER III

THE AMERICAN CHILD'S BATTLE FOR LEGISLATION

One of the chief objectives of child labor reformers was a federal law which would eliminate the inconsistency and diversity in state laws and provide for universal enforcement of standards. The American Child pursued a vigorous campaign to marshall public support of a federal law.

The American Child offered literature and assistance to organizations and state child labor committees in an effort to win converts to its cause. "Legislation to be effective must express the collective will of the people, not idealism or self-centered commercialism," said Editor Lovejoy.[1]

In November 1906, Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana appeared before the NCLC for support of a federal bill. Said Beveridge,

> We cannot thus (through child labor) wreck the future of the American Republic. We have not any right to permit any state to produce in this Republic a degenerate class unfit for citizenship.[2]

In December, Beveridge introduced a child labor bill, which incorporated the NCLC's standards, in the Senate. The typical reaction was

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[1]Edna D. Bullock, comp., Debaters' Handbook Series: Selected Articles on Child Labor (Minneapolis, 1963), p. 81.

[2]Trattner, Crusade, p. 87; and Markham, Lindsey, and Creel, Bondage, p. 330.

that federal intervention was unconstitutional. Organized labor was opposed to child labor, but saw federal regulation as a dangerous precedent for governmental interference with labor.[1]

Dr. Lindsay, a permanent secretary of the NCLC, later reprimanded the government in the Child Labor Bulletin, saying, "Congress is entirely too unconcerned and too little informed as to the possibilities involved in the aid which the government might give to those engaged in the work of education and child welfare."[2]

The Child Labor Bulletin strongly favored federal legislation, saying, "A federal law is necessary to the ultimate abolition of child labor and it took twelve years of work by the NCLC to pave the way for it."[3] Reports in the magazine began to include lobbying activities in state legislatures and accounts of local legislative reform movements early in 1915.

Southern cotton mill owners who employed more child laborers than any other industry were the backbone of resistance. The Beveridge Bill was delayed for eight years by manufacturers, who reaped the benefits of child labor by counter-lobbying and political deception and avoidance.

In May 1913, the NCLC had renewed its policy to seek federal legislation. Lovejoy was chosen to draft a new bill which was pushed

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 89.

[2]"True Preparedness in Greater Protection to Childhood," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1916, p. 11.

[3]"News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1916, p. 139.

even at the cost of other Committee work. The Child Labor Bulletin continued to collect and publish information on all existing and proposed laws relating to children. Bulletin surveys found that two-thirds of the states had no effective enforcement of child labor laws, and only ten states had fair systems of factory inspection in 1914. Forty thousand children, aged 10 to 15, were at work in the cotton mills for periods of up to seventeen hours.[1]

"The features of the child labor law which contemplate the protection of young persons in industry become at once hazardous to employers of these children," wrote Miss Tracy Copp, Wisconsin industrial commissioner.[2]

Lax enforcement was a characteristic of laws in most states. A Bulletin survey discovered that of 115 prosecutions in Ohio factories, 72 percent of the fines were suspended or remitted. One justice of the peace dismissed fifteen cases because of errors in warrants drawn by himself![3]

A 1915 study by Florence I Taylor, publications secretary of the NCLC, revealed that the maximum employer fine was $1 in many states. In Mississippi, a new factory inspector replacing an overworked state official found 158 child labor law violations in eight canneries in one month.[4]

President Woodrow Wilson thought that federal action was

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[1]Markham, Lindsey, and Creel, Bondage, p. 24.

[2]Johnsen, Selected Articles, p. 227.

[3]"Enforcement of Child Labor Laws," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1916, p. 165.

[4]Ibid., p. 162.

unconstitutional, but met with Adler, McKelway, and Lovejoy of the NCLC in February 1914, promising at least Presidential neutrality. McKelway warned Wilson that if he failed to support legislation, it would cost him a great deal in the election. A victory over child labor would convince the Progressives that the Democratic party was a party of reform.[1]

In 1914, Representative A. Mitchell Palmer introduced a bill which would prohibit child labor indirectly through the regulation of interstate commerce. The measure was acclaimed in the Child Labor Bulletin and endorsed by the NCLC, the American Federation of Labor, the Children's Bureau, the Farmers' Education and Cooperative Union of America, the American Medical Association, the International Child Welfare League, the National Consumer's Leage, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, and women's clubs, temperance unions, health associations, and both major political parties.[2]

Opposition was based on divergent opinions on states' rights and constitutionality and came almost exclusively from a small group of southern textile men. David Clark, editor of the Southern Textile Bulletin, pursued a vigorous attack on the proposed legislation and accused the Child Labor Bulletin of maligning the South. Clark and seven other southern members of the National Association of Manufacturers formed an Executive Committee of Southern Cotton Manufacturers which immediately became a thorn in the side of the Child Labor Bulletin.[3]

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, pp. 125 and 130.

[2]Bremner, From the Depths, p. 225.

[3]Trattner, Crusade, p. 126.

Reports published in the Bulletin detailing intolerable conditions and illegal child employment in the South were vehemently denied by the NAM in articles and editorials which were circulated and published in popular magazines and newspapers. Clark told the New York Times, "I have never seen a statement issued by the NCLC that did not exaggerate conditions and tell half-truths."[1]

Congress adjourned before consideration of the bill and the Bulletin prepared for another extensive campaign. Editorials were circulated and published in the Chicago Tribune, the Memphis Commercial Appeal, the Boston Evening Transcript, the Philadelphia Ledger, the New York Tribune, the New Orleans Times-Picayune, the Kansas City Post, and the San Francisco Call.[2] At the February NCLC conference, Bishop Edwin H. Hughes of San Francisco reminded delegates, "It takes a 20-mile wind of popular opinion to drive a legislative ship 10 miles."[3]

In 1915, the Bulletin sent press notices promoting the bill to 1,250 newspapers. Ads advocating federal legislation were published in every issue along with appeals for readers to write to their legislators. Thirteen pamphlets, four appeal leaflets, and 15,000 copies of the bill were circulated by the staff during the year.[4]

David Clark continued to accuse the Bulletin of a "busybody

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[1]"Denies Child Labor Tales," New York Times, Jan. 7, 1915, p. 10.

[2]Trattner, Crusade, p. 127.

[3]"Annual Proceedings, part II," Child Labor Bulletin, August 1915, p. 99.

[4]"Annual Report of the Secretary," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1915, p. 150.

attitude" toward conditions which were none of its affairs. The Honorable J. J. Britt, representative of the 10th Congressional District in North Carolina, wrote to the editors, "Congress can't regulate manufacturing and the bill is unhumanitarian because it throws children out of their jobs and provides nothing for them to do." The Bulletin printed a Life magazine cartoon of a young girl happily telling her mother, "That means it will be against the law for me to wipe dishes, doesn't it, mother."[1]

Owen Lovejoy and other NCLC members toured the country pleading for public support. Lovejoy maintained, "The right of the child to exemption from labor must be admitted by society before the third right of childhood can be recognized, the right to adequate preparation for citizenship."[2]

The much-delayed legislation was finally adopted in September 1916. The Owen-Keating Bill provided that no child under 14 should work in a factory, mill, workshop, or cannery in the United States whose products were shipped in interstate commerce. Children under age 16 were forbidden from work in mines and quarries. The working day for children 14 and 15 in factories could be no more than eight hours, and not between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. Enforcement was delegated to the Children's Bureau.[3]

President Wilson signed the bill "with real emotion," saying, "I know how long the struggle has been to secure legislation of the sort

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[1]"Two Concepts of Child Employment," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1916, p. 54.

[2]"Effects of Child Labor on Social Standards," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1916, p. 23.

[3]"Federal Child Labor Law," School and Society, September 1, 1917, p. 256.

and what it is going to mean to the health and vigor of the country."[1]

"While he was merely taking up near its end the campaign carried on by the NCLC and reformers for years, he gave aid when it was needed," said the New York Herald Tribune of Wilson's political victory.[2]

Wilson boasted in School and Society magazine, "Every person engaged in educational work will feel gratified that a member of the craft was privileged to sign, as President, this charter of the children's liberties, and that it was owing to his insistence, at least in considerable measure, that the bill received the attention of Congress and became a law at this time."[3]

The Child Labor Bulletin and NCLC were overjoyed with the victory, proclaiming it the "greatest single accomplishment in the Committee's history."[4] Credit was given to Lovejoy and McKelway who were bitter over Wilson's claims. "When I see the cartoons in the New York World giving Wilson credit for the national child labor law . . . my emotions are aroused. This reform is mine," said McKelway.[5]

The Bulletin geared itself to the task of helping the states codify their laws to comply with the federal legislation. "Many employers tolerated child labor only because of the pressure of competition and are

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[1]Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era (New York, 1954), p. 227.

[2]Trattner, Crusade, p. 132.

[3]"Child Labor Bill and the Schools," School and Society, Nov. 25, 1916, p. 825.

[4]Trattner, Crusade, p. 132.

[5]"News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1916, p. 141.

glad to be rid of the whole system," said Lovejoy.[1] Even amid the celebration, the Bulletin was preparing to renew its crusade--this time to assist working children not affected by the bill. Prime offenses in this area were found in agriculture, tenement home work, and the street trades.

The bill immediately freed 150,000 children subject to the worst exploitation in factories and mines. The Bulletin saw the new law's principle value as an aid to enforcement and standardization of laws in the states. In September 1916, Bulletin researchers found twenty-eight states with poor regulation. Twenty-eight states permitted children under 16 to work more than eight hours. Nineteen states allowed children under 16 to work at night. Twenty-six states had no medical requirement for issuance of working permits, and twelve had no educational requirement.[2]

Prosecutions under the new law were highlighted in the Bulletin. By May 1918, five violators had been found guilty and fined $100 each.[3] Unfortunately, the celebrations were premature.

The villainous David Clark and his Executive Committee set out to confound the purpose of the fledgling bill. In a highly contrived test case, Reuben Dagenhart, represented by NAM lawyers, sued the state of North Carolina, claiming the bill was unconstitutional. In August 1917, Judge James E. Boyd ruled against crusty Charlotte District Attorney William C. Hammer, issuing an injunction and declaring the law

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[1] "News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1916, p. 136.

[2] Ibid., p. 142.

[3] "News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1918, p. 64.

unconstitutional in his Western District.

Loud cries of protest filled the pages of the Bulletin. The Justice Department immediately began an appeal to the Supreme Court with the help of the Children's Bureau and the NCLC. All were confident that the Supreme Court would reverse the decision. Newspapers and magazines joined in protest, although many had not campaigned for the bill. "The states should be sufficiently enlightened and conscientious to forego the profits to be derived from child labor," said the New York Times.[1]

On June 3, 1918, the Supreme Court upheld Boyd's district court decision by a close 5-4 vote. Federal intervention in state affairs was thus considered illegal and an invasion of states' rights, "an improper exercise of power."[2]

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes joined Justices McKenna, Brandeis, and Clark in dissenting opinions. Holmes said scornfully that the Court thought it proper to regulate strong drink, but not the "evil of premature and excessive child labor."[3] He accused the Court of being "more concerned with the technical rights of Congress than the human rights of children."[4]

Professor Frederick Green of the University of Illinois told R. G. Fuller, managing editor of the Bulletin, "This is the most important decision any court has made for many years . . . in its effect on child labor, and, in a sense, in its denial to the nation of the power

[1]"A Decision Adverse to Reform," New York Times, Sept. 3, 1917, p.6.

[2]Bremner, From the Depths, p. 225.

[3]Bent, Newspaper Crusaders, p. 237.

[4]Trattner, Crusade, p. 137.

to make its will effective. The immediate results of the decision are regrettable but may bring amendment to the Constitution and be a blessing in disguise."[1]

In the South, there was loud rejoicing and many manufacturers sent letters to the Bulletin commending Judge Boyd for his stand on states' rights. Child laborers who had been temporarily freed from excessive toil under abhorrent conditions went back to work.

The NCLC immediately appointed a Special Committee on Federal Legislation to consult with experts and outline a new course of action. Bulletin editors realized that the war emergency would result in high wages and labor shortages which would draw even more children into industry. Compulsory education and child labor laws were suspended in many states, making further attempts at regulation impossible. Felix Frankfurter, long-time friend of the NCLC, made sure the govenment complied with the 1916 minimum child labor standards in war industries' employment of children.

The president of the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs wrote in the Child Labor Bulletin, "The end of the war must necessarily bring the need of industrial readjustment, but before we ask women to cease the work they are now doing, let us abolish child labor."[2]

In November 1918, a new federal child labor law was proposed by Senator Atlee Pomerene, an Ohio Democrat, as an amendment to the 1918 Revenue Bill. The standards again complied with those published in the

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[1]R. G. Fuller, "A Quest for Constitutionality," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1918, p. 207.

[2]"News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1918, p. 54.

Bulletin. Senator Irvine L. Lenroot wrote in the magazine, "This legislation can be sustained upon its merits by a well-considered public opinion and we need not regard it as subterfuge to reach an evil in a constitutional way."[1]

In 1919, the American Child circulated 133 articles endorsing the act which added a 10 percent tax onto commodities in the interstate commerce of firms employing child labor. Widely circulated complimentary issues of the shortened and revamped magazine publicized the approach of a new attempt at legislation.

The Pomerene Amendment to the tax act was adopted in February 1919, with enforcement delegated to the Treasury Department.[2] The American Child cautiously applauded the new legislation and continued to publish scrupulous data of child labor conditions in the nation. Publicity concerning the two bills had engendered considerable public curiosity and elicited new concern and cooperation. Wiley H. Swift, American Child researcher and reporter, noted that both humanitarian and business considerations were more and more willing to support child labor reform. He attributed this change in attitude to the long years of public education campaigns by the NCLC and its publication.

The American Child began to emphasize the need for increased cooperation with school authorities to further limit child labor through compulsory education laws. "It is not enough to shut children out of the factory, we must also bring them into the school. The movement for

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[1] "News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, February 1919, p. 255.

[2] "News Notes," The American Child, May 1919, p. 8.

compulsory education everywhere goes hand in hand, must go hand in hand, with the child labor movement."[1] Again, children not affected by the new law were a special consideration, and the agricultural situation was chosen by Adler as the next area of concerted attack. While the American Child was accelerating its legislative assistance program, Judge Boyd once again considered the constitutionality of child labor legislation.

On May 2, 1919, Boyd declared the second law unconstitutional. The Drexel Furniture Company won compensation for fines paid to J. W. Bailey, a North Carolina internal revenue collector, for violation of the child labor tax act. The company claimed an invalid exercise of Congress' right to lay and collect taxes, and an invasion of states' rights by violation of the 10th Amendment which reserves to the states powers not delegated to the nation.[2]

Again the Justice Department appealed to the Supreme Court, assuring the NCLC that the decision would be overruled. Counsel for the government wrote in the American Child, "The statute now in question imposes an excise tax which Congress had the power to levy and its primary object must be assumed to be the raising of revenue, although it may operate practically to affect the employment of child labor in factories."[3]

Manufacturers applauded Boyd's decision agreeing that the law was an invasion of states' rights and would result in formation of a

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[1]Wilensky, "Child Labor Situation," p. 315.

[2]Grace Abbott, The Child and the State (Chicago, 1938), p. 469.

[3]"News Notes," The American Child, February 1920, p. 278.

costly and impracticable bureacracy. David Clark of the NAM thought it was wrong for the government to make money on the illegal employment of children. The American Child countered with, "The world has been enacting child labor laws for more than 100 years and none of them were detrimental to the communities concerned. Opposition rests on the selfishness of interested employers or misunderstanding and ignorance."[1]

Enforcement was expensive and the American Child reported that in 1920, the government spent $90,000 to levy and collect fines which amounted to only $2,380.20. "It was a loss to the government, but an incalculable profit to the nation," wrote the editors.[2]

The Supreme Court declared the second federal law an unconstitutional invasion of states' rights on May 15, 1922, in an 8-1 decision. The NCLC was not surprised by the ruling and the American Child prepared to work for the only course remaining, a federal amendment to the Constitution. The editors said

> Twice the people tried to express their will through representation in Congress. Twice the humane and patriotic purpose has fallen to naught by reason of constitutional limitations set forth in decisions of the Supreme Court. Twenty-eight state laws are below the very reasonable standards fixed by the two acts.[3]

The American Child reported in detail editorial comment on the decision and a possible amendment. Among the newspapers favoring

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[1]Henry R. Seager, Labor and Other Economic Essays (New York, 1931), p. 397.

[2]"News from the Child Welfare Field," The American Child, November 1920, p. 201.

[3]"Amend the Constitution," The American Child, August 1922, p. 68.

amendment were the New York Globe, the New York Herald Tribune, the Washington Star, the Boston Transcript, the Denver Times, the Cleveland Press, the San Francisco Journal, the Tuscaloosa (Ala.) News, the Jackson (Miss.) Clarion, the Houston Chronicle, and the New York Times. A New York Times editorial said

> The great campaign for improved child labor conditions . . . is aiming much higher. The whole problem of child labor, its importance to health, education, and the morals of the next generation, will be opened and attacked in a broader spirit and with increased vigor. After muddling around for more than ten years with the child labor question, it would seem that even Congress must be convinced by now that the only adequate recourse is amendment to the federal Constitution.[1]

Statesmen, social welfare agencies, organized labor, women's groups, and health and welfare groups wrote to the American Child for information regarding an amendment. In December 1922, the quarterly magazine accelerated its reform campaign and changed to monthly publication. The two defeated bills had accomplished legislative gains in several states and further awakened the American conscience to the evils of child labor. Between 1917 and 1922, the eight-hour day was adopted in eleven states and by 1922, twenty-three states had improved compulsory school attendance laws.[2] The 1920 census, as reported in the American Child, showed 1,060,585 children, 10 to 15, at work.[3]

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[1]"Editorial Comment on the Child Labor Decision," The American Child, August 1922, p. 91.

[2]John R. Commons, A History of Labour in the United States (New York, 1918), p. 452.

[3]"Members Attention!" The American Child, January 1925, p. 7.

Following the Bailey decision, Samuel Gompers organized a Permanent Conference for the Abolition of Child Labor. Delegates representing twenty-five national groups attended a Conference meeting in 1922 and selected a ten-member legislative steering committee to draft an amendment proposal. American Child Editor Lovejoy and staff writers Grace Abbott and Florence Kelley headed the committee.[1]

With the aid of the steering committee, Edward P. Costigan, a member of the U. S. Tariff Commission, wrote the draft of a bill which was introduced in the Senate in 1922. The proposed Children's Amendment provided for the following:

1. Congress shall have the power to prohibit the labor of persons under the age of 18 years and to prescribe the conditions of such labor.

2. The reserved power of the several states to legislate with reference to the labor of persons under 18 years of age shall not be impaired or diminished except to the extent necessary to give effect to legislation enacted by Congress.[2]

The latter clause was added to appease those who were apprehensive over states' rights. Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and President Harding voiced support to American Child editors. The President accepted an honorary membership in the NCLC in 1922 and his death in 1923 was mourned in the pages of its magazine.

Early in 1923, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary considered several proposed versions of the amendment. One entire morning session

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[1]Clarke A. Chambers, Seedtime of Reform (Minneapolis, 1963), p. 34.

[2]Johnsen, Selected Articles, p. 4.

was given over to Grace Abbott, NCLC trustee and new head of the Children's Bureau. Florence Kelley and Owen R. Lovejoy of the American Child spoke to Senators in the afternoon.[1] "We will have to combat disbelief, indifference, and the opposition of business and agriculture," said Lovejoy. Congressional discussion filled more than 100 pages of the Record.[2]

In 1923, the American Child listed four reasons for the continuation of child labor in America: (1) It was profitable to child exploiters; (2) Children were attracted by the lure of wages; (3) The educational system remained in a fossilized condition; and (4) Americans still permitted it.[3]

In the height of the amendment campaign, American Child staffers collected 5,000 clippings from the media every week.[4] The majority included information, commentary, and reprints from the magazine. Most popular magazines campaigned for the legislation, but newspapers were not so vocal. Arthur Robb, editor of Editor and Publisher, claimed in his column, "Shop Talk at 30," that "some of the counter-lobbying by newspapers against the amendment, based upon theory rather than fact, has done the newspaper cause more harm than good."[5] The American Child reported only 130 newspapers in favor.[6]

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[1] "News Notes," The American Child, February 1923, p. 1.

[2] Chambers, Seedtime, p. 44.

[3] "Four Reasons," The American Child, November 1923, p. 7.

[4] "Publicity," The American Child, November 1925, p. 2.

[5] Bent, Newspaper Crusaders, p. 239.

[6] "Child Labor Amendment Favored," The American Child, October 1923, p. 1.

The brunt of amendment publicity was accomplished through the efforts of the American Child and child labor committees. National organizations were adamant in their support and wrote for information to aid in local campaigning. In 1923, the American Child distributed 226,652 pieces of literature advocating amendment. The magazine's circulation was 12,500.[1]

A joint resolution was enacted by Congress in 1924, proposing an amendment to the Constitution to permit federal regulation of child labor. This resolution was sponsored by the NCLC and endorsed by the American Federation of Labor and both major political parties. The resolution was passed in the House on April 29, 1924, by a vote of 297 to 69, and in the Senate on June 2, 1924, by a vote of 61 to 23, 5 more than the necessary two-thirds.[2] Ratification by thirty-six states was needed for passage of the amendment.

Reformers throughout the nation joined the American Child in the victory celebrations and staffers excitedly prepared to campaign in the states. Three-fourths of the states' legislatures would meet in 1925. No one foresaw the vicious anti-amendment campaign which was being prepared by manufacturers and foes of the legislation. "The friends of the amendment were totally unprepared to combat the flood of distorted propaganda which was let loose upon them. They suddenly found themselves compelled to discuss a matter of public policy with a monstrous jazz band," said the New Republic.[2]

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[1]"Publicity," The American Child, January 1924, p. 7.

[2]National Child Labor Committee, 50th Anniversary Report, p. 2.

[3]Trattner, Crusade, p. 170.

American Association of Social Workers
American Association of University Women
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Association for Labor Legislation
American Federation of Labor
American Federation of Teachers
American Home Economics Association
American Legion
American Nurses' Association
American Unitarian Association
Association for Childhood Education
Association of Governmental Officials in Industry
Camp Fire Girls
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Commission on the Church and Social Service
Council of Women for Home Missions
Democratic National Committee
Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America
Fraternal Order of Eagles
Friendly Society in America
General Federation of Women's Clubs
Girls' Friendly Society in America
Juvenile Protective Association
Methodist Board of Home Missions and Church Extension
National Child Labor Committee
National Congress of Parents and Teachers
National Consumer's League
National Council of Catholic Women
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Mothers and P.T.A.s
National Council of Women
National Educational Association
National Federation of Business and Professional Women
National Federation of Settlements
National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods
National League of Women Voters
National Women's Christian Temperance Union
National Women's Trade Union League
New York Child Labor Committee
Northern Baptist Convention
Permanent Conference for the Abolition of Child Labor
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
Railroad Brotherhoods
Reformed Church in America
Republican National Committee
Service Star Legion
The National Grange
U. S. Children's Bureau
Y.W.C.A.

Figure 1. Groups favoring a national amendment.[1]

[1]William Green, Child Labor: A Primer for Trade Unions and Study Classes (New York, 1940), p. 17, and Johnsen, Selected Articles, p. 281.

Most Americans were fearful and suspicious of the further extension of federal authority. Wartime regulations and the Prohibition and Suffrage Amendments had taken their toll. "They have taken our women away from us by constitutional amendment, they have taken our liquor away from us, and now they want to take our children." wrote a Southern legislator in the American Child.[1]

The widespread fear of Communism helped stigmatize the amendment as a subversive move to nationalize children. The Woman Patriot, magazine of the Anti-Suffragists, called the amendment, "a straight Socialist measure promoted under direct orders from Moscow."[2] The NAM's Manufacturers' Record said legislation was unChristian and contrary to God's law. "The proposed amendment is fathered by Socialists, Communists, and Bolshevists," said its editors.[3] The Catholic Church opposed legislation because "it would destroy parental control over children." The Farm Journal said it would destroy the home, and the Sentinels of the Republic predicted that the child would become the property of the national government.[4]

The American Child received and reprinted a barrage of letters and telegrams from concerned citizens and groups. The NCLC formed a speaker's bureau and its magazine fought for the amendment with articles

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[1] "News Notes," The American Child, April 1925, p. 6.

[2] Trattner, Crusade, p. 172.

[3] Ibid., p. 173.

[4] Josephine Goldmark, Impatient Crusader: Florence Kelley's Life Story (Urbana, Ill., 1953), p. 188; Chambers, Seedtime, p. 39; and Commons, History of Labour, p. 445.

explaining the issues and answering questions and accusations with facts and figures. A semi-weekly news service offered editorials and articles to 800 friendly or neutral newspapers.[1] A running battle with the NAM made for entertaining reading in almost every issue of the magazine in 1924 and 1925.

The NAM pursued a bitter propaganda campaign, misrepresenting the amendment's history, terms and purpose. Manufacturers said it would make children the devil's workshop and was "the greatest thing ever done in America in behalf of the activities of Hell."[2] The American Child responded with documented evidence of the child labor problem and commentary from concerned authorities. "The most active opponents of the amendment confine their energies to the publication of false statements which are not based on facts or sound arguments," wrote William Draper Lewis, director of the American Law Institute, in the American Child.[3]

News from the states, dutifully printed in every issue of the magazine, was discouraging. Massachusetts rejected the amendment in November, 1924, and was followed by Kansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, and Georgia in January 1925. During the summer of 1925, the staff realized that it was impractical to expect ratification in the near future. Three times as many states rejected as adopted the amendment.

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 175.

[2]Abbott, Child and State, p. 546.

[3]"A Lawyer's View of the Child Labor Amendment," The American Child, December 1924, p. 1.

Rejected-22	Pending-14	Ratified-5	Not in Session-6	Houses Contradictory-1
(Both Houses)		(Both Houses)		
Connecticut	Colorado	Arkansas	Alabama	Montana:
Delaware	Illinois	Arizona	Florida	House-Yes
Georgia	Iowa	California	Kentucky	Senate-No
Kansas	Maine	Wisconsin	Maryland	
Massachusetts	Minnesota		Mississippi	
North Carolina	Missouri	(House)	Virginia	
South Carolina	Nebraska			
South Dakota	New Hampshire	New Mexico		
Tennessee	New Jersey			
Texas	New York			
Utah	Oregon			
Vermont	Rhode Island			
	West Virginia			
(House)	Wyoming			
Idaho				
Louisiana				
Michigan				
Nevada				
Ohio				
Oklahoma				
Washington				
(Senate)				
Indiana				
North Dakota				
Pennsylvania				

Figure 2. Status of amendment action by states, March 1, 1925.[1]

[1] "Status of Amendment Action by States," The American Child, March 1925, p. 8.

The American Child's circulation peaked at 14,000 in 1925. The special press service, extended to 1,300 newspapers, was faring poorly as interest in the amendment waned. Reasons for public apathy, as seen by the staff, included a post-war slump in idealism, lack of faith in federal regulation, and American conservatism. The final blow came in February 1926 when Editor Lovejoy resigned from the magazine and as NCLC secretary. He was replaced by acting secretary Wiley H. Swift and Gertrude Folks Zimand became the new editor of the American Child.

Letters of appreciation for Lovejoy's work and tenacity filled the pages of American Child issues in March, April, and May of 1926. Writers who praised the editor included Walter Lippmann, chief editorial writer for the New York World; John Dewey, professor at Columbia University; Paul Kellogg, editor of The Survey Magazine; Kenyon L. Butterfield, president of Michigan State College; Bruce Bliven, editor of the New Republic; and Grace Abbott, head of the Children's Bureau.[1] Lovejoy was elected secretary of the Children's Aid Society in 1929. The crusading spirit never left him.

Ratification by the states was slow in coming. The 1926 census showed close to a million children still at work. The most significant decreases won by the American Child were recorded between 1915 and 1920. During this time, the number of child workers decreased from two million to about one million. In 1920, the total number of working children was 1,060,858. The total had decreased to about 700,000 by 1930.

The foundering American Child issued a special December 1928

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[1] "Letters," The American Child, March, April, and May 1926.

Christmas edition, printed all in green. Nothing seemed to spur the lagging circulation or to reawaken the apathetic public. Between 1925 and 1931, the magazine lost almost 4,000 subscribers, and in April 1932, the eight-page issues were reduced to four to conserve funds for the long battle still ahead. Members gave up their complimentary issues in deference to paying subscribers.

In a March 1925 issue, NCLC Treasurer V. Everit Macy pleaded for public support on page one.

> If a federal law must be delayed, children in backward states need protection now more than ever. The intensive work of the last few months has reduced our funds very low--we must be prepared to answer any calls for our services in the states. Will you contribute for this work?

This ad was followed by an NCLC membership application.

The national tragedy in 1929 regenerated some interest in child labor reform. The tide of favorable reaction caused by the Depression surprised and delighted American Child staffers. The public wanted more children kept at school and prevented from competing with twelve million unemployed adults for scarce jobs. The Depression brought collective economic concern and idled one third of the nation's child workers.

In 1933, eight more states ratified the child labor amendment, and by 1938 the number had grown to twenty-eight. The June 1933 National Recovery Act temporarily barred 100,000 children from industry. President Roosevelt wrote to the American Child, expressing hope that this trend could be continued.

A 1935 American Child survey found thirty-eight states with the minimum standard of a fourteen-year age limit for children in factories and mills. Six states had a fifteen-year limit, seven a sixteen-year

limit, and one had no age limit. Forty-two states had established an eight-hour day.[1] Such successes kept the staff diligently at work despite the meager progress of amendment ratification.

The 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act set child labor and wages and hour standards for workers "in interstate commerce" and overruled the Hammer v. Dagenhart decision of 1918 which had barred the federal government from interfering in such matters of states' rights. This act eliminated many thousands of child workers by forbidding children under 16 in covered employment and under 18 in occupations declared hazardous by the Children's Bureau. The catch phrase "covered employment" set many child workers outside coverage of the act. Those not protected were children who worked on farms, in local establishments, on the streets, and minors between the ages of 16 and 18.[2]

The American Child would see no appreciable results until 1941, when the Fair Labor Standards Act was upheld by the Supreme Court. After that year, large numbers of children were protected by new laws concerning age limits, school hours, and hazardous occupation definitions.[3] The ten states needed for ratification had not yet been reached when the American Child ceased publication in 1966 with its forty-eighth volume.

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[1]George B. Mangold, Problems of Child Welfare (New York, 1936), p. 336.

[2]Green, A Primer, p. 12.

[3]"Child Welfare," Encyclopedia of History, 1967, IV, p. 755.

CHAPTER IV

IMPACT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Publishers

The National Child Labor Committee was the most vocal and adamant crusader against child labor in America's history. The American Child, the organization's official publication, became the outstanding organ for child labor reform, influencing millions of Americans and helping every state enact or improve its child labor laws. Publicity was the most vital tool of reformers, and this was the magazine's chief resource. "Parents, employers, and the public were generally blind to the real effects of child labor and to the value of education and the right kinds of work and play," wrote the editors of School and Society magazine.[1]

The NCLC was a respected and widely acclaimed organization. Two years after its formation, the NCLC was given credit for the proposed Beveridge Bill, introduced in the Senate in 1906. "The bill is the fruit of a prolonged and very earnest agitation by an organization expressly devoted to that purpose and aided by most of the active charitable associations," wrote the New York Times.[2]

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[1] "The Increase of Child Labor," School and Society, September 8, 1923, p. 296.

[2] "The New Child Labor Law," New York Times, October 2, 1906, p. 8.

Also in 1906, Florence Kelley, a trustee of the NCLC, had enlisted President Roosevelt's aid in the formation of a federal Children's Bureau, "to report on all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life."[1] For six years, the NCLC waged a massive and expensive campaign promoting establishment of the Bureau and in 1912, the new Bureau joined the NCLC in research and publication of child labor information. "Every dollar spent by the Children's Bureau is a dollar invested in aiding those who . . . are contributing their share to upbuilding intelligence and physical strength," wrote the Child Labor Bulletin.[2]

The U. S. Department of Labor utilized NCLC data in production of its monumental Report on the Conditions of Woman and Child Wage Earners.[3] Copies went to legislators and a 1910 Congressional committee considering establishment of the Children's Bureau examined the child labor problem.

> The country ought to know how the labor of children is being regulated, what occupations are especially dangerous or injurious physically or morally, at what ages children should be allowed to enter the army of breadwinners, and what restrictions should be thrown around them . . . what is the general effect of premature toil.[4]

The NCLC was eager to answer the Congressmen's questions. Homer Folks, vice-chairman of the Committee, organized the 1909 White House Conference on Dependent Children, setting a precedent for NCLC support

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[1]Markham, Lindsey, and Creel, Bondage, p. 397.

[2]"True Preparedness in Greater Protection to Childhood," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1916, p. 12.

[3]Markham, Lindsey, and Creel, Bondage, p. 20.

[4]McConnell, Child Labor, 1912 to 1937, p. 1.

of conferences held in 1919 and 1929. Child labor was a debated topic at all three conferences.

Various national organizations applauded the NCLC's entry into the field of child welfare reform. The National Consumer's League issued a handbook on child labor laws and celebrated the Committee's formation in 1904. Secretary Florence Kelley incessantly urged consumers to boycott goods manufactered by illegal child workers and to consult the NCLC for child labor information. The League predicted that the NCLC would arouse violent hostility in the stronghold of child labor.[1] The League later saluted Florence Kelley, Alexander McKelway, and Owen R. Lovejoy of the NCLC as three crusaders who provided courageous leadership in the campaign to save the children.[2] Child labor reform had succeeded to some extent in thirty-eight states by 1914.

The American Bar Association, Chicago Vice Commission, International Child Welfare League, American Federation of Labor, National Education Association, and various reform and child welfare groups endorsed a model child labor bill drawn up by the NCLC in 1904. This bill was used as a base for Beveridge's 1906 child labor bill.

"The NCLC can remove the difficulty arising from the diversity of state laws. The model law drafted in 1904 could do much to remove the worst evils of the child labor problem if adopted by all the states," wrote Benjamin DeWitt in The Progressive Movement.[3]

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[1] Goldmark, Kelley, p. 92.

[2] Ibid., p. 161.

[3] Benjamin P. DeWitt, The Progressive Movement (New York, 1915), p. 248.

The New York Times hailed the new organization in 1904. "The NCLC was organized to supervise the actions of child labor committees in all parts of the country, and to prevent in the states the sacrifice of child life which has characterized some of the older industrial communities."[1]

National magazines began to publicize the reform crusade. Between 1897 and 1901, Poole's Index to Periodical Literature listed only four articles on child labor. Between 1902 and 1906, sixty-nine related articles were added.[2] In 1904, discussions of the problem were found in McClures', The Independent, The Outlook, the Saturday Evening Post, and Cosmopolitan.[3]

By 1909, twenty-seven state and local child labor committees were working in conjunction with the NCLC's five thousand members.[4] Contributions climbed from $13,500 in 1904 to $60,000 in 1912. Printed material distributed by the Committee increased from two to six million pages annually by 1912.[5] The demand for more information resulted in the advent of the NCLC's child labor magazine, the Child Labor Bulletin, in 1912. In 1919, the magazine was renamed The American Child and altered to appeal to the more casual reader.

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[1]"A Suggested Organization," New York Times, April 23, 1904, p. 10.

[2]Commons, History of Labour, p. 408.

[3]Trattner, Crusade, p. 48.

[4]Ibid., p. 75.

[5]Ibid., p. 114.

"I want to congratulate the NCLC upon the American Child, which is full of illuminating material in the field of child welfare. It fills a unique place," wrote Hastings H. Hart, director of the Child-Helping Department of the Russell Sage Foundation, a philanthropic organization.[1]

Editors of The Survey Magazine and The Literary Digest wrote to Editor Lovejoy that their staffs regularly scanned the pages of the magazine for "newsy, interesting, fresh, and scrupulously accurate" information. Reprints were soon found in almost every national magazine, and child-helping organizations pointed to NCLC studies and statistics published in the Child Labor Bulletin. More and more libraries began to subscribe, 300 kept files in 1921.[2] State child labor committees wrote to the staff requesting information on child labor surveys in their states. Edward N. Clopper, Bulletin reporter, conducted an extensive study of New York tenement workers and published a book, Child Labor in City Streets, in 1913.

Historian Arthur S. Link notes that by 1913, the more radical progressives dedicated to the cause of social justice were clearly distinguishable. Among these he listed the American Association for Labor Legislation, the Consumer's Leage, and the NCLC.[3]

"The NCLC carried its educational program into every state in an untiring fight for better legislation. It sought to educate the public through investigation and publication of child labor conditions," wrote

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[1]"Shop Talk," The American Child, February 1921, p. 369.

[2]"Annual Report of the Secretary," The American Child, November 1921, p. 224.

[3]Link, Woodrow Wilson, p. 54.

George B. Mangold in Problems of Child Welfare.[1]

"The NCLC has grown in membership and efficiency, advancing with ever increasing momentum against the phalanx of tradition, indifference, and greed. The Committee is successful beyond anticipation in securing improved laws and methods of enforcement," wrote Judge Benjamin B. Lindsey in Children in Bondage. He called the successes won with inadequate funds remarkable as crusader Lovejoy continued to sound the call for volunteers in the Child Labor Bulletin.[2] Clarke A. Chambers, author of Seedtime of Reform, called Lovejoy "one of the unsung heroes of social work."[3]

"The NCLC stimulated surveys of the inhuman working conditions of children and charged public opinion toward regulatory legislation," wrote the editors of Work, Youth, and Unemployment.[4]

According to the Annals of America, the "NCLC, led by prominent liberals such as Felix Adler and Jane Addams, publicized the distressing conditions under which children worked and the unhealthy effects long working hours had on the young."[5] Before 1912, NCLC reports and accounts of annual conferences were published in the Annals.

NCLC conferences, dutifully reported in the Child Labor Bulletin, attracted prominent Americans as participants and delegates, and were

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[1]Mangold, Problems, p. 329.

[2]Markham, Lindsey, and Creel, Bondage, p. 9.

[3]Trattner, Crusade, p. 101.

[4]Melvin Herman, Stanley Sodofsky, and Bernard Rosenberg, eds., Work, Youth, and Unemployment (New York, 1968), p. 81.

[5]"Obstacles to Enforcing Child Labor Laws," The Annals of America, Vol. 13, 1968, p. 85.

well-attended and publicized. Among those who often attended were New York Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt; Justice Felix Frankfurter; Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce; Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor; James J. Davis, U. S. Secretary of Labor; Heywood Hale Broun of the New York World; and an unending list of social workers, legislators, educators, and those interested in child labor reform.

The NCLC was instrumental in the formation of the National Child Health Organization in 1918. This group fought for improved child health and stressed better child nutrition through a vast campaign in the schools. The NCLC also founded the Committee on National Aid to Education and assisted this group in a successful effort to pass the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act which made $1 million available annually to the schools for improved vocational programs. It was affiliated with the Children's Bureau, National Consumer's League, the Federal Council of Churches, National Information Bureau, National Council of Rural Agencies, Permanent Conference for the Abolition of Child Labor, and hundreds of child labor committees throughout the nation.

Child labor day, the creation of the NCLC, was held on the last Sunday of every January and was observed in many communities. "More than 8,000 organizations wrote to the Child Labor Bulletin for material to observe child labor day," wrote the New York Times in 1916.[1] Announcements of child labor days were found in the majority of the nation's newspapers.

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[1] "Sunday is Child Labor Day," New York Times, January 21, 1916, p. 20.

Another measure of the NCLC's success is the extent and vehemence of its opposition. The Sentinels of the Republic, a group opposing centralization in the federal government, was formed in 1922 as a reaction to the proposed child labor amendment. The NAM and its Manufacturers' News and the Southern Textile Bulletin waged violent campaigns against the NCLC and its magazine. The Farmers' States' Rights League, a fictitious organization exposed by the American Federation of Labor, was sponsored by the NAM and flooded newspapers with ads denouncing the proposed federal legislation. Others who opposed the bill and wrote critical letters to the nation's newspapers and magazines included farmers, Catholic church members, and states' rights champions. The NAM lobbied in every state legislature and tried to mislead the gullible public with false and unfounded arguments.

The NCLC had its own avenues of publicity and responded in kind. "Through letter and lecture, pamphlet, newspaper, and magazine story, exhibit and slide, we have endeavored to bring the story of the laboring child close to the hearts of men," asserted the Committee in its Child Labor Bulletin.[1]

The response from the public was not always adverse. In 1915, the Detroit Employers' Association wrote to the Bulletin, requesting NCLC testimony concerning the economy of eliminating children from industry.[2]

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[1]"The Citizen and the NCLC," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1916, p. 36.

[2]"Employers Campaigning Against Child Labor," The Survey Magazine, May 8, 1915, p. 130.

The national secretary of the YMCA wrote and requested slides illustrating child labor to show at Army camp meetings in 1918.[1] In 1923, Colonel John T. Axton, chief of the chaplains of the Army, obtained NCLC child labor material which he sent to each of the 175 Army chaplains to help solicit donations for child labor reform.[2]

Children's essay contests were sponsored in the nation's schools, with winning child labor essays contributed to the Bulletin's editors. "The Proposed Child Labor Amendment," a chapter in Henry R. Seager's Labor and Other Economic Essays, consisted of answers to an NCLC request for expressions of opinion from various professional groups. The consensus was "Of course I am in favor of amendment. Only through legislation can children be protected and manufacturers be restrained from exploiting children."[3]

The Foreign Automotive Association donated one day's car sales to the NCLC following a week-long automobile exhibit in New York.[4] Under NCLC supervision, the Typographical Union and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union conducted educational and welfare work for the apprentices in their trades.

Child labor became an international concern and the NCLC was supported at the International Labor Conference held in Washington, D.C., in 1919. Its standards were accepted by the International Secretariat

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[1] "Publicity," Child Labor Bulletin, November 1918, p. 166.

[2] "News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, February 1923, p. 4.

[3] Seager, Essays, pp. 392-93.

[4] "News Notes," The American Child, November 1923, p. 3.

of the Young People's Movement and the League of Nations in 1922.[1]

Said the Washington Post, "The progress that has been made since the NCLC was organized gives hope that the problem can be finally solved." Walter Trattner, author of an NCLC history, concurred. "The NCLC left a large constructive imprint on the whole field of child welfare and helped release children from defenseless bondage."

The Publication

The American Child holds a unique place in the history of media crusaders. By bringing together members of the NCLC, noted reformers, social welfare workers, and experts in every field, the magazine published a running account of the fight against the evils of child labor and poor state legislation.

Success can be measured by the preliminary response to the magazine. Although its circulation was not large, the American Child found its way into the hands of citizens in every state and over a hundred foreign countries in its first year of publication. The number of readers generally equalled the number of NCLC members. In 1912, NCLC membership was about 5,000. This grew to 12,780 in 1919, with circulation reaching 12,000. Circulation peaked in 1925 at 14,000 and had decreased along with NCLC membership to about 10,000 by 1930.

Members of every state child labor committee read the magazine and corresponded with Editor Lovejoy, relaying child labor successes and defeats in their locales. American Child articles were read and

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[1]Johnsen, Selected Articles, p. 4.

quoted by reformers, legislators, and educators in speeches and child labor day addresses. As part of the literature of moral protest in the early 20th Century, the American Child helped awaken the American conscience and contributed to efforts in the wide campaign for social betterment. Children's aid societies and welfare organizations were created and the juvenile court system was revised and improved. There was new concern over the physical and mental health of the child, resulting in the construction of parks, playgrounds, and better vocational facilities. The magazine fought for better compulsory school attendance laws. Dr. John Dewey, philosophy professor at Columbia University, told NCLC conference delegates, "The movement for the abolition of child labor has always been part of an educational movement."[1]

The 1920 census figures on school attendance published in the American Child showed some results in the campaign for better attendance. There was an overall increase of 4.26 percent in school attendance since 1919.[2] Between 1900 and 1925, the number of children attending school had increased fourfold, while the population of children was up only 15 percent. High school attendance rose from 10 percent in 1904 to 53 percent in 1928.[3]

The majority of magazine articles written on child labor included American Child data or comment. "We read your excellent magazine here

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[1]"Proceedings of the Annual Conference," Child Labor Bulletin, May 1917, p. 61.

[2]"News from the Child Welfare Field," The American Child, February 1922, p. 29.

[3]Chambers, Seedtime, p. 52.

with great interest and find its material available for quotation in our columns," wrote William S. Woods, editor of The Literary Digest.[1] Paul Kellogg, editor of The Survey Magazine, noted that members of his staff often went foraging in the pages of the American Child because its standards of accuracy were high and it gave information about conditions affecting children against the larger background of public welfare as a whole.[2] "According to The American Child" was a familiar phrase to the reading public.

American Child staffers wrote innumerable articles for publication in national magazines. R. G. Fuller's articles were serialized in Good Housekeeping, The Survey Magazine, and the Journal of Home Economics. Helen C. Dwight encouraged local child labor efforts in "Child Labor in Your Town," an article published in The American City.[3] Florence Kelley and Samuel McCune Lindsay were contributing editors of the Survey. Editor Lovejoy authored "American Progress, 1620 to 1920" for The Literary Digest.[4]

American Child staffers conducted surveys of child labor conditions in every state. Detailed reports of the findings were published in every issue. In North Carolina, such a survey proved that underaged children were illegally employed, resulting in new legislation to forbid child

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[1] "Shop Talk," The American Child, p. 369.

[2] Ibid., p. 368.

[3] Helen C. Dwight, "Child Labor in Your Town," The American City, December 1915, p. 533.

[4] "Child Labor," The Literary Digest, January 15, 1921, p. 40.

labor under age 13.[1] Surveys also showed that child workers had greater liability to accidents, were more prone to juvenile delinquency and illiteracy, were less likely to attend school, and needed vocational assistance in most cases. The American Child also pointed out that child labor laws were mediocre and poorly enforced, most families were not in dire need of children's wages, and the concern for child welfare was a sadly neglected area of social reform. The magazine estimated that child labor cost society $20 to $25 million per year and was part of the vicious circle of illiteracy, poverty, disease, low wages, and bad housing.[2]

Many Americans responded with an enlightened interest in the nation's children. Support for organizations such as the P.T.A. and N.E.A. was engendered. Membership in state and local child labor committees increased yearly until 1925. The American Child was read by members of religious groups, charity organizations, child welfare agencies, and educators throughout the nation. The Kiwanis, Big Brother and Big Sister Organizations, and Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations reprinted American Child articles in their publications. There were few national organizations which did not utilize the many services offered by the magazine.

"The American Child is doing a useful service in calling attention to the conditions of child life in some of our more neglected rural regions, and in some of the neglected homes . . . ," wrote Professor Dwight Sanderson of Columbia University's College of Agriculture.[3]

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[1] "News Notes," Child Labor Bulletin, February 1915, p. 20.

[2] Ibid., p. 34.

[3] "Shop Talk," The American Child, p. 369.

A child labor handbook, published by the American Child, was acclaimed as the best collection of child labor information ever assembled.[1] The staff's scrupulous regard for facts resulted in an increasing demand for American Child reprints and survey data. In 1928, NBC sponsored "Child Labor Talks" on radio station WJZ in New York, with information provided by the American Child.[2]

On the NCLC's twenty-fifth anniversary in 1929, the American Child printed a "25th Anniversary Souvenir Book," containing articles by Felix Adler, Samuel McCune Lindsay, Grace Abbott, the Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt, Wiley H. Swift, and William John Cooper, U. S. Commissioner of Education. The edition was widely acclaimed and circulated throughout the nation as evidence of the progress made thus far in the area of child labor reform.[3]

As the popularity of child labor reform waned, American Child staffers increasingly sought publicity through more widely read magazines including the Ladies' Home Journal, The Survey Magazine, Public Health, Current History, The Nation, The World Outlook, and the Review of Reviews. Articles appeared in these magazines throughout 1932 and 1933. The American Child had done its part and the brunt of publicity was now entrusted to those periodicals with a wider, more general circulation.

Soon, the government would step in with the National Recovery and the Fair Labor Standards Acts of 1933 and 1938. No one could deny that

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[1]Trattner, Crusade, p. 76.

[2]"News Notes," The American Child, January 1928, p. 4.

[3]"25th Anniversary Souvenir Book," The American Child, January 1930, pp. 1-7.

the American Child had provided invaluable contributions at the most critical period in the history of child labor reform and preliminary legislation.

The New York Herald-Tribune expressed the nation's gratitude in 1929. "(The NCLC) has plugged along for twenty-five years, winning small victories and fighting big battles, and the sum of its achievements is impressive."[1] Joseph K. Hart, associate editor of The Survey Magazine, urged the staff of the American Child to continue its battle. "I hope that while continuing your excellent work for the protection of children from the complications of modern industrial society, you will continue your fine work in exploration and discovery of the still hidden meanings of childhood itself."[2]

The stamina and conviction with which the staff continued its fight against innumerable odds and public adversity is an example for social reformers everywhere. Even today, the American Child has not received proper acclaim for its contribution toward rescuing the nation's youth.

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[1]"Reflections from the Press," The American Child, September 1929, p. 5.

[2]"Shop Talk," The American Child, p. 367.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MINIMUM STANDARDS OF THE NATIONAL CHILD LABOR COMMITTEE[1]

1. No child under 14 shall be employed in any gainful occupation.

2. No child under 16 to be employed unless the employer gets a work permit from the proper school official issued upon the following conditions:

   (a) A promise of employment showing the exact nature of the work.
   (b) Evidence that the child is of legal age for the employment.
   (c) A statement by an authorized physician showing that he finds the child physically fit for that particular employment.
   (d) Evidence that the child has completed the 8th grade of the public school or its equivalent. This should be waived when the schools are not in session, a special vacation work permit being issued.

3. No child under 16 to be employed for more than 8 hours a day, 6 days or 48 hours a week, or after 7 at night or before 6 in the morning.

4. No child under 16 to be employed at any work in any place dangerous, injurious or hazardous. Places and occupations known to be dangerous, injurious or hazardous for children under 16 should be enumerated in the law--and authority should be delegated to some state board to extend the list.

   A similar provision for employment in work dangerous for children 16 to 18 years.

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[1] "Child Labor Standards," The American Child, November 1927, p. 3.

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION

THE OWEN KEATING BILL

No child under 14 shall work in a factory, mill, workshop, or cannery in the United States whose products are shipped in inter-state commerce. No child under 16 shall work in a mine or quarry.

The working day for children 14 and 15 in factories shall not be more than 8 hours or not between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Enforcement -- U. S. Children's Bureau
Legislation

passed House	-- Feb. 2, 1916	(343 to 46)
passed Senate	-- Aug. 8, 1916	(52 to 12)
adopted	-- Sept. 1, 1916	
effective	-- Sept. 1, 1917	
unconstit.	-- June 3, 1918	(5 to 4)

THE POMERENE AMENDMENT

Based on the taxing power of Congress, a 10 percent tax in excess of all other taxes shall be imposed on the net profits of all factories, mines, etc., employing children contrary to the specific standards laid down by the act.

Enforcement -- U. S. Treasury Department
Legislation

passed House	-- Feb. 4, 1919	(310 to 11)
passed Senate	-- Dec. 18, 1918	(50 to 12)
adopted	-- Feb. 24, 1919	
effective	-- April 25, 1919	
unconstit.	-- May 15, 1922	(8 to 1)

THE CHILDREN'S AMENDMENT

Congress shall have the power to prohibit the labor of persons under the age of 18 years and to prescribe the conditions of such labor.

The reserved power of the several states to legislate with reference to the labor of persons under 18 years of age shall not be impaired or diminished except to the extent necessary to give effect to legislation enacted by the Congress.

Legislation

passed House -- April 29, 1924 (297 to 69)
passed Senate -- June 2, 1924 (61 to 23)

FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT
1938

Forbids child labor under the age of 16 in covered employment or under the age of 18 in occupations declared hazardous by the Children's Bureau.

Upheld by the Supreme Court in 1941.

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