“THERE SHALL BE NO WOMAN SLACKERS”: THE WOMAN’S COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVISM AS HOME DEFENSE, 1917-1919

By

Anita Anthony VanOrsdal

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

History – Doctor of Philosophy

2016

ABSTRACT

"THERE SHALL BE NO WOMAN SLACKERS": THE WOMAN'S COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVISM AS HOME DEFENSE, 1917-1919

By

Anita Anthony VanOrsdal

When the United States entered the Great War in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of War Newton Baker organized the Council of National Defense, a group of civilian businessmen in essential industries, labor leaders, and transportation experts, to coordinate for wartime needs. President Wilson and Secretary Baker also created the Woman's Committee as a semiautonomous branch of the Council of National Defense to represent and coordinate the nation's women to organize and maintain the home-front for the duration of the war. Under federal mandate, the Woman's Committee defined "home-front defense" as the protection of the American family, most notably the nation's women and children, from the social disruptions of World War I.

The Woman's Committee established coalitions with Progressive Era women's clubs to assist the U.S. Food Administration with wartime food and nutritional needs, coordinated a massive child-savings campaign with the federal Children's Bureau, and conducted sociological research to support demands from working-class women. The Woman's Committee's goals supported the war effort and expanded women's domestic political power through social welfare activism. The American involvement in the war, however, steered women reformers into relationships with each other that remained loosely-defined during the war and ultimately created a false sense of political solidarity among women's groups and federal agencies partnered with the Woman's Committee. The war presented over 10 million American women

with opportunities to become involved in local, state, and national politics through social welfare activism on behalf of children and women in their local communities and states. The social welfare activism of American women who joined in the Woman's Committee's wartime programs helped shape women's political power in the early 1920s. Once the crisis of the war ended, the coalitions the Woman's Committee helped foster splintered into warring camps that divided over the course of women's post-war politics.

Acknowledgements

As with any dissertation, there is a collection of folks behind the words and ideas who have shaped, supported, and frustrated the process. I am grateful for those folks. While I cannot mention every person who has impacted this process of writing and research, there are a few people who remained essential to me throughout every step of research, reading, and writing. I beg the reader's patience here as I attempt to insufficiently express my gratitude for my core group of people whom I could not have completed this work without their involvement in my life and learning.

In the fall of 2006 at the Great Lakes History Conference hosted by Grand Valley State University, I had the pleasure of first learning something of the Woman's Committee when local historian Diana Barrett presented on a finding of over 23,000 registration cards of women in Grand Rapids, Michigan, who volunteered for the war effort through the local branch of the Woman's Committee. Diana's diligent initial research revealed a treasure trove of archival information on local women and what they thought they could contribute as women to the American war effort during World War I. At the end of Diana's presentation of these records, we had a long discussion and she handed over all of her notes and research and pointed me to Caroline Bartlett Crane's Collection at Western Michigan University Regional Archives and Collections in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where I started tracing the path that led to this dissertation. Jo Ellyn Clarey, a friend of Diana's and also a local women's historian and literary critic for Grand Rapids, Michigan, also offered much help and guidance in the early stages of research. I had the good fortune of reconnecting after many years with Jo Ellyn and Diana. Their

support and encouragement in the beginning and final stages of the dissertation has made me realize the long thread of reform and advocacy that exists between different generations of American women.

Another woman who inspired me and also occasionally terrified me in this research process was my first graduate advisor at Michigan State University, Maureen Flanagan. Her quick wit and ability to cut to the heart of the matter at all points made me prepare more for each meeting, each class, and each discussion with her. Yet, in the terror of disappointing her, I worked harder at becoming a better historian. I can admit now that several of her graduate students, myself included, nicknamed her "Mother Flanagan" for her ability to advocate for her graduate students and push them to succeed. As Maureen left Michigan State University to pursue another opportunity, she advised me to meet with Helen Veit to discuss the Woman's Committee. Helen Veit joined my committee just before my comprehensive exams and has stayed with me through the completion of the dissertation. Her work on the United States Food Administration during World War I inspired me to rethink food during the war and women's role in providing food security for the American populace.

Kirsten Fermaglich was very kind to agree to join my dissertation committee late in the process even though she did not know me well. Her patience and commitment to meeting tight timeframes for reading and commenting on the dissertation revealed to me the incredible professionalism and support professors such as her provide to students when there is no tangible benefits to them. Thank you Professor Fermaglich.

My thanks as well to my dissertation advisor and established fiddler, Peter Knupfer. I had the pleasure of working as a research assistant to Peter for three years during some of the

most desperate and yet liberating moments of my adult life thus far. While working for Peter, I went through a divorce from my first husband after fifteen years of marriage, became a single mom, got remarried to a wonderful man, and fell on financial hard times in ways that jeopardized my abilities to complete the PhD. At each upset and each happy moment, Peter was a patient advocate on my behalf and pushed me to keep working. At one very low point in my graduate and personal life, Peter wrote me an email and told me that whatever it was that was keeping me from progressing was unlikely to subside and I could either choose to work in spite of it or give up. I chose to work and I am glad Peter gave me the opportunity to write this dissertation.

While I was writing this dissertation I had the phenomenal opportunity to return to my undergraduate institution, Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, to teach as a visiting professor of history. Over three years I had the pleasure of teaching some of the most conscientious and hard-working students and they drove me to become a better professor and historian as well as a more compassionate person. My colleagues in the History Department at Grand Valley State University offered me much encouragement, critical assessments of my work, and advice for the process of graduate school. William Morison, the chair of the department at GVSU and a former professor of mine, remarked to me years ago when I told him I was accepted for the PhD program at Michigan State University that "in history, there are no victims, just volunteers." Bill's sage words often returned to me in my more desperate moments of graduate school and reminded me that I was there by my own free will. Carolyn Shapiro-Shapin, Alice Chapman, Gabrielle Gottlieb, Steeve Buckridge, Doug Montagna, Paul Murphy, Steve Tripp, Sean O'Neill, Scott Stabler and many of my colleagues in the History

Department at GVSU offered their time, advice and expertise to me and I am thankful for their support. And, of course, the phenomenal Michelle Duram and Reda DeYoung, office coordinators for the History Department at GVSU, deserve my love and recognition for their continuous happy encouragement and for keeping “the cats all herded.”

My kids have been with me throughout this process and have endured hardships and moments of exultation alongside me. My oldest daughter, Myah, had my back from the moment I decided to go to college and encouraged me at every step of the way to take small steps towards my larger goals. When I started college at the age of 24, Myah was already seven years old and she has grown up into an intelligent advocate for women and the LGBTQ community. My youngest daughter, Maggie, and my son, Caedmon, have grown up alongside books and papers and being told to not touch anything on the kitchen table as that became my dissertation writing spot. I worried for many years that my drive to write the dissertation and continue my research and teaching interests would make them think I was too busy for them. When I let my kids know that I successfully defended my dissertation, Myah, Maggie, and Caedmon all expressed how proud they were of me and how much of an inspiration I am to them. I tell my children to go forth into the world and do great things. They have allowed me to do this for myself and I thank them for being such good people.

Finally, I want to thank the three men who have inspired me the most in my pursuit of the historical past and dedicate this dissertation to them. My dad, Elmer “Bill” Anthony took the time from the moment I was young enough to sit to tell the stories his dad and mom had passed down to him as well as stories about growing up as a poor kid in the back hills of rural Pennsylvania in the 1950s. In these stories, my dad painted images and colors with words. He

made me and my brothers feel the fear he felt when he and his brother became trapped in a two-seater outhouse in the late evening as a mountain lion prowled outside. My dad inspired me with these stories; he created in me a desire to understand others in the past and to look for people like me in the past. I nurtured this love for the story of history in my undergraduate years and met Matthew Daley when he started teaching as a professor at Grand Valley State University in 2004. Under Matthew's tutelage, I learned the importance of the evidence and argument of historians and that story wasn't enough to make good history. Since 2004, I've taken every class Matthew has taught and gained phenomenal insights into content, theories, methods, and, of course, the story of history. Along the way, Matthew became my mentor, friend, and colleague. His passion for teaching and student success drove him to look at me not as an overworked mom who did not have time to devote to historical study but as a potential scholar. Matthew's dedication to my undergraduate success was crucial to my own understanding of who I could be as me, not as a mom or wife, but as a person. He was kind enough to continue his mentorship and friendship with me as a reader for my dissertation committee. Matthew and I drank enough coffee over the years and discussed our research so much, that I do believe if I had suddenly died during the process of writing this dissertation, that he could have joined with my husband, Brian VanOrsdal, to finish it.

And, last but most assuredly not least, I want to thank my husband, Brian. Brian has stuck with me during two homeless periods while writing the dissertation. He has sacrificed in ways that most people would not even consider for the advancement of their spouse. He has endured more mini-lectures, arguments, mini-defenses, mumblings, and threats of smashing

computers than most people should ever endure. Thank you. You've always said you were as calm as a Hindu cow…you've proven it.

For Dad, Brian, and Matthew…

Table of Contents

Introduction: "Women Reformers and the Expansion of the 'Female Dominion' over Social Welfare during the Great War."

As the tremendous years 1914 to 1918 recede, scholars will begin to sift out the things of real importance and to draw, with certainty, lessons from the events of that epoch.[1]

When Secretary of War and Chairman of the Council of National Defense Newton Baker penned the foreword to Emily Newell Blair's book examining the role of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, he understood women's significance to the war effort and their contributions to shaping American social welfare policies during the war. As Director of the Council of National Defense, Secretary Baker enlisted the help of women reformers as the crisis of the war demanded civilian involvement. As a former director of the National Consumers League, Baker understood the abilities of reformers to rally people to causes and in his role as Director of the Council of National Defense, a federally-mandated committee of business, industrial, banking and labor leaders charged with coordinating their industries for the war effort, Baker enlisted prominent women reformers to create a Woman's

[1] Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, Chairman of the Council of National Defense, Foreword to *The Woman's Committee, United States Council of National Defense: An Interpretative Report, April 21, 1917 to February 27, 1919,* by Emily Newell Blair (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920).

Committee for the Council of National Defense in efforts to mobilize the nation's women for the crisis of war and to protect the home front from the social devastation the war caused to American society. The women who formed the core of the national Woman's Committee and its state divisions hoped to inspire American women to join in developing national patriotic programs to aid the war effort and, in the process of aiding the war efforts, also seized opportunities to shape citizenship responsibilities and obligations through federal social welfare policymaking and implementation.

Progressive reformers across the country viewed the war in mixed ways. Historian Allen Davis, in his history of the settlement house workers and their connections to social welfare and reform, wrote that "the war came as a great shock to the social workers; at first it seemed to spell the end of social reform. Yet, gradually…many of them came to view the war…as a stimulus to their promotion of social justice in America."[2] Settlement house workers, social workers, reform groups, and especially the women who supported and were members of the growing professional fields tied to these groups, split in their support for the American entry into the European war but also saw opportunities to promote their desires for federal social welfare legislation.[3] Suffrage workers in particular also saw opportunities for women to obtain

[2] Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 222.

[3] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform,* 218-221; David Traxel, *Crusader Nation: The United States in Peace and the Great War, 1898-1920* (New York: Knopf, 2006), ix-x, 300-302; Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in American, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 280-285; Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 259-264; Nancy C. Unger, *Fighting Bob LaFollette: The Righteous Reformer* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 245-264; Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivism, 1890s-1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 216-219, 222; Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 77-79; Katherine Joslin, introduction to *Peace and Bread in Time of War* by Jane Addams (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), x-xx; Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 21-25.

the long sought federal amendment for women's enfranchisement, and historians recognize women's involvement in the war as the impetus for the passing and ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, providing voting rights to all adult American citizens regardless of sex.[4] Anna Howard Shaw, Woman's Committee national director, longtime advocate for women's suffrage and newly-retired President of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association at the onset of the war, summarized what the war meant to American women in a lecture delivered shortly before her death from pneumonia in July of 1919:

> Women never had such an opportunity in the world's affairs before as we had during the war just closed. At the beginning of the war very little attention was paid to the women but gradually, as the man power began to leave for the front…more and larger demands were made upon women, until it came to such a pass…that the war could never have been won if it had not been for the work of the women.[5]

As the Director of the Woman's Committee during American involvement in the war, Shaw along with the women she assembled and the organizations they represented helped win the war through patriotic programming that also expanded women's dominion over social welfare policymaking by drawing in women outside of the reform movements and using that collective power to promote social welfare as home defense during the war. The crisis of the American entry into the war in April of 1917 propelled nationally prominent women reformers into leadership roles in the federally mandated and authorized Woman's Committee. The Woman's Committee chose to define home defense as protection of the American family from

[4] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform,* 225; Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal, (*Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981), 32.

[5] Anna Howard Shaw, "Leaflet: What the war meant to women," July 1919, Iowa Suffrage Memorial Commission records, University of Iowa. Accessed March 22, 2016, URL: http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/ref/collection/suffrage/id/1750.

the social disruption of the war and mobilized women in their local communities through branches organized by state divisions of the Woman's Committee to assist in the protection of the family as well as directly aiding the war effort at home. Through building coalitions with women's clubs and organizations, the leaders of the Woman's Committee created a conduit for agencies within the federal government to the nation's women in a period of national crisis and, in the process, the Woman's Committee used their authority to direct women to join in social welfare reforms and legislative efforts in their states and national government. Following the armistice, the growing women's politicized bloc dedicated to social welfare that the Woman's Committee helped advance during the war collapsed as leaders within the woman's reform movement bickered over proposed legislation and left American women without clear direction on social welfare issues.

In the seventy years prior to the American entry into the war, women reformers collectivized into powerful associations and organizations that increasingly dedicated themselves to social reforms that demanded political changes and new legislation. During the Progressive era, as the National American Woman's Suffrage Association worked to change legislation within the states to gain women suffrage rights as citizens of their respective states, the National Woman's Party organized to demand not only suffrage for women but also for laws that acknowledged women's equality with men.[6] In the years just prior to the American entry into the war, women reformers within the suffrage movement generally supported maternalist reform efforts but the National Woman's Party also exposed growing demands for

[6] Allison L. Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question, 1870-1929* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5-8, 118-120; Christine A. Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928* (New York: New York University Press, 1986); Linda Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party, 1912-1920* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991).

feminist reforms. At the start of the Woman's Committee in 1916, the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw in particular helped to cement the membership of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association (NAWSA) as the primary base for the women's wartime bloc. Yet the leadership of the Woman's Committee, including Shaw, were drawn from nationally prominent groups of women reformers and supported several single-issue sociopolitical goals with a combined maternal-feminist perspective. American women's historian Molly Ladd-Taylor defined maternalism during the late Progressive era and the early 1920s as

> a specific ideology whose adherents held 1. that there was a uniquely feminine value system based on care and nurturance, 2. that mothers performed a service to the state by raising citizen-workers, 3. that women were united across class, race, and nation by their common capacity for motherhood and therefore shared a responsibility for all the world's children, and 4. that ideally men should earn a family wage to support their 'dependent' wives and children at home.[7]

Ladd-Taylor's definition of maternalism encapsulates many of the social welfare programs the Woman's Committee's leadership supported and advanced; yet, as Ladd-Taylor acknowledges "maternalists were wedded to an ideology rooted in the nineteenth-century doctrine of separate spheres and to a presumption of women's economic and social dependence on men."[8] The women who led the Woman's Committee, however, supported sociopolitical goals that stressed some aspects of maternalism such as motherhood and the importance of protecting children and yet questioned women's economic dependence and roles as mothers of future citizen-workers in ways that incorporated ideas of Progressive era feminism.

---

[7] Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Toward Defining Maternalism in U.S. History," *Journal of Women's History* 5, no.2 (Fall 1993), 110.

[8] Ladd-Taylor, "Toward Defining Maternalism in U.S. History," 110.

The Woman's Committee was created during a time of transition in the Progressive era's women's movement. Organizations such as Alice Paul's National Women's Party embraced what many maternalists thought were radical ideas that ignored women's roles as mothers and as guardians of the home and protectors of children in favor of a feminist ideology that stressed the equal status of men and women in social, economic, legal and political arenas.[9] Feminism during the Progressive era, as defined by American women and gender historian Nancy Cott, emphasized the individuality of women, encouraged political participation, and stressed the need for women's economic independence.[10] The Woman's Committee, while unwilling to embrace the more radicalized demands of Paul and the National Women's Party, adopted a wartime platform that combined elements of both maternalism and feminism during the demands for women's participation in wartime programs. The Woman's Committee's leadership stressed women's need to participate in wartime programs and legislative reforms that emphasized social welfare needs as a form of patriotic civic duty and created coalitions with women's groups that respected both maternalist and feminist demands for reforms but generally adopted maternalist reforms for legislative actions within the states. Once the Woman's Committee disbanded under federal orders in the spring of 1919, women's associations and organizations started dividing over federal legislation that embraced maternalist reforms in favor of feminists' demands for equality-based laws.[11] During the war, however, these divisions within the women's movement were mollified by the Woman's

[9] Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights*; Linda Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels*; Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

[10] Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 3-10.

[11] Wendy Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Policy Debate: Post-Suffrage Feminism, Citizenship, and the Quest for a Feminist Welfare State," *Signs* 17 no.2 (Winter 1992), 331-333; Florence Kelley, "The New Woman's Party," *Survey* 47 (March 5, 1921), 838; Ethel Klein, *Gender Politics: From Consciousness to Mass Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

Committee's adoption of programs that allowed for broad coalitions for single-issue social welfare actions.

Coalitions among reform groups were not a new development but by the American entrance into the Great War, women's coalitions had gained ground through efforts fought on local, municipal, and state levels. Allison Sneider has detailed the long legal struggle for women's suffrage during the period of American imperial expansion and found that as American territory expanded during the late 19th Century, more Western territories elected to extend various suffrage rights to women to qualify for the population numbers needed to obtain statehood. In the process, the United States maintained a mosaic of incomplete and spotty suffrage rights for adult women prior to the 19th Amendment. Sneider details several significant legal cases that challenged the interpretation of state and federal enfranchisement laws at the end of the 19th Century. According to Sneider's detailed legal research, the federal government claimed throughout the 19th Century that it did not make citizens, but rather that the states made citizens and therefore the federal government could not extend national voting rights to women if the states did not allow women the vote.[12] The growing demands by suffragists to create a national law to federalize women's voting rights gained these reformers much experience in local, state, and national organizing and lobbying tactics as they attempted to educate and organize women for the national suffrage.

By the mid-1910s, demands for women's national suffrage split women's groups into three competing ideologies. The National American Women's Suffrage Association, with its origins stretching back to the 1848 Seneca Falls Conference where women and men reformers

[12] Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age,* 30-32.

pledged themselves to obtaining suffrage and other citizenship rights for women, represented the largest and longest organized effort by women for national suffrage and concentrated on winning state-by-state suffrage rights with the ultimate goal of obtaining enough states that extended the enfranchisement to women to force a national amendment.[13] The National Women's Party, led by Alice Paul, represented a newer force in the suffrage movement that focused on gender neutrality in politics and law and demanded national women's suffrage rights through flamboyant displays that attracted much public interest. Not interested in state-by-state campaigns, the National Women's Party remained a much smaller group than the National American Women's Suffrage Association but centered its focus on obtaining a national suffrage amendment and then on eliminating gender discrimination from law and politics.[14] The final grouping of women who participated in the suffrage struggles were the anti-suffrage groups and organizations that opposed a national amendment for a variety of reasons including arguments for states' rights and racially-based restrictions on voting. As the federal government prepared to enter the war, these organizations and groups had managed to establish branches in towns and cities throughout the United States and offered a viable way for the federal government to garner women's help in the war effort.

On the eve of the American entrance into the war, Alice Paul and several National Women's Party directors staged ostentatious public acts for the suffrage cause that enraged President Woodrow Wilson and confirmed the much more radicalized stance of the National Women's Party. The anti-suffrage groups were not as powerful as the National American

[13] Sally G. McMillen, *Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 176-184.

[14] Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights*; Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels*; Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Policy Debate," 332.

Women's Suffrage Association and were not capable of rallying large numbers of the nation's women. President Wilson's choice in asking Anna Howard Shaw, the former President of the National American Women's Suffrage Association and an honorary lifetime Vice President, seemed a logical one for rallying the nation's women as Shaw spent many long years as a suffrage leader and had proven her abilities at coordinating the nation's women for a specific cause. Shaw also remained connected to women reformers in various other social welfare causes through her suffrage work and those prior connections proved especially beneficial to the development of social welfare reform agendas and policymaking goals as well as the implementation of federal wartime programs to the localities in the states.[15]

From 1916 to 1919, the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense designed social welfare programs that supported the war effort and also benefitted families. The Committee left much of the implementation of national programs to over 10,000 local branches that could adapt program goals through communication with their communities' women volunteers to address various American communities' needs and abilities to contribute to the war effort. The Woman's Committee partnered with women's groups and organizations as well as with federal and state governmental agencies and created coalitions and used those connections to communicate wartime needs and social welfare to women in their communities. By creating coalitions with groups that had national and state affiliates, and therefore communication and connections to women in their local communities, the Woman's Committee helped create avenues for women to contribute to social welfare concerns while also contributing to the war effort. The Woman's Committee directly shaped the war effort by

[15] Trisha Franzen, *Women in American History: Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman Suffrage* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 2-7, 12-13.

contributing millions of pounds of food, rolling hundreds of thousands of bandages, organizing women to replace men in the fields and factories, assisting with draft designations, and conducting local community financial drives for the war, but the majority of these efforts happened on the state-level while the national Committee concentrated on building coalitions and social welfare platforms for the coalitions to support.[16] Once the Armistice ended the immediate calls for women's contributions to wartime needs and the Woman's Committee could not gain permanent federal agency status, the social welfare coalitions collapsed into factions that furiously bickered with each other over a proposed equal rights amendment and national health care for women and children while anti-suffragists accused women reformers of promulgating socialist and communist ideology through social welfare legislation. By the mid-1920s, with the unity of the war years diminishing, women's ability to shape national social welfare policymaking through grassroots activism collapsed and ended a brief but significant effort at creating an American women's voting bloc centered on social welfare.

Less than two weeks after President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany and its allies, the Council of National Defense recommended that President Wilson and Secretary of War Baker form a women's advisory body that could "coordinate the activities and the resources of the organized and unorganized women of the country, that their power may be immediately utilized in time of need, and to supply a new and direct channel of communication and cooperation between women and governmental

[16] Caroline Bartlett Crane, *History of the Work of the Women's Committee (Michigan Division) Council of National Defence During the World War* (State of Michigan: State Administrative Board Publication, 1922), 29.

departments."[17] American women had long participated in social welfare causes through a variety of voluntary groups and organizations and the Woman's Committee maintained strong partnerships throughout the duration of the war with these "organized" women. The "unorganized" women who did not maintain memberships in women's clubs and organizations offered a unique opportunity to the women who directed the Woman's Committee to create a national women's sociopolitical bloc to shape and control the implementation of federal social welfare policies and legislation that benefitted women's reform causes. Previous historians who have examined the activities of women during the Great War have emphasized the new roles, and new opportunities, the crisis presented to American women reformers in social welfare, suffrage, labor union support, military positions, and women's professional development in fields once closed to them; yet, these women represent the "organized" and not the "unorganized."[18] The Woman's Committee used the crisis of the war to draw in unorganized, and oftentimes uninformed, women into social welfare policy development and implementation by using its authority as a federally-mandated wartime agency to emphasize women's growing importance as citizens. Women's citizenship obligations during the war expanded as "government propaganda emphasized the responsibilities of citizens to their nation, and in this project, women were assigned a crucial role. Quite suddenly and in a myriad

---

[17] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918), accessed March 22, 2016, http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/comment/Clarke/Clarke02.htm, Chapter II: "Woman's Committee Created."

[18] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, Xii, xv; Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 34; Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*, 222; Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), viii.; Lynn Dumenil, "Women's Reform Organizations and Wartime Mobilization in World War I-Era Los Angeles," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, No.2 (April 2011), 213-214.; Jessica B. Piexotto, "The Children's Year and the Woman's Committee," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 79 (Sept. 1918), 257-258.; Nevada Davis Hitchcock, "The Mobilization of Women," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 78 (July 1918), 25-26.; Vera Buch, "Women and the War." *Class Struggle* 5, No.12 (Dec. 1935), 2.

of ways… women were increasingly charged with the maintenance of the 'home front'."[19] But what constituted the "home front"? The Woman's Committee answered that question by concentrating on federalization and maintenance of social welfare in efforts to protect American families from the social upheavals of war.

When Congress approved of President Wilson's declaration of war in April of 1917, growing numbers of American women's clubs, social and religious groups, and organizations as well as individual women began organizing for the needs of the American entry into the war. Thousands of letters from individual women and women's clubs poured in at the War Department, military branches, and President Wilson's White House offices in Washington, D.C., offering their services in branches of federal and state governments, volunteering their skills in knitting, sewing, and bandage-rolling, and beseeching federal officials for some tangible way to contribute to the American war effort. The women who volunteered their time and skills could not join the effort as soldiers or sailors and held no federal political positions, yet the nearly ten million American women who joined the Woman's Committee's programs contributed on even small levels to meet wartime civic obligations.[20] The number of letters American women sent increased so that by the time war was declared, President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of War Newton Baker asked the newly-retired President of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association, Anna Howard Shaw, to organize and coordinate American women to defend the home front. President Wilson and Secretary Baker feared that without organization, the help of the nation's women would be squandered on duplicate

[19] Penelope Noble Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War: Women in Government, 1917-1919" (PhD Diss., Brown University, 2002).

[20] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War*, http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke01.htm, Chapter I: "Introductory."

programs, through competition among rival groups, and in general confusion and lack of coordination with federal and state governments.

President Wilson's and Secretary Baker's choice in selecting Anna Howard Shaw seemed logical as Shaw had led the nation's suffragists and retained strong personal and professional connections to important leaders in Progressive era reform groups. Until the elections of 1916, Republican and Democratic national political leaders refused to endorse a federal amendment to allow women's national suffrage and politically-astute women such as Shaw gained recognition for their abilities to rally large numbers of volunteers to their cause by applying lobbying techniques and moralistic political pressure on national leaders. The politically divisive presidential elections of 1912 demonstrated that growing social concerns demanded that the two primary political parties adopt some level of social reforms onto party platforms. In 1912, the fairly new Bull Moose Progressive Party, led by former Republican President Theodore Roosevelt, gained traction with reformers, especially enfranchised women in the Western states, for the party's encouraging stance towards national suffrage for women as well as other federal social welfare reforms.[21] By 1916, with another presidential election on the political horizon and the European conflict looming in the minds of many Americans, both the Republican and Democratic parties adopted women's national suffrage onto their political platforms in order to attract the growing numbers of women capable of voting in the national elections according to their individual states' suffrage laws.[22] When Democratic President Wilson won reelection in 1916, his campaign slogan to "keep America out of war" attracted

[21] Traxel, *Crusader Nation*, 25-28, 35; Zieger, *America's Great War,* 18, 20, 33-36; Flanagan, *America Reformed,* 101; 134-138. Unger, *Fighting Bob LaFollette,* 222-229; Diner, *A Very Different Age,* 218-223; McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent,* 280.

[22] Traxel, *Crusader Nation*, 241-245.

large numbers of social reformers and social reform groups, oftentimes staffed and supported by a growing network of women trained in the growing field of social work.[23] Yet, as German hostilities against American merchant and passenger vessels increased throughout 1916 and into the early months of 1917 and news of the "Zimmermann Telegram" that detailed the German-inspired plot to support a Mexican war against the United States reached the American press, social reformers feared that the oncoming war might undo years of reform work. Shortly after the American entrance into the Great War in April of 1917, however, reformers began to embrace the war as a catalyst for passing social welfare legislation and could find political support for their causes as long as their "reform agendas…could be described as integral to the war effort."[24] During the American involvement in the war, the Republican and Democratic parties somewhat uncomfortably embraced women reformers' growing engagement in national politics as both parties desired women's wartime support for national well-being. As the parties adopted women's suffrage onto their political platforms in the years just before America's entry into the war, politicians attempted to garner the women's vote to sustain their party's power as women's anticipated incorporation into national politics brought 26 million new voters into the electorate, thus threatening to unbalance over one hundred years of party politicking.[25]

Robyn Muncy and Daniel Rodgers assert that the key to successful drives for Progressive era reforms may be found in the strong partnerships, or coalitions, that attracted a wide variety of reformers, oftentimes through identifying social demands and needs that required political

[23] Traxel, *Crusader Nation,* 9-10; Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*; Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 66-68, 74-86; Flanagan, *America Reformed,* 101; 134-138.

[24] Dumenil, "Women's Reform Organizations and Wartime Progressivism," 224.

[25] Dorothy Brown, *Setting a Course: American Women in the 1920s* (Twayne, 1987), 50.

action.[26] By the late Progressive era, sociopolitical coalitions identified several national issues that required legislation and policy formation at the federal level. These coalitions oftentimes featured women reformers in leadership positions and federations of women's groups, clubs, and organizations as the main contributing coalition partners.[27] While several of the groups, (such as knitting clubs and religious groups), that partnered with the Woman's Committee retained no direct political or social welfare agendas, many of the larger partnered groups and organizations had similar agendas. During the war, the Woman's Committee employed patriotic rhetoric and promotional materials to inspire a collective effort for social welfare reforms and the opposition among groups diminished as the war demanded cohesion and framed collective civic responsibilities as women's patriotic duty to the country.[28]

In order to understand the context these women worked in, it is imperative to briefly discuss the "unfixed" political status of women in the decades prior to national suffrage. Having been relegated to a separate public sphere from men, women were assumed to be more responsible for retaining a higher moral authority than men. In this separate sphere, women's gendered roles were to be the guardians of the home and hearth, loving mothers to children, and supportive of their husband's endeavors. On the eve of the Great War, women's roles in American political society began to undergo a shift as meanings of citizenship changed and women reformers placed more importance on civic participation as citizenship. Historian Kimberly Jensen describes this change underway during the late Progressive era. Jensen argues that "as the First World War approached there were two major competing arguments for civic

[26] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* xvi; Dumenil, "Women's Reform Organizations and Wartime Progressivism," 217-218, 245; Daniel T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* 10, No. 4 (Dec. 1982), 117, 121.

[27] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 97-103.

[28] Dumenil, "Women's Reform Organizations and Wartime Progressivism,"245.

identity and authority: the Progressive Era's emphasis on participatory and community-based citizenship, on the one hand, and an emphasis on masculine military experience for citizenship and political authority, on the other."[29] American women's historian Linda Kerber also argues that women challenged notions of citizenship in legal cases for decades prior to the First World War and by the time America entered the war in 1917, ideas of what constituted citizenship and how it should be expressed became more nuanced.[30] Or, as politically-active reformer Emily Newell Blair wrote during the war:

> Once, a long time ago…there was built a high wall. On this side, said someone, falls the great affairs of war, finance and state. They are men's interests. On the other side was placed the home, the children, and the church. Here, said the same someone, dwell women's interests. And on the side where dwelt the men's interests was placed all power and dominion. Well, little by little, that partition has been wearing away. Women have been climbing over into the men's side. Men have been reaching over and stealing some of women's interests. Across the wall, here and there, men and women have joined hands. At other places, large stones have been rolled away. That wall is mortared with tradition. No one event in history has done more to crumble that mortar than the Great War.[31]

As Newell Blair suggests in her analogy, women during the Great War renegotiated the importance of their citizenship through their efforts to assist in home front mobilization during the war and entered the political arena through wartime programs developed by the Woman's Committee.

World War I and the American home front have, in recent years, received more attention from historians, yet the history of the largest women's wartime mobilization effort in U.S. history has received little scholarly attention. There is only one published monograph on

---

[29] Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War (*Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 11.

[30] Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), xxiii-xvi.

[31] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 36.

the Council of National Defense, which focuses primarily on the men's division and gives only a passing glance to the Woman's Committee. William Breen studied the organization and work of the Council of National Defense and briefly examined the role of the Woman's Committee in two chapters devoted to their work on the Children's Year programs in 1918 and the child and infancy health care reforms.[32] Breen does not, however, expand on the long-term impact of the Woman's Committee's social welfare program nor the political impact women involved in the war had on their communities and states. Robyn Muncy in her study of the U.S. Children's Bureau does trace the importance of the "web of interconnectivity" between the Progressive Era and World War I women's groups.[33] Muncy highlights the importance of the Woman's Committee for the Council of National Defense in the ongoing battle for children's welfare reform that many Progressive women fought both before, during, and after the war.[34] Muncy's focus, however, is not on the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense; instead, the focus of her scholarship is on the efforts of upper and middle-class Progressive Era white women towards enacting health care reform for women and children. Therefore, Muncy's treatment of the Woman's Committee is rather narrowly focused on the upper and middle-class women of a handful of state divisions and not on the women the Woman's Committee hoped to mobilize. Breen also focused on the upper and middle-class white women who organized the Woman's Committee at the national level and while he did write on the Illinois Woman's Division, that remains problematic because Illinois held a unique place in the Progressive era. Illinois, and especially Chicago, was the rallying point for Progressive Era

[32] See William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam At Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1984), Chapter 7 "The Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense" and Chapter 8 "Mobilizing Women in the States: The Illinois State Division."

[33] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, xii-xiii, 97-101.

[34] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 97-107.

women. Progressive era reformer Jane Addams established Hull House in Chicago and from there many of the most influential Progressive Era women gained education and experience in social and political reform.[35] Virginia Boynton, in an article on the women who joined the Illinois Woman's Division, Chicago branch, highlights the roles of middle-class white women in organizing working-class women in the war mobilization efforts in Chicago.[36] Carrie Brown also published a monograph on the mobilization efforts of working-class women in Minnesota; yet, like Boynton, Brown does not connect the wartime efforts of women with the reforms already underway in women's groups during the Progressive Era. Rather, Brown's interest is in connecting the World War I women industrial workers to the women industrial workers of World War II.[37] While there are several similarities between both groups of women, it is obvious that the women who mobilized to work in factories during World War I did not know that there would be a World War II, much less that women's work would be needed in similar ways during that war.

Much attention has been given by historians to Progressive women who objected to America's entry into the war in 1917 and women's historian Kathleen Kennedy argues in her study of anti-war and leftist women that at the root of women's wartime protests lie ideas of citizenship. Kennedy argues that gender norms shaped acceptable forms of citizenship expression and that wartime "discourses of anti-radicalism, nationalism, patriotism, and Americanism shaped women's relationship to the state."[38] Yet, Kennedy's focus is on women

---

[35] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 7-9.

[36] Virginia R. Boynton, "Girls, We Must Enlist!," *Chicago History Magazine* (Summer 2004), 26-49.

[37] Carrie Brown, *Rosie's Mom: Forgotten Women Workers of the First World War* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002).

[38] Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), xvii.

who objected to the war and the legal and personal challenges to dissent that arose during their trials under wartime emergency laws. Kennedy does not include women, such as those who directed the Woman's Committee and its volunteers, who joined the war effort. The Woman's Committee's leadership and volunteers allowed women to express their citizenship in ways that also embraced feminist and maternalist conceptions of social welfare. Kim Nielsen investigated the conservative women of the late Progressive era and argues that these women helped construct a version of female patriotism that centered on opposition to pacifism, feminism, and the construction of a maternalist social welfare state.[39] Yet, during the Great War, the Woman's Committee provided opportunities for women to engage in social welfare reforms that embraced both feminist and maternalist ideas. Since the Woman's Committee was federally-authorized and their programs were endorsed by women's groups and organizations as well as other branches of federal and state governments, concepts of appropriate female citizenship during wartime received federal and state governmental support.

The Progressive reform movement that began a generation prior to the Great War concentrated political reforms on the state and municipal levels to great success, but by the 1910s, reformers believed that broad economic and social conditions required national protective legislation. Women reformers often supported and partnered with suffragists and many reformers were also active suffragists. This bond allowed reform and suffrage groups to create powerful coalitions that lobbied for political changes for social welfare. By the late Progressive era, women suffragists and social reformers gained state and local protective legislation for workers, children, and women and succeeded on the state levels to obtain a

[39] Kim E. Nielsen, *Un-American Womanhood: Antiradicalism, Antifeminism, and the First Red Scare* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2001), 130, 139.

variety of voting rights for women.[40] By the mid-1910s though, reformers and suffragists realized that the spotty mosaic of protective legislation and suffrage rights for women were inadequate to creating the social changes required by reformers. At the onset of hostilities in Europe in the summer of 1914, American reformers, social workers, settlement house workers, suffragists, and unionists agreed that national legislation, more specifically national amendments to the Constitution, would provide for the basic protections of those who were unable to effect change on their own behalf, primarily women, children, and immigrants. The national legislation sought by those reformers and suffragists, and that became unifying themes and goals of the coalitions built by the Woman's Committee, centered on three key areas of social welfare reform and policymaking: domestic civilian food supply and nutritional needs, nationalized health care and public health care clinics, and labor protections for working women as well as ending child labor. As the Wilson administration prepared for America's entry into the war in 1917, wartime needs for sufficient food supplies, healthy men for the military, and war-related industrial output coalesced with women reformers' social welfare and policymaking initiatives. The Woman's Committee fostered partnerships with the U.S. Food Administration, the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, and assisted in the creation of the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor for the war effort. The women reformers and suffragists who formed the core of the national Woman's Committee tied together social welfare reform and policymaking initiatives as wartime needs and created a powerful, although short-lived, bloc among American women.

---

[40] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform,* 225. Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 32. Allison Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question, 1870-1929.* (New York: Oxford University Press), 2008. Ellen Carol DuBois, *Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights.* 37.

Once Shaw assented to the appointment, she recommended to the Council of National Defense and to President Wilson and Secretary Baker the selection of the remaining members of the board of directors for the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense. Taxed by Wilson and Baker with coordinating the industrial and raw materials output, labor management and manpower resources, and maintain the normal financial and industrial operations for the country and the war effort, the Council of National Defense consisted of an all-male Board of Directors who were leaders in their industries and professions.[41] The Board of Directors for the Council of National Defense had no direct experience with working in coalitions with social reform groups except for Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor, who worked closely with unions for improved working conditions and labor-friendly regulations. The appointment of Anna Howard Shaw onto the Board of Directors as a representative of the nation's women ensured that maintaining social welfare remained a primary concern of the Woman's Committee; however, Shaw's appointment remained one in which her opinions on the maintenance of social welfare during the war were advisory only and viewed as best left to the women of the nation by the Council of National Defense. Faced with a gender-circumscribed secondary role on the Council, Shaw foresaw that the initial goal of the nearly independent Woman's Committee was to organize the nation's women for home front defense. Given that the Council of National Defense organized the industrial and economic spheres of home front defense, Shaw envisioned a group of women reformers with practical skills as well as proven professional development to create coalitions with humanitarian aid groups and powerful women's groups. These coalitions focused on creating national programs

[41] William Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*.

driven by women that benefitted the social welfare of the nation, aided the allied war effort, translated national-level needs to local level actions, and fostered the goals of the reform groups partnered in coalitions with the Woman's Committee.

Shaw also saw longer term benefits to a strong women's presence in national home front defense. Shaw and many of those who served as national and state board members of the Woman's Committee had gained national prominence as social and political reformers and used that leverage to promote sociopolitical tactics such as lobbying and petitioning to pass state and federal legislation for protective measures. With the country at war, Shaw and the directors of the Woman's Committee believed that women retained an unusual opportunity to contribute to the nation's well-being while simultaneously advancing the cause of women's suffrage and creating federal legislation for long-sought social welfare reforms.[42] In an early history of the Woman's Committee, Ida Husted Harper suggested that Shaw viewed the appointment to the Woman's Committee as an achievement towards the passage of a federal suffrage amendment. Harper wrote that when "President Wilson and the members of his Cabinet who constituted the Council of National Defense chose [Shaw] to head the Woman's Committee" it was during "the most critical two years in the whole course of the suffrage movement, as the Federal Amendment was before Congress most of time, but when some anxious one would express sorrow at the loss of Dr. Shaw's much needed assistance, she would answer: 'I am doing the best work for suffrage that I ever did in my life. I am in daily companionship with men and women of influence whom I could never otherwise have met and

[42] Franzen, *Women in American History: Anna Howard Shaw,* 12-13, 169-174.

have countless opportunities in many ways to make friends and sentiment for it'."[43] As Shaw expressed, her connections to "men and women of influence" allowed her to pursue suffrage rights on a level previously unattainable by suffragists by putting her in a new position of authority as being a representative of the federal government to the nation's women and to the other branches of government that partnered with the Woman's Committee.

During the duration of the war, the Woman's Committee remained "a direct appendage of the government" and encouraged coalition-building strategies with other branches of the federal and state governments in order to develop a federated organizational structure that relied on the cooperation of state and local divisions of the Committee as well as partnered organizations and groups.[44] In addition to women's clubs and organizations, humanitarian aid groups, and state governments, the Woman's Committee sought strong coalition partners among other federal agencies, most notably the U.S. Food Administration and the Children's Bureau. Robyn Muncy established that women reformers in the Children's Bureau also created coalitions as a federally-authorized branch of the Department of Labor and had only achieved that recognition in 1912.[45]

According to Muncy, women reformers' personal and professional attachments with other women reformers through the social settlement house movement and in university educations in the social sciences created an atmosphere where social welfare policymaking flourished as mostly white, middle-class American women had access to these opportunities. Muncy argues that once these women met and established personal friendships and similar

---

[43] Ida Husted Harper, *The Passing of Anna Howard Shaw.* (New York: National Woman's Suffrage Publishing Co., Inc.), July 1919. *Nineteenth Century Collections Online.* Accessed 5 August 2014. URL: http://tunyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/42Ws4. 6.

[44] Buch, "Women and the War," 1-2.

[45] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 38.

professional goals, they were able to translate these relationships into partnerships, or coalitions, with the groups, clubs, and organizations these women created or directed. Since the bonds of personal friendships as well as professional training in social scientific methods prepared women leaders in the Progressive era to engage in social welfare work, many of the groups and organizations they represented shared similar tactics and organizational strategies. By the mid-1910s, the shared tactics and strategies women reformers and their organizations used allowed them to cluster together in federated coalitions for like-minded goals. Rather than diminish individual organizations and clubs' social power, these coalitions reinforced these groups as the reform coalitions sometimes met with success and if not, continued to support their coalition goals with vigor. Daniel Rodgers identified coalition-based politicking by a variety of groups and found that while coalitions presented new challenges in communications, methods and grievances, the ability to cluster the strength of their individual reform efforts did "not…deflate the progressives' moral fervor…like all reformers, those of the Progressive era were made piece by piece, as unease and anger were channeled into vocabularies and techniques that were always in motion."[46] As vocabularies and techniques adapted, the federated coalition structure allowed social welfare reformers to emphasize women's role in shaping sociopolitical reforms for women and children.

Social welfare policies regarding children and women drew together coalitions throughout the Progressive era as "the better organized players—the professional lobbies, the well-disciplined interest groups, and, above all, the corporations—held massive advantages" in

[46] Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 117.

national and state politics.[47] In order to combat the influences of those pressure groups, women reformers developed their own set of tactics to influence politics and protect those whom they believed had little resources or political clout to advocate on their own behalf.[48] The few politicians who advocated protective legislation for women and children tended to fail in advancing such social legislation as "national leaders never thought to devise integrated political programs, and their followers, immersed in local affairs, would only have been shocked if they had."[49] During the 19th Century, local communities provided social welfare resources and relief, oftentimes to women and children, and national politicians and the committees they formed "had neither the resources not the prestige to conduct campaigns" for the federalization of what many communities believed was their local controls over local interests.[50] During the 19th Century, many Americans who tried to change governmental policies channeled those energies into a political party, but by the late 19th Century, Americans lost faith in the abilities of political parties. Daniel Rodgers argues that

> As party loyalties eroded, the parties could no longer sustain their former role as the single most important channel through which Americans tried to affect the policies of governments. The result was to spring open the political arena to extra-party pressure groups of all sorts…all trying directly to shape public policy…Progressive politics—fragmented, fluid, and issue-focused—was, in short, part of a major lasting shift in the rules of the political game.[51]

Women reformers, through working in individual reform organizations and in coalitions with other like-minded groups, helped to bring order to "the explosion of scores of aggressive,

---

[47] Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 121.

[48] Franzen, *Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman's Suffrage,* 12.

[49] Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 28.

[50] Wiebe, *The Search for Order,* 28. Susan Stein-Roggenbuck, *Negotiating Relief: The Development of Social Welfare Programs in Depression-Era Michigan, 1930-1940* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2008), 3.

[51] Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 116.

politically active pressure groups [that arose] into the space left by the recession of traditional political loyalties." [52] The Woman's Committee in particular brought order to women's reform groups by clustering social welfare issues into political platforms that coalition partner groups found amenable to their own groups' goals. Robyn Muncy found that the Children's Bureau also maintained coalitions with reform groups and created "an interlocking set of organizations and agencies" that earnestly supported "a female dominion in the mostly male empire of policymaking."[53] The coalitions built by the Children's Bureau, as Muncy demonstrated in her work, helped to successfully implement and pass federal legislation but they were not the only Progressive era coalitions.[54]

The Woman's Committee emphasized programs that maintained a federated structure of coalition partners and broad national social reform political pressure platforms similar to those of the Children's Bureau.[55] The Children's Bureau, however, focused almost solely on children's issues and left other important social welfare reform causes without a federal branch of government to represent their policymaking interests. The Woman's Committee received federal status in 1916, a mere four years following the creation of the federal Children's Bureau, and offered reformers an avenue for policymaking, namely the federalization of social welfare policies for women and children that also benefitted the federal, state, and local governments. Muncy acknowledges that the growing "female dominion" in child welfare reform was not "the only female policymaking network in the United States" and by concentrating on creating coalitions with reform groups led by women that had national, state,

[52] Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 114.
[53] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* xii.
[54] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* xii.
[55] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* xii, 38. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 117.

and local branches operating throughout the country, the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee had access to millions of easily mobilized members of those organizations.[56] The Woman's Committee not only mobilized the nation's women to support the federalization of social welfare for women and children, but also mobilized women through the federated coalition organizational structure to mobilize for the needs of the war.[57] They were joined in their efforts by over seventy organizations, groups, and clubs mostly directed and operated by women reformers who desired sociopolitical changes for the betterment of all Americans but especially those with little political power. The Woman's Committee's coalition used the crisis of the war to implement social welfare programs focused on civilian food production and conservation, nationalized health care and nutritional needs, and protections for working women and children.[58]

For the duration of the war, food production and conservation received much attention and women across the country obtained information on canning, gardening, and community-based kitchens from the U.S. Food Administration and the Woman's Committee. The pamphlets, brochures, and lectures women read and attended focused on community-based food production and emphasized food conservation as a form of public patriotism. Partnered with the U.S Food Administration and with other humanitarian aid groups, the Woman's Committee implemented federal guidelines for wartime food production for allied countries' civilian populations while also maintaining enough food supply for the American civilian

---

[56] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* xii-xi, 38. Dumenil, "Women's Reform Organizations and Wartime Progressivism," 217-218.

[57] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee; United States Council of National Defense,* 34.

[58] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke03.htm, Chapter III: "Organization." Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 11-12, 23-24.

population. Concerns over food supplies led to food riots in New York City and fears over increased social unrest due to perceived food shortages and prompted the Woman's Committee to promote programs that provided access to nutritional foods for American families at reasonable costs. The Woman's Committee developed and encouraged programs for state distribution of war garden supplies to local communities (including such items as seeds, gardening tools, and educational materials). With the encouragement of the national Committee, the state divisions organized educational campaigns and conferences on food conservation hosted by state-supported agricultural colleges and universities and opened community-based "Hoover Kitchens" where local women met to cook together and share food with their communities.

Food production and conservation programs also emphasized the nutritional content needed by children and adults. The war drew attention to nutritional issues as nearly half of the men drafted into military service failed the physical or mental examinations and medical doctors found that childhood malnutrition was the causes for the majority of men who failed the tests. The discovery of the incredible numbers of men suffering from the long term effects of childhood malnutrition allowed the Woman's Committee and its partnered coalition groups to focus the nation's attention on children's health and wellness.[59] The Woman's Committee, in particular, fought to retain American milk supplies for use by the civilian population, especially in cities and other areas with limited access to fresh milk, by arguing that shipping milk supplies overseas to soldiers and allied civilian populations put the United States at longer term risk by not supplying enough calories and nutrition to American children, who may be called on to

[59] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 97.

defend the nation in future crises. By claiming to protect a generation of future Americans, the women who created and implemented the federal food production and conservation programs also proclaimed their loyalty to the nation. Kimberly Jensen stresses the importance of women's claims to loyalty as "in the debates about military preparedness… 'loyal mothers' were those who supported the war and were willing to send their sons to fight…they were not themselves combatants but were citizens by virtue of their role as mothers of soldiers."[60] And, as mothers of young sons and daughters, women claimed the protection American children's nutritional needs as a form of patriotism and civic duty as citizens.

The growing concerns over nutritional needs also emphasized the demands for nationalized health care and health clinics for women and children. In 1915, according to Allen Davis, social workers identified health insurance and health care costs as significant issues for many Americans and chose it as "the next step in social progress."[61] Demands for national health clinics and nationalized health care gained momentum with the discovery of the numbers of drafted men who failed the military physicals and, while the war helped stimulate the demand, clear policies regarding federalizing health care remained elusive until the Woman's Committee partnered with the Children's Bureau for the creation of Children's Year in 1918.[62] During Children's Year, the coalition created by the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee focused on weighing and measuring babies to establish a normal range for American children, provided free physical examinations for pregnant women and children by

[60] Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva,* 19-20.
[61] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform,* 224.
[62] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform,* 224. Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 97.

licensed physicians and nurses, referred specialty cases to free health clinics and checked on patients, and coordinated local food relief for families with malnourished children.

Robyn Muncy examined the coalition partnership between the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau and found that the "consolidation of female voluntary organizations occurred under the auspices of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense" and the Children's Bureau welcomed the partnership as they "used this wartime organization of women to broaden the popular base for child welfare reform."[63] Jessica Peixotto also emphasized the importance of the coalition headed by the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau. Peixotto wrote in the fall of 1918 that by "allying itself with the Woman's Committee, the Children's Bureau gained the use of an organization with a wider grasp and reach than any ever before" especially by uniting "trained government investigators sobered by the discipline of regular research work" with "enthusiastic volunteers as rich in eager earnestness as they are apt to be poor in experience" to implement programs and events.[64] With the combined efforts of the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau, the "female dominion" over children's and women's health solidified as both groups had federal authority to develop and implement programs for women and children during the war.[65] The coalition headed by the combined powers of the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau made "child welfare reform…one of the progressive beneficiaries of World War I and one of the very few whose benefits did not end with demobilization."[66] Following the armistice, reformers in the coalition lobbied to pass the federal Sheppard-Towner Act providing for public health care

[63] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 97.

[64] Jessica B. Peixotto, "The Children's Year and the Woman's Committee." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 79 (September 1918), 257-258.

[65] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 96.

[66] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 96.

clinics funded in partnerships between the states and the federal government. The state and local implementation strategies designed by the Woman's Committee for the Children's Year also were reflected in the implementation strategies of federal-state funding partnerships of the Sheppard-Towner Act and became a standard federal-state implementation strategy for nearly all social welfare policies.[67]

The increased focus on children and women's health and well-being also increased efforts to establish a clear federal policy regarding child labor and work protections for women. In the summer of 1918, a state division director of the Woman's Committee emphasized the connections between children's well-being and health and women's increased need to work to provide for their children:

> The Council of National Defense recognizes that child welfare needs special attention at this crucial period in our history. At this time women are going into industry, because they must take the place of men who are in the trenches. Family life is more or less disorganized. Children are in danger of becoming weak morally and physically; morally because they are allowed to run the streets, and to take care of themselves to a greater degree; physically because their mothers are unable to secure and prepare the proper food owing to the necessity of working away from home and the increased cost of living. Child welfare and women in industry are insolubly linked. Under women in industry the relations between employer and employe [sic] are studied and often adjusted by the Woman's Committee through women's associations which aid in securing proper sanitary conditions, equal wages for equal work and the protection of women against unwise zeal and enthusiasm of taking positions where they are not yet needed.[68]

The concerns over children's well-being and health provided the Woman's Committee an impetus to create coalitions to support working women's protective legislation and wage equity while also stressing the importance of remaining in the positions most needed for the

---

[67] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* xvi.; Lucinda McCray Beier, *Health Culture in the Heartland, 1880-1980 (*Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 122-125.

[68] Hitchcock, "The Mobilization of Women," 25-26.

war effort, namely in airplane and munitions manufacturing and in piecework contracts for military uniforms.

The coalition developed for women in industry by the Woman's Committee also reflected the growing class antagonisms in the United States. While the Woman's Committee leadership remained a white, middle-class women reformers group, they worked in close collaboration with a number of women's unions including the Women's Trade Union League. Unfortunately, the Woman's Committee's coalition with women's unions remained a contested arena as Samuel Gompers's position as labor and manpower director for the Council of National Defense allowed him to create a separate Women in Industry subcommittee to his own Labor Committee. Faced with mandates from the Council of National Defense and perhaps fearing some retribution, the Woman's Committee directors agreed to have Gompers represent all workers, including women, although the influence of two of the Woman's Committee directors as executive committee members on the Women in Industry subcommittee ensured that Gompers could not act without some input from women reformers.[69] The Woman's Committee also maintained a watchful eye over labor conditions for working women and sent social workers to several of the factories and military installations where women worked to assess their working conditions, wages, and health. Ultimately, the Woman's Committee helped to shape laws in twenty-four states to protect women workers from abuses and to ensure that

[69] Peter J. Albert and Grace Palladino, eds. *The Samuel Gompers Papers, Volume 10: The American Federation of Labor and the Great War, 1917-18* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 54-60, 65-67, 81-83, 85, 91, 95, 98-102, 121-122; Frank L. Grubbs, *The Struggle for Labor Loyalty: Gompers, the A.F. of L. and the Pacifists, 1917-1920* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1968).

working women enjoyed wages equal to that of their male counterparts and that married women with children would be called upon last to help fill wartime industrial needs.[70]

Within six months of the armistice in November of 1918, the national Woman's Committee in Washington, DC, was ordered to end its operations and close its doors. The closing of the national Committee and its headquarters, however, did not mean that the social welfare policies sought by the groups partnered in coalitions with the Woman's Committee ended nor did many of the state divisions of the Woman's Committee close until the last of the women reformers' coalitions split apart during the 1920s. Ultimately the successes of the Woman's Committee and its coalition groups signaled the undoing of women's coalition-building practices directed at promoting sociopolitical issues during the Progressive era. Following the armistice, the Committee disbanded almost immediately and its coalitions dismantled per federal orders from Secretary of War Newton Baker and President Wilson. Perhaps believing that the Committee would find a permanent home in a federal branch of government, the Committee failed to plan for its own successes or for its demise.[71] The ratification of the 19th Amendment that endowed universal suffrage rights to American women and the earlier passage of the 18th Amendment that prohibited the sale or manufacture of alcohol as well as the passage of key federal legislation such as the Sheppard-Towner Act providing health care for pregnant women and young children, the Mann Act that made "white slavery," or forced prostitution, a federal crime, and the Cable Act, which allowed American

[70] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke10.htm, Chapter X: "Women in Industry."

[71] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, 38-65.

women who married foreigners to retain their American citizenship, helped signal the successes of women's sociopolitical coalitions during the war.[72]

These successes, as well as ongoing developments in key legislative platforms in child labor and women's equality, and expansion of political positions for women ultimately led to the collapse of the groups and associations that formed coalitions and lobbied for social welfare. Prior to the passage of the Suffrage Amendment, several key women's groups belonging to broad reform coalitions created what Muncy termed "a female dominion in American reform," but within five years after the passage of the 19th Amendment, the female dominion collapsed as the coalitions and their primary organizing groups dismantled as they lost the ability to claim a women's bloc based on the social welfare activism of the war years.[73] Encouraged by Carrie Chapman Catt and other former suffrage leaders, politically-active women attempted to gain equal access to the Republican and Democratic political parties where the advancement of social welfare causes became polarized by partisan debates while proposed social welfare legislation such as the 1923 Equal Rights Amendment and the Sheppard-Towner Act and its subsequent re-appropriations strained any tenuous strands that remained of women's sociopolitical coalitions.[74] Subsequently, the Woman's Committee's sociopolitical gains remained short-lived. Several social welfare programs supported by the Woman's Committee and wartime coalition partner groups were declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in the years following the disbanding and dismantling of the Woman's

[72] McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent,* 271-272; Flanagan, *America Reformed,* 190.

[73] For more on the reorganization of sociopolitical lobbying groups following the ratification of the 19th Amendment, see: Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 126-135; Brown, *Setting a Course*, 50-74; Kristi Andersen, *After Suffrage: Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics before the New Deal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 6-8, 33-46.

[74] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 95-96; 126-133; Ellen Carol DuBois, *Woman Suffrage & Women's Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 35-37.

Committee.[75] By the late 1920s, any remnants of the World War I coalitions that partnered with the Woman's Committee further crumbled and died as the few remaining coalitions continued to divide and squabble over proposed legislation that reflected social divisions within women's groups as well as women's growing political partisanship that had remained obscured by the nationalism of World War I.[76]

The Woman's Committee represents a significant moment in women's sociopolitical tactics on the cusp of the extension of national suffrage when desires for social welfare programs designed to shape civic engagement, education, and the health and well-being of women, children, and immigrants received federal attention and approval as well as funds. The Woman's Committee created and nurtured coalitions with other Progressive era groups and wartime agencies that supported social welfare programs and yet provided its state and local divisions much latitude in assessing how to implement and direct those programs, occasionally leading to difficult and problematic situations that the national Committee was forced to address and rectify. The power to control the implementation of programs on local and state levels increased the state divisions' leverage on the national Committee and that leverage allowed women to retain significant influence over the shaping and implementation of the Woman's Committee programs, and fueled schisms within the national Committee that, on the surface, made the national Woman's Committee appear chaotic and disorganized.[77] The leverage of the local branches and state divisions, however, determined the successes and failures of the national programs. Certain locales, states, and regions of the U.S. emerged as the

[75] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 124-126.

[76] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 5, 32-33, 76-78; Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 3, 9, 80.

[77] Breen, *Uncle Sam At Home,* especially Chapter 7 "The Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense" and Chapter 8 "Mobilizing Women in the States: The Illinois State Division."

strongest factions within the national Woman's Committee and drove the direction of the programs implemented on state and local levels and underscored a politicized division of wartime interests in the national Committee.

The worst years of the Great Depression in the 1930s brought back many of the concerns over social welfare, health, and education for Americans. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs addressed many of the economic and social concerns of the Depression but focused on providing relief measures and programs primarily to males as gender norms of the time dictated that men provided for families and aged parents while women remained in the home to provide care for their families. The federal government during the New Deal promoted and offered national programs to men, especially those with dependents, while the individual states assisted many women with relief measures. By arranging social and economic relief in this manner, New Deal measures created a dual system of citizenship where women relied on the state for non-participatory relief, where an application and some testimony to good character oftentimes was sufficient to qualify, and men relied on the federal government for participatory programs for relief that generally required some form of labor.[78]

The New Deal's programs supported a more gendered segregation of social support and economic relief, but the underlying patterns from the experiences of the Woman's Committee and the war years as well as the New Deal and federal measures at economic relief during the Great Depression, expose a system of increased federal and state governmental concern and support for education, civic engagement, and health and welfare measures during times of economic, political, and social crises. The Woman's Committee, through drawing on federal

[78] Suzanne Mettler, *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy (*Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 16-21.

funding of social welfare programs and sustaining coalitions to support their programs, illustrates what many Progressive era women saw as engaged and responsible citizenship and good governance and represents the last great huzzah of women's Progressive era sociopolitical coalitions.

The establishment of the Woman's Committee and its role in creating coalitions that linked federal agencies with women's reform groups for the maintenance of social welfare as home defense relied on the active efforts of women in their local communities and states. In chapter one, the selection of nationally-prominent women reformers by President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of War Newton Baker helped draw in over seventy national women's groups and clubs with state affiliates and local chapters reveals an incredible degree of interconnections among women's groups and their abilities to develop broad social welfare goals that included political reform demands. An essential part of the successes of the Woman's Committee included a non-hierarchical relationship with state divisions and local branches and an important aspect of the power of the state divisions and local branches to be joint players in the wartime social activism of the national Committee involved federal and state funding arrangements. Chapter one also details the funding arrangements and abilities of local branches and state division to rally women into social welfare activism through the Woman's Committee.

As the state divisions of the Woman's Committee formed and obtained funding and the national Committee established coalitions with women's groups and clubs, the first call to wartime service from the federal government centered on the need for ensuring both military and civilian food needs. Chapter two focuses on the Woman's Committee's coalition with the

United States Food Administration, a wartime agency under the leadership of Herbert Hoover, and the Woman's Committee's role as a conduit for the Food Administration to reach the nation's women for wartime food needs. The Woman's Committee, however, sought to establish itself as an authority on protecting the domestic food supply and many of its state divisions complained bitterly about the oftentimes heavy-handed tactics and orders of the state food administrators appointed by Hoover's Food Administration. The Woman's Committee, while circumscribed to a lesser role in wartime food controls, established a functional relationship with the United States Food Administration and helped to assist the state divisions and local branches to conduct food preservation and conservation measures that directly engaged women in providing food for their local communities.

While the coalition with the United States Food Administration remained contestable with many in the Woman's Committee, the coalition established among the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau remained a successful and well-organized partnership for the health and well-being of the nation's women and children. In chapter three, the coalition with the Children's Bureau reveals the growing power of the Woman's Committee to rally women to social welfare activism on behalf of children during Children's Year in 1918. Children's Year provided the Children's Bureau with millions of records of children's health and well-being and became the base for demanding state and national policies to provide health care for pregnant women and children under the age of five years. Over thirteen million American women participated in Children's Year programs through the Woman's Committee and helped to draft legislation within the states to support children and women's health care

prior to the first nationalized health care legislation for women and children, the Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921.

Statistics compiled during Children's Year in 1918 also helped the Woman's Committee demand the end of child labor and better protective legislation for women workers. Chapter four discusses the complications the Woman's Committee encountered when it attempted to address workplace reform issues on behalf of women workers. Since the Council of National Defense maintained its own Labor Committee under the leadership of American Federation of Labor President Samuel Gompers, the Woman's Committee's decision to form a Women In Industry subcommittee ran afoul with Gompers's wish to organize all workers for the war effort, including women. The Woman's Committee's abilities to rally women for workplace reforms also was complicated by the Committee's lack of deciding what direction to pursue for women's workplace reforms. Many of the leaders in the Woman's Committee desired to pursue protective legislative reforms that signaled women workers as distinctly different from their male counterparts; yet, several of the high-ranking members of the Woman's Committee supported a more equality-based platform for reforms where women and men were to be treated and paid equally in the workplace. Yet, as detailed in chapter four, this contested arena concerning the direction of women's wartime labor activism drove the Department of Labor to establish a Women's Bureau with members of the Woman's Committee as directors to ensure that working women's needs were addressed during and after the war and the confusion over which direction of reforms to pursue continued to plague women reformers in the 1920s.

Just as the Woman's Committee established a coalition with the Council of National Defense within the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor, the declaration of the

armistice in November of 1918 signaled the quick demise of the Woman's Committee. Chapter five details the quick and rather unorganized closings of the national Committee and state divisions and the impact of women's wartime social welfare activism in national politics. The wartime coalitions of women that the Woman's Committee organized, directed, and represented in federal agencies accomplished much of the social welfare goals women reformers desired by the early 1920s yet the collective power of women's wartime social activism did not last long into the 1920s. At the mid-point of the decade, the wartime coalitions of women splintered as women debated political topics openly and broke into fractious new coalitions that could no longer claim to represent all women's social and political interests.

Chapter One: "Creation of the National Woman's Committee and State Divisions: Registering Women and Funding Wartime Programs"

Each woman unprepared is a national handicap, each prejudice blocking the use of woman-power is treachery to our cause.[79]

Harriet Stanton Blatch, 1918

By the spring of 1917, the newly-appointed director of the Woman's Committee, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, faced the enormous task of arranging and coordinating the nation's women into a voluntary home-defense force charged with supporting the war effort. After President Woodrow Wilson approved Shaw's nomination by the Council of National Defense as director of the Woman's Committee, she commented that she had not even been aware such a position had been created until she was notified of her appointment.[80] All the national level Woman's Committee leaders were selected and appointed to the Woman's Committee by the men of the Council of National Defense and likely were recommended by Shaw once she accepted her appointment. Many of the women who served on the national Committee were unaware of their nominations which led several of the women to joke that they felt they had

[79] Harriot Stanton Blatch, *Mobilizing Woman Power*, *with a Foreword by Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: YWCA, The Woman's Press, 1918), 133-134.

[80] Since the women who were elected to the Woman's Committee, both at the state level and at the national level, referred to themselves as chairmen, I will use that term rather than the more gender appropriate modern-day equivalent of chairperson.

been drafted or conscripted into service.[81] Within a few weeks of Shaw's "conscription into service," influential women reformers with longstanding professional and personal associations and friendships with each other arranged a meeting in Washington, D.C. to discuss the direction of women's work in the war effort and to organize a national registration of women willing to accomplish required tasks related to the war.[82] Out of the eleven women who led the national Committee, seven retained important positions within organized national women's clubs and associations and out of the four directors who were not in executive positions in reform groups, one was a nationally recognized investigative journalist, two were married to extremely wealthy businessmen and had established careers in law, and one was a young woman who had just started her reform career by working closely with Pennsylvania suffragists. Elisabeth Clemens, in her study of women's associations during the Progressive era, found that women involved in reform groups cultivated social capital, or the ability to influence politics through activating networks of reform groups, in three distinct ways; first, that individual relationships amongst women reformers often tied together formal organizations and associations, secondly, that informal ties among reformers bound organizations and associations together and "transforms a network of interpersonal ties into a system of roles and routines [where] new members are more easily integrated and expansive campaigns more easily coordinated," and

[81] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee, United States Council of National Defense: An Interpretative Report, April 21, 1917 to February 27, 1919* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 14.

[82] Anna Howard Shaw, "Leaflet: What the war meant to women," July 1919, Iowa Suffrage Memorial Commission records, University of Iowa. Accessed March 22, 2016, URL: http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/ref/collection/suffrage/id/1750;Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918), accessed March 22, 2016, http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/comment/Clarke/Clarke02.htm, 17-18. Robyn Muncy also uncovered the strong personal and professional ties among women reformers in child welfare issues during the Progressive Era. Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 20, 27, 36-37, 41.

finally, that these coalitions among organizations and the individuals that represent them "anchor meaning" by serving as "critical signals of positions within public debate."[83] The nationally prominent reformers who formed the directorship of the national Committee used the existing networks created through the suffrage campaigns and other women's organizations to address children's health and safety and hoped to "harness informal networks and noninstitutional capacities to collective action in the pursuit of social change."[84] The women of the national Committee quickly needed to determine how to organize the nation's women to meet the immediate needs of the American entrance into the Great War and settled on a federated, coalition-based structure that respected the individual causes of partnered groups and used network ties created in the state and local affiliates of these partnered groups to translate federal wartime labor, agricultural, and financial demands into state and local action.

The meeting in Washington on April 17, 1917 marked the combined strength of women reformers who represented a plethora of social welfare and reform organizations and associations that pledged their memberships to the nascent Woman's Committee as coalition partners for the duration of the war. Coalition partners also operated within the framework of the Woman's Committee as federated associations that served to advise the Woman's Committee on social welfare and war related goals.[85] The federated-coalition organizational framework developed during the initial meeting in Washington of women reformers

[83] Elisabeth S. Clemens, "Securing Political Returns to Social Capital: Women's Associations in the United States, 1880-1920s." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29, no.4 (Spring 1999), 614-615.

[84] Clemens, "Securing Political Returns to Social Capital," 614.

[85] Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), May 1918. See Chart 3 especially for a listing of affiliated groups and associations that served as the honorary advisory committee to the Woman's Committee.

representing over seventy national women's clubs and organizations benefitted the Woman's Committee in two ways.[86] First, by operating under a federated organizational structure, national coalition partners concentrated on specific social welfare causes under a general banner of "home defense" and rallied their groups' individual memberships to obtain volunteers; second, the federated organizational structure adapted more easily to the states' various laws on funding and organizing representatives for special committees which allowed the states much leverage in establishing their own funding and implementation strategies for wartime programs. The federated structure allowed the states' divisions of the Woman's Committee significant leeway in implementing the programs and goals of the national Committee for immediate wartime needs, as directed by the Council of National Defense, and allowed for the implementation and maintenance of social welfare goals as determined by the national groups and associations partnered with the Woman's Committee. Essentially, the federated, coalition-based organizational framework allowed the Woman's Committee to focus on dual missions of supporting the actual needs of the war while simultaneously employing calls for wartime needs to the purposes of promoting social welfare causes for the American civilian population. The federated, coalition-based framework also aided women reformers in their efforts to isolate and generate significant local and state support for social welfare activism among women. Through the Woman's Committee, social welfare activism received federal approval as a form of wartime patriotism and home front defense and legitimated women reformers' causes. As long as the Woman's Committee, advised by coalition partnered

[86] Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), May 1918. See Chart 3 especially for a listing of affiliated groups and associations that served as the honorary advisory committee to the Woman's Committee. Shaw, "Leaflet: What the war meant to women," 7-8; Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* 17-18.

women's groups and clubs, framed social welfare goals in the rhetoric of "home defense," they were able to use the unifying call for women's patriotic voluntarism during the war as a basis for building an influential women's sociopolitical bloc before the passage of universal suffrage.

By mid-spring of 1917, the Woman's Committee's Board of Directors included many powerful and influential members in prominent reform groups that sought political changes to benefit women and children especially and the Committee created branch subcommittees to address the various demands of its coalition partners that served on an honorary committee to advise the Woman's Committee on social welfare concerns during the war.[87] In the summer of 1918, the Woman's Committee reported to the U.S. Committee on Public Information and the U.S. Department of Defense and detailed the social welfare organizational branches of the national Committee and the organization of 11,276 local units in the states' divisions.[88] The Woman's Committee explained through graphs and charts how the national, state, and local branches were organized to meet federal wartime needs, maintain social welfare conditions, and publicize their efforts to draw more women into voluntary service who did not maintain memberships in coalition partner groups.

In the organizational charts, the national Committee served as an "honorary committee" meant to advise the Council of National Defense and the Council answered to the President of

[87] Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), May 1918. See Chart 3 especially for a listing of affiliated groups and associations that served as the honorary advisory committee to the Woman's Committee. Shaw, "Leaflet: What the war meant to women," 7-8; Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* 17-18.

[88] Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), May 1918.

the United States.[89] Shaw, as Woman's Committee's Chair, concluded that the honorary status of the Committee hampered its effectiveness by excluding her from voting on the measures of the Council of National Defense, and therefore left her unable to influence directly the decisions made concerning the nation's women during the war.[90] As Lynn Dumenil uncovered in her work on the local branch of the Los Angeles, California, Woman's Committee, the lack of "decision-making authority" limited the national Woman's Committee as federal departments unfamiliar with the organization of the Woman's Committee "stymied the Woman's Committee's ability to determine its own methods and organize efficiently."[91] Centering wartime work through the memberships of its coalition partner women's clubs and groups as well as humanitarian aid organizations, the Woman's Committee's wartime efforts were disrupted when the Council of National Defense and other federal wartime branches of government such as the U.S. Food Administration were unable to understand the complex and often non-hierarchical arrangements among the states' divisions, coalition partners, and national Woman's Committee.[92] Kristi Andersen, in her study of the continuation of Progressive era social welfare reform efforts by politically active women in the 1920s, found that Progressive era political activist and reformer Emily Newell Blair (who also wrote a history of the Woman's Committee in the early 1920s) "had come to the conclusion that men accomplished things primarily through competition with one another, women through what

---

[89] Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), May 1918, "Chart 1: Organization of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense."

[90] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women in the World War*, 6, 17.

[91] Lynn Dumenil, "Women's Reform Organizations and Wartime Mobilization in World War I-Era Los Angeles," 217.

[92] Shaw, *What the War Meant to Women*, 7-8; Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women in the World War,* 6; Dumenil, "Women's Reform Organizations and Wartime Mobilization in World War I-Era Los Angeles," 217.

[Newell Blair] called the 'program method' [meaning] cooperating under definite rules of procedure to solve a problem."[93] The program method, as Newell Blair defined it and as Andersen found in her study of 1920s' women politicians' sociopolitical reform causes, allowed each federated branch of the Woman's Committee to set its rules of procedure in the implementation of wartime programs. When other federal wartime branches of government, including the Council of National Defense, attempted to force hierarchical and competitive arrangements onto the federated, program method style of the Woman's Committee, confusion and chaos emerged. Also complicating the relationships among the Woman's Committee and other wartime branches of federal government was the lack of voting status on the Council of National Defense. The lack of retaining an equal vote on home front wartime programs often led to an inability to merge the hierarchical organizational style of the Council of National Defense and the federated structure of the Woman's Committee for the benefit of reaching volunteers for the war effort.[94]

The federated and hierarchical structure of the organization put a premium on collaboration and communication. Shaw, the Committee Chair, advised and answered to the Council of National Defense.[95] While Shaw was the primary contact between the Woman's

---

[93] Kristi Andersen, *After Suffrage: Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics before the New Deal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 38.

[94] William Breen wrote an organizational history of the Council of National Defense and devoted two chapters to the Woman's Committee in which he recognized the influence of certain state divisions, most notably the Illinois and Massachusetts divisions, but generally found that the organizational structure of the Woman's Committee varied so greatly from the hierarchal organizational structure of the Council of National Defense that he judged the national Woman's Committee to be "chaotic" and "disorganized" rather than simply structured differently to allow for the input from coalition partners. William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam At Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1984. Chapter 7 "The Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense" and Chapter 8 "Mobilizing Women in the States: The Illinois State Division." Shaw, "What the War Meant to Women," 7-8; Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women in the World War,* 17.

[95] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 14.

Committee and the Council of National Defense, she shared responsibility for the direction of the Committee with Vice Chairman Ida Tarbell, Secretary Eva Perry Moore, Treasurer Katherine Dexter McCormick, and Resident Director Hannah Patterson. These women advised Shaw and served as Chairmen on twelve federated subcommittees for women's wartime service and social welfare issues and their organization of divisions and local branch committees within the states.[96] Each of these subcommittees was directed by one of the four women already assigned executive positions in the directorship of the Committee or by mutually-agreed upon experts drawn from over seventy women's organizations that supported social welfare reforms in the subcommittees' fields. The twelve federated subcommittees of the Woman's Committee included State Organization led by Clarinda Pendleton Lamar, Women in Industry led by Agnes Nestor, Child Welfare run by Ione Hill Cowles, Education led by Carrie Chapman Catt, Antoinette Funk coordinated the Liberty Loan Drives, and Maude Wetmore oversaw the Home and Foreign Relief subcommittee. The four women in the directorship of the national Committee also led some of the twelve subcommittees. Ida Tarbell as Vice Chairman also led the Food Administration and News subcommittees. Eva Perry Moore served as Secretary for the Woman's Committee and as director of the Maintenance of Existing Social Service Agencies and Health and Recreation subcommittees. Treasurer Katherine Dexter McCormick directed the subcommittee for Food Production and Home Economics while Resident Director Hannah Patterson oversaw the Registration subcommittee as well as organizing and answering the

[96] Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 1918). No pagination. Chart 2.

enormous amount of mail and other correspondence received at the Woman's Committee national headquarters.[97]

The twelve subcommittees advised the national Committee on social welfare and wartime goals and organized the states' divisions into the same federated structure. At the national and state levels, the federated subcommittees developed programs and implementation strategies to achieve the goals of the national Committee and its coalition partners. While implementation strategies varied by state and local abilities, the national Committee along with its coalition partners represented in the twelve subcommittees merged wartime social welfare goals into three broad areas: women and children's nutritional needs, nationalized health care for women and children, and protective legislation for women workers combined with a ban on child labor. Each of these social welfare areas had already received much support and recognition among women's clubs and organizations in the Progressive era. The Woman's Committee continued to maintain that support and recognition while also directly aiding the war effort through Liberty Loan drives to financially support the war, as well as aiding in food production and conservation to supply Allied civilians in Europe and American civilian populations, and directing the entrance of thousands of women into wartime industries.[98]

Each of these federated subcommittees and their directors represented prominent women's clubs and organizations. While claims were made that the directors "were appointed as individuals regardless of any organizations with which they may be associated," the directors

[97] Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 1918). Chart 2. No Pagination.

[98] Caroline Bartlett Crane, *History of the Work of the Women's Committee (Michigan Division) Council of National Defence During the World War* (State of Michigan: State Administrative Board Publication, 1922), 29.

used their experience gleaned in women's organizations and clubs to guide their decisions and brought their respective organizations within the Committee's umbrella as coalition partners.[99] For example, Eva Perry Moore served as President of the National Council of Women in addition to her appointment as Secretary of the Woman's Committee and director of two subcommittees, Health and Recreation as well as the Maintenance of Existing Social Services. Ione Hill Cowles retained her presidency of the General Federation of Women's Clubs while serving as director of the Child Welfare subcommittee and Carrie Chapman Catt continued as President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in addition to directing the Education subcommittee. Maude Wetmore served as Chairman of the National League for Woman's Service, an organization that competed with the Woman's Committee in the registration of women farm workers, while she also served as subcommittee director for the Woman's Committee's Home and Foreign Relief. Clarinda Pendleton Lamar represented the National Society of Colonial Dames as President during her commitment to the Woman's Committee's State Organization subcommittee. And, shortly following the initial organizational meeting in April of 1917, the women reformers and directors of the Woman's Committee added Agnes Nestor to direct a subcommittee on Women in Industry while she also served as President of the International Glove Workers' Union, an almost exclusively female labor union.[100] These influential women were part of an interlocking network of women's reform and welfare organizations that connected civil society to government through volunteer service and political activism.

---

[99] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* 18.

[100] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter IV "Registration."

Shaw, as Chairman, applauded and encouraged these relationships as a way to unify women's reform organizations for the war effort. The appointment of nationally prominent women in social reform groups and women's clubs also helped Shaw and the initial four women in leadership positions in the national Committee to draw on these groups for support and for volunteers. Woman's Committee publicist Ida Clyde Clarke recognized "the supreme value" of women's clubs and organizations in the registration of wartime women volunteers in the states and emphasized the "scores of…great organizations of women [that] have worked intelligently, unceasingly, and to fine purpose, in every state" especially larger national organizations such as the "Federated Clubs [General Federation of Women's Clubs], Daughters of the American Revolution, Young Women's Christian Association, Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Association, Council of Jewish Women, [and the] National League for Woman's Service."[101] Chairman Anna Howard Shaw lectured on women's roles during the war in 1919 and also stressed the importance of cooperation among women's groups. In her speech, Shaw recalled that

> on the first call sent out by our Committee to the women of the country, seventy-five presidents of the largest organizations in the United States came to Washington and we formed a group called the Advisory Committee of the Woman's Committee…all of these seventy-five societies agreeing to give up their individual, identical work, their individual service, as they had been expecting to perform it, and to come together and to unite to carry out any plan of united service which the Government might demand, while still retaining their identity.[102]

[101] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter IV "Registration."

[102] Shaw, "What the War Meant to Women," 7-8.

By honoring the work of individual groups and associations through assigning each roles in coordinating wartime social welfare goals, the Woman's Committee tapped into the memberships of these reform and social welfare organizations and accessed a broad and existing network of state and local level women interested in social welfare and appointed these women roles in organizing their states' divisions of the Woman's Committee along the same federated, coalition-based framework of the national committee.[103] Kristi Andersen has uncovered that women's groups and associations in the immediate post-suffrage years of the 1920s "adapted existing models of nonpolitical organization for political purposes" and "the groups tended to have departmental or federated structures, allowing small groups or local organizations to focus on a range of different goals."[104] The Woman's Committee, although predating the groups Andersen concentrated on in her study of women's political activism, also adapted to a coalition-based, federated structure to achieve its wartime goals.[105]

While the national Committee formulated a series of sociopolitical goals and single-issue politics that drove the overall programming, the state divisions and local levels contributed more to the actual needs created by the war, commonly through collaborations with the national Committee's coalition partners. State divisions and local subcommittees in the Midwestern states and in many of the New England states participated in direct war needs by working closely with national coalition groups. The webs of interconnectivity that the Woman's Committee built and maintained on the national level, such as collaborations with General

[103] Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 1918). Chart 2. No Pagination.

[104] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 149.

[105] Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 1918). Chart 2. No Pagination.

Federation of Women's Clubs and the National American Women's Suffrage Association, did not influence state divisions and local subcommittees as much as these groups influenced the national Committee. Through focusing on the immediate wartime needs, the state and local members of the Woman's Committee defined their voluntary wartime experiences as contributions to women's efforts towards creating an active and engaged citizenry who provided for the needs of those most affected by the war. Kristi Andersen, in her work on the continuation of Progressive era social welfare concerns into the 1920s, found that women progressives supported a "new conception of a citizen's obligations, which valued objectivity, regard for the public good, and civic participation" and felt that "democracy…could be preserved only if Americans could return to the values of 'civic humanism' and work toward the collective good."[106] The "collective good," for the Woman's Committee and its coalition partners, centered on social welfare for women, children and the American family.

Part of this call for a return to civic humanism by women reformers centered on issues related to the betterment of the home and family. Women's historian Susan Ware found that during periods of national emergencies, such as war, women often were called by federal and state governmental authorities to fill positions in government and create bridges between government and the American populace. Ware termed women such as those called upon during wartime "crisis women."[107] During the Great War, the Woman's Committee concentrated home defense efforts on domestic life and drew in local and state women volunteers by appealing to a growing sense of national urgency for women's wartime support

[106] Kristi Andersen, *After Suffrage*. 31-32, 33.

[107] Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal, (*Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981), 1-2, 31-33.

as well as highlighting the professional and personal opportunities for advancement through wartime volunteerism. The crisis of the war allowed women access to politics and policymaking unavailable to them earlier and the "crisis women" that led the Woman's Committee provided opportunities to shape social welfare through their service to the federal and state governments during the war. Susan Ware, in her study of the continuance of Progressive reform impulses among women politicians in the New Deal era of the 1930s, found that "during wars or other emergencies the percentage of [political] appointments given to women rose dramatically…[and] women generally do better in the formative periods of [emergency political] organizations when there typically is less prejudice against using female talent…[but] when the sense of emergency…recedes and the bureaucratic structure stabilizes or tightens, the situation for women [to shape politics] deteriorates."[108] Following America's entry in the Great War, women reformers used their newfound public positions in the Woman's Committee as a way to access local and state level women volunteers and formed a women's sociopolitical bloc that impacted social welfare policymaking and implementation strategies from the Great War until a new group of women reformers arose to shape social welfare policymaking and implementation during the New Deal.[109]

While relying on national-level women's clubs and organizations to supply the primary membership base of volunteer women on local and state levels, the national Committee also operated a federated, coalition-based approach in establishing state divisions of the Woman's Committee. As each state established its own individual divisions, its director was to designate

[108] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage*. 61.

[109] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 61-62, 70; Susan Stein-Roggenbuck, *Negotiating Relief: The Development of Social Welfare Programs in Depression-Era Michigan, 1930-1940* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2008), 2-4, 8-11.

local women reformers to coordinate volunteers into work related to twelve federated state subcommittees that mirrored the national Committee's twelve federated subcommittees. The state subcommittee directors reported to their state division director and to the directors of the national subcommittees of the Woman's Committee in Washington, DC. State Committee directors also reported to the national Committee and often summarized the reports and sociological data created by the state level subcommittees. At the national Committee headquarters at 1814 N. Street in Washington, Resident Director Hannah Patterson organized incoming reports and other correspondence from nearly fifty-two state and territorial division directors as well as national coalition partners and the fifty-two state and territorial twelve subcommittees' directors.[110] This cumbersome federated structure kept any no one division from dominating the others, but it also created areas of contention. Daniel Rodgers's call for understanding the political motivations for reform among Progressive era associations underscored that "only by discarding the mistaken assumption of a coherent reform movement could one see the progressives' world for what it really was: an era of shifting, ideologically fluid, issue-focused coalitions, all competing for the reshaping of American society."[111] The Woman's Committee, and its national coalition partners, attempted to create a coalition where instead of competition with each other, individual groups could retain their own identities and social welfare goals while broadly applying social welfare policymaking and implementation strategies that allowed no one group primacy over the others. Coalition partners and especially the federated structure of the states' divisions, however, created internal frictions that often

[110] Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 1918). Chart 1: "The Organization of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense." Chart 2. No Pagination.

[111] Daniel T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 114.

were complicated by the involvement of federal governmental wartime departments more concerned with immediate wartime needs than with politics and social welfare. Division directors often were unsure of their authority and the national Committee retained no policing powers over either its coalition partners or its state and territorial divisions. Rather, the Woman's Committee maintained its coalition for social welfare through admonishing local level committees and state divisions when they deviated from the national Committee's preconceived implementation strategies or when state and local levels refused to support social welfare policies promoted by the national Committee. These areas of contention in social welfare policymaking and implementation underscore the independence of powerful local branches and state divisions of the Woman's Committee and also represent the regionalized nature of women's reform movements in the United States during the late Progressive era. As Elisabeth Clemens aptly summarizes in her work on coalitions among women's associations in the Progressive era and their ability to rally large numbers of women to political causes through informal networks, "by enrolling informal networks into associations and associations into coalitions, organizers also incorporated sources of potential schism with the web of group affiliations."[112] Schisms in the Woman's Committee occurred primarily at the state level and often portrayed regionalized interests and prejudices. By 1918, "over five thousand different organizations and branch organizations [were] doing war work, and more than two million persons [were] actively enlisted as members of these organizations."[113] Many of the state divisions of the Woman's Committee (referred to as divisions at the state level) were headed by

[112] Clemens, "Securing Political Returns to Social Capital," 627.

[113] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War*, http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke01.htm, Chapter I: "Introductory."

women active in Progressive Era reform movements and women's groups. Newell Blair noted in her history of the Woman's Committee and its organization in the states, "in most states trained club women played an important part."[114] The connections that the Woman's Committee established early on directly led to a female dominion within war mobilization and profound growth in a women's sociopolitical bloc. This connection to women's organizations not only was essential at the national level but also at the state level. In an early history of the Woman's Committee, political activist and social reformer Emily Newell Blair commented that "the kind of women who headed State Divisions had been trained in national societies, they had taken part in national conventions and congresses, not as representatives of a locality, but as representatives of a sex, an idea, a hope, an ideal, and thus they thought nationally."[115] In order to advance the ideas, hopes, and ideals of women reformers during the war, state divisions cooperated not only with women's organizations within the state, but the divisions relied on nearby states for assistance in registration training and in other drives for the duration of the war.

On the state level, the national coalitions occasionally interfered with local needs and desires. In Michigan, the creation of a separate food administrator position within the state-level division for the U.S. Food Administration's conservation and preservation program created an internal schism as Michigan division director Caroline Bartlett Crane disagreed with the national Committee's selection of Dean Georgia White of the Home Economics Department at Michigan Agricultural College. Angered by the presence of German-Americans and skeptical of their loyalties to the United States, women in Nebraska embarked on a mission to use the Food

[114] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 51.
[115] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 51.

Administration's volunteer forms for food preservation and conservation as a means of accusing German-American women of sedition under the 1917 federal Espionage and Sedition Acts when many refused to participate in voluntary food conservation programs. Such situations in the states demanded a response from the national Committee, but without any enforcement power over local and state interpretations of directives or actions, the Committee often resorted to moral suasion and relied on the webs of interconnectivity built with coalition groups on personal and professional levels to sway local branches and state divisions into compliance with the national Committee. Through this informal network of moral suasion and the combined pressure tactics of the states' branches of coalition partner women's clubs and associations, the national Committee maintained a contested, although resilient, sociopolitical bloc with state-level women who organized local branches.

Initially, the most difficult issue that faced the Woman's Committee centered on providing financial assistance to the state and U.S. territorial divisions. The Woman's Committee left the financing largely up to the states themselves since the state divisions fell under the authority of the mostly male-led State Councils of the Council of National Defense.[116] Some of the State Councils' directors did not respect or appreciate the efforts by women in their states and allocated shoestring budgets for the states' divisions to operate wartime programs. Pennsylvania's Woman's Division received the most funding from its State Council, a paltry $27,000 to maintain and staff a state headquarters, print and mail thousands of promotional brochures and informational pamphlets, and arrange materials such as knitting

[116] Several of the states' divisions of the men's Council of National Defense used different names other than "State Council of National Defense" usually because several of the states created war readiness boards directed by men before the official creation of the Council of National Defense. For example, in Michigan, the State Council was named the Michigan War Preparedness Board as Michigan started the War Preparedness Board in 1915 and the national Council of National Defense did not begin as a national organization until 1916.

and bandage-making supplies for women volunteers to assemble for Allied soldiers.[117] Several of the states' divisions lacked a budget and many managed to operate by maintaining division headquarters in personal homes and paid expenses through donated funds. Such limited funding for the states' divisions often led state and local leaders of the Woman's Committee to appeal to wealthy women benefactors for financial support and also to develop a variety of fundraising activities. In Chicago, volunteers sold homemade potato chips on the city streets and donated the funds to the Chicago branch of the Illinois State Woman's Division.[118] In Michigan, women sold "I Am Pledged" lapel pins for a dollar and funded many of the state division's programs through what some of the local leaders called "the pin money fund."[119] In spite of the difficulties concerning funding issues, the state divisions in the Midwest and New England established themselves very quickly and cooperated with the national Woman's Committee's decrees as to the formation of state divisions and the creation of an inclusive program to reach as many potential volunteer women as possible by the end of the summer of 1917. A post-war ranking of the organization of woman's state divisions by the Woman's Committee gave a class A ranking, indicating a highly organized state division with county directors for rural areas and separate large urban committees as well as women placed in charge of each of the twelve subcommittees, to mostly Midwest and New England states, topmost Illinois and Michigan, respectively. The Western and Southern states received a class B rating, mostly due to the mixed successes of establishing rural committees although many of the larger cities in these states maintained successful local branches. The far Northeastern

[117] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 54-55.
[118] Virginia R. Boynton, "Girls , We Must Enlist!," *Chicago History Magazine* (Summer 2004), 26-49.
[119] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 29.

states, Northwestern states, and some Southern states received a class C rating, due to the general lack of organizing any local rural or urban branches.[120] The Southern states were the least successful at organizing, mostly related to funding and with gaining recognition of women's potential in wartime services on the men's State Councils. The Southwest and the Northwest states also remained largely unorganized on the local and county levels because of too great of spatial distances that needed to be covered between local population areas and because of a lack of telephone and telegraph services in rural areas.[121]

State Councils and the Woman's Divisions utilized three basic funding arrangements: complete funding by the State Council to the state's Woman's Division; donations from the state's women's organizations and through arranged entertainments and personal voluntary contributions; or, state congressional grants and appropriated funds.[122] In Michigan, the Woman's Division received funding initially from a one dollar per year donation from local organizations that cooperated as coalition partners with the state division. Michigan division treasurer Mrs. Frances Burns, a wealthy woman who held positions in coalition partner groups, also placed an undisclosed amount of money into the Woman's Division account. In 1919, the Michigan State Congress approved a $20,000 appropriation for the Woman's Division, both to pay the previous year's bills and to fund it for the following year. By the end of the war, Michigan Woman's Division had spent $24,493.95 and sold the "I Am Pledged" pins to women who registered for service to cover the excess expenditures. While the Class A-rated state divisions often spent their budgets on promotional materials and wartime supplies such as yarn

[120] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 107.
[121] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 52.
[122] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke03.htm, Chapter III: "Organization."

and knitting directions, the urban branches of the state divisions often maintained independent finances separate from the state division's funding. In Michigan, for example, the Detroit branch received funding from an unaffiliated Detroit Patriotic Fund.[123] Once the states' divisions began to receive some funding, they organized local branches[124] first by counties, then by city wards or precincts or by towns, in rural areas by townships, and finally by school district or polling area.[125] At each level, women were elected chairmen by the level just above them, thereby staffing women sympathetic to social welfare causes supported by the Woman's Committee's coalitions; often the women appointed to leadership positions also maintained memberships in groups partnered with the Committee.[126] This system of recommendation allowed women reformers much leverage in maintaining a core set of sociopolitical goals and helped to centralize women across much of the nation into a sociopolitical force that increasingly demanded and received recognition of their goals throughout the duration of the war.

The state divisions required money to run wartime programs and relied on state-level Councils of Defense, donations from private individuals, and fundraising tactics developed by the local branches to finance wartime home defense programs. While funding the state divisions and local branches became a hodge-podge of pieced-together initiatives, three basic frameworks for women's representation on the State Councils for the Council of National Defense created conflicts of authority between the Woman's Committee and the Council of

[123] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 9.

[124] Many of the state divisions referred to local-level branches as "subcommittees," meaning under the authority of the state division in their respective states. In order to avoid confusion with the twelve national subcommittees, I refer to the local-levels as "branches."

[125] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 8. Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 52.

[126] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 19-20.

National Defense. The most financially and gender equitable organizational plan was dubbed the "Connecticut Plan" after the organizational framework for that state. This plan called for a joint committee of men and women who handled all defense matters for the state, including funding for wartime committees and preparedness programs, and allowed women members voting power on joint committees. The second plan had the state division chairmen of the Woman's Committee serve on the board of the State Council. The state chairman, under the second plan, made reports to the State Council but the state division worked independently from the state Council of Defense which allowed for women's input on war-related issues but did not provide for specific funding or for voting rights on wartime defense measures for their respective states. The third plan had no women represented on the State Council but the state division acted as an auxiliary of the State Council and received at least partial funding from the State Council.[127]

The organizational framework adopted by individual states depended on the level of cooperation between men in charge of the State Councils and women who organized the state divisions of the Woman's Committee. In order for the first and second plans of organization to work efficiently and effectively, there remained a need for and an understanding of the capabilities of the state's women for mobilization. These plans of organization left the states free to order their own divisions in the best manner for their respective states, yet provided those states' divisions little to no funding for organizing women volunteers and often kept

[127] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 40-41.

women in subordinate positions by allowing them to make recommendations and provide advice on home defense matters while denying them a vote on State Councils.[128]

Before any efforts could be made at the state divisions, studies had to be conducted to profile and number the women available for war work in each individual state. In an effort to consolidate the multiple and different war mobilization registration cards national and state level women's organizations submitted to the various wartime departments in Washington, D.C., the Woman's Committee arranged for a registration of the nation's women for wartime service.[129] Once the organization of states' divisions became effective, the Woman's Committee issued orders to the state divisions that a national registry of all women in the states would commence as soon as the individual state divisions felt they had reached a level of organization capable of handling such a huge task. In order to prevent confusion by women who had previously registered under a women's organization, the Woman's Committee "prefer[red] to have all previous registration [by other women's organizations] reentered upon the official cards, or invite all women, whether or not they have registered elsewhere, to register again on these cards."[130] Once the registration cards were filled, they remained with the local branch where individual women registered. The local branches then provided summaries of the

[128] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke03.htm, Chapter III: "Organization"; Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 1918). Chart: "Organization—State," May 1, 1918. No pagination.

[129] The General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and several other organizations had sent thousands of registration cards with various information to departments in Washington. Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter IV: "Registration."

[130] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter IV "Registration."

registration in that area to both the state and national headquarters.[131] This system of summaries kept the national Committee apprised of the actions and abilities of volunteers within each state.

The registration cards reveal information on what women thought they could contribute to the war effort and for home front defense. Potential volunteers sat down in one-on-one meetings for up to an hour with specially-trained registrars who interviewed each volunteer about her skills and work experiences. The cards delineated 116 different work or skill categories including teaching and educational fields, factory and farm production work, sewing and other needlework, foreign-language speaking skills, and professional fields such as medical doctors, nurses, and social workers. Registrars also listed women's addresses and contact information, their health, ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and the number of hours each volunteer thought they could contribute to the Woman's Committee's programs. The registration cards reveal that a wide swath of American women volunteered for wartime efforts through the Woman's Committee and included women aged 16 to over 100 years old. Non-English-speaking women were interviewed in their native languages by registrars who were specifically encouraged by the Woman's Committee to attract immigrant women into the wartime programs. Women from a variety of racial backgrounds also volunteered through specially selected registrars who were from the same racial background as the volunteers. Black club women organized black women for the registration effort in the states while Hispanic and Native American women organized in their racial and ethnic communities. The majority of the women who volunteered with the Woman's Committee had obtained at least an 8th grade

[131] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter IV "Registration."

education while some had attained at least a year or two of high school education and usually very little post-secondary education, but the Woman's Committee remained dedicated to registering not just the educated and professional women available in their local communities, but also women with little to no connections to women's organizations and associations during the Progressive era. While efforts at involving non-white women stalled in the Southern states as Southern white women desired a separate organization for black women, the Woman's Committee planned on involving every American woman who desired to help the American war effort and maintain the home front.

At the planning of the registration, the Council of National Defense agreed to print $2,000 worth of registration cards which they estimated would provide 600,000 cards for the states to register women. If the states found themselves in need of more cards, it was up to each state's division to print more at their own expense. Registration cards were distributed to the states based on census records of women above the age of sixteen who resided within each state.[132] The registration cards also included instructions for filling them out. The process of registering a woman for wartime service was cumbersome and specially-trained registrars assisted individual women in a one-on-one basis.[133] Since much individual time was given to each woman who registered, specially trained registrars were vital to the success of the local level registrations. Librarians were encouraged to sign up for registrar's duties since "they are

[132] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter IV "Registration."; Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 67.

[133] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 15.

experts in classification"; also emphasis was given that "women from all classes of the population" should be encouraged to sign up for registrar's duties.[134]

The registration process depended on women's organizations and groups to bolster the initial organization of the states' divisions. In the Midwest, the Illinois division was essential to the registration efforts of several of its neighboring states. The Illinois division designed an easy guide to the registration cards and had trained "10,000 registrars…in special schools."[135] After training their own state registrars, the Illinois division sent several trained registrars to Michigan, Indiana, and other Midwestern states to assist with instruction manuals and practical demonstrations of how to register women.[136] Much of the initial registrar training took place at Midwestern agricultural colleges and heavily depended on Home Economics Departments. Illinois women's help was greatly appreciated and undoubtedly made the "registration [in Michigan] of nearly or quite nearly 900,000 women in eighty-two counties" much easier.[137] The Illinois division's desire to help neighboring states organize divisions underscores the interconnectivity between women's organizations and emphasizes the importance of local level women to the development of the Committee and its goals. Once the Illinois Division trained some registrars in a neighboring state, those registrars then trained the women who volunteered as registrars in the county. Then the process would start all over again in the next county. The Illinois division helped establish the Michigan division and trained enough registrars so that Detroit had an estimated 5,000 women trained as registrars within a few weeks of the announcement for a state-by-state registration drive by the Woman's Committee. In Michigan,

---

[134] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter IV "Registration."

[135] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 70.

[136] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 11.

[137] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 11.

nearly 1,000 women registrars were available in Grand Rapids and special registrars were assigned to the University of Michigan campus, the State Normal School at Ypsilanti[138], Michigan Agricultural College[139], Albion College, and St. Mary's Seminary in Monroe. These schools reported nearly one hundred percent of their women students registered for wartime service and underscore the growing coalitions among women's groups and academic departments at higher educational institutions.[140]

The Woman's Committee in Washington was very specific about which women could register and the goals of registration. The registration was to be completely voluntary and the local registrars were told to inform all registrants that registering with the Woman's Committee did not affect the status of a husband or son's draft possibilities. If a woman who had registered was later called for service, the registrars had to inform the registrants that there was no obligation and if she could not serve, there would be no criticism or action taken against her.[141] The Woman's Committee reminded states that the "aim of the registration of women [was] to record in definite form the training, capacity, and the willingness for service of as many women as can be reached throughout the country…every woman should be given the opportunity to register for patriotic service if she so desires!"[142] Emphasis was placed on the privilege of registration "which should be sought by women" and encouraged state divisions to make registration as public as possible to establish "a fine psychological effect in all women doing the

[138] Now Eastern Michigan University.
[139] Now Michigan State University.
[140] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 17.
[141] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 16.
[142] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter IV "Registration."

same thing at the same time of their own volition."[143] Through opening the registration process to a wide majority of American women, the Committee accessed larger numbers of women who began to represent a growing women's sociopolitical bloc that effected social welfare policymaking and implementation on local and state levels. Members of larger state branches of women's organizations especially were targeted for registrars' duties since many of them had experience with membership pledges and because most larger women's organizations had already committed their membership to the Woman's Committee's efforts.[144]

In order to encourage women to join in patriotic voluntarism for social welfare causes as measures towards home defense, publicity was prepared on a large scale. Poster contests and special billboards were designed to encourage women to register. In Michigan, "five hundred and fifty of these huge bill-board posters were posted throughout Michigan just on the eve of registration."[145] Michigan also employed the relatively new medium of film to promote the registration drive. Governor Albert Sleeper "signed the Registration Proclamation before a moving picture camera, and this film, as well as the Proclamation itself, became a valuable piece of propaganda for Registration."[146] Public school students also were encouraged to contribute to the registration effort. Allegan county and Oakland county public schools in Michigan encouraged their boys and girls to create posters for display in their towns. In Detroit, local branches hosted "a notable exhibition of one hundred…posters was held in the Detroit Museum of Art which for several nights was thronged with visitors," and Michigan native Paul

---

[143] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter IV "Registration."

[144] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter IV "Registration."

[145] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 14.

[146] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 14.

Honore's poster, "The Spirit of Woman Power," became the national poster for the Woman's Committee.[147] Even with all the publicity over the registration, there was some initial opposition to registration, both from men and women in each state. Some women refused to register because they felt that any indication of their ability to be financially self-supportive would render their husbands more likely to get drafted. Some women thought that registration meant they would be sent overseas to Great Britain and France for war work. Some men refused to let their wives register as they thought this was a federal and state government violation of their authority in the home.[148] The great majority of men and women, however, readily supported the registration efforts in their states. As Robyn Muncy noted in her work on the Children's Bureau and its reliance on a growing field of professional women, "women discovered that their male counterparts were much more willing to cede professional territory [and] to acknowledge the female right to expertise in instances where women and children were the only clients…encourag[ing] creators of new female professions…to define certain social problems in ways that made women and children central."[149]

During the registration drive, efforts were made at involving all women, not just particular classes, ethnicities, or ages of women. In Michigan, the oldest woman to register was just one-month shy of her 100th birthday, and a group of fifteen years olds took registration cards home with them to hold until they could legally register for service on their sixteenth birthdays.[150] Homemakers with children were especially encouraged to register for service. Many homemakers volunteered to watch other women's children while those women worked

[147] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division, History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 12-13.

[148] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 68.

[149] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform,* xv.

[150] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 24.

in war related industries. Homemakers were encouraged to register even if they could not work outside of the home, because they could work within the home to supply the Red Cross with war bandages or to can vegetables for local markets.[151] The roles of homemakers were so important to the mobilization efforts that "when a woman sat down in privacy opposite the registrar and began, as three-fourths of the adult women did, 'Well, I am just a housewife', it was the business of the registrar to make that woman feel that being a housewife made her an important person in the eyes of her Government."[152] Kristi Andersen, in her study of politically active women in the national parties during the 1920s, uncovered that women indirectly affected politics through their roles as mothers. Mothering roles during the late Progressive era, Andersen argued, became increasingly important as women's "membership in the community was characterized by its indirectness, as it was not based on a woman's individual rights but on her functions as mother, wife, and homemaker…[and] the contributions that she was expected to make to the collectivity were based on these obligations."[153] Immigrant mothers also were included in the registration drive. In the state of Michigan, Wayne, Bay, Saginaw, Houghton, Emmet, and Arenac counties provided foreign-speaking registrars for immigrant women. Native American women in Emmett County, Michigan, also registered, even though many had to walk up to fourteen miles to the closest registration area.[154] In Cass County, Michigan, American-educated Polish immigrant children acted as interpreters for registrars. Wartime industries also employed thousands of immigrants. Starting in the 1890s immigration channels changed from primarily Western Europeans earlier in the century to

[151] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 22.
[152] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 22.
[153] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 23-24.
[154] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 23.

growing numbers of Southern and Eastern European immigrants. As the new century dawned, American settlement house workers increasingly worked with these newer immigrants and designed programs that centered on educational activities, naturalization and citizenship applications, English language skills, and acceptance of immigrants' home cultures through the cultural gifts movement that emphasized immigrants' cultural foods, music, and dress.[155] The settlement houses' immigrant programs competed with the Americanization programs of industrial leaders, most notably Henry Ford's Ford Motor Company's Sociological Department's Americanization program.[156] Ford Motor Company's Americanization program focused on developing the skills the Sociological Department considered as essential for the happiness and long term employment of its immigrant employees, namely English-language development including reading, writing, and speaking skills, thrift and savings information for economic welfare, and aggressive anti-cultural tendencies designed to emphasize the immigrants' former cultures as inferior to American culture. The Woman's Committee maintained an uneasy affiliation with both sets of Americanization programs as several of the coalition partner groups maintained close ties to the settlement house workers and their Americanization program while demands for industrial workers, many of whom were foreign-born women, stressed an aggressive style of Americanization similar to the Ford Sociological Department's example.

The Woman's Committee also wanted to maintain their coalitions with established partnered groups and industries while simultaneously appealing to immigrant women to join the war effort as members of local branches of the Woman's Committee. Hundreds of small

[155] Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1912) accessed January 11, 2015, http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/addams/hullhouse/hullhouse.html; Diana Selig, *Americans All: The Cultural Gifts Movement* (Harvard University Press, 2011).

[156] Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921* (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1981).

towns, cities, and rural communities established branches of the Woman's Committee and reflected local prejudices towards immigrants. In several areas, local branches were accused of using the authority of the Woman's Committee to persecute German-American women who refused to cooperate with the local Committee. Active campaigns against German-language classes, German-American teachers, Germans songs and newspapers, and German-American farmers increased following the media frenzy over the Zimmermann Telegram and Americans called for immigration restrictions and aggressive Americanization programs for immigrants already in the country as fears of immigrants' loyalty increased during the war.[157]

The Woman's Committee attempted to soothe fears over German-Americans', and essentially all immigrants', loyalty to the United States by actively recruiting foreign-born women and chastising local branches that did not accept the national Committee's civic education programming for immigrants. Civic educational programs had long gained the support of women's groups and by concentrating civic educational programs to teach immigrants how to behave like an American along with a general knowledge of American government, economy, and society and English language education.[158] Ultimately, the Woman's Committee's implementation strategies for its Americanization programs lacked substantial influence as many of the local branches refused to cooperate with the programs or refused to allow foreign-born women to join the local branches.

The building of a women's sociopolitical bloc to effect social welfare policies and implementation, reflected in the registration drive, drew from Progressive era concepts

---

[157] David Traxel, *Crusader Nation: The United States in Peace and Wartime, 1898-1920* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 266-267, 315-317.

[158] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War,* http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke07.htm, Chapter VII "Health and Recreation."

concerning immigrant incorporation, class and age barriers, and growing professional fields available to women. The registration drive sought not only to sweep any available women into the catch basin for wartime service; it also targeted professions with high concentrations of female expertise, such as nursing. The Woman's Committee conducted a special drive for the registration of nurses in summer of 1918.

Although this drive was much smaller than the general registration drives and more particular about the women it desired, the Woman's Committee understood the great need for nurses, both overseas and at home. Michigan's nurse registration drive yielded 1,070 applicants, not including Detroit, for civilian or army nurse training.[159] The registrants who signed up for the nurses' drive were not actually nurses but young women who desired training for nursing and these women became part of the nurses' reserve of the federal government.[160]

The number of inexperienced volunteers in the nurses' reserve far outweighed the expected number of applicants, and delay occurred in registering these volunteers because of a lack of printed registration cards. The entire Woman's Committee in Washington, D.C. rallied together and worked to distribute the needed extra cards as soon as they arrived from the printer. This effort to get the nurses' cards to the state divisions created an "energy and zeal with which the whole force at 1814 N. Street [Woman's Committee headquarters], from the janitress to Dr. Shaw herself, fell to and worked early and late, counting cards, tieing [*sic*] packages, and cutting cords."[161] War mobilization required women, even those in higher

[159] Unfortunately, the figures for Detroit's nurses' reserve registration were not reported in any of the documents. Caroline Bartlett Crane suggests that the Detroit branch kept their records and failed to give a summary of the nurses' drive to the state. Bartlett Crane, *History of the Work of the Women's Committee (Michigan Division) Council of National Defence During the World War,* 70.

[160] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 70.

[161] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense,* 95-96.

positions, to directly contribute to the effort, so the Woman's Committee's directors fulfilled even minor jobs by focusing on the new opportunities for women. In Grand Rapids, Michigan, a direct result of the nurses' registration was the demand for training in nursing which was "answered in Grand Rapids through its evening schools. More than 600 women took such a course in the winter of 1918-1919."[162] Undoubtedly such training helped many young women establish careers for themselves, that without the registration during the war may not have been available to them.[163]

The largest drive that the Woman's Committee and the state divisions used the registration cards and the nurses' reserves registration cards for was the Children's Year which ran from April 6, 1918 to July 1, 1919. As historian Robyn Muncy makes clear in her study of the U.S. Children's Bureau, "the war riveted attention to child welfare by revealing through military physicals, the prevalence of ill-health among American boys."[164] At the head of the drive for healthier children was the Children's Bureau and national Committee and the state divisions rallied behind their coalition partner in support of Children's Year programs. [165] Rather than directly competing with the Children's Bureau, the Woman's Committee supported the Bureau because of its expertise in children's health issues. As a publicist for the Woman's Committee noted:

> With the national departments actively enlisted to safeguard [the nation's] children; with such women as Miss Lathrop and Miss Abbott at the head of the work; with the Woman's Committee of the Council of National

[162] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 22.

[164] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform,* 97.

[165] For a detailed study of the Children's Bureau and the push towards health care reforms for children and women, see Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, Chapters 2, 4, and 5; Kriste Lindenmeyer, *'A Right to Childhood': The U.S. Children's Bureau and Child Welfare, 1912-1946* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

> Defense standing squarely behind the Children's Bureau in everything it undertakes and with leading women in every state in the Union on guard for the safety and welfare of the children, America need have nothing to fear for the generation of its citizens not being developed amidst the difficulties and dangers of war.[166]

Julia Lathrop of the Children's Bureau also was appointed to the Woman's Committee to act in the lead advisory role to the Child Welfare Subcommittee director Ione Hill Cowles.[167] Because of the coalition built between the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee, women were able to retain control of an area that was considered in the women's field of interest for the duration of the war and into the late 1920s and represented the most successful sociopolitical organizing of the Woman's Committee.

The registration records were also utilized in some states by the Federal War Labor Board for local factory needs, farming, and harvesting work.[168] Women who registered also were placed in Liberty Loan drives to finance the war, employed as garden supervisors, directed and assisted community kitchens to provide food for civilian populations, cared for the children of women working in wartime industries, operated telephone and telegraph lines, provided clerical help for draft boards, contributed to various Red Cross work projects, and planned civic education curricula.[169] Hidden within these answers to the calls for wartime service, the Woman's Committee built a women's sociopolitical bloc that made social welfare the focus of home front defense. As Lynn Dumenil emphasizes in her history of the Los Angeles branch of the Woman's Committee, "if the government used women's organizations, so, too, did women

---

[166] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War*, http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter VI "Registration."

[167] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War*, http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke04.htm, Chapter VI, "Registration."

[168] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 29.

[169] Bartlett Crane, *History of the Women's Committee Michigan Division,* 29.

activists use the war emergency to implement their own agendas and serve their own needs."[170] By the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918, just over 3,375,000 women in the United States had registered for service with their state divisions of the Woman's Committee for the Council of National Defense, and for the national Committee and its coalition partners, these women volunteers represented the building of a women's sociopolitical bloc. The national Committee and its coalition partners, by working through the federated organizational structure with women in the states and local levels, crystallized social welfare goals and provided the assurance that those goals remained a national, state, and local priority and that women retained control in the implementation of social welfare, especially regarding food and health care needs and women workers' safety during the war and afterwards. While the Woman's Committee used women's groups partnered with it to organize and register women volunteers, the brunt of its membership consisted of average American women without professional ties to social welfare groups. As the Woman's Committee formed, the national chairmen provided connections for activists and organizers in women's groups to average women who were not active in social reform causes. While the professional women who staffed these groups created networks with other women's groups and helped set the agenda for the Woman's Committee also provided the leadership for social welfare reforms, their abilities to connect to average women through the Woman's Committee allowed them greater access to American women for social welfare-driven politicized actions.

The Woman's Committee concentrated most of its social welfare policy formations on programs to benefit women and children and used the war as a context for the creation and

[170] Dumenil, "Women's Reform Organizations and Wartime Mobilization in World War I-Era Los Angeles," 214.

implementation of federalized social welfare. Kimberly Jensen, in her work on women who joined the Great War as support personnel in medical branches and other branches of military service, emphasized that "the mobilization of a nation for war can provide the context for women to take advantage of social and economic advances due to direct needs for women's labor in industry, agriculture, and the military…the nation also needs their organizational skills in voluntary organizations and management…and service to the state may be seen as a vital component of citizenship."[171] The women who volunteered for wartime needs under the auspices of the Woman's Committee committed themselves to the war effort, and in the process also underscored their efforts towards full citizenship. As Penelope Noble Brownell noted in her dissertation concerning the racial aspects of the Southern divisions of the Woman's Committee, "with the creation of the Woman's Committee…[President] Wilson quickly conferred what decades of women's political activism had yet to achieve: an official recognition that women were citizens of the nation with a vital role to play in civic life."[172] During the Great War, American women entered the political realm through social and familial life and as "women were coming to the polis from the private sphere…they were concerned with health, order, and the future, because of their central involvement with children and with caring for their homes and families."[173] The Woman's Committee claimed to understand the concerns of women and devoted the majority of its efforts to social welfare policymaking and implementation strategies that focused on children, the home, the family and the greater communities in which women lived. During the Progressive era, women claimed that once they

[171] Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), Viii.

[172] Penelope Noble Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War: Women in Government, 1917-1919" (PhD Diss., Brown University, 2002), 1.

[173] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 27, 36.

had the vote, they would commence with "municipal housekeeping" that encompassed a "vast range of activities undertaken by women's clubs in the late nineteenth century [and] was essentially a way of legitimating public activities…by redefining them under the rubric of women's traditional, 'private' concerns with cleanliness, order, and nurture."[174] By framing their social welfare goals around issues that traditionally had been in women's sphere of influence, the Woman's Committee yoked welfare within the home to national security, and attracted more American women to social welfare as a public issue.

[174] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 4.

Chapter Two: "'Food Will Win the War': Production, Preservation, and Conservation of Food as Women's First Call to Action"

The mother in the kitchen, alone with her conscience and her memories, became a food administrator in her own right. We have become surfeited with statistics. We have talked in terms of millions and billions so long that figures have lost their significance, but the fact that 'food will win the war,' and that every woman had been drafted into the ranks of the Army of American Housewives, sank deeply into the consciousness of every loyal American woman.[175]

Ida Clyde Clarke, 1918

Within weeks of the initial formation of the national Woman's Committee in April of 1917, the federal government officially sanctioned the creation of the United States Food Administration through the passage of the Lever Act.[176] The Lever Act (officially, the Food and Fuel Control Act, not to be confused with the Smith-Lever Act of 1914) not only created an

[175] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918), accessed March 22, 2016, http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/comment/Clarke/Clarke02.htm, Chapter V "Food Conservation."

[176] Veit highlights that the Lever Act established the U.S. Food Administration and Woodrow Wilson appointed Herbert Hoover director as Hoover's reputation for his handling of the food aid program of the voluntary Belgium Relief Association earned him much regard and attention from Wilson. The Lever Act provided $150 million for the Food Administration. Helen Zoe Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food: Self-Control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 58-59; Zieger, *America's Great War*, 57.

entirely new wartime branch of social control through broad powers over food supplies and distribution but also provided much federal funding to enact programs for food production and conservation measures and relinquished control of regulatory powers over food to Food Administration Director Herbert Hoover. Hoover used his position as Director of the Food Administration to promote voluntary domestic food measures among the citizenry for the duration of the war. Hoover and President Woodrow Wilson recognized immediately the significant role of the American housewife in aiding the domestic and Allied food needs through her voluntary acceptance of federal guidelines, state-level food production, preservation, and distribution abilities, and local level innovations in the production, preservation, and conservation of food.[177] Other federal leaders joined in the chorus. In early May of 1917, Secretary David F. Houston of the U.S. Department of Agriculture also appealed to American women when he encouraged them to join the war effort although "she need not leave her home duties to help the armed forces…she can help to feed and clothe our armies and help to supply food to those beyond the seas by practicing effective thrift in her own household."[178] Encouraged by President Woodrow Wilson and other prestigious politicians, the Woman's Committee sought to work as a partner in coalition with the Food Administration. Wilson supported women's involvement in the food programs but relied on Director Hoover to "undertake any steps necessary for the proper organization and stimulation of their efforts."[179] The Woman's Committee provided access for the U.S. Food Administration to millions of

[177] Copy of letter from Woodrow Wilson to Herbert Hoover, June 12, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Council of National Defense, Woman's Committee Collection (hereafter WCCND Collection).

[178] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War*, http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/comment/Clarke/Clarke02.htm, Chapter V "Food Conservation."

[179] Letter from Woodrow Wilson to Herbert Hoover. June 12, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

American women through its coalition partners. The Food Administration, with Hoover in charge, created a powerful, although problematic, wartime coalition with the Woman's Committee and helped provide social welfare policymaking opportunities to women. The first call to action, the production, conservation, and preservation of food for the war, helped draw more American women into the Woman's Committee to acquaint them with its broader political agenda.

Before the official passage of the heavily anticipated Lever Act, the Woman's Committee already had begun food measures as its first step upon the organization of the states' divisions. When the Woman's Committee's chairmen met for the first time in Washington, D.C. in the spring of 1917, Ida Tarbell, the muckraking journalist who was appointed as Vice Chairman of the Woman's Committee and director of the Food and News subcommittees, already knew that one of the greatest demands the war placed on American women would be their ability to supply food for the soldiers and for the civilian population, as well as for overseas export to Allied countries. In her autobiography published in 1939, Tarbell recalled that at that first formative meeting of the Woman's Committee, her fellow chairmen "took it for granted that we were to handle the food problem already looming so large. By midsummer we had our organizations everywhere, planting and hoeing."[180] The Woman's Committee's state divisions that organized and registered women in the early spring of 1917, according to Tarbell's rather sarcastic reminiscence, knew that "the larder was to be full. [And] we were pretty well under way and rather proud of ourselves, thinking this was a special job, when Herbert Hoover came back from feeding Europe and was put at the head of the American Food Administration in a

[180] Roger C. Kochersberger, Jr., Introduction to *All in the Day's Work: An Autobiography* by Ida M. Tarbell (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 321.

building of his own, practically a dictator of the food of America."[181] Tarbell's rather biting criticism of Hoover's power over food supplies in the United States had its origins in her role in the Food Administration's hierarchy. The Woman's Committee's Chairmen fervently believed that the Woman's Committee should be represented equally on the Food Administration's directorship, but Hoover remained primary director of the Food Administration. The Committee came to realize that a coalition-based, multi-layered approach to organizing not just the nation's women, but its bakers, commercial canneries, food distribution networks, and farmers in a time of national emergency should be left to one central figure, as these areas were outside of the Woman's Committee's authority. Tarbell herself acknowledged Hoover's importance towards the wartime food emergency when she admitted that "obviously Mr. Hoover was the one man in the world who could properly manage the huge and many-sided job; but it caused considerable heartburning in the Woman's Committee that gardening and canning and drying should not be left entirely to us."[182] The Woman's Committee found the loss of such a central wartime role especially upsetting because their authority to place emphasis on women's wartime roles demanded that the directors, especially Chairman Anna Howard Shaw and Vice Chairman Ida Tarbell, retain equal footing with the men, like Herbert Hoover, who received primary positions in an arena that women in America largely dominated: food.[183]

In early summer of 1917, the chairmen of the Woman's Committee received official notifications from the Council of National Defense's Director Walter S. Gifford and Food Administration Director Herbert Hoover to assist the Food Administration in its plan to reach

[181] Ibid.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Insert footnote for article on Herbert Hoover and the Associative State. Include mullendore's history of the food administration and perhaps a biography about Hoover during Belgium relief and food administration. Do not use viet here.

average American housewives for wartime-related food measures. President Wilson supported their involvement and wrote to Director Hoover in June of 1917 that while "the women of the nation are already earnestly seeking to do their part in this our greatest struggle for the maintenance of our national ideals," mostly through the auspices of the Woman's Committee, they could also "so greatly assist [the war effort] as by enlisting in the service of the food administration and cheerfully accepting its direction and advice. By so doing they will increase the surplus of food available for our own army and for export to the Allies."[184] Having established direct channels to women on local levels through national allied women's groups with state-level affiliates and through the formation of its own state-level divisions, the Woman's Committee became central to the Food Administration's ability to engage American women into its federal food plans, although "in spite of Dr. Anna's [Howard Shaw] bristling opposition…[the Woman's Committee] were soon put into our place, [and] made an auxiliary" of the Food Administration.[185] In its role as an auxiliary, the Woman's Committee was allowed to have Tarbell serve as a "liaison officer, which amounted to nothing more than finding out at food [Administration] headquarters what they wanted from women and passing it on."[186] This position as an auxiliary with little more importance than serving as an information channel, however, took on greater importance throughout the war as the Woman's Committee was able to direct where and how this channel functioned and to what extent its states' divisions could manipulate the Food Administration into supporting its larger sociopolitical goals.

---

[184] Letter from Woodrow Wilson to Herbert Hoover. June 12, 1917. R.G. 62 (College Park), Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

[185] Tarbell, *All in the Day's Work,* 321.

[186] Ibid.

The relationship between the Food Administration and the Woman's Committee, however, created complications with the coordination of state divisions of the Woman's Committee and state appointed Food Administrators. The Food Administration sought to place a state food administrator in each state and territory of the U.S., but the selection of the states' food administrators left the national Committee with severe constraints on its authority with the states' divisions. Since the Woman's Committee was still within its organizational infancy in many of the states and several of the states had yet to register women into their respective divisions, the Food Administration's appointments of state-level food administrators created crises in authority as several of the state divisions desired some input in the selection of state administrators. Food Administration Director Herbert Hoover, in a letter to the national Director of the Council of National Defense W.S. Gifford, detailed his desires to have the state divisions of the Woman's Committee "decentralize [their] administration of this large body of women into the state food administrations and to use the various state machinery to carry out instructions and advice to them."[187] Hoover, essentially, desired that the state divisions work as subordinates under the hierarchy of the state food administrators whom Hoover appointed. The Woman's Committee, however, felt that the state division directors should have some voice in the selection of candidates for state Food Administrators in hopes of creating a cooperative, non-hierarchal coalition within each state for the food effort. Hoover's decision to use the Woman's Committee as a communication channel to the women in the states rather than cooperative partners left the national Committee with little authority over food during the war. In some states, the federally-appointed food administrators worked in collaboration with

[187] Letter from Herbert Hoover to W.S. Gifford. June 18, 1917. 2 pgs. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

the state divisions of the Woman's Committee and fostered a fairly harmonious relationship among the state divisions and local branches of the Committee and the state food administrators. In others, however, the appointment of the Food Administrator without consultation or consent of the women in charge of state divisions of the Committee created ill will towards many of the state-level food administrators and established combative relationships that occupied much of the time of the national Committee. Although the Woman's Committee registered thousands of women in the summer of 1917 and already started planning food programs for women, President Wilson's decision to centralize authority over food to Herbert Hoover as Director of the U.S. Food Administration and to Hoover's appointed food administrators placed the Woman's Committee in a subordinate position that affected women's abilities to shape food policies.

During the early summer of 1917, as the Woman's Committee and the Food Administration attempted to coordinate and define their relationship to each other, Anna Howard Shaw wrote to Hoover that "since this matter [of food conservation] chiefly concerns women, it is clear that leadership must in a large measure be given over to the women themselves."[188] Since President Wilson's decision to give supreme authority over food to Hoover and the Food Administration, Shaw understood that her desire for the Woman's Committee to retain any control or voice in food policies must include a cooperative partnership between the men and women of both federal branches for the war effort. Shaw desired that the Food Administration allow women's equal control and involvement in the food

[188] Letter from Anna Howard Shaw to Herbert Hoover concerning food pledges and programs. Council of National Defense, Woman's Committee. June 22, 1917. 3 pgs. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

programs for the states because "the conditions differ so greatly in the different states that each must work out its own plans" and believed that "the best results are obtained where the men and women work together enthusiastically in a common cause."[189] The national Woman's Committee believed that women's wartime roles could take on a variety of causes and concerns of wartime civilian life, but the Food Administration believed that women were best utilized in food programs. Hoover, in the same letter to W.S. Gifford written in mid-June 1917, emphasized that the Food Administration was "convinced that the imaginative position of being actually in national service in war time is vital to the enrollment of all the women who control households."[190] Yet, while Hoover expressed his idea that women may have been of best service to the war through their involvement in the Food Administration, he also understood the importance of coordination with coalitions of reformers to obtain the Food Administration's goals. In September of 1917, as the harvest season was underway, Hoover wrote to a colleague in the Food Administration that "we have had in Washington…the heads of every important church and fraternal organization and we have from here the support of the Woman's Committee of the National Council of Defense and their organizations in the states…and all of these have agreed to give every possible support. Success can only be obtained by assembling all of these forces."[191] Even as Hoover and his Food Administration struggled to coordinate as a coalition partner with the Woman's Committee, state-level food administrators still retained more control over food programs than the women who directed the state divisions of the Woman's Committee. In Michigan, division director Caroline Bartlett Crane wrote in

[189] Ibid.

[190] Typed letter from Herbert Hoover to W.S. Gifford. June 18, 1917. 2 pgs. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

[191] Letter signed by Herbert Hoover to Mr. Hallowell at Food Administration, 6-H-2. September 1, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "61 Food Administration—Oct., 1917-Dec., 1917." WCCND Collection.

exasperation about the need for coordination and inclusion of women at the state level in the selection of state food administrators. Crane, as state division director, sought to offer her advice on the selection of the Michigan state food administrator and quickly discovered that the state division of the Food Administration represented what she labeled as "*another* network…in which women are expected to work *under*, and not *with* men, and one which the Woman's Committee, in some places, have been utilized and—insulted…the disrespect visited upon the best club women in Detroit, and…how one of the leaders [of the state Food Administration], a young fellow, referred to these women as 'old hens' in talking *with* the women's representative at the Food Administration headquarters [emphasis her's]."[192] Division directors such as Caroline Bartlett Crane bitterly complained about the lack of consideration by some state food administrators for working equally with women, and other women also joined in with complaints about the authority of the Food Administration over the Woman's Committee at the state divisions and local branches. In a telegram from Grand Rapids, Michigan, local subcommittee leader Justina Hollister complained that the "proposed appointment [of a state food administrator]…should not be allowed precedence over chairman [of the state division of] Woman's Committee if integrity of that committee as officially authorized is to be preserved."[193] The state division directors and their affiliate local branches ultimately coordinated food work with the Food Administration appointees but attempted in nearly every state to influence the decision over who was appointed and what their relationship encompassed. In many states, the Food Administrator was chosen from a field of

[192] Letter marked "Confidential: not to go into files please" from Caroline Bartlett Crane to Carrie Chapman Catt. November 18, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division—Mrs. C.B. Crane Oct.-Dec." WCCND Collection.

[193] Night telegram from Justina Hollister to Alice H. Wood. Sent from Boston, MA, on August 5, 1917 when Hollister was on vacation. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division." WCCND Collection.

home economists and offered less overt confrontation as many home economists were also women and had some connections to reform causes. In Michigan, Georgia White, Dean of the Michigan Agricultural College's Home Economics Department, was selected as state food administrator and worked in conjunction with the Michigan War Preparedness Board[194] and, while not selected by the state division director of the Woman's Committee, retained active involvement and communication with many of the women who were members of the state division.[195]

Historians generally agree that Progressives often held various reform ideas and established groups and associations that formed coalitions with each other to advance political changes for broad-based, single-issue reforms. [196] During the Great War, the Woman's Committee also created a powerful coalition among over seventy reform groups and as Rodgers argues "Progressives of all stripes saw the war as an opportunity for social action."[197] For the Woman's Committee, social action relied on drawing together women from inside and outside the established networks of civic associations, women's clubs, and various organizations affiliated with the Woman's Committee. Because the alleviation of hunger and production of food were everyday concerns for women inside the home, new recruits could be drawn to the Committee's social welfare agenda through its important work as a pipeline between the Food

[194] The Michigan War Preparedness Board was the same as the state division of the Council of National Defense. Many states that created a wartime preparation committee kept the previous name of the committee rather than change the name to the state division of the Council of National Defense.

[195] Government issued Western Union Telegrams to Michigan War Preparedness Board, Food Conservation and secretary Major Roy C. Vandercook from George F. Porter, Chief of Section on Cooperation with States, Council of National Defense. Three telegrams dated July 3, July 6, July 9, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division." WCCND Collection.

[196] Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism,"; Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*; Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*.

[197] Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 121.

Administration and working mothers concerned about nutrition, diet, and empty stomachs. The coalition the Woman's Committee built through its national-level directors and their representative organizations and clubs and subsequent state-level affiliates anticipated the extension of food as a wartime supply problem into hunger and nutrition as a social welfare issue in times of peace. Partially by working as an auxiliary of the Food Administration for the duration of the war, the Woman's Committee's influence over food issues as social welfare forced the Food Administration to rely on coalitions for assistance with food controls.

The Food Administration, according to historian Helen Zoe Veit, understood the importance of Progressive coalitions and state-level affiliate branches of those coalitions and were willing to use such organizations for their own purposes. The Food Administration developed ongoing relationships with several Progressive reform groups to meet the wartime demands on American food production, including newer academic programs such as Home Economics departments at state universities and agricultural colleges throughout the United States. As Veit found, state universities' Home Economics departments remained a crucial link in creating a coalition for food conservation as "even before it became an official agency, the Food Administration formed a Committee on Home Economics, and home economics directors, always women, were appointed in every state."[198] And, in 1917, Hoover sought the assistance of college and university home economics departments across the country by writing letters "asking for direct assistance with food conservation education."[199] Believing that the active engagement with Home Economics departments allowed the Food Administration a larger audience for promotion of its programs, Hoover understood that "suffragists generally

[198] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 92.
[199] Ibid.

supported home economics, believing that domestic science demonstrated women's intellectual competence and their capacity for higher education" and that "women had been arguing for decades that management of the home was related to politics."[200] Suffragists also understood that food issues directly concerned women, as many women retained control over their own personal and familial food uses, and that the war depended on women's involvement, thereby helping to promote the need for women's participation as a form of citizenship.[201] Since in March of 1917 "officials of the National American Woman Suffrage Association announced that…they were prepared to stand behind the president and aid him as far as possible in every national policy he may decide on in the…crisis," suffragists found themselves working in cooperation with federal wartime departments.[202] Hoover not only attempted to use suffragists, Progressive reform groups, and university home economics departments for the promotion of the Food Administration, but in January of 1918 Hoover also appointed Martha VanRensselaer as co-chief of the Food Administration's Home Conservation Division, making VanRensselaer the highest-ranking woman scientist in the service of the federal government.[203] Not only did Hoover, as director of the Food Administration, offer significant governmental work during the war to women such as VanRensselaer and university-trained home economics specialists, but he also employed suffragists involved in the National American Woman Suffrage Association to promote the Food Administration's programs. Veit found that Hoover and Food Administration leaders "were apparently eager to enlist influential suffragists in their campaign, and leaders like Harriet Stanton Blatch and Helen Guthrie Miller

[200] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 96-97.

[201] Ibid.

[202] *Grand Rapids Herald,* "Suffrage Workers put aside Fight for Ballot to Help in Preparing Nation for Strife." March 25, 1917. Front Page. Grand Rapids Public Library Archives, Grand Rapids, MI.

[203] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 91.

toured the country giving speeches linking food conservation and the elevation of housekeeping to women's political freedom."[204] Suffragists and their supporters worked with the Food Administration primarily because they linked wartime food issues with women's growing political importance. As Veit argues, "supporters of suffrage argued that women could most effectively deal with problems of food now and in the future if they had full political citizenship…others saw the government's reliance on women to conserve food as a bargaining chip…to suffragists and their sympathizers, the food problem made woman suffrage a more pressing issue than ever."[205] The Woman's Committee's deep connections to Progressive women's reform groups, most prominently to the National American Woman Suffrage Association, reinforced the connection between access to food for civilian populations, wartime food conservation, and political rights during the war.

The Woman's Committee's chairmen also maintained strong ties to the Parent-Teacher organizations forming during the Progressive Era and understood the emerging ideas of civic educational programs that were redefining how American schoolchildren conceptualized citizenship obligations. The new civic educational model promoted by Parent-Teacher organizations and educational specialists concentrated on the expression of citizenship obligations as individual engagement in the betterment of the local, state, and federal communities in which one lived.[206] The Woman's Committee employed this new civic

---

[204] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 97. Harriet Stanton Blatch was Elizabeth Cady Stanton's daughter and remained an ardent and influential suffragist throughout her life. Helen Guthrie Miller was an influential member of NAWSA and also served on Missouri's Red Cross board. Trisha Franzen, *Women in American History: Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman Suffrage* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

[205] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 97.

[206] Linda Kerber in *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies* discusses the importance of equal citizenship for women prior to the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1919. Kerber asserts that full citizenship was conferred upon adult men with the assumption that the ability to militarily defend one's country allowed one access to the

educational pedagogy to educate women on the state levels and to adopt innovations made on local levels to apply food controls and support to their communities. Ultimately, the autonomy of the states in food control measures revealed growing concerns over food as a social welfare marker and the civic education-inspired policymaking programs employed by the Woman's Committee helped consolidate many more women into the sociopolitical goals the national Committee pursued in health care legislation and reforms for women workers as well as the end of child labor. Food issues, however, remained essential to developing the Woman's Committee's sociopolitical goals, and the experiences of working with the federal Food Administration opened opportunities for reformers to address broader areas that concerned the welfare of women and children. While the national Committee developed a working relationship with the Food Administration and attempted to integrate federal food demands into the lives of average American women, the women who worked to organize the state divisions and subsequent local branches implemented strategies for food production, preservation, conservation, and distribution that reveal a deep interest in creating fairer access to good, healthy foods for families. The national Committee in turn embraced and promoted these local and state level initiatives into federal food measures for the duration of the war.

The importance of access to wholesome, nutritious foods for the American domestic population increased before the official American entry into the escalating European war as the United States supplied the nations involved in the crisis with shipments of food supplies for

---

full rights as well as obligations of citizenship. Kimberly Jensen in *Mobilizing Minerva* found that the argument of military service as a qualifier for full citizenship was being challenged by women who served as military nurses, home-land policemen replacements, and other essential public safety positions asserted that "defense" had a much broader meaning in modern societies and that women remained essential to expanding the scope of citizenship obligations. Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

civilian populations. The families that contributed to the massive voluntary food effort lived in every state and territory of the nation and planted millions of backyard gardens to help conserve the commercial markets for the war effort. As the war demanded greater amounts of American foodstuffs to be sent overseas, Minnesotans and others who lived on farmsteads in the grain belt of the Midwest worried about cost-of-living increases while Jewish women in New York City rioted over lack of access to vital, religiously-sanctioned foods. Mothers in cities such as Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia desperately sought milk for their infants and toddlers while commercial distribution markets frustrated small farmers throughout the Midwestern grain belt. Commercial warehousing and distribution also angered urban families as they waited for fruits and vegetables to travel hundreds of miles by rail to central warehouses where they would be sorted by size and quality when the produce generally was grown less than a hundred miles away from city centers. Yet, within a few months following President Woodrow Wilson's address to Congress asking for a declaration of war in early April of 1917, nearly seventy percent of American households agreed to voluntarily conserve foods on a daily basis so that others far away may have enough to eat while yet maintaining enough food supply for their own families at home.[207] Part of this appeal to American women to conserve, preserve, and generally increase the food supply also altered the focus of what food and access to food meant for Americans. As Helen Zoe Veit argues, the Food Administration sought a voluntary system rather than rationing as a way to increase civilian support for the war effort and to showcase especially women's patriotism and support for the war.[208]

[207] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 60, 75.
[208] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 1-2, 5-6.

Once the Food Administration officially became a federal wartime agency, the Woman's Committee's food efforts, already underway in the late spring and early summer of 1917, were forced to integrate into the Food Administration's hierarchical plans for organization to preserve, conserve, and produce more food. The Food Administration needed the support of the Woman's Committee's state divisions as the number of registered women grew in the early months following the creation of the Committee. State divisions in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Michigan alone contributed over two million women volunteers for the war effort through the auspices of the Woman's Committee. Herbert Hoover, Director of the Food Administration, wrote to W.S. Gifford of the Council of National Defense in the summer of 1917 that it was "most important that we should have the definite organized direction of the State Councils of Defense and their Women's [sic] Committees, to see that the movement is forwarded and followed up in every state and county."[209] Yet, the Food Administration often regarded the Woman's Committee as chaotic and disorganized as the Committee granted much latitude to the state divisions to create implementation strategies. Understanding that the Woman's Committee existed as a coalition, its directors acted as a clearinghouse to translate federal needs to the state divisions and allowed state divisions much leeway in planning how to provide for the demands of wartime food needs to the best abilities of local communities. In early August of 1917, Woman's Committee Vice-Chairman and muckraking journalist Ida Tarbell answered questions concerning the food programs in a special insert in the *New York Times.* Tarbell highlighted the importance of involving the nation's women when she responded to a question concerning the role of the Woman's Committee in relation to the Food

[209] Letter from Herbert Hoover to W.S. Gifford, Council of National Defense, June 18, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

Administration. Tarbell described that "after the registration [of women in the state divisions] our first concern will be along the lines of food, its production, conservation, and distribution. The Food Administration has asked us to cooperate and has appointed me on the commission to act as the clearing house between it and the Woman's Committee. It is anxious to use our machinery to get in touch with women everywhere."[210] While the Food Administration desired the Woman's Committee to act as a general channel of information and for issuing orders to housewives, the Woman's Committee regarded themselves and their volunteers as essential advocates for equitable distribution of foods for their own families and the civilian population in general. By removing their families and the rest of civilian America from the normal commercial food distribution channels, the Woman's Committee hoped to make more foods available for U.S. and Allied troops overseas. As Helen Zoe Veit remarked in her own study of the Food Administration, "U.S. propaganda continually stressed that women's contributions were no less important or morally profound for taking place in a realm seemingly far removed from conventional statecraft."[211] Through focusing on food production, conservation, and distribution in the domestic, or civilian, markets, women contributed to "conventional statecraft" by freeing up the wholesale commercial markets, thereby diverting food from civilian retail markets into food shipments for Allies and American soldiers in 1918. In a press release from Herbert Hoover in the summer of 1917, Hoover detailed the importance of the removal of civilians from traditional food markets while also stressing the importance of

[210] Mary Dewhurst, "Women Striving for Efficiency in War Work: Ida Tarbell, of Woman's Committee of Council of National Defense, Describes Coordination in Work of Many Organizations." *New York Times, Special Mailer.* August 5, 1917, 7.

[211] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 67.

adequate food supplies for the domestic front. Hoover emphasized that the Food Administration's

> primary aim is to see that the people of this country eat a sufficient quantity of food, but not an excess, and that they stop waste. [The civilian population] is also to reduce the consumption of staples so that a large amount may be set free for export to the Allies. We wish to urge in particular the free use of vegetables and perishable foods where they are produced, to encourage the preservation of perishable and semi-perishable fruits, vegetables, and other foods, to substitute other cereals to a large extent for wheat, and to reduce materially the consumption of meat.[212]

The Food Administration planned on using the Woman's Committee to implement these changes in Americans' eating habits as Hoover also flatly stated in the same press release that "Many other phases of the work will be developed from time to time, and reported regularly to the Councils of Defense" to disseminate to the public, more specifically, to women responsible for feeding their families.[213] The Food Administration, while using the Woman's Committee as a conduit for dissemination also created a series of organizational problems as the relationship between the Committee and the Food Administration was complicated by the differences in their different federal mandates. The Woman's Committee, unlike the Food Administration, operated in an organizational framework that relied upon its coalition partners on the national level and stressed non-hierarchal relationships with its state divisions, in essence treating the state divisions as collaborative partners rather than subordinates.

Part of the Food Administration's relationship with the Woman's Committee involved the promotion of food experts to assist women with making good food choices for their families without relying on the normal food distribution channels. Food Director Hoover, in a letter to

---

[212] Press release from Herbert Hoover, "AIMS of the Food Administration on Food Conservation." June 15, 1917. R.G. 62 (College Park), Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

[213] Ibid.

Council of Defense Director W.S. Gifford, stressed plans to "appoint a Federal Food Administrator in each State to cooperate with all of the state agencies."[214] The primary state agencies fell under the jurisdiction of the Council of National Defense, and the Woman's Committee had begun to organize volunteers on behalf of the Council of National Defense for the food effort prior to the official start of the Food Administration. While Hoover emphasized how "vital from a national point of view [to] maintain the volunteer principle in this country…[so as to] demonstrate the ability of democracy to defend itself without being Prussianized," he also insisted upon compliance with his Food Administration's suggestions and regulations.[215] The Food Administration's insistence on establishing federal food administrators for each state may have indicated the lack of faith Hoover and members of the Council of National Defense had in the abilities of state-level women to coordinate with federal demands. The Woman's Committee, however, was a volunteer group and although it had a federal mandate to organize the nation's women for wartime efforts, including food, the Committee and its state divisions and local branches did not receive direct control over food policies from the Wilson administration.[216] The U.S. Food Administration, with state food administrators and a cadre of support workers and other officials on the federal and state payrolls, remained accountable for its spending of federal and state funds.[217] Handing over control of food policies to a group of federally-mandated volunteers, such as the Woman's Committee, had risks that the Wilson administration was unwilling to take during wartime.

---

[214] Letter from Herbert Hoover to W.S. Gifford, Council of National Defense. June 18, 1917.

[215] Ibid.

[216] William Clinton Mullendore, *History of the United States Food Administration, 1917-1919* (Stanford University Press, 1941), 12.

[217] Mullendore, *History of the United States Food Administration, 1917-1919*, 53-58.

The Food Administration, with the support of the Woman's Committee, encouraged women to conserve, preserve, and plant and harvest more foods as a form of patriotism. Patriotic American women, according to the programs of the Food Administration, focused their voluntary efforts on food issues as a way to express their growing importance to the country during a time of crisis. Woman's Committee Chairman Anna Howard Shaw understood and endorsed these expressions of patriotism. Writing to the state divisions in June of 1917, Shaw connected food, country, and democracy to the unique contributions of women to the war effort at home and abroad:

> There was never a greater challenge to the womanhood of a country than that made by the President of the United States to women, for voluntary enrollment in this league for food conservation. It is the devotion, courage, and economy of the women of France today that is largely helping to keep her armies in the field and save the nation from destruction. We believe the American women will show as fine a spirit in this hour of need, and stand with the women of the allied countries in our fight for liberty and democracy.[218]

In seeking to coordinate activities with the Food Administration and become a clearinghouse for the Food Administration to access American women for voluntary programs, the Woman's Committee not only embraced patriotic rhetoric but also sought to emphasize women's growing political importance to countries involved in modern warfare. But, such an endeavor required the coordination and support of women in local communities spread throughout the United States. American women who desired to join in food control efforts for the duration of the war participated primarily through their local communities and their involvement remained heavily influenced by local priorities and state resources. The Woman's

[218] Signed letter from Anna Howard Shaw to Woman's State Divisions, Council of National Defense, Woman's Committee. June 22, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

Committee could broker that relationship. Shaw desired that the state divisions publicize the Food Administration's desires while also enthusiastically supporting the plans for food conservation, preservation, and production. Shaw intended that the first two weeks of July 1917 would be devoted to "an intensive campaign…through every possible medium of publicity" to "create such sentiment in favor of the Food Administration program that women throughout the country will gladly sign the [Food Administration] pledge cards and promise to carry out the instructions of the Food Administration."[219] While the states generally complied with federal requirements concerning food, local communities maintained much oversight in implementing national programs for food and the potential for coercion to join in food production, preservation, and conservation programs as a form of women's patriotic contributions remained an ongoing concern for the national Committee. Historians have examined the federal role in establishing food controls during World War I and have uncovered very little overt coercion on the federal level.[220]

The federal imposition of food control measures, however, relied on local communities and states to enforce food programs. The local branches and state divisions of the Committee increased women's roles in food-related programs by including home economists, social workers, and well-connected members of women's clubs and organizations to help ensure women's involvement on nearly every level of cooperation among the federal, state, and local communities.[221] Local communities in particular retained much control over the enforcement of food measures and women in local branches of the Woman's Committee employed this

[219] Ibid.

[220] Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 83-116.

[221] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 77-100.

enforcement of food measures against women who chose not to produce, conserve, or preserve foods and women who chose not to obey the food control measures of the Food Administration. In particular, local branches of the Woman's Committee publicized food program events in their communities and advertised the names of women who volunteered with the local branch and attended these events.[222] Local branches of the Committee also tracked Food Administration Pledge cards that women returned through their local community branches and branch leaders were able to see who in their community volunteered to comply with wartime food controls. Local branches of the Woman's Committee used their canvassing and collection responsibilities for the Food Administration's pamphlets and pledge cards to apply pressure on women who did not join in the effort. In the fall of 1917, concerns over the loyalties of immigrant socialists reached the Woman's Committee when Executive Secretary of the Committee Alice Wood received a letter passed on from Sara Splint of the Food Administration. Splint wrote that she "received a personal letter from a high school teacher in Brooklyn [New York]…of which…should be brought to your attention. The writer is a person whose judgment I consider good…She says 'At present we are trying to overcome in our high school an unfortunate antagonism on the part of Russian Jewish children of Socialist families toward the Food Administration" and hoped that Wood "might put us in touch with information…[as] we are very anxious to enlist our children and their parents in our food conservation army.'"[223] As the war progressed through the fall of 1917 and into 1918, more Americans regarded their immigrant neighbors with suspicion and attempted to measure one's

[222] Newspaper clippings from Woman's Committee file. August-October 1917. R.G. 62, Box 910, Folder unmarked. WCCND Collection.

[223] Letter from Sara Splint of the Food Administration to Alice Wood, Executive Secretary of the Woman's Committee. October 27, 1917. 1 pg. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "61 Food Administration—Oct., 1917-Dec., 1917." WCCND Collection.

loyalties according to one's willingness to join in food measures and other wartime programs. German immigrants especially were targeted for suspicions by their American neighbors and were assumed to be agents of German subterfuge operating in American towns. In the fall of 1917, Alice Wood received another letter from Daniel Reed of the Food Administration in which Reed warned that "The agents of our unscrupulous foe have sought to discourage the noble women of this great country from participating in food conservation work. These agents are difficult to combat, for they operate under the guise of sympathetic friendship, pointing out to our good women that they should not again be asked to engage in an enrollment campaign [for food conservation]."[224] Reed believed that American women in particular needed to be skeptical of their German-American neighbors and warned that "unless our sacrificing women are deceived by the plausible and alleged sympathetic appeals of our ever busy enemy, they will individually and collectively rise in their might and fight for food conservation."[225] The climate of fear against German immigrants and eastern European socialists that the Food Administration helped nurture allowed local branches of the Committee to view foreign-born women in their communities as noncompliant outsiders who did not express appropriate forms of patriotism. Recently, historians who have studied the national level food programs found that overt coercion to join food control programs remained minimal when present throughout the war and the Lever Food and Fuel Act of 1917 provided specific punishments for those who hoarded food but concentrated attention on commercial-food enterprises rather than on

[224] Official letter of the U.S. Food Administration from Daniel A. Reed to Mrs. Ira Couch [Alice H.] Wood. October 15, 1917. 1 pg. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "61 Food Administration—Oct., 1917-Dec., 1917." WCCND Collection.

[225] Ibid.

individuals or even small farmers.[226] In an early work on the civilian social aspects of World War I, however, historians H.C. Peterson and Gilbert Fite found that the local branches in particular offered the organizing women and local level officials much latitude in employing the food control measures recommended by the Food Administration as an avenue for potential abuse of German-Americans.[227] In local communities, some of the Woman's Committee branches threatened the use of the newly-created federal Sedition and Espionage Act of 1918 to coerce German-American women and other immigrant women to sign the federal U.S. Food Administration pledge card to conserve, preserve, and produce food during the war effort.

While the state and local food program coordinators in the Woman's Committee employed some coercion to have women join food programs, the food program implementation efforts on the local branches also offered a wide variety of activism that reinforced women's growing sociopolitical concerns and helped draw women who were unaffiliated with reform movements into the Committee's orbit. Helen Zoe Veit, in her work on the Food Administration and its impact on social history and women's involvement with the food control measures, emphasized the role of organized, activist women involved in the suffrage movement during the summer of 1917 when the National American Women's Suffrage Association members "issued a special edition on food conservation" in the group's weekly magazine, the *Woman Citizen*, as well issuing a NAWSA textbook for home economics that stressed conservation, production, and preservation of foods.[228] While the suffragists organized on the national level through their publications, local and state level women organized the food

[226] Mullendore, *History of the United States Food Administration,* 68, 228.
[227] Peterson and Fite, *Opponents of War,* 102-112.
[228] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 97.

programs' most innovative ideas. Certain branches in Midwestern states in particular developed significant plans for carrying out demands from the Food Administration. While during the first two months following the creation of the national Committee, the Illinois state division and specifically the Chicago branch helped design the Woman's Committee's registration process and then taught surrounding states' divisions the registration process and the use of individual interviews with specifically trained registrars, Michigan's state division developed local initiatives that met the Food Administration's demands while also allowing for variations depending on the abilities of different locales throughout the state. Michigan's state division's plans for the implementation of food distribution and conservation programs in particular impressed the national Committee and the Michigan division's plan served as a guide for implementation of food programs in other Midwestern states. Through the flexible program initiatives for conservation, preservation, and production of food, women who previously had maintained memberships in the coalition partners affiliated with the Woman's Committee were able to attract women who had no official membership or affiliation with reform movements.

Although the national Committee attempted to fit within the hierarchy of the Food Administration, the state divisions developed regionalized programs for food production, distribution, and conservation. The regionalized aspects of the state divisions helped to consolidate programs based on the environment and climate of the various growing areas in the United States. The Midwestern, Great Plains, and some New England states grew many of the crops marked by the Food Administration as most essential to the war effort and developed programs on the state levels to provide desirable products such as wheat, corn, oats, and pigs and cattle for food. In June of 1917, Anna Howard Shaw wrote to the state divisions concerning

Food Administration pledges to conserve, preserve, and produce more food for the domestic and overseas markets. In the letter, Shaw detailed the plans of the Woman's Committee and its state divisions and outlined a four-part program for the states. The Woman's Committee and its state divisions, in cooperation with the Food Administration, planned to concentrate on:

> 1st: An exact survey of the amount of food on hand in this country, so that the amount available for home consumption and exportation to the allies may be accurately known.
> 2nd: An investigation undertaken by the Department of Agriculture into the normal consumption of food by different families from representative groups of the population.
> 3rd: Some control of food in storage, better methods of transportation, and the elimination of speculation in foodstuffs.
> 4th: The enrollment of a league of women who will pledge themselves to carry out the wishes of the President, the National Government, and the Food Administration.[229]

This four-part plan of action required the direct cooperation among not just federal branches of government, but also cooperation among state-level Food Administrators and the women who led the state divisions of the Woman's Committee. The women in charge of the state divisions concentrated most of their efforts on providing for the domestic population by encouraging home gardening, farmers' markets, communal cooking, and home canning. The Woman's Committee believed efforts such as these would remove American families from the normal warehouse food distribution channels allowing for greater amounts of food to be sent overseas for Allied soldiers and European civilians involved in the war. Women who led the state divisions, such as Caroline Bartlett Crane of the Michigan division, promoted a familial approach to food conservation and production by stressing the need for women responsible for feeding families to concentrate on providing enough foods for their own families' needs rather

[229] Letter concerning food pledges and programs, Council of National Defense, Woman's Committee. Signed by Anna Howard Shaw, June 22, 1917. 3 pgs. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

than depending on local grocers to supply access to foods.[230] State Chairman Caroline Bartlett Crane not only confirmed and approved of Michigan's involvement in the national Committee's four-part plan of cooperation with the Food Administration, but also emphasized the need "that each woman should undertake to provide for the food needs of her own family" as the "cardinal principle laid down by the Committee on Food Production and Marketing of the Michigan Woman's Committee."[231] Crane and her fellow state division chairmen in the Midwest especially concentrated their efforts on developing local food supplies to local families as "a recent meeting of [the Michigan] Committee [adopted] the first principle…that every woman who possibly can do should provide for the needs of her own family by raising a sufficient supply of the kinds of foods that can be preserved, canned, dried, or stored in the natural state for use throughout the coming year."[232] This concentration on providing for one's own family was "held to be necessary…because the [federal] government is now commandeering canned goods for our soldiers, and for the Allies, and the prospect is for a continued heavy exportation; hence it is unlikely that we will be able to purchase canned goods this next winter. [And,] Because, in any event, if we provide for the needs of our own families, that takes us out of the market, and we thus voluntarily increase the food supply that helps to win the war."[233] By encouraging the removal of families from the markets, women in Michigan and other

[230] Caroline Bartlett Crane had much experience in Progressive reform causes as did many of the state divisions' chairmen. Crane had a personal as well as professional connection with Anna Howard Shaw as both women grew up in Northern Michigan and both obtained their doctorates of divinity and had worked together through the Unitarian church and through the Michigan suffrage cause. Trisha Franzen, *Women in American History: Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman Suffrage* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 180-181.

[231] Press Release, Woman's Committee, Michigan Division. Kalamazoo, Michigan, June 12, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation Comm. Publicity." WCCND Collection.

[232] "Plan of Work of Department of Food Production and Marketing, Woman's Committee (Michigan Division), Council of National Defense." Approved by Alice H. Wood, Executive Secretary. 2pgs. June 1917. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation Comm. Publicity." WCCND Collection.

[233] Ibid.

Midwestern states indirectly helped the war effort while simultaneously providing healthy homegrown foods for their families.

While press releases and information from the state divisions stressed the importance of providing for one's own family food needs, "maintaining that sense of urgency…was important because on a daily level food conservation could be awfully boring…especially since the savings themselves could so easily seem trivial…but if those small quantities were meaningless by themselves, wartime articles and exhibitions stressed, it was the collective effort that counted."[234] The national Committee encouraged the state divisions to adopt this sense of urgency in order to gain the collective abundance from individual women's efforts at food conservation in their local communities. In a letter detailing the Food Administration's food pledge program for individual families, the Woman's Committee stressed the necessity to "have a woman or a group of women in each town to provide the enthusiasm, the inspiration and the knowledge that will make it possible to rally every woman in the state to this noble work of saving food that others may be fed."[235] In Michigan, and in other Midwestern and Great Plains state divisions, influential women adopted this plan of organization and when the Michigan division chairmen met in the capital city of Lansing in July of 1917, Michigan division chairman Justina Hollister recorded that "there were nearly forty women there, representing at least thirty-five affiliating organizations."[236] The affiliating organizations that met in Lansing included women with significant connections to the farming and food industries in the state and also represented many of the larger cities throughout Michigan's Lower Peninsula, where

[234] Veit, *Moral Food, Modern Food,* 66.

[235] Letter concerning food pledges and programs, Council of National Defense, Woman's Committee, signed by Anna Howard Shaw. June 22, 1917.

[236] Personal letter to Alice H. Wood from Justina Hollister, Grand Rapids, Michigan, July 29, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division." WCCND Collection.

the majority of the farming and food industries were located. The women on the Michigan Committee on Food Production and Marketing included representatives of Michigan State Teachers' Association, Farmers' Clubs of Michigan, the Ladies' Work of the State Gleaners,[237] Woman's National Farm and Garden Association, a supervisor of Detroit's public schools' Garden Club, and directors of three different departments of the State Grange and hailed from Detroit, Grand Rapids, Dowagiac, Ann Arbor, Howell, and Alma.[238] Three other women rounded out the membership on Michigan division's Committee on Food Production and Marketing and besides Caroline Bartlett Crane, who served as the state division chairman, the other two women had no direct affiliation with food or farming industries but represented the communities of L'Anse and Saginaw.[239] In Michigan, these women who supervised the state food production and conservation programs represented both larger industrialized cities as well as smaller farming communities.

The Michigan division, in particular, helped to develop an implementation strategy for food programs and developed a seven-step plan to organize local units for food conservation, preservation, and production. Michigan division's seven step plan for organizing stressed: 1) the preparation of press releases based on the national statement of purpose and goals from the national Committee; 2) plans to include a wide list of women's organizations and clubs in food programs regardless of connections or affiliations with other groups and initiatives; 3) the

[237] The State Gleaners were a national association of reformers who believed in cooperative marketing and buying of necessities such as food by a community. The "Ladies' Work" was the women's branch of the State Gleaners and in Michigan, the Ladies' Work of the State Gleaners partnered with the state division of the Woman's Committee. See: Willis Dunbar, "The Transformation of Rural Life in Michigan Since 1865," *Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review* 49, no. 11 (Dec. 19, 1942), 357-358.

[238] "Plan of Work of Department of Food Production and Marketing, Woman's Committee (Michigan Division), Council of National Defense."

[239] Ibid.

inclusion of any other non-affiliated women in leadership positions such as teachers, Sunday school teachers, professors such as those in home economics departments, and businesswomen; 4) the selection of a convenient date and place to meet with women interested in adopting food programs and following up with telephone calls and press releases that highlighted the organizations and individuals invited to attend the meetings; 5) reminder calls and letters to heads of local organizations to emphasize that "patriotism demands duty"; 6) the creation of an opening address at meetings that stressed food measures as a patriotic duty and have women elect local chairmen to organize and promote food measures as well as honorary members such as judges' wives, mayors' wives, and other local women elites; 7) and, the election of an executive local food subcommittee to coordinate with state division chairmen.[240] Michigan's seven-step plan became the model for organizing local units throughout the Midwest and was celebrated as an inclusive and productive program by the national Committee.

In the Progressive era, many women in smaller towns and in larger cities came to rely upon the local grocer to supply canned goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, and cut meats from large national distribution centers.[241] As the national Committee and its state divisions, in cooperation with the Food Administration, announced the impending lack of commercially-produced foods, women unaffiliated with the reform movements looked to the state divisions of the Woman's Committee for guidance on how to supply enough quantities of food for their own families. In Michigan, state division director Caroline Bartlett Crane supported the creation

[240] "First Steps in Organizing a local unit of Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense." State Directives from Michigan Division. Undated, no pagination. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division." WCCND Collection.

[241] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 81.

of farmers' markets for farmers to sell their produce directly to those in the city. Crane also vociferously supported the redistribution of food. In a speech – which later became an article -- to the Detroit meeting of the National Municipal League in 1918, Crane recounted the various efforts that were underway in 1917 to meet civilian food demands in her state.[242] According to Crane, as a state division of the Woman's Committee, Michigan

> undertook to do something towards stimulating food production…we purchased…bushels of seed potatoes at which we sold at cost in small lots to people ledged to plant and cultivate them. We did a great deal to stimulate the testing of seed corn, and the disinfecting of oats to remove smut. We started a 'set-a-hen, keep-a-bee' campaign among farmers' wives and children, encouraged the raising of poultry, and advised the stocking of farm ponds with fish. Especially, we encouraged the women in the city and the country to plant gardens. We went to owners of vacant lots and solicited the right to use them. We obtained much garden seed free or at half price for our gardeners who needed such help.[243]

Crane's work as director of the Michigan division helped to increase the numbers of women involved in the food programs supported by the Woman's Committee and also helped draw in unaffiliated women into the war effort. But, Crane also found that even with such broad efforts, women experienced much difficulty in distributing the foods they raised and preserved. Although women gave away foods to their neighbors and worked together in collaborative community projects such as community kitchens and community canning centers, they still had problems with getting enough quality fruits and vegetables into the larger cities. Crane acknowledged that branches and the state division "had encouraged the women to produce a surplus for the local markets [but] we found that when they came to these local

[242] Caroline Bartlett Crane, "The Housewife and the Marketing Problem." *National Municipal Review,* Philadelphia, PA, July 1918. No pagination. A-92, Box 14, Folder 3. WMU Regional Archives, Caroline Bartlett Crane Collection.

[243] Ibid.

markets…the local dealers…ordered their supplies of commission merchants from the city, and for many reasons it was not usually practicable to purchase these small lots of local produce [and] many of our women found on repeated trial that they could not sell their produce unless they were willing to part with it at a loss."[244] Crane also stressed that while farming women could not sell their produce to city grocers due to standards set by larger commercial competition, urban women also had much difficulty gaining access to these same healthy foods rotting in the countryside. Crane wrote in exasperation that

> here, then, was the housewife upon whom the government had laid the duty of increasing the food production—with no way of disposing of her surplus even if she could spare the time to go to town and peddle it from store to store [but could not access]…the housewife in town who had no surplus, but a deficit; the woman who wanted to can tomatoes or peas or peaches, and found them so high in the market that she could not afford to buy. So, there were tomatoes too dear to can in town; too cheap to pick on the farm; green corn withering on the stalk in the country, while the town people longed to eat it or can it, but couldn't afford to buy the green corn in the stores.

With no way of transporting the produce and no prearranged grocers or markets in which to sell produce at a reasonable cost, Crane pointed to the problem of food distribution in the United States. Part of the reason for the lack of distribution to urban women was "that the offerings from local sources were irregular, sporadic, and hence not to be depended on" and that other reasons such as "products brought in direct from the country are seldom sorted or graded" and were therefore "unattractive to the dealer accustomed to the carefully sorted and graded and handsomely packed goods shipped from the big commission houses."[245] As state division director, Crane's solutions to distribution problems centered on the creation of cooperative local producers to work together to grade, sort, transport, and sell to local grocers

[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid.

and in centralized farmers' markets in the cities, and community canning centers with refrigeration facilities and commercial canning machinery for overripe produce so as to "save our surplus and to release the outputs of the canning factories for our soldiers and the Allies" as well as to get "this food into the hand of the people."[246]

Other state divisions across the Midwest also developed innovative ways of dealing with the food crisis in their communities. In Minnesota, according to historian Rae Katherine Eighmey, state division leaders of the Woman's Committee developed programs for children through the University Farm in St. Paul where boys and girls attended "one class a week to train children to raise a small garden at home or care for the family plot and then can rhubarb, sweet potatoes, carrots, strawberries, or any article the market afforded."[247] Minnesota's state division also assisted in monitoring "commercial compliance with federal regulations among bakeries, hotels, grocery stories, and restaurants…to assure that fair prices for all foods were maintained."[248] In Illinois, the state division directors concentrated the majority of their food-related work in the city of Chicago.[249] Virginia Boynton, in her history of the Illinois division of the Woman's Committee, found that "since…state leaders considered Illinois 'essentially a corn-producing state,' they organized a variety of temporary educational programs and demonstrations in Chicago, including 'Corn Kitchens' and 'Corn Shows', to help women use corn to conserve wheat."[250] The conservation of wheat remained an essential part of the Food Administration's goals for state divisions of the Woman's Committee in the Midwest and in

---

[246] Ibid.

[247] Rae Katherine Eighmey, " 'Food Will Win the War': Minnesota Conservation Efforts, 1917-18." *Minnesota History* Vol. 59, No.7 (fall, 2005), 274.

[248] Eighmey, " 'Food Will Win the War': Minnesota Conservation Efforts," 285.

[249] Boynton, " 'Girls, We Must Enlist!,'' 28.

[250] Boynton, "'Girls, We Must Enlist!,'' 37.

Chicago, "The [Illinois division] sponsored a citywide corn show in a vacant [downtown] store for six days in early November 1917, [and] attended by more than thirty thousand people, followed by neighborhood corn shows in several schools, stores, and a local hall."[251] Neighborhood shows and programs in Chicago under the auspices of the Illinois division of the Woman's Committee, according to Chicago branch director Louise deKoven Bowen, introduced 205,000 women to food conservation measures and new recipes.[252] While the Illinois division organized such exhibits for the residents and visitors to Chicago, they also cooperated with the State Council of Defense to arrange a "citywide 'Patriotic Food Show' held in the Chicago Coliseum, there the [Illinois division] exhibited different wartime food substitutes [and] despite two large snowstorms during the show, approximately 125,000 people watched the demonstrations and visited the displays."[253] Illinois' division leaders also offered an ongoing Food Conservation Bureau in a former Carson Pirie Scott store that demonstrated how to cook wartime recipes and conserve foods to thousands of women and men during 1918.[254] These proactive programs provided access to food reform ideas that women in larger cities as well as smaller communities attended, and the numbers of women unaffiliated with reform movements joined in educational programs and hands-on classes that helped increase the coalition strength of the reform movements connected with the Woman's Committee.

Part of the reason why the Midwestern divisions' food programs and organizations received so much attention and praise from the national Committee was their dedication to reach nearly every woman in their states through energetic programs for teaching women how

[251] Ibid.
[252] Boynton, "'Girls, We Must Enlist!,'' 42.
[253] Boynton, "'Girls, We Must Enlist!,'' 37.
[254] Boynton, "'Girls, We Must Enlist!'' 41.

to conserve, preserve, and produce healthier foods for their families. By including not just women in affiliated reform groups but also unaffiliated women concerned with providing enough quantities of healthy food for their own families, the Midwestern and Great Plains state divisions brought large numbers of women into the growing sociopolitical concerns of the war and of the Progressive era. The state divisions in Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and several other states adopted proactive programs. The Michigan model for food programs included features that appealed to those who lived in rural communities and in cities, and the county of Manistee, Michigan, became the pilot for counties in states throughout the Midwest. In Manistee County, the local branch organized fifteen local and township chairmen and registered 4,482 women into the Food Administration's pledge to conserve, preserve, and produce more food.[255] According to a summary of the Manistee County branch's program, women "assisted the county food administrator and the grocers of the city in a big three-day food show. Splendid food posters [were] displayed. Woman's Committee [Manistee County branch] also assisted in issuing sugar cards…[and] compiled food conservation program for county school teachers to use for their last-day-of-school programs…much literature has been distributed and many demonstrations held in cold pack canning and the use of economical and nourishing foods."[256] Manistee County also received a prize from the National Emergency Food Garden Commission for the best exhibit of two or more cans of vegetables raised in a home garden and "because of the many calls from other states, found it necessary to draft a plan of work and organization along food lines [that] were sent to Washington…for all states [to] use

[255] *Carry On*, Official publication of the Woman's Committee (Michigan Division), Council of National Defense. Kalamazoo, MI. No. 1, Saturday, November 23, 1918. No pagination. A-92, Box 14, Folder 3. WMU Regional Archives, Caroline Bartlett Crane Collection.

[256] Ibid.

the Manistee plan as a basis for the national plan."[257] While the Manistee County women helped develop a program for more rural communities, and the Chicago branch developed programs for urban women's involvement in food conservation, other various programs and hands-on workshops for city dwellers attracted much attention. Michigan cities developed public canning centers and community kitchens which were commonly called Hoover Kitchens.[258] Michigan also developed gardening programs for children that offered incentives such as "natty little buttons in the flag colors, with the motto, 'See it Thru' [sic]"and expected that these incentives would "stimulate courage against the onslaught of potato bugs and weeds and 'the weather'" as well as to showcase children's civic participation in the war as patriotism by expecting "that all who wear them will 'show their colors,' both as gardeners and patriots."[259] Michigan and the Midwestern and Great Plains state divisions not only encouraged children through inspiring them to do their civic duty for the war effort but also helped educate women on what to do for the food programs. Simply reducing the amounts of foods a family ate or planting gardens was not sufficient enough to meet the demands of the Food Administration. Pamphlets and classes encouraged women without gardening experience to "plant early [in the summer] peas, beets, carrots, turnips, lettuce, radishes, beans for late use, and to can and dry. Save the earliest best peas and beans, the finest ears of corn and hills of potatoes for seed."[260] Women with some level of livestock experience were "urged to still raise one or more extra hatches of chickens…[which] can nearly live on the waste from the harvest

[257] Ibid.

[258] "Plan of Work of Department of Food Production and Marketing, Woman's Committee (Michigan Division), Council of National Defense."

[259] Ibid.

[260] "Food Week in Michigan, August 1-5 [1917]," pamphlet. Woman's Committee of Council of National Defense, Michigan Division. 12 pgs. Undated (circa July 1917). R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division." WCCND Collection.

fields and will largely care for themselves" as "indications [were] that there will be a great scarcity of poultry products" as beef and pork products were shipped overseas and many American families relied on chicken and turkey for meat.[261] The regionalized efforts of the Midwestern state divisions reinforced the importance of local communities' individual abilities and also developed among women increased connections and greater emphasis on their roles in the state, regional, and national war efforts.

Local branches of the Woman's Committee advertised food conservation and preservation in national and local newspapers and attracted a wide variety of women as well as men interested in food controls during the war. In larger cities such as Chicago and New York, advertisements and information on food programs supported or created in cooperation with the U.S. Food Administration and other wartime volunteer groups promoted the Woman's Committee's efforts at controlling food prices and access. As communities rallied for the food effort, the Woman's Committee's local branches offered classes and advice on canning, gardening, cooking and recipes that conserved foods needed for American soldiers and allied countries in Europe, specifically wheat and meats. The Chicago branch of the Woman's Committee opened storefronts in downtown locations, including a Carson-Pirie-Scott department store, to showcase classes and food conservation methods while New York's Woman's Committee aided in organizing women to plant potatoes and vegetables in open lots within the city's boroughs in attempts to quell wartime food rioting in 1917. In 1916 and 1917, the *New York Times* published articles warning consumers that food prices were skyrocketing at alarming rates. The *New York Times* reported that in 1916 the price of wheat flour increased to

[261] Ibid.

"$11.50 a barrel" and was expected to reach the price of $15 a barrel, representing a price increase per barrel of $4-5 over the cost of the same quantity and quality of wheat flour sold in 1915 and reflected food inflation prices not seen by Americans since the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. Other foods often used as substitutes for wheat, including oats, rice, potatoes, and other starchy vegetables and grains, also saw a dramatic price increase and the *Times* reported that from September to October of 1916 the price of potatoes doubled and left housewives with high grocery bills, angry at food distribution warehouses, and wary of businesses and individuals who hoarded food. In 1917, when women of New York City rioted over the cost and availability of foods, new emphasis was put on making food available for the civilian population and through encouraging the planting of empty lots, the Woman's Committee's local branches became active organizers in the distribution of seeds and offering classes on gardening to women and children. During the food price inflation of 1917, Americans looked for ways to obtain enough quality foods for their own families and the Woman's Committee provided clear opportunities to learn ways to conserve, preserve, and produce more foods. Many of the local branches reported on the attendance at classes and other public programs that emphasized strategies for food conservation and preservation and nearly all local branches throughout the United States reported significant interest among the public for such programs. The Hoover Food Pledge Drive, conducted in the summer of 1917 under the authority of the Woman's Committee, also offered opportunities for local branches to secure more women's involvement in wartime programs. During the Hoover Food Pledge Drive, the local branches of the Committee had a mere eight days to organize their communities into food-savings forces and relied on women volunteers to canvass their

neighborhoods to enlist women into pledging to conserve, preserve, and produce foods for the war effort. The Hoover Food Pledge Drive was scheduled by the Food Administration to begin the same week as many of the local branches' registration campaign to enlist women volunteers into the Committee's ranks. As the organizers and volunteers of local branches of the Committee began canvassing neighborhoods for the Food Pledge Drive, they also registered women for the Woman's Committee and thereby tied women's interests in food controls during the war to the Woman's Committee's mission to enlist every American woman into both the food programs and the Committee's other wartime home defense plans in health care and industrial war work. Local branches in Michigan reported by county or city wards to the state division headquartered in Kalamazoo on the numbers of women who volunteered and in local branches' territories, thousands of women registered with the Woman's Committee during the Hoover Food Pledge. The Michigan division's newsletter *Carry On* detailed the local branches' work in organizing women who were unaffiliated with reform groups and in Houghton, Michigan, a mere six local and township branch leaders registered 21,000 women for both the Woman's Committee and the Hoover Food Pledge Drive, many of whom, according to the branch leaders, had no knowledge of food programs for the war effort much less the organization of women's associations and clubs under the Woman's Committee.[262] Michigan division director Caroline Bartlett Crane also noted in her reports to the national Committee that the local branches in the counties of Eaton, Calhoun, Gogebic and Oceana placed Hoover food pledge cards in "every home in the counties in a single day."[263] In Allegan county,

[262] *Carry On: Official Publication of the Woman's Committee (Michigan Division), Council of National Defense.* Kalamazoo, MI. No. 1, November 23, 1918.

[263] Ibid.

Michigan, 8,904 women registered with their local branches by the fall of 1918 and 7,000 Hoover pledges were signed by women.[264] The local branches in particular were essential to the food programs of the Woman's Committee and the Food Administration as they provided hands-on food demonstrations and encouraged women, children, and men to attend free classes on canning and gardening, distributed wartime recipes that conserved wheat and meat, and organized canvasses of their neighborhoods to enlist women into the Hoover Food Pledge.

The local branches also created connections for the food programs promoted by the Woman's Committee to mothers through schoolchildren. Rae Katherine Eighmey, in her study of Minnesota's wartime food conservation efforts, found that the state's local branches of the Committee in cooperation with the state food administrator "reached out to children to lead the way" in encouraging their mothers to join in food conservation.[265] In Minnesota, according to Eighmey, school-aged children were encouraged by teachers to adopt the local branches' food effort motto of the No Waste Pledge.[266] The No Waste Pledge was written as a rhyming poem that encouraged patriotic civic engagement and Minnesotan children learned:

> I pledge allegiance to my flag, in service true I will not lag.
> I'll not despise my crusts of bread, nor make complaint whatever fed.
> On wheatless days I'll eat no wheat, on other days eat less of sweet.
> I'll waste no pennies, spoil no clothes, and so I'll battle against our foes.
> No slackard, but a soldier keen, to do my best in the year eighteen.[267]

Minnesota schoolchildren not only learned patriotic pledges from the local branches, they also were actively enlisted in the fall of 1917 as they returned from summer break to

---

[264] *Carry On: Official Publication of the Woman's Committee (Michigan Division), Council of National Defense.* Kalamazoo, MI. No. 1, November 23, 1918.

[265] Eighmey, "'Food Will Win the War': Minnesota Conservation Efforts," 282.

[266] Ibid.

[267] Ibid.

"gather signatures on Food Pledge cards carried home and to their neighbors, with the goal of having everyone pledge to conserve food."[268] St. Paul's public schools, working in cooperation with the local branches of the Committee, sent food pledge cards home with 40,000 students in hopes of enrolling 100,000 in the food pledge.[269] Local branches in Minnesota were not the only ones to employ schoolchildren in distributing and collecting food pledges. In Michigan, the Grand Rapids city ward branches "made a final dash on the Hoover Pledge campaign at the opening of school when the cards were sent home by the pupils to their parents. The cards were then gathered [at the schools] and mailed to Washington."[270] Schoolchildren were also encouraged to maintain gardens at their local school grounds, donated their produce at harvest time to community kitchens in their neighborhoods, and extended invitations to their mothers and other neighborhood women to use the free produce to make meals for the entire community.[271] The national Committee, with coalitions to teachers' groups and parent-teacher organizations, hoped using schoolchildren to encourage their mothers to sign the food pledge and attend local branches' food programs would increase the numbers of women who agreed to join the Woman's Committee and its coalition with the Food Administration. By the end of the war, the Food Administration reported that the work of volunteer organizations helped to secure 14 million pledges for American households.[272] The Woman's Committee remained a

---

[268] Ibid.

[269] Ibid.

[270] Press Release, Woman's Committee, Michigan Division. Kalamazoo, Sept. 14, 1917. RG 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division—Publicity Matter." WCCND Collection.

[271] *Carry On: Official Publication of the Woman's Committee (Michigan Division), Council of National Defense.* Kalamazoo, MI. No. 1, November 23, 1918. (A-92), Box 14, Folder 3. WMU Regional Archives, Caroline Bartlett Crane Collection

[272] Mullendore, *History of the United States Food Administration,* 12-13.

key conduit for the U.S. Food Administration to reach women in their local communities to pledge their families into the national food efforts of the war.

Many of the women who joined the food programs through the Woman's Committee's local branches were attracted to the programs offered for wartime food conservation and that also stressed the need for the women's involvement in food distribution as a form of social welfare during the war. Innovative programs for food conservation, preservation, and production attracted many women into the war effort through the Woman's Committee and the state divisions offered significant help to women. The Michigan and Illinois divisions, in particular, offered food programs that created state level innovations and local branch action. While "every woman [was] urged not only to put up her own family supplies" as the national Committee advised, the Michigan division also encouraged women to "sell surplus supplies, either fresh or preserved, to neighbors less fortunately situated, or to neighboring grocers" to avoid the creation of communities without access to good, wholesome foods.[273] The cooperative nature of state division programs also stressed public community canning centers, collective meals that showcased new conservation recipes which came to be called "Hoover dinners," and community "Hoover kitchens" where women gathered to cook meals together from wartime gardens and distribute to their neighbors. Calls for rational housekeeping, including cooking, increased during the Progressive era, and according to Veit, spokespersons such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman stressed that transferring cooking outside the home to community kitchens "could take advantage of economies of scale, saving a little money for

[273] "Plan of Work of Department of Food Production and Marketing, Woman's Committee (Michigan Division), Council of National Defense."

everyone" by offering "reasonably priced hot meals" to men and women.[274] Canning demonstrations and other classes offered through the extension programs of the home economics departments from agricultural colleges and universities also attracted women into the Woman's Committee's state divisions. Kalamazoo, Michigan, where the state division's headquarters were located, offered local women cooperative canning demonstrations in its own store where women were "asked to bring [homegrown produce] to the center, where the work will be done by trained workers, and serve as general canning demonstrations for all the women of the city" and also utilized public school buildings for canning demonstrations as well as "demonstrations given by people speaking foreign languages for the alien women."[275] Canning demonstrations and public farmers' markets advocated by the state divisions often found support from home economists who believed that "one immediate and far reaching effect of the Food Administration drive is to open the way for educational work along food lines and to increase greatly the interest of women in learning the practical means of making their food pledge effective."[276] The Midwestern state divisions, particularly Michigan and Illinois, received much attention for attracting women into food programs by relying on branches in local communities. In Michigan, larger cities surrounded by farming communities helped formulate plans to involved both urban and rural women. The local branch in Grand Rapids, Michigan, rallied women to help feed thirteen hundred meals to eight hundred men stationed for two weeks in the city waiting for transfer to basic training at the cost of twenty-five cents

[274] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 88.

[275] Kalamazoo *Gazette* press release, "Women's Store Opens August 14: Defense Committee Plans to Conserve Food Through Exchange." Undated. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division." WCCND Collection.

[276] Press Release, Woman's Committee, Michigan Division. Kalamazoo, MI. Undated. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan—Publicity, Nov. –Dec. 1917." WCCND Collection.

for each meal and helped save the federal government over two thousand dollars "which was expended for extra comforts for the soldiers."[277]

Not only were Midwestern women helping to feed soldiers but they were also feeding themselves and their neighbors through innovations made at the state level. In Michigan, division director Caroline Bartlett Crane organized the distribution of 1,300 bushels of seed potatoes at over a dollar below the market price; almost a quarter of the 1,300 bushels were "passed out in Jackson to some who never have planted potatoes before" and "each buyer pledging…as a patriotic duty, to plant and faithfully cultivate every potato."[278] And, in Muskegon, Michigan, the local branch worked with the state division materials to supply a "Hoover Dinner" of macaroni and cheese, celery, beets, "war bread," apple sauce, cake and coffee to over 100 local residents.[279] The local Muskegon branch made certain that "the cake was made without eggs and the war bread was made with a substitute for part of the wheat flour" and received praise from diners who commented that it "was a wholly satisfying, wholesome war time dinner."[280]

As these programs offered women and children advice concerning food production, the Home Economics movement linked together the Food Administration and especially Woman's Committee state divisions through the classes developed to help educate women on food needs for their families to maintain health and well-being during the demands of the war.

---

[277] Ida Clyde Clarke, Chpt XXI, page 7 of 9. Chpt VII, page 3 of 5. Typed personal letter to Alice H. Wood from Justina Hollister, Grand Rapids, MI. July 29, 1917. 3pgs. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division." WCCND Collection.

[278] *Grand Rapids Herald*, "Raps Woman's Lack of Dress and the 'Movie' Shows." May 31, 1917. Pg.12. Grand Rapids Public Library Archives, Ryerson Branch, Grand Rapids, Michigan. "Plan of Work of Department of Food Production and Marketing, Woman's Committee (Michigan Division), Council of National Defense."

[279] Press Release, Woman's Committee, Michigan Division. Kalamazoo, MI. October 5, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division—Publicity Matter." WCCND Collection.

[280] Ibid.

Home economists, according to Veit, during the war "provided information about basic nutrition science and preached the message that fruits and vegetables were not luxuries for the rich but rather important components of healthy diets that all families should try to prioritize in their grocery budgets."[281] Stuart Galishoff, in his history of the public health movement in Newark, New Jersey during the Progressive era, noted that concerns over food safety in particular enhanced "the wholesomeness of the food supply…the growing use of canning and refrigeration prevented spoilage, made for a more varied diet, and insured the availability of nutritious foods the year around" and led to laws "to insure the safety and quality of foodstuffs" including the safety of milk supplies, inspections of slaughterhouses, markets, and restaurants for sanitary purposes and "in 1917 a [local] ordinance was introduced requiring food handlers to undergo examination for communicable diseases."[282] These food safety measures were enacted not only in New Jersey but in many states and the Home Economics movement in particular offered women advice and assistance on canning and other preservation methods that ensured their families would not be exposed to harmful bacteria from home preservation methods encouraged by the federal Food Administration during the war. While the Home Economics movement gained momentum since the 1870s when it found a place in the agricultural land-grant colleges and universities, home economics specialists in the Progressive era were offered, through federal legislation, its largest expansion into the average American woman's life. Once the Smith-Lever Act created the Cooperative Extension Service in 1914, farmers' wives took advantage of the scientific training offered through "extension

[281] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 85.

[282] Stuart Galishoff, *Safeguarding the Public Health: Newark, 1895-1918* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), 18.

programs… [that] sent men and women trained in agriculture and home economics to rural areas, where they visited small communities and often people's homes to teach new farming techniques or to provide information about health, hygiene, and scientific food preparation."[283] In the midst of the American involvement in the war, during 1917 the federal government passed "the Smith-Hughes Act [which] provided more federal funds to land-grant colleges to train teachers in vocational fields, including home economics" that led to a "surge in trained home economics teachers, domestic science classes expanded in public and private institutions and at all educational levels, in universities, in high schools, and even in elementary schools."[284] The surge in home economics, inspired and supported by federal legislation during the Progressive era and World War, also encapsulated the Woman's Committee and its relationship with the Food Administration. Seeking to provide rational, direct help to women who wanted to participate in food production, preservation, and conservation, home economists partnered with the Woman's Committee in directing the educational aspects of the Food Administration's demands for increased food supplies for the duration.

For the state divisions and branches, the support of home economists greatly enhanced the food conservation and production programs. During the summer of 1917, state divisions and branches sought college-trained home economists to teach classes to women in proper food safety techniques, especially in preservation methods, and in cost-savings. Efficiency remained the focus of the branches while the state divisions sought more educational programs and home economists were experts in both arenas. In Michigan, Dean of Michigan Agricultural College's Home Economics Department Georgia White served as food administrator for the

[283] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food,* 83.
[284] Ibid.

state and she developed programs in close cooperation with the state division director Caroline Bartlett Crane to meet "requests for help from women who are anxious to meet their home problems more efficiently" and connected professional home economists to women in eighty-two of Michigan's eighty-three counties to meet the "great demands in all communities for the trained worker to assist her friends, neighbors, and townswomen."[285] White also developed a week-long workshop program at Michigan Agricultural College in East Lansing that was "intended for women who have had at least two years training, or its equivalent, along Home Economics lines in a Normal School or College" to update their knowledge of the preferred preservation methods and thrift ideas.[286] While White developed the workshop program, her colleague in the state division, Caroline Bartlett Crane, advertised White's plans and called branches to pay "especial attention to…an announcement by Miss Georgia L. White, Dean of the Division of Home Economics….Have you not in your community a Home Economics-trained woman whom you can send…to take this four-day course?"[287] Home economists not only trained at week-long workshops at the state colleges during the summer of 1917, but they also spread throughout local communities in their states. In Michigan and Minnesota, home economists utilized recently passed federal legislation that supported agricultural schools' extension programs and offered classes on topics as varied as wheat, sugar, and meat substitutions in cooking and baking, methods for canning and drying fruits and vegetables, cooking wild game, thrift classes on ordering bread and meats, and nutritional aspects of

[285] Letter from Dean Georgia White to Michigan women, on Michigan Agricultural College, Division of Home Economics letterhead with enclosure of program of events and classes. June 12, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "Food Conservation Comm. Publicity." WCCND Collection.

[286] Ibid.

[287] Letter from Michigan division director Caroline Bartlett Crane to local chairmen, Michigan division. Undated. 1 pg. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation Comm. Publicity." WCCND Collection.

various foods.[288] In Michigan, the local classes offered by home economists generally were so well attended that pre-registration was encouraged by branches and classes were limited to one hundred women. In Minnesota, however, some branches struggled with maintaining attendance at classes and demonstrations as some women, according to a Becker County local branch chairman, "can see nothing but the Red Cross and are so entirely absorbed by it that food conservation as yet does not seem to have touched them."[289] While some women volunteered more for the Red Cross in their local communities, the classes, demonstrations, recipes, and pamphlets that branches offered in cooperation with trained home economists organized through the combined efforts of the state food administrators and division directors helped draw women into the war effort and exposed them to reformers in their local communities.

The national Committee especially regarded the state divisions as primary conduits to women in their local communities once the Food Administration began demanding the distribution of pledge cards to women throughout the United States. The pledge cards, it was hoped, were to be indicators of how many American women were willing and able to preserve, conserve, and produce foods for the domestic market. Yet, the Hoover food pledge, as the cards came to be called, were designed as open-ended vows to adopt food measures as outlined by the federal Food Administration. As one state division director claimed "The card

[288] Press Release, Woman's Committee, Michigan Division. Kalamazoo, MI. Undated. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan-Publicity, Nov.-Dec., 1917." Press Release, Woman's Committee, Michigan Division. Kalamazoo, MI. June 12, 1917. 2pgs. "War Work for Women," Press Release, Woman's Committee, Michigan Division. Kalamazoo, MI. Tuesday, Dec. 18, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan-Publicity-Nov.-Dec., 1917," WCCND Collection; Eighmey, " 'Food Will Win the War': Minnesota Conservation Efforts," 278, 281-282.

[289] Eighmey, "'Food Will Win the War': Minnesota Conservation Efforts," 278.

did not appeal to women; it was too indefinite, for one thing."[290] Yet, even with the objections from division directors, the state divisions of the Woman's Committee were utilized in the distribution of the Hoover food pledges to local level women in their communities.[291] A directive on the distribution of the pledges came in June of 1917 from the national Committee and highlighted the need for "the State Divisions…to reach women through all existing organizations of women, through the local press, through the schools, and by the extension of the State Divisions to the most remote corners of the States."[292] In its desires to reach every available woman in each state for the food pledge drive, the Woman's Committee directed its state divisions to not only use existing organizations, but also to use "every possible means of distributing the food pledges" including the division of towns and cities into districts or wards and a "house-to-house canvass…to secure signatures."[293] The national Committee also urged state division chairmen to use automobiles from neighboring towns to reach women on the farms and to partner "in cooperation with the extension work of the agricultural colleges."[294] Once the pledge cards were signed by the women who received them and mailed to the Food Administration in Washington, D.C., "there will be returned to each signer a household tag, to be placed in the window of the home, to show that the members of the household have volunteered for service."[295] The Hoover food pledges, for many local women in the Midwest,

---

[290] Letter from Caroline Bartlett Crane to Alice H. Wood. September 29, 1917. 2pgs. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division—Mrs. C.B. Crane-Oct.-Dec." WCCND Collection.

[291] Bulletin 35 from Council of National Defense, "Food Conservation Committee to the Several State Councils of Defense." June 23, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

[292] Letter concerning food pledges and programs to Woman's State divisions. Council of National Defense, Woman's Committee. Signed by Anna Howard Shaw, June 22, 1917. 3 pgs. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

[293] Ibid.

[294] Ibid.

[295] Ibid.

served as a visual reminder of their patriotism during a time of national crisis and also indicated their commitment to place the family in a priority position during the war. Out of the forty-eight states, the territory of Alaska, and the Washington, D.C. divisions of the Woman's Committee, only eight states remained relatively unresponsive to calls for food measures through the Woman's Committee.[296] Out of the fifty states and territories active in the war effort, twenty-eight adopted the Michigan Division's program for organizing the food pledges and conservation, preservation, and production efforts and allowed the state divisions of the Woman's Committee to be in charge of the food programs. Only five states and territories had the men's State Council of Defense organize food programs and four had both men and women working in collaboration on the food programs under a general banner of the Council of National Defense. Five other states utilized either private organizations or private companies such as newspapers to run their food programs.[297] The funding for the printing and distribution of the Hoover food pledge cards showed a similar use of either the state divisions of the Woman's Committee, the mostly male State Councils of Defense, or other organizations including for three states the printing of cards by the Food Administration itself.[298] Only in Washington State, Vermont, Mississippi, and Washington, D.C. were the distribution of the food pledges handled by groups unaffiliated with the Woman's Committee. In the state of Washington, the food program pledge cards were printed and distributed by the National League for Women's Service, of which Maude Wetmore served as its Chairman and who also was subcommittee director for the Woman's Committee's Home and Foreign Relief. In Vermont

[296] "Summary Reports of State Divisions of the Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense, on the Food Pledge Campaign." Woman's Committee, Washington, D.C., July 10, 1917. 4 pgs. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "62 Food Conservation." WCCND Collection.

[297] Ibid.

[298] Ibid.

and Mississippi, food programs and pledge cards were advertised and distributed in newspapers that women could cut out and mail in to the Food Administration, and in Washington, D.C., policemen conducted house-to-house canvasses for the distribution of food pledges.[299]

Many immigrant women throughout the United States refused to sign the Hoover food pledge primarily because the cards these women were asked to sign did not include pertinent information on the duration of the pledge or if it meant that the federal government would then be able to commandeer foods from average American families. Also of concern to American women who considered signing the food pledge was the draft status of their husbands and sons. Many women thought that signing the food pledge exposed their male relatives to the draft because the pledge assured the federal government that they had enough food supplies to last for the duration.[300] Other women thought that signing the food pledge that the draft status of their male relatives may be delayed due to the patriotism of the women who volunteered their food efforts. The local branches of the Woman's Committee collected, tallied, and recorded the names and addresses of women who signed the Hoover pledge and some women seemed to believe that if they signed the pledge, then the local draft boards, even though distinctly separate from the Woman's Committee, would postpone or forego drafting their loved ones. The Hoover food pledge card left many of its signers and non-signers alike confused about what this pledge actually meant and what, if any, effects it may have on the conscription of their male family members. The card women were asked to sign read

[299] Ibid.
[300] Letter from Caroline Bartlett Crane to Alice H. Wood. September 29, 1917.

> To the Food Administrator: I am glad to join you in the service of food conservation for our nation and I hereby accept membership in the United States Food Administration, pledging myself to carry out the directions and advice of the Food Administration in my home, insofar as my circumstances permit.[301]

Although women were assured they were pledging their own kitchens for the wartime food effort, without knowledge of what "directions and advice" the Food Administration may make, women were left to assume a variety of potential outcomes for their families and themselves. The Woman's Committee, even as it promoted the food pledge, also provided women with information on what kinds of sacrifices they were to make in their kitchens for the war effort. Local branches of the Committee provided women with assurance that the pledge simply meant to conserve, preserve, and produce more food and gave women practical advice and skills to meet those goals.

The Hoover food pledges in particular helped to draw more women into the state divisions of the Woman's Committee. Working with the state division and local-level women, federal food administrators assigned to oversee state-level compliance with food programs supported innovations from local-level women affiliated with the state divisions of the Woman's Committee. Although Hoover's insistence on a federal food program demanded that the Woman's Committee postpone or coordinate other wartime needs such as the Liberty Loans used to finance the war, the food programs presented an opportunity to become involved in not just the war effort but also in opportunities for women to engage in the distribution of educational materials to inform their local communities of ways to contribute to

[301] "The Food Pledge: Pledge Card for the United States Food Administration," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (November 8, 1917), 8.

war-related food needs while also providing for their families.[302] While national Committee chairmen and state division directors complained that the insistence on adhering to the Food Administration's strict schedule of pledge card distribution to local women in the states was "a most unwise proceeding as it involves so much work" during the Liberty Loan drives, there were also desires to support the Food Administration's efforts as state directors "thoroughly believe[d in Hoover], and want to help…but we cannot do impossibilities" especially when many of the state food administrators offered "an atmosphere of discouragement attending these *intensive demands* [emphasis hers]."[303] Shaw herself complained bitterly as well about the timing of Hoover's Food Pledge drives and expressed in a letter to Woman's Committee Liberty Loan chairman Antoinette Funk that she

> [had] not so much faith in that food-pledge matter anyway. It seems to me they are spending an enormous sum of money on a very small part of the food business, and I cannot help feeling that if two or three hundred of the people employed in sending out these dinky little cards were engaged in some other government service it would save more than these cards will bring about. My opinion of the food-saving business is, not so much that it will save food as it will help to stimulate the lagging patriotism of the country.[304]

Although Shaw evidently viewed the pledge cards as essentially a way to bolster women's patriotism at the expense of other wartime needs, she also understood that food programs attracted innovative women from local communities throughout the United States. While the national Committee and some of its state divisions struggled to maintain a

---

[302] Letter from Caroline Bartlett Crane to Alice H. Wood. September 29, 1917.

[303] Letter from Anna Howard Shaw to Woman's Liberty Loan Committee chair Antoinette Funk. September 5, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 460, Folder "61 Funk, Antoinette." Letter from Caroline Bartlett Crane to Alice H. Wood. Kalamazoo, MI, September 29, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division—Mrs. C.B. Crane—Oct.-Dec." WCCND Collection.

[304] Letter from Anna Howard Shaw to Woman's Liberty Loan Committee chair Antoinette Funk. September 5, 1917.

cooperative relationship with food administrators in the states, local branches cooperated with the Hoover food pledge drives and attempted to enroll every woman in their communities.

The food programs of the state divisions and the activism of the branches allowed the national Committee to focus on the creation of a viable relationship with the federal Food Administration. Although the chairmen of the national Committee remained non-voting affiliates of the Food Administration, their ability to mobilize women in their local communities through their state divisions shaped how the Food Administration utilized women for the war effort. National coalition groups that partnered with the Woman's Committee found receptive audiences in many of the states targeted by the Food Administration's conservation, preservation, and production goals and state and local affiliates of groups partnered with the Woman's Committee designed local initiatives for food demands that showcased women's vital roles in the war effort. While the Food Administration beseeched Americans to conserve, preserve, and produce more food for the duration of the war, women in local communities implemented these demands in ways that helped women unaffiliated with reform movements and uneducated in food measures to access reformers who organized the branches and state divisions as well as experts in efficient and rational food sciences through the home economics movement.

While the relationship on the national level between the Food Administration and Woman's Committee remained somewhat contentious, the state divisions implemented the food control measures that branches created through their innovations. The Woman's Committee's first call to action to assist the Food Administration in joining the war effort increased their abilities to connect to other social welfare reforms such as the nutritional needs

of American families, and while the Woman's Committee's primary instruction to feed families first developed, every level of the Woman's Committee worked to educate women that "food will win the war." The efforts to educate and advocate for American women and American families increased the legitimacy of the Woman's Committee and its volunteers in the state divisions and local branches and created opportunities for the Woman's Committee to partner with reform groups as well as with federal agencies. As the war demanded greater foodstuffs to be shipped overseas, the Woman's Committee insisted that the federal government also provide for its civilian population and reformers who strove to actively support the war effort. In the process, the Woman's Committee connected average American housewives to reformers and their causes through food needs and introduced unaffiliated women into reform movements. The civilian food efforts of the Great War, organized and assisted by the federal Food Administration and the Woman's Committee, also increased the public roles of average women in the American democracy. Without the direct assistance of 14 million women across cities and small communities in the United States, the wartime food efforts of the federal government could not have been achieved. In addition, the Woman's Committee's direct engagement in the food control effort attracted more women into an ongoing social welfare movement that could in turn refocus attention on a new constituency: the country's children.

Chapter Three: "The Children's Year: The Call to Eradicate 'National Incompetency and Neglect' in 1918"

We have rightly said that the war is the job for this generation to fight out and spare the next. And the heroic thought for that tender, helpless next generation has turned our eyes upon the slums in which children were dying faster than the soldiers in 'No Man's Land'; the mills and factories that snatch them untimely from school and play; the byways and alleys in which they were bred in contempt of law; the dives and brothels in which their souls are corrupted in their first youth…and what of the hundreds and thousands who needlessly died in childhood and infancy, robbed of the right to live—the nation robbed of their potential strength! What of the appalling army of the physically unfit—one-third of all men called to defense of our country—a standing witness to our previous national incompetency and neglect![1]

Michigan Division Chairman Caroline Bartlett Crane, Woman's Committee for the Council of National Defense, November 23, 1918

As the Woman's Committee negotiated American women's contributions to the food effort in partnership with the Food Administration, the national chairmen worked to establish a successful coalition with the recently created federal Children's Bureau housed in the Department of Labor. The coalition that developed among national, state, and local divisions of the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau remains the most successful partnership for social welfare during the war and helped to advance concerns over children's health, safety,

[1] "Carry On," official publication of the Woman's Committee (Michigan Division) Council of National Defense. Kalamazoo, Michigan. No.1, Saturday, Nov. 23, 1918.

well-being, and education in profound ways that permanently altered federal obligations to its citizenry. Faced with mounting demands for a healthier population from civilian leaders, politicians, and military officials, the Woman's Committee partnered with the Children's Bureau to design and implement a federal health care system for infants, young children, and women in their child-bearing years while they helped young people gain vocational and educational skills through state legislative processes and direct involvement of volunteers in their communities. This coalition insisted that the welfare of young children, especially their health, remained a national concern during the war and argued that children's health was an essential part of a longer focus on national needs. Facing significant numbers of men who failed the national military draft's physical and mental fitness tests, the federal government and the state governments began enacting legislation to support children's health and educational needs with the intent of creating a future population healthy and sufficiently educated to prosecute any future wars faced by the United States. Social welfare reformers seized the opportunity presented by the military physical and mental examination failure rates of the generation of men drafted into the Great War and demanded federal and state support for health care programs that benefitted children and women, state and federally funded educational programs and initiatives to train up the younger generation for productive work in the private and sectors. In the process, the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau invigorated Progressive arguments for social welfare that benefitted families and attracted an audience of women to join in volunteering for civic obligations in their communities and sought political changes through legislation for the sake of American families.

The wartime coalition of the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee seized opportunities for children's health and well-being that stemmed from Progressive era debates on the responsibilities and obligations of communities, states, and the nation toward its citizens. Since the Children's Bureau did not have state branches or affiliates, the Woman's Committee assisted and encouraged its state division directors with plans for new reform-oriented legislation and enforcement of existing laws. The Children's Bureau, however, needed research on the health of millions of children in their local communities to advance plans for legislative reforms and nationalized health care for children and their mothers. The state divisions of the Woman's Committee provided access through local branches to women and children in their communities and presented opportunities to conduct vast health and well-being tests on millions of American children. Information cards with children's tests information filled out in detail by women volunteers, nurses and doctors at local branches of the Woman's Committee were tallied and results were summarized by the state divisions and sent to the national Committee where the research was shared with the Children's Bureau.

The state divisions in particular offered greater opportunities to reach women unaffiliated, or without official membership, in reform groups through appeals to American women that had direct connections and immediate results in their daily lives. By appealing to women's concerns for their children and their families' welfare, state division chairmen were able to create a network of women in communities through connections to one or two individual women with memberships or direct association with coalition-partnered reform groups in townships, city wards, and rural counties. These women became the leaders of communities and neighborhoods throughout the states and were well-acquainted with local

customs and concerns. They helped to tailor federal directives from the national Committee into actions that drew in women unaffiliated with women-led reform movements prior to the American entrance into the war. The mothers who brought their children to be weighed and measured by women who volunteered with their local branches of the Committee learned details about the health of their children and demanded actions from the state and federal governments to support children's and mothers' health needs as a form of home defense. In turn, the state legislatures during the war began to pass state laws for health care that by 1921 helped support the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act. The state divisions of the Woman's Committee became the testing ground for social welfare activism and for legislation that propelled the federal government into creating federal protective laws for women and children. During the Great War, the role of the Woman's Committee in the coalition for child welfare was different from the coalition role it maintained with the U.S. Food Administration. Rather than employing the Woman's Committee as a conduit to reach women in communities and cities across the nation for a federally-initiated mandate as in the Committee's role with the Food Administration, the Children's Bureau required a different level of responsibility and actions for the Woman's Committee in its campaign for children's health and well-being. As one researcher stressed, the relationship that developed with the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee helped to coordinate the activities of 17,000 local committees and involved the efforts of over eleven million American women above the age of 16.[2] Issues concerning American children captured women's attention before the war. During the war, the demands for a healthy future population marked a significant advancement in national and state

[2] Dorothy Edith Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), 12.

legislation concerning children. Many of the reforms concerning children occurred in the states that remained the testing grounds for progressive legislation and paved the path to greater federal protective and social welfare legislation in the years following the Great War. According to historian Robyn Muncy, the war helped advance concerns over children's health and well-being and remained one of the few "beneficiaries of World War I and one of the very few whose benefits did not end with demobilization."[3] American social historian Allen Davis also found that while ideas such as nationalized health insurance continued to be highly debated during the war, "the nation's health was stimulated by the conflict… as a variety of agencies, volunteers and the federal government rallied to the cause."[4] The Woman's Committee, with its abilities to utilize volunteers in their local communities, became one of the dominant agencies that helped propel the health of the nation's children into political action.

Central to the debates on children's health and well-being during the Progressive era and in the years just before America's entry into the Great War was the issue of broad-based nationalized health care. Social historian Allen Davis found that health insurance to safeguard children and to assist families with children who had mental or physical issues in paying for health care was "the next step in social progress" for reformers in 1915, but the opposition of physicians, medical schools, and boards of health to nationalized health care programs or nationalized health insurance remained too strong for significant changes in national and state laws prior to the United States' entry into the war.[5] A renewed drive for nationalized health care, according to Davis and other historians, could point to the shocking numbers of men

[3] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, 96.
[4] Davis, "Welfare, Reform & World War I," *American Quarterly* 19, no.3 (Autumn, 1967), 524.
[5] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*, 224.

drafted into the military who could not pass physical or mental wellness tests given by military physicians.[6] The alarm in communities and in national wartime planning over the numbers of men who failed these draft tests helped to promote health care as not only a wartime measure but also as an attempt to create national health standards, including access to health care. World War I historian Jennifer D. Keene uncovered in her research that while the U.S. military initially defined the passing limits for physical and mental tests, local draft boards in communities and cities throughout the U.S. set their own limits for rejection.[7] Since draft boards were staffed and maintained by local officials in each community within the U.S., these local officials defined their own standards of mental and physical acuity that prompted the surgeon general to complain "that low rejection rates did not reflect substantially healthier regional populations but only more lenient examination practices" set by local draft boards.[8] Even as overall rates of rejection for the entire drafted population of men remained higher than officials expected, local draft boards in the Midwest and in the South had lower rejection rates than in industrial and urban communities. The surgeon general's dismissal of low rejection rates as indicative of healthier populations in certain areas of the country reflected less stringent requirements from local draft boards.[9] The medical policies for military tests set by local draft boards also inadvertently underscored the need for access to health care services in communities. Historian Walter Trattner, in his history of social welfare legislation during the Progressive era, emphasized that the health care deficiencies of communities throughout the U.S. were exposed during World War I as reformers claimed that many of these failed

[6] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform,* 224; Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, 96.

[7] Jennifer D. Keene. *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 25-26.

[8] Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America,* 26.

[9] Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America,* 25-26.

examinations "could have been averted through suitable health care during infancy and childhood."[10] Trattner found that the lack of health care services also reflected regional variations and location issues as "rural areas throughout the nation had few [health care] facilities, [and] this was especially true of the South where, because…of the relatively low per capita income, public services in general were scarce," especially health care services.[11] While certain regions, such as the South, experienced a general lack of ability to fund free or low-priced health care services, other areas had limited access to free and low-priced health care clinics as the demands of the war lowered the abilities of clinics to offer services. During the war, according to social historian Ralph Pumphrey, free and low-priced clinics such as the Boston Dispensary in Boston, Massachusetts, could not obtain access to drugs, supplies such as bandages, or physicians and nurses for their clientele due to the demands of the war for these resources.[12] And, according to Pumphrey, not only did the demands of the war drain the materials, resources, and specialists that were essential to free and low-priced clinics such as the Boston Dispensary, but that the social needs of soldiers drew social workers into services like the Red Cross.[13] Without access to the very few free and low-priced clinics such as the Boston Dispensary, civilian America's health needs remained far behind the needs of the war effort. The coalition headed by the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau persisted in the fight to recognize and assist civilian health needs in a climate where federal funds for health care services concentrated on soldiers.

---

[10] Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State, 2nd Edition* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 182.

[11] Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State,* 182.

[12] Ralph E. Pumphrey, "Michael Davis and the Transformation of the Boston Dispensary, 1910-1920," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 49, No. 4 (Winter 1975), 462.

[13] Pumphrey, "Michael Davis and the Transformation of the Boston Dispensary," 462.

Free and low-priced health clinics like the Boston Dispensary, however, were unusual during the Progressive era and the few clinics that opened before the war set up services in larger urban areas to provide for an urban population. In rural areas, health care services resembled a mosaic where local physicians as well as midwives were oftentimes far from those who needed health care, and services offered to the sick often remained too costly for most poor families and even many middle-class families.[14] Just a mere two years before the war broke out in Europe in the summer of 1914, reformers concentrating on children's needs supported federal legislation for the creation of the Children's Bureau in the Department of Labor. According to one history of the Bureau, the idea of a federal Children's Bureau was proposed by Lillian Wald, a social welfare advocate, nurse, and New York City Henry Street Settlement House director, and Florence Kelley, the famous anti-child labor advocate and influential member of the National Consumers' League. In 1903, Kelley suggested that American colleges and universities set up a series of lectures to focus on the "physical, mental, and moral conditions and prospects of the children of the United States" and specified seven key areas of children's overall health, including infant mortality studies, birth registrations, orphanage care, child labor, issues caused by parental desertion, problems with illegitimacy, and degeneracy especially among older children.[15] These seven areas remained the focus of the concerns of the Children's Bureau and were fixed into the three programs developed by the wartime coalition led by the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau.

---

[14] Lucinda McCray Beier has made an exhaustive study of health care in the Midwest from 1880-1980 based on oral histories of women and men. See: Lucinda McCray Beier, *Health Culture in the Heartland: An Oral History, 1880-1980.* University of Illinois Press, 2009; especially chapter 3 "Nursing, Gender, and Modern Medicine" and chapter 5 "An Ounce of Prevention: Public Health Services."

[15] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 2.

Prior to the start of the Great War, the Children's Bureau employed the use of patriotic rhetoric to draw politicians and others unaffiliated with its cause into the arena of children's needs. From the outset of proposing a federal branch to handle and manage issues related to the care of children, reformers employed patriotic rhetoric to focus on creating the healthiest and most intelligent upcoming generations of Americans. In 1909 during the Congressional debates on establishing the federal Children's Bureau, Lillian Wald told Congress that while Americans "cherish belief in the children and hope through them for the future," they could "no longer…be satisfied with the casual administration of that trust." Congress must "consider whether this call for the children's interest does not imply the call for our country's interest," she continued, demanding that "in the name of humanity, of social well-being, of the security of the Republic's future, let us bring the child in the sphere of our national care and solicitude."[16] Wald's testimony and the support she received from other social welfare reformers concerned with children's issues helped establish the Children's Bureau after a lengthy fight in Congress, even though the bill had garnered the support of former American Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft in 1909 and 1910.[17] After eleven attempts in Congress to pass the bill founding the Children's Bureau in the Department of Labor, it became law on April 2, 1912, and Congress charged the new branch to "investigate and report ... upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life among all classes of our people."[18] Much like the federal mandate to the Woman's Committee at its creation in 1917 to organize the nation's women and coordinate with federal wartime powers in home-defense efforts, the

[16] Lillian Wald, Testimony, January 27, 1909, United States House of Representatives, 60th Cong., 2nd Sess., Hearings Before the Committee on Expenditures in the Interior Department, on HR 24148, Establishment of a Children's Bureau in the Interior Department, (GPO: 1909), 35; Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 1-2.

[17] Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 180.

[18] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 3.

mandate to the Children's Bureau remained broad, loosely-defined and without any enforcement powers to act on its research and findings.

At the outset of the Great War in 1915, the Children's Bureau had only existed as a federal branch since 1912 and yet "the Children's Bureau presided over an interconnected set of organizations that joined the Bureau in attempting to control child welfare policy in the United States."[19] Since the Bureau retained a rather broad mandate to investigate and report on issues affecting children, advisory committees within the Bureau helped to organize the primary issues involving children that the Bureau concentrated on meeting through legislation and educational programs supported by the groups that formed the advisory committees.[20] The Bureau's first director, Julia Lathrop, established the advisory committees by "call[ing] together people who had been instrumental in establishing the Bureau."[21] Lathrop called organized women's reform groups together with teacher groups, labor unions, social workers, and state boards of public health as the key players in helping the Bureau achieve federal status.[22] In the three years between the legislation establishing the Bureau and the onset of World War I, these groups formed an influential coalition with the Bureau regarding both child labor issues and the passage of an anti-child labor bill through the federal Congress. By 1916, before the creation of the Woman's Committee, the Children's Bureau established a powerful coalition with member groups including the National Consumers' League, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.[23] And,

---

[19] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 38.
[20] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 4-5.
[21] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 5.
[22] Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State,* 180.
[23]. "Final Report from Child Conservation Section of the Field Division of the U.S. Council of National Defense, October 1, 1918—July 1, 1919;" Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 59.

according to historian Robyn Muncy, "by 1918, women's organizations were vying for the honor of helping the Bureau."[24]

The Woman's Committee, rather than being just one of a series of women's reform organizations to join with the Children's Bureau, held a special place in the coalition for children's health and wellness reforms. As a federal wartime branch of government responsible for organizing the women of the country for the war effort and for a rather undefined home defense effort, the Woman's Committee's mandate remained broad enough to incorporate concerns from before the war into its plans for women's wartime service. Since many of the national Committee's chairmen retained leadership positions in the reform groups that partnered with the Children's Bureau before the establishment of the Woman's Committee in 1917, they retained a working relationship with the Bureau, so that the incorporation of the Committee into the Bureau's plans was an easy transition. Furthering the ties that bound the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau, in the spring of 1917 as the Woman's Committee met in Washington, D.C. to formulate its plans and select chairmen for its subcommittees, Julia Lathrop was called upon to join the Committee as national chair of the Child Welfare subcommittee thereby sealing the importance of the interconnections among both federal branches.[25] Once the Woman's Committee became a federal wartime branch in the Council of National Defense in 1917, Lathrop, in her positions as director of the Bureau and chair of the Committee's Child Welfare subcommittee, made special agents of all of the state

[24] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 59.

[25] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918), accessed March 22, 2016, http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/comment/Clarke/Clarke06.htm, Chapter VI: Child Welfare.

division chairs of the Woman's Committee charging them with implementing a new wartime program developed by the Bureau and the Committee to target specific child welfare issues.[26]

This new "Children's Year" officially began in April of 1918 and was supposed to last a year. Many states, however, extended Children's Year programs for at least another year because they had their own funding either from donations or from state expenditures or had been forced by the Spanish flu epidemic to suspend activities and programs.[27] During Children's Year, the coalition led by the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau focused its efforts in the states on three drives for children's health and education. First, the program focused on a nationwide weighing and measuring test of all American children under five years of age in order to establish a national normalcy range. A recreation drive sought to encourage children to go out of doors and get exercise and to help promote the building of public parks and recreational areas. Finally, a back-to-school drive aimed to help encourage children between the ages of 12 to 18 to return to school or stay in school during the war despite the attraction of higher wages spiked by national mobilization.[28] Eleven million American women joined the effort: they ran successful clinics where babies and toddlers were weighed, provided pregnant women and new mothers with medical care and parenting and health education, organized clean-up campaigns to remove garbage from parks and lobbied for more municipal, county, and

---

[26] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 97.

[27] In its Final Report, the Child Conservation Section of the Council of National Defense, which superseded the Child Welfare subcommittee of the Woman's Committee when it was reorganized in 1919, recognized that the Spanish influenza had halted many of the Children's Year programs in the states and several of the states returned to Children's Year programming once the initial threat of the flu passed in the late fall of 1919 and into early 1920. See ""Final Report from Child Conservation Section,". Page 8. For more on the Spanish Flu in the United States, see: John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004).

[28] While the Woman's Committee developed a program to combat the lax enforcement of child labor laws or to support the creation of new child labor laws in the state legislatures, the topic of child labor reform will be addressed in the next chapter in the context of changing labor laws for women and children during World War I and alternative forms of family supportive laws such as Mother's Pensions and federal food assistance laws.

state parks while developing public performances in parks for children, and developed new educational and vocational programs to keep older children in school and out of the labor force.[29] In each of the three drives of Children's Year, the Children's Bureau relied upon the organizational experiences of women in communities and on the national Woman's Committee's abilities to lead women untrained in social work and health care to create, implement, and organize national programs for children's health and well-being. Essential to the development of the states' programs for the Children's Year were abilities to activate local and state level reform groups. In Illinois, the Chicago branch of the Woman's Committee not only worked with the national reform groups partnered with the Children's Bureau and with the Woman's Committee, but also created a coalition of reform groups within the city. Historian Virginia Boynton observed that the coalition organized by women in Chicago for Children's Year included assistance from the "city's Infant Welfare Society, Department of Health, the Visiting Nurses Association, local Parent-Teacher Organizations, city branches of the Federation of Day Nurseries, and the Settlement Association of Chicago, among others."[30] By working with national and community reform groups, local branches such as in Chicago gained the experiences of women who understood the need for both community volunteers as well as those who had training in social work research. As one influential member of the Children's Bureau commented, by "allying itself with the Woman's Committee, the Children's Bureau gained the use of an organization with a wider grasp and reach than any ever before" and combined together "two groups always mutually dependent—trained government investigators

[29] "Final Report from Child Conservation Section of the Field Division of the U.S. Council of National Defense, October 1, 1918—July1, 1919."

[30] Boynton, "Girls, We Must Enlist!," 30.

sobered by the discipline of regular research work, and enthusiastic volunteers as rich in eager earnestness as they are apt to be poor in experience" to collaborate on providing health care and educational help to families with children.[31]

Local branches of the state divisions maintained different interests in the three programs of the Children's Year. For some communities, child labor issues remained the primary concern; in other neighborhoods, the need for safe play areas and organized child recreational programs drew women into participating in Children's Year; and, in other localities, the need for health care superseded all other Children's Year programs. While state division chairmen and community leaders advanced all three programs of the Children's Year, much of the variance in the adoption and adherence to the Children's Year programs stemmed from the regional locations and funding abilities of the thousands of communities that participated with the national directives of the Woman's Committee. Children's Bureau director Julia Lathrop also stressed the importance of local control over Children's Year programs. Lathrop wrote to the co-chairman of the Child Welfare subcommittee of the Woman's Committee in November of 1917 to stress that "the decision as to what is locally useful must be made finally by local people, but the Child Welfare Section of the Woman's Committee should at once undertake a vigorous correspondence with the State Divisions of the Woman's Committee, and endeavor either by correspondence or by personal visits and lectures to aid when requested in outlining State programs."[32] The ability of local leaders in the Woman's Committee to work directly with trained social workers and researchers from the Children's Bureau not only helped to create a

[31] Peixotto, "The Children's Year and the Woman's Committee," 257-258.

[32] Julia C. Lathrop, Children's Bureau, to Mrs. Josiah Cowles, Chairman Child Welfare Section, Woman's Committee, Nov. 27, 1917. R.G. 62, Box 464, Folder "113 Labor Department of Children's Bureau" WCCND Collection.

national focus on children's health and wellness but tailored that focus to meet the needs of women and children within their communities. The direct assistance of the Children's Bureau also supplied the state division directors of the Woman's Committee with a plan for political action within their states that helped to protect children and also helped formulate a national political platform to demand federal legislation for children and families. Women, both affiliated and unaffiliated with reform movements, linked their involvement in Children's Year to the war effort through patriotic rhetoric but they also sought to better their own cities and communities through legislative action.[33] The Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau attempted to create a national program that had broad applicability to nearly all communities in the United States. Lathrop wrote in 1917 in preparation of Children's Year that it was "needless to point out that it is impossible to offer in detail programs of child welfare work applicable or available for the entire country. No two States have precisely the same needs…we are therefore preparing some general material…as a brief wartime program. At the same time we are securing such State programs as are now available with a view to incorporating whatever material is of common application."[34] Through focusing on the needs of their communities and neighborhoods, women thrust the public debate on health care and children's needs during the war from the state legislatures onto the national level where the calls for children's health demanded clear federal legislation.

Prior to the official start of Children's Year in 1918, the state Councils of Defense and state divisions of the Woman's Committee undertook child welfare activities but the various

[33] Boynton, "Girls, We Must Enlist!," 27.

[34] Julia C. Lathrop, Children's Bureau, to Mrs. Josiah Cowles, Chairman of Child Welfare Section, Woman's Committee. Nov. 27, 1917.

(and oftentimes gender-based) funding apparatus that the states employed to conduct child welfare programs and activities allowed each state to determine who was responsible for child welfare and how funds should be spent.[35] Since the Woman's Committee's state divisions received their funding from combinations of private donations and state-appropriated funds, the financial responsibility for conducting child welfare programs as home-front defense created burdens on already strapped budgets. As leaders in the state divisions sought financial help from donors for child welfare programs, they relied on the national Committee to justify child welfare as needed for home-front defense. In January 1918 as ideas for Children's Year began to take shape, George Porter of the State Councils Section of the Council of National Defense reminded the Woman's Committee that because Children's Year programming was "somewhat on the border line," it must primarily "help win the war." The Council, he stated, hand to approve any recommendations "before going out."[36] The insistence of the Council of National Defense to authorize or deny the Children's Year programs as a form of home-front defense created questions of authority between the national Woman's Committee and Council of National Defense.

While the two branches of the Council of National Defense worked to incorporate children's welfare into programs "To Help Win the War," the national Woman's Committee kept track of the programs for child welfare already developing in subcommittees in the state divisions. By the beginning of 1918 the Woman's Committee tracked three general themes in child welfare that the state divisions were advocating and incorporated them into the plans for

[35] See chapter two of this dissertation for more specific information on the funding for state Councils of Defense and for state divisions of the Woman's Committee.

[36] Memorandum to Miss Pope, State Councils Section Woman's Committee, from Mr. George F. Porter of the Council of National Defense State Councils Section. January 10, 1918. R.G. 62, Box 910, Folder "Child Welfare." WCCND Collection.

Children's Year. The Woman's Committee found that "the child welfare activities undertaken by State Councils of Defense and the State Divisions of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense fall roughly into three groups: 1) General child welfare measures. 2) Child welfare in education including the maintenance of existing school standards and the modifications of school curricula to meet war conditions. 3) Child welfare in industry including the maintenance of existing labor standards and cooperation in the enforcement of the Federal Child Labor Law."[37] The Woman's Committee, however, quickly realized that it was not to retain primary control over the Children's Year programs in the states; rather, the Council of National Defense's State Councils Section demanded oversight of Children's Year programming and formed a new combined committee of representatives from the Woman's Committee, the Council of National Defense, boards of health and boards of education.[38] In January 1918, as the state divisions already were underway with child welfare work, members of this new committee met to decide whom to include in national child welfare work during the war under the auspices of the Council of National Defense. Of the committee's thirteen members four had direct responsibilities in the national Woman's Committee, two members from the Children's Bureau, and one from a reform group partnered with the Committee. The remaining six members of the Child Conservation Section included pediatricians, obstetricians, and one statistician.[39] This new thirteen member Child Conservation Section of the Council of National Defense drew seven of its members from the primary partners in child welfare work during the

[37] "Child Welfare Activities Undertaken by State Councils." Department of Information, Section on Cooperation with the States. Nov. 20, 1917. 7pgs. R.G. 62, Box 910, Folder "Child Welfare" WCCND Collection.

[38] "National Child Welfare Program." No author. 6pgs. January 18, 1918. R.G. 62, Box 910, Folder "Child Welfare." WCCND Collection.

[39] Julia Lathrop, Untitled report on Child Welfare Activities and Plans. January 10, 1918. 6pgs. R.G. 62, Box 910, Folder "Child Welfare." WCCND Collection.

war, the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau, and with the advice and help of the other six members who had much experience with children's and women's health care, recognized five areas to concentrate on reforming: official birth registrations to track how many children were born in each state, prenatal care to ensure the health and well-being of mothers and unborn children, obstetrical care to ensure healthy deliveries of newborns and healthy mothers, infant care to assist mothers in maintaining healthy newborns or to help mothers who had babies with birth or other defects, and safeguarding the milk supply in order to avoid deaths from unpasteurized or tainted milk.[40] Many of these recommendations were supported and advocated by the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau prior to the reorganization of child welfare work by the Council of National Defense and with the cooperation of the Council of National Defense, the coalition of the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau received greater recognition and authority for its child welfare work.

In the final report of the Child Conservation Section of the Field Division of the U.S. Council of National Defense,[41] Dr. Jessica Peixotto and Ina J.N. Perkins as chairwomen of the section, reported that thirty-five various educational pamphlets and bulletins concerning the three drives of Children's Year were written and 10,077,212 printed during the roughly eighteen months that the nation's women focused on children's needs as a wartime effort. Of

[40] Ibid.

[41] In October of 1918, the Child Welfare Department of the Woman's Committee was folded into a new section of the Council of National Defense that consisted of both men and women chairmen. The new section was called the Child Conservation Section of the Field Division of the U.S Council of National Defense and served "the function…to transmit to the Child Welfare Departments of the several State Divisions of the Woman's Committee, programs for the betterment of child life which have been adopted by the government…to supervise the State Child Welfare Departments in carrying out such program and to stimulate their activities. [And] the major part of the work…has been related to the execution of the…'Children's Year Program', which was prepared by the Children's Bureau in collaboration with the Child Welfare Department of the Woman's Committee."(1) "Final Report from Child Conservation Section."

these, 9,204,746 were mailed and distributed to individual women through the Woman's Committee's local branches and state divisions.[42] This effort concentrated on educating American women on the needs of children and healthy child-rearing practices, including the need for ongoing health check-ups and nutrition for babies and toddlers under five years of age. These pamphlets sought to educate women on what to feed their children, what to avoid in children's diets, how to dress their children, the need for safe play areas and outdoor exercise to promote health, and the effects of malnutrition and parenting ignorance, children's labor issues and the resulting disabilities and health concerns related to laboring children, and the need for protective legislation for families with children. As the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau quickly realized, one of the problems with assessing children's health and disease prevention remained the absence of an established baseline metric for the average American child of good health. Military physicians increasingly blamed malnutrition and educational neglect as the primary reasons for failure rates and added emphasis to the calls for advancing children's health care and educational needs for the nation's future safety.[43]

The Children's Bureau, in collaboration with the Woman's Committee, sought to rectify the situation. It prepared a monumental program of organizing the nation's women to weigh and measure every American child to establish a national baseline and to follow up with parents of children with tests that indicated malnutrition or other physical or mental defects. In the roughly eighteen months that the state divisions of the Committee distributed weighing and measuring test cards and waited for their return to state division headquarters, neighborhoods and communities across the United States rallied women to conduct these tests

[42] "Final Report from Child Conservation Section," 28-29.
[43] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 97; Davis, "Welfare, Reform & World War I," 524-5.

and assist with children's health in direct ways. Women responded in large and small communities and neighborhoods throughout the United States to weigh and measure babies, offer health education information, organize obstetrical care for pregnant women and new mothers, assist families who had children diagnosed as underweight or height, and establish local health clinics and services.

During the Progressive era, city health departments and physicians grew alarmed when statistics concerning health care and infant and maternal death rates revealed shockingly high numbers in comparison to other countries. A professional conference at Yale University in 1909 on the Prevention of Infant Mortality set a precedent for the Children's Bureau to investigate these concerns in 1913.[44] The findings of the Children's Bureau's studies of infant and maternal deaths revealed alarming rates and provided the impetus for Director Julia Lathrop, also a member of the executive board of the Woman's Committee, to formulate a plan in 1917 to reduce the death rates for women, infants, and children through a federal program supported by the public and included it in her *Annual Report* to Congress.[45] According to historian Walter Trattner, Lathrop suggested plans for the federal government to "offer grants-in-aid, on a matching basis, to those states promising to establish facilities and services such as public health nursing and education, outpatient clinics, hospitals, better inspection of maternity homes…[and] in accordance with specifications established by the Children's Bureau."[46] While Lathrop attempted to convince the U.S. Congress to enact health legislation for women, infants and children, she implemented her plans for health care reforms through the coalition with the

[44] Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 181-182.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

Woman's Committee. In an untitled report written from the Woman's Committee on January 10, 1918, plans for the implementation of infant health care and maternity health care initiatives provided details for organizing and staffing such clinics and programs. The report's plans for infant health care and maternal care reveal insistence on professional assistance to "all needy cases" by staffing clinics with physicians who directed staffs of "specially trained Public Health nurses…[or] in case a sufficient number of nurses can not be provided supplementary work under their direction can be done by lay-assistants."[47] The report also suggested that new mothers who lacked assistance at home in the weeks following childbirth have provided for them household helpers such as maids and nannies.[48] In Indiana, according to the state division director, one county formed a special club to help new mothers with chores such as laundry and cooking and also made clothing for the newborns and helped develop "a sort of community responsibility to see to it that no home shall suffer for lack of care at the time of the birth of a baby."[49] During Children's Year, such assistance as household helpers and health clinic staff oftentimes was met through local areas' women volunteers. Lay-assistants, or women who volunteered to help in clinics, did so through the auspices of their communities' branches of the Woman's Committee. Lay-assistants joined with physicians and public health nurses who oftentimes retained connections made in state and municipal boards of health and in their university training with the women who operated local branches, state divisions, and the groups and organizations affiliated with the Woman's Committee and

[47] Julia Lathrop, Untitled report on child welfare activities and plans. January 10, 1918. 6pgs. RG 62, Box 910, Folder "Child Welfare." 3-4. WCCND Collection.

[48] Julia Lathrop, Untitled report on child welfare activities and plans. January 10, 1918. 2-3.

[49] "Activities of the Child Welfare Department."

Children's Bureau.[50] The combination of assistance and advice from medical professionals in the state divisions, active and engaged volunteers working in their communities, and the national coalition headed by the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau propelled health care and children's educational needs to the forefront of home defense concerns during 1918 and in the post-war era of the 1920s.

During Children's Year, the importance of local neighborhood and community volunteers supported the statistical research demands of the Children's Bureau in their quest to understand the health needs of various villages, towns, cities, and rural communities throughout the United States in order to enact appropriate and rational legislation, either on the local, state, or federal levels or some combination of all levels of government. In 1918, at the peak of Children's Year, every state and territory participated in organizing and conducting weighing and measuring tests of children less than five years of age to take place in their many various communities and cities across the country.[51] The efforts of volunteers helped the Illinois state division capture the lead in the numbers of towns and cities it assisted in organizing weighing and measuring tests through innovative ideas as in Chicago where the Child Welfare subcommittee of the city branch of the Woman's Committee became "convinced that the

[50] Information contained within two reports from the Children's Bureau and Woman's Committee coalition revealed that a number of obstetricians, gynecologists, and surgeons as well as university-trained nurses, especially those who had served on boards of health, joined the coalition for health care for women and children. See: Julia Lathrop, Untitled report on child welfare activities and plans. January 10, 1918. 6pgs. RG 62, Box 910, Folder "Child Welfare"; "Final Report from Child Conservation Section," WCCND Collection.

[51] All forty-seven states and the territories of Alaska, Hawaii, and the Philippines participated in Children's Year activities arranged by the state and territorial divisions of the Woman's Committee. Only the state of Pennsylvania chose not to work directly with the Children's Bureau and Woman's Committee program as Pennsylvania already had begun child welfare (educational and health care) through their war preparedness program that began prior to the national Children's Year of 1918. While Pennsylvania ran its own child welfare programs in cooperation with the State Council of Defense in partnership with the Child Hygiene Division of the State Board of Health, the state division of the Woman's Committee did not have any information on maternal and fetal health programs by the issuing of the report: "Activities of the Child Welfare Department."

weighing and measuring test and the accompanying instruction concerning the care of children should be done at centres [sic] where people naturally congregated" and found that "this idea worked out most successfully" in reaching women and children.[52] Historian Virginia Boynton, in her study of the Chicago branch of the Woman's Committee, found that Chicago women who volunteered with the Illinois Woman's Committee city branch "embraced every opportunity to educate Chicagoans about children's health care. They displayed educational child welfare exhibits at locations around Chicago, including stores, parks, government buildings, and settlement houses, and put up posters in downtown stores, Western Union stations, hotels, elevated train stations, banks, and libraries."[53] While the Chicago branch of the Woman's Committee received much recognition for their publicity programs and active use of popular local venues to conduct weighing and measuring tests, other locales throughout the United States also employed such ideas to their own weighing and measuring tests. In Texas, the women of the state division had printed appointment cards to give women as a reminder to bring their children into clinics, schools, and doctors' offices to be weighed and measured. The appointment cards also reminded women that it was their patriotic duty to have their children weighed and measured by printing it on the cards.[54] The mere participation in having a child weighed and measured assured women they were doing their patriotic bit, and volunteering for service in health clinics and with the Woman's Committee also reinforced women's growing sense of patriotic service during wartime. Banned from joining the military as soldiers or sailors by tradition and law, women desired the abilities to express patriotism and home-front support

[52] "Activities of the Child Welfare Department."
[53] Boynton, "Girls, We Must Enlist!," 30.
[54] "Activities of the Child Welfare Department."

during the war and the Children's Year coalition led by the Woman's Committee and Children's Bureau provided American women with a culturally acceptable form of patriotic service to render to the federal government.

Reaching women for the weighing and measuring tests remained problematic and cities such as Chicago and New York employed innovative plans to use the popularity of movies and lantern slides to teach the patriotic importance of the weighing and measuring test. Chicago also embraced immigrant families into the growing sense of patriotic service through the national weighing and measuring tests. In Chicago, women who volunteered with the city's Woman's Committee branch prepared fifty sets of lantern slides[55] to "advertise the weighing and measuring test and birth registration on movie screens" and made certain that the slides "were made in foreign languages" that allowed immigrant women to not only bring their children to be weighed and measured, but also to receive instructions from Woman's Committee volunteers on raising children in a manner acceptable to Americans.[56] New York City also engaged children in spreading the appeal to the weighing and measuring test by encouraging school children to create patriotically-themed posters that were "placed on bill boards in schools, public libraries, institutions…throughout the city and by distribution of hand dodgers."[57] In New York City, elementary-aged children also were encouraged through the use of individualized school banners that were assigned to each student. School teachers and administrators encouraged school children by giving out "blue stars [to be] pasted on the banners of each child whose little brothers and sisters joined the health army by being weighed

[55] Lantern slides were an early form of a slideshow presentation of photographs where slides were created by printing a negative onto a glass plate and using a lantern to illuminate the enlarged image on the plate onto a white screen.

[56] "Activities of the Child Welfare Department."

[57] Ibid.

and measured for the Government [and] special buttons were given to all children who were weighed and examined."[58] In New York City, the special attention given to school children helped promote the weighing and measuring test while also emphasizing that children as well as adults could express their patriotic support of the war even though they may be incapable of serving in the military. During the few months of the summer of 1918 alone, New York City's sixty new health clinics that operated two to three days a week weighed and measured over 40,000 children through the use of patriotic rhetoric and civic engagement programs that attracted women and children to the war effort at home.[59]

In many smaller communities the weighing and measuring test results revealed more accurately the availability of low-cost or free health care for women and children and the importance of providing such services. In Wisconsin, where small, rural farming communities represented the majority of the state's population, results indicated that many of those communities suffered from malnutrition "due generally to lack of milk in the diet" and complicated statistical research through "laxness in birth registration" that revealed ignorance of how many infants were born in the state, and "the fact that mothers in rural communities have practically no prenatal and many times no obstetrical care."[60] For Wisconsinites, the revelation of such poor health care for women and children prompted the Woman's Committee's state division director to express gratitude for the weighing and measuring tests. Wisconsin's state division director commented that following the test results, "The people have come to realize that safeguarding the health of children is not alone a personal or family

[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

concern; it is an obligation laid upon the state and the community."[61] In meeting this obligation, American women who volunteered with the Woman's Committee were asserting their abilities as citizens to meet the needs of their communities and participate in the war through improving the health of children who may one day be soldiers.

In Iowa, similar results from weighing and measuring tests revealed that although practically fifty percent of the children below age five were weighed and measured and the tests "came on at a time when the interest was at its height and desire to render patriotic service was at a maximum," the state divisions did not have enough funding to administer the tests or to assist communities in preparing and conducting the tests themselves.[62] The majority of the state and territorial divisions of the Woman's Committee lacked funding to carry out the tests and women who volunteered with the Woman's Committee to assist with these tests and the state division directors, community branch directors, and proponents of nationalized health care who organized the venues and publicity for the tests conducted fundraising drives to help offset the costs associated with weighing and measuring over four million American children. In Georgia, when members of the state's Woman's Committee realized they lacked the financial resources to conduct tests, they rallied to enlist financial support from local women and businesses.[63] In Indiana, physicians and nurses donated time and materials to the value of over $80,000 while in Massachusetts, local branches of the Woman's Committee raised over $85,000 to support the salaries and expenses of sixty public health nurses, thirty-three

[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.

children's health centers, and eight prenatal health clinics.[64] States such as Michigan, Connecticut, and North Dakota provided "auto corps" to drive families without transportation to clinics to weigh and measure babies and retrofitted trains as "Baby-Saving Specials" and "Children's Year Specials" that conducting weighing and measuring tests at train depots, thereby bringing their services to families rather than bringing families to clinics.[65]

Not only were the weighing and measuring tests important to understanding the health and wellness of children across the nation, but the tests also helped to indicate the health and well-being of children in specific locations and helped to draw the attention of local women to the needs of children within their own communities. During 1918, the Children's Bureau printed 6,791,000 weighing and measuring test cards and with the assistance of the state divisions of the Woman's Committee, and distributed 6,391,000 cards to localities in their efforts to reach American women for children's needs.[66] By the end of Children's Year in 1919, women in communities and neighborhoods throughout the United States accomplished the opening of new health care centers that specialized in women's and children's health needs, worked to pass state and municipal laws providing for public health nurses, opened milk stations where mothers received at-cost or even free pasteurized cows' milk for their children, opened and staffed dental clinics and new playgrounds, promoted and funded stay-in-school scholarships for older children, and lobbied to promote and record official birth registrations to tally the number of children born in the United States. Only through the work of volunteers distributing the test cards and conducting the millions of weighing and measuring tests did the states

[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] "Final Report from Child Conservation Section," 28-29.

understand the importance of providing low-cost health care to families. Women also remained the primary force in not only advancing educational and vocational programs but in opening ninety-two new playgrounds in twenty-two states and provided fifteen stay-in-school and nursing school scholarships to students in eight states and established new courses in child care for high school students in eighteen states.[67]

Progressive reform accomplishments in education and health care not only helped advance the needs of children and health care in general for American women but also represent the abilities of women to operate such broad programs on a tight budget. Lacking any federal expenditures and receiving little to no monies from state legislatures, women involved with the Children's Year programs developed by the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau operated programs, tests, and registrations on cobbled, shoestring budgets. State division chairmen reported the total expenditures for the operating of these programs at only $215,367 in funding, with state, county, and city funds accounting for roughly half of the total.[68] The remainder of the budget came from private donations, special programs, and promotional sales by local branches of the Woman's Committee. The Woman's Committee alone, through its federal status, managed to solicit just a meager $10,954 to advance Children's Year.[69] Only through the active participation of women in their communities did the efforts of Children's Year come to fruition and only as the war demanded their healthiest sons

[67] "Final Report from Child Conservation Section," 16-17.

[68] Records indicate that of the $62,463 contributed by county and city governments, $41,625 of that amount was attributable to New York State and New York City appropriations for New York City and state county branches of the Woman's Committee to use in Children's Year programs. "Final Report from Child Conservation Section," 26-27.

[69] Ibid.

did the states and the national government regard children's health and well-being as an important investment in the country's safety.

While funding remained an ongoing challenge and frustration to many of the state division chairmen in the Woman's Committee, the local chairmen and the state division chairmen concentrated the bulk of work done for Children's Year on the prevention of maternal and infant mortality. By concentrating on maternal and infant mortality prevention, as one report on the Children's Year emphasized, "all State Committees will look upon it as the all-important, and indeed, fundamental beginning of the nation's concerted effort to provide in advance for the terrible wastage incurred by this war."[70] By supporting maternal and infant health care, the Woman's Committee did not expect to replace a lost generation, but hoped instead to provide an upcoming healthy population to look to in times of future crises.

At the start of Children's Year and before the reorganization of national efforts about children into the Child Conservation Section of the Field Division of the U.S. Council of National Defense in the fall of 1918, the first and second drives of Children's Year were managed and arranged in coordination with the Children's Bureau. Only the back-to-school drive and nursing educational drives were managed by the Child Conservation Section, of which over half of its thirteen members had direct affiliations with the Woman's Committee, the Children's Bureau, or both federal branches. The first two drives of Children's Year concentrated primarily on maternal, fetal, and early childhood health care and on recreation and the building of playgrounds and safe play areas for children. The first program included the weighing and measuring tests, better birth registrations, and the creation of health clinics for follow-up care

[70] Lathrop, Untitled report on child welfare activities and plans. January 10, 1918.

in cases where a weighing and measuring test indicated needed support for a specific child or family. The weighing and measuring tests were considered the primary program to initiate all other Children's Year activities as state leaders and politicians needed to gain an understanding of the health of children in their communities.[71] And, while "the facts thus obtained furnished data for establishing new standards of height and weight for the American child," even more importantly, the weighing and measuring tests helped to ascertain facts that "enabled communities and states to intelligently go about the establishment of permanent measures for the improvement of the health of children."[72] In a summary of the accomplishments of Children's Year, the Child Conservation Section, a subcommittee of the Woman's Committee responsible for reporting on the accomplishments and failures of Children's Year, listed that women assisted in promoting and recording official birth registrations in thirty-four states that had either no official birth registration apparatus or spotty reporting of new births which complicated the understanding of the country's regionalized growth and health needs; thirty-six states opened two hundred twenty-nine new health centers mostly devoted to women's and children's health care along with thirty-four states that hired and paid for four hundred twenty-one new public health nurses; established fifteen new pasteurized "safe" milk stations in thirteen states to prevent childhood deaths from infected milk supplies; and, opened thirty-five new dental clinics in seven states.[73] Many of these improvements stemmed from the research done on the weighing and measuring tests. According to historian J. Stanley Lemons, in 1918 the Children's Bureau with the assistance of the Woman's Committee conducted research into

[71] "Final Report from Child Conservation Section,". 1-2.
[72] Ibid.
[73] "Final Report from Child Conservation Section," 16-17.

maternal and infant mortality rates and found that the United States had unusually high rates compared with European countries and linked the rates to the level of poverty experienced by families that had undergone these devastating early deaths.[74] According to Lemons, the research done on maternal and infant mortality revealed that "for families earning less than $450 annually, one baby in six died within the first year; for the income range of $650-850 annually, the rate was one in ten; and for those earning about $1,250 annually, the rate was one in sixteen."[75] The links between poverty and early, and oftentimes preventable, mortality revealed that the need for ongoing public health care remained a crucial component in establishing a healthy generation after the war.

The infant and maternal mortality rates also helped draw attention to areas where death rates were highest and these were oftentimes in the overcrowded cities. While reformers long understood that poverty-ridden areas of the cities experienced higher rates of disease and death, they also understood that the cities "could provide through superior organization a better defense against disease and more effective means for its eradication than could rural areas."[76] Yet, although city-dwellers had the resources and abilities to establish public health centers and medical facilities, they seldom opened free or low-cost health clinics for growing urban populations. Many cities throughout the nineteenth century established boards of health to investigate epidemic diseases and offer plans to keep infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis or cholera, to a controllable level, yet these boards of health were called on only in moments of crisis and rarely met or planned for general public health needs. Howard Kramer

[74] J. Stanley Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s," *Journal of American History* Vol. 55, No. 4, 776.

[75] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 776.

[76] Howard D. Kramer, "The Beginnings of the Public Health Movement in the United States," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* Vol. 21 (January 1, 1947); 352.

investigated the rise of urban public health movements in the late nineteenth century United States and found that the majority of governing bodies in larger metropolitan areas, especially in the Northern states, created boards of health and also began establishing sanitary regulations to control the spread of diseases.[77] Kramer argues that urban boards of health provided the basis for public health in America as early as the 1820s, but only as temporary measures to meet demands for disease prevention and oftentimes "were composed of the mayor and several aldermen, and only convened when an epidemic knocked at the gates of the city." These early boards rarely included physicians or other medical professionals; they "frequently did more harm than good" by establishing frantic regulations on cities unprepared to enforce sanitary laws. Remarkably, "seldom if ever did these makeshift boards of health pay any attention to the living conditions responsible for endemic diseases." By the 1840s, however, "the slum districts of the larger cities had become so objectionable that civic-minded citizens could no longer blindly disregard the social evil in their midst" and began to advocate for health insurance and sanitation laws to reduce the impact of infectious diseases on the populace within their cities.[78] Yet, even as the cities began to establish some sense of protocols for controlling infectious diseases, the impact of diseases on the poor remained a secondary concern as cities attempted to control the spread of disease into other, and usually more affluent, neighborhoods. The health care needs of poorer families and of rural communities did not receive nearly as much attention as urban areas and by the beginning of the war, reformers looked to state and federal governments to establish minimum levels of health care services to impoverished neighborhoods and rural communities.

[77] Kramer, "The Beginnings of the Public Health Movement in the United States," 355.
[78] Ibid.

The Woman's Committee bolstered the ongoing efforts to reform health care in the United States by working with its partnered groups to establish health care centers, understand the health care needs of rural communities as well as urban neighborhoods, and to safeguard families from the destructive financial and physical consequences of poor health. During the war, the coalition of the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee assisted both urban neighborhoods and rural communities in meeting their health care needs by allowing groups partnered with the coalition to develop initiatives in their respective states and localities that also fell within the parameters of national wartime goals. Through the use of patriotic rhetoric and appeals to safeguard the upcoming generation of Americans, the coalition developed a national plan for health care that served a significant population which previously had been ignored. Within the states, local branches of the Woman's Committee operated in towns, farming communities, and large cities and made use of the growing numbers of reformers attracted to health care issues as well as the organizations already operating in communities and neighborhoods.

Many of the health care reformers gained footholds in municipal politics during the Progressive era and the coalition for women's and children's health in particular drew increasing support from women within and outside of Progressive reform movements. In cities such as Chicago, public health reform remained an ongoing concern of women reformers, but the municipal boards of health seldom paid attention to women who continuously called for public health assistance to needy families in times when infectious diseases were at a

minimum.[79] As the Woman's Committee partnered with the Children' Bureau, health care reformers established a powerful support system whereby the over seventy national women's groups partnered with the Woman's Committee assisted localities across the United States in assessing their individual health care issues and needs and advancing legislative efforts to meet the needs of communities. Groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Girl Scouts of America, settlement houses, and even the Boy Scouts of America as well as state branches of the Children's Bureau and local Woman's Committee branches joined efforts in weighing and measuring the nation's children to determine the health of their communities. In the territory of Hawaii, when the local branches of the Woman's Committee had not yet completed formation or registration, the weighing and measuring test of children under five years of age was conducted by volunteers from the memberships of the Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, students from a seminary and girls' school, the communities' Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and the staff of a settlement house in Honolulu.[80] These groups with members drawn from the communities understood that to meet the needs of the population on the Hawaiian islands, special attention and help had to be offered to the Japanese and Chinese residents. The local coalition that developed in Hawaii measured and weighed all children brought to schools and health clinics and gained an understanding of the burdens families with children found below

[79] Boynton, "Girls, We Must Enlist!," 27; Maureen Flanagan also discusses the progression of women's reform agendas in Progressive era Chicago and found that the city's reform groups oftentimes insisted upon municipal government to provide funding for initiatives to assist needy families and to promote better public health through open-air parks and building codes to limit the spread of germs and odors. See: Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[80] "Activities of the Child Welfare Department."

weight and height standards faced in feeding and caring for their children.[81] As many Japanese and Chinese families registered their children for kindergarten, the Hawaiian coalition found "a large majority below standard" and recommended that the territory's board of health "furnish free to the child of indigent parents suitable lunches" and hire more school nurses to investigate and assist destitute families.[82]

While Hawaii's coalitions organized and assisted families from mostly Japanese and Chinese ethnic backgrounds, in the heartland of the Great Plains, women who maintained memberships in local branches of the Kansas State General Federation of Women's Clubs partnered with the Kansas Women's Christian Temperance Union to conduct weighing and measuring tests as the Kansas state division of the Woman's Committee lacked any expenditures from state, county, or township funds to administer the tests.[83] The national coalition of the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau relied on local branches of national reform groups such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the Women's Christian Temperance Union to undertake programs when and where state divisions and local branches of the Woman's Committee could not. In Kansas, participants weighed and measured 13,365 children less than five years of age and physicians examined 5,615 children found underweight or underheight by the tests.[84]

In states where the Woman's Committee had not established a state division or the coalition established by the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee did not have any strong local partner groups to rely upon, the Children's Bureau offered direct assistance and, as

[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.

in the state of Louisiana, ran Children's Year programs under its own authority. In Louisiana, Children's Bureau investigators and social workers conducted weighing and measuring tests as the state provided no funding and parishes committed no monies either. Even with Children's Year programs conducted by federal social workers employed by the Children's Bureau, they were only able to assist the city of New Orleans during Children's Year.[85] Yet, Louisiana remained one of only two states without a functional state division of the Woman's Committee or a coalition partner group to conduct Children's Year programs, especially the weighing and measuring tests.[86] Every state and territory of the United States participated in Children's Year weighing and measuring tests through the Woman's Committee divisions or through partnered groups and nearly every state sought legislative changes on the state or federal levels to support health care initiatives. The demands for public health care clinics for expectant mothers and young children, the hiring of public health nurses whose salaries were paid by state and local budgets, and the weighing and measuring tests of children under the age of five years were significant accomplishments for the first of the three drives of Children's Year.

The Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau established three interrelated drives for Children's Year in 1918 and while the first drive demanded and received the most attention and efforts of volunteers under the auspices of the Woman's Committee, the second drive for children's recreation remained a locally-driven initiative as several state division

[85] Ibid.

[86] The other state that had no state division of the Woman's Committee and that largely did not participate in the Children's Year programs was Pennsylvania; however, Pennsylvania established a separate and independent war board that also ran similar programs to the Woman's Committee plans and programs but since Pennsylvania's war board remained unaffiliated with the Council of National Defense, its wartime program directors did not communicate with the Woman's Committee nor the Council of National Defense in federal wartime programs. For more information, see Pennsylvania section of: "Activities of the Child Welfare Department."

directors reported at the end of Children's Year that the support for the recreation drive was heavily supported in some areas and communities while in other areas and communities, recreational programs received little support. Many of the state division directors stressed that the influenza epidemic that started in the late summer and fall of 1918 halted recreational programs as several states and communities demanded that the closing of public venues and heavily discouraged public meetings and gatherings during the epidemic to slow the spread of the potentially deadly illness.[87]

Even in several of the states that had to halt or postpone their weighing and measuring tests due to the spread of the highly contagious Spanish influenza in the summer and fall of 1918 when Children's Year was at its peak, women remained committed to the tests in particular and vowed to restart them once the epidemic passed.[88] The weighing and measuring tests remained an important piece of statistical information for reformers to advance health care legislation and nearly every state that participated in the program used the information gleaned from communities' results to develop legislative proposals for community health needs, especially for children and women.

One area that concerned both the U.S. Food Administration and the Children's Bureau was the distribution and availability of milk. Since the Woman's Committee was partnered with both federal agencies, it joined with health reformers who wanted to regulate the safety of milk supplies. During the early months of the U.S. entry into the war, the U.S. Food Administration under the charge of director Herbert Hoover started requisitioning milk supplies for overseas shipments and for American soldiers. The U.S. Food Administration, in its commandeering of

[87] "Activities of the Child Welfare Department."
[88] Ibid.

the public milk supply, encountered opposition from the federal Children's Bureau director Julia Lathrop.[89] Lathrop, as director of the Children's Bureau and as a chairman in the Woman's Committee, worked with Hoover to release enough milk supplies to the American public to avoid public panic. Yet, reformers believed that the nutritional content provided in milk was needed by American children even though oftentimes milk was tainted with bacteria that caused a plethora of diseases, some lethal. Even after over twenty years since the advent of bacteriology in the 1890s allowed scientists and physicians to understand how many diseases spread, very few states and no federal regulations required the removal of harmful bacteria from milk supplies through the process of pasteurization.[90] Historian Stuart Galishoff studied milk safety and other public health laws passed in Newark, New Jersey from 1895 to 1918 and found that milk supplies in that city helped garner Newark a reputation for being the "nation's unhealthiest city."[91] Milk supplies were tainted the moment a farmer milked a cow, according to Galishoff, as "bacteria in unchilled milk will multiply a thousand—or a millionfold in a matter of hours, [and] compounding the danger, it is nearly impossible to keep milk sterile…stable dust, filthy hands, dirty pails, and unwashed bottles are just a few of the vehicles" that contaminated Progressive era milk supplies in not just Newark but in nearly every American city

[89] Letter from Daniel A. Reed, U.S. Food Administration, to Mrs. Ira Couch Wood, Woman's Committee. October 15, 1917. RG 62, Box 460, Folder "61 Food Administration—Oct., 1917-Dec., 1917." 1 page. WCCND Collection.

[90] Stuart Galishoff, *Safeguarding the Public Health: Newark, 1895-1918* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), 16.

[91] Galishoff, *Safeguarding the Public Health,* 3. Newark, New Jersey, according to Galishoff, maintained a death rate of 27.4 per 1,000 persons while the death rates of the nation's twenty-eight largest cities during the same time period "had a cumulative death rate of only 21.6 per 1,000 persons." (3) Galishoff also found that Newark "ranked among the top ten in typhoid fever, malaria, tuberculosis, and diphtheria and croup (laryngitis)" of American cities in the Progressive era and "led the nation in deaths from scarlet fever, in infant mortality, and in deaths of children under five years of age."(3) The majority of the deaths of young children and the numbers of deaths attributable to scarlet fever, tuberculosis, laryngitis and septic sore throat, and diphtheria were all related to tainted milk supplies.

and town.[92] Inspired by reformers in Rochester, New York who opened milk depots or stations in 1897 that offered free or low-priced milk to impoverished mothers with young children that was certified as safe by city government inspectors and also pasteurized to prevent spoilage, reform organizations largely led by women in Newark and forty-three other American cities opened milk depots and stations to serve the needs of poorer families by 1910.[93] And, in New York City, the Health Department converted milk depots into comprehensive infant welfare centers and started providing a "program of health services for its burgeoning immigrant clientele."[94] Part of the programs developed in the milk depots included instructions translated into many different languages attached to the bottles on "the keeping of milk and the care of infants in hot weather."[95] Instructions in a variety of languages, free and low-priced certified and pasteurized milk, and comprehensive health clinics for infants helped to reduce the infant mortality rate and proved its success as a test group of infants were tracked by Newark's new pediatric hospital for nine years and resulted in a mortality rate "between 2.7 and 6 percent, substantially below the city figure" of children who did not receive free certified milk.[96]

As gains in public health increased with free or low-priced milk supplies prior to the American entrance into the Great War, wartime demands jeopardized not just milk supplies in general, but especially certified and pasteurized milk. The war also increased the public's fear concerning increases in the cost of milk as the U.S. Food Administration attempted to commandeer the milk supply for soldiers and overseas shipment to Allied countries. In January 1918, a report on plans for the milk supply issued by the Woman's Committee to its state

[92] Galishoff, *Safeguarding the Public Health,* 82, 107.
[93] Galishoff, *Safeguarding the Public Health,* 109; 111.
[94] Galishoff, *Safeguarding the Public Health,* 111.
[95] Galishoff, *Safeguarding the Public Health,* 109-110.
[96] Ibid.

divisions emphasized that "the present increase in the price of milk, due to war conditions, brings with it grave danger to babies and young children. Milk is an absolute essential in the diet of young children, and babies who are artificially fed. It is also necessary in the diet of nursing mothers. We, therefore, urge that steps be taken to make available a safe and sufficient supply for all children."[97] The state divisions, in response to calls for action from the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau, alerted women to the burgeoning crisis in the milk supply, rallied the local branches of the Woman's Committee and demanded not only a sufficient quantity of safe milk for families with young children, but also opened more new milk depots and stations during the war. In the New York state division, which kept records, financing, and activities separate from the independently operated City of New York Woman's Committee, new milk stations opened in 1918 where mothers and families obtained "Grade A milk…sold at a figure below the usual market price to individual consumers."[98] In states such as New York, existing regulations on milk set by the state board of health allowed public milk stations to flourish but in states with no legislation regulating the safety of milk supplies, the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau cooperated in educational campaigns to increase public awareness of the potential contamination in uninspected milk and the resulting medical issues and complications caused by bacteria within the tainted milk supply.[99] In Florida, the state had no regulations for supervising the safety of milk and dairy products and local towns and cities developed their own supervisory boards that exercised a broad swath of supervision and inspection but also relied on "popular education…[to] raise the standard for

[97] Lathrop, Untitled report on child welfare activities and plans. January 10, 1918.
[98] "Activities of the Child Welfare Department."
[99] Ibid.

handling and marketing milk."[100] In Delaware, the local branches of the Woman's Committee assisted in the distribution of 365,000 quarts of certified safe milk at five public health and milk station clinics operating in the larger towns and cities in 1918 and obtained over 7,000 appointments for follow-up care for infants with milk-related health issues or infants from poorer families that needed public assistance in obtaining safe milk.[101]

Public milk stations and depots provided an essential service to the communities they served. The Woman's Committee's coalition with the Children's Bureau helped to increase public awareness of the dangers of tainted milk through educational programs as well as direct assistance through research to "to stir State and local action" to address these health concerns.[102] According to historian J. Stanley Lemons, the Children's Bureau conducted studies in the 1910s which revealed that 80 percent of expectant mothers in the United States received no advice or trained care including information on the dangers of tainted milk.[103] The coalition of the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau not only informed women and the general public on tainted milk supplies but also increasingly demanded local, state, and federal efforts for prenatal care and infancy health checkups for all American families. In January of 1918, the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau explained that their demands for publicly-supported health care clinics for women and children stemmed from the high rates of infant and maternal mortality based on research done in 1913 by the Children's Bureau in nine

---

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 8-9; Lucy Calhoun, "Benefits for all Mothers of Babies Urged: Child Welfare Meeting Discusses Plans for New Generation," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (May 20,1919), 11; "Recreation Work to Save Children: National Campaign for Saving Infants is very broad in its Scope," *Detroit Free Press* (January 29, 1918), 4; Dr. W. A. Evans, "Health is Wealth: How to Keep Well, Baby Week," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (June 2, 1918), D4.

[103] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 777.

cities throughout the United States.[104] According to historian Dorothy Bradbury, "the studies…showed that the greatest proportion of infant deaths resulted from remedial conditions existing before birth," including sanitary conditions, family income levels, and the ability of mothers to be at home during the crucial first year of children's lives.[105] During Children's Year in 1918, the Woman's Committee asserted that all pregnant women "should have prenatal care and instruction [and] where such work is already being done, it should be expanded to meet the needs of the community; where no prenatal work is being done, it should be established" and insisted that prenatal care "should be done under the direction of physicians with the assistance of Public Health Nurses" who were recommended to visit and advise expectant mothers in their homes and encouraged physicians and hospitals to reserve hospital beds for the "special needs of this period."[106] Such tremendous demands for public support of maternity and infancy health care met with such acceptance throughout the nation that during Children's Year in 1918 communities that partnered with the coalition of the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee managed to establish hundreds of new clinics and authorized the hiring of hundreds of new public health nurses to staff clinics and public schools.[107]

While the first two drives directly affected children's, the third drive for educational and vocational training remained a significant step to achieving the Progressive, rational goal of teaching children how to be good citizens while also creating curriculum and specific classes

---

[104] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 6. "Activities of the Child Welfare Department."

[105] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 7-8.

[106] Lathrop, Untitled report on child welfare activities and plans. January 10, 1918.

[107] "The First Children's Year," *New York Times* (April 6, 1919), 77; "President O.K.'s 'Children's Year' to Save Lives," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (April 4, 1918), 9; "Thousands Help in Child Campaign: Year of Intense Activity for Infant Welfare Conducted by 17,000 Women's Committees," *New York Times* (June 8, 1919), 24.

that taught older children valuable skills that directly influenced their working lives. The women who coordinated the first two drives understood that secondary schools competed with the temptations of the workplace and demanded labor reforms and protective legislation as the basis for the third drive so that children under the age of sixteen were not tempted to abandon their education early for the factories where few legal protections applied.[108] The Back-to-School Drive of the Children's Year focused on creating programs reflective of the progressive Smith-Lever Act passed by Congress and signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson in 1914. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created a cooperative relationship between the federal government and state governments by funding the demonstrations and extension services of the state agricultural colleges and offered much leverage to state governments for the implementation of classes, curricula, and agents to teach and conduct public demonstrations and other extension work for the public.[109] The Smith-Lever Act was later extended and expanded a few years later in 1917 by the Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Act and provided for new and ongoing instruction in agricultural and vocational training, public policy and governmental developments, and home economics and tied these programs to the public education system and state-supported agricultural colleges just in time for the United States Department of Agriculture to assist in developing wartime food production and preservation

[108] During Children's Year in 1918-1919, demands for the enforcement of the Child Labor Act passed in Congress in 1918 and later declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1924. Issues concerning child labor will be discussed in chapter five of the dissertation in relation to labor laws for women and children during the war.

[109] For more on the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, see: "Green and Growing: The History of Home Demonstration and 4-H Youth Development in North Carolina" by North Carolina State University. https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/specialcollections/greenngrowing/essay_smith_lever.html. "The Smith-Lever Act of 1914" by The National Archives. http://www.archivesfoundation.org/documents/smith-lever-act-1914/

education.[110] Although these two laws provided farmers' sons and daughters' post-secondary, specialized training, vocational training for high school-aged boys and girls who most likely would become industrial and clerical workers remained problematic and heavily influenced by local concerns and lacked direct federal-state cooperation or funding. The third drive of Children's Year meant to rectify the lack of vocational training through federal efforts in partnership with state governments and by relinquishing primary control of programs to local branches of the Committee. The national Committee developed the drives and initial planning for Children's Year, but left the implementation of those drives to local branches that understood their communities' educational needs better.

The women who coordinated the third drive of Children's Year also addressed issues of child labor by attempting to report on conditions of child laborers during the war. Child labor restrictions passed into law with the Keating-Owen Act of 1916 and although the provisions of the new child labor law would not take effect for a year after its passing, the Woman's Committee started investigating children's employment during wartime as a home defense measure.[111] As the first federal child labor law, the Keating-Owens Act allowed the federal government to enforce restrictions on child labor through its powers to regulate interstate commerce. The Act prohibited businesses and factories that conducted interstate commerce

[110] Walter Nugent, *A Short History of Progressivism* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 102, 107; "The Smith-Lever Act of 1914" by The National Archives, http://www.archivesfoundation.org/documents/smith-lever-act-1914/; "Green and Growing: The History of Home Demonstration and 4-H Youth Development in North Carolina" by North Carolina State University, https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/specialcollections/greenngrowing/essay_smith_lever.html .

[111] For more on the Keating-Owens Act and its repeal by the Supreme Court in 1918, see: "Keating-Owens Child Labor Act of 1916," National Archives. http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=59; An act to prevent interstate commerce in the products of child labor, and for other purposes, September 1, 1916; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789-; General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives and Records Administration.

from employing children under the age of 14 and set the number of hours and some conditions for child workers aged 14-18.[112] When the United States Supreme Court declared the Keating-Owens Act an overreach of federal powers over interstate commerce, a new federal law in December of 1918 attempted to restrict the use of child laborers by levying higher taxes upon businesses that employed children.[113] The volunteers who assisted their communities' Woman's Committee in the third drive of Children's Year, the Back-to-School Drive, were able to report violations from their communities' local businesses and factories to the Woman's Committee and, through its coalition with the Children's Bureau that was housed in the federal Department of Labor, have punitive measures started. Wages from children helped many working-poor households survive and during the war, wages increased in nearly every industry as wartime demands helped to stimulate industrial and agricultural production. While the passage of federal laws helped to provide some initial national prohibition of child labor, the demands of wartime production, the lack of adult male laborers due to the war or to national strikes by labor unions, and the questionable constitutionality of the laws discouraged many businesses and industries from respecting and adhering to the restrictions on child labor during the war.

Although eliminating or reducing child labor was earmarked as essential by Progressive reformers during the late 1800s, significant efforts for the enforcement of child labor laws were lax during the war and child labor reformers in particular worried that the war might deflate the movement to end child labor. Encouraging attendance at school and providing government

[112] "Keating-Owens Child Labor Act of 1916," National Archives and Records Administration. http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=59.

[113] This section of the *Revenue Act of 1919* was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1922. See: "Keating-Owens Child Labor Act of 1916," National Archives and Records Administration. http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=59.

support for vocational education seemed to be a reasonable and effective alternative to reliance on child labor. During 1918, the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau supported a stay-in-school program as a drive of Children's Year and worked at attaching education to children's long-term preparation towards appropriate and engaged American citizenship. The war, while complicating the process of ending child labor practices through legislation, also offered opportunities to advance vocational training in secondary schools. As one report highlighted, an "effect of our entrance into the war…as reported by the State Councils is the change in curriculum…[through] the introduction of more vocational courses…[that] may help to solve some of our approaching industrial problems and serve to reestablish in school the boy who has known during the summer wage earning freedom."[114] Belief that citizenship could be learned through schooling helped to reinforce the Progressive notion of adapting school curricula and pedagogy to keep especially older children in school longer could only result in better and more prepared future adult citizens and temptations to enter wage-earning positions early in life only damaged the long-term effectiveness of citizenship-centered education and vocational training.

Vocational training programs in schools also directly benefitted adults during the war when states such as Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Kentucky modified their public school curricula for public education through a range of courses from war geography to automobile and wireless repair classes for women as well as courses in first aid, nursing, stenography, horticulture, and a host of others.[115] As one member of the national subcommittee for the Back-to-School drive wrote, "These measures may mean an opening

[114] "Tendencies in Education, Child Welfare, and Social Services,"." 7-8.
[115] "Tendencies in Education, Child Welfare, and Social Services," 10.

wedge toward bringing our schools within reach of all the people."[116] Schools, for these progressive reformers, provided communities and neighborhoods with activities and programs that not only supported vocational training, wartime policies, and new skills, but also provided avenues to teach citizenship and community involvement to all Americans. Though the war demanded an increase in labor from Americans of all ages, the Back-to-School Drive of Children's Year placed importance on education as a central component to children's health and wellness. While wartime factories offered higher wages for child workers, agricultural demands drove many older children out of school and into the fields as laborers. In Arizona, California, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland alone hundreds of thousands of children left schools early to work in the fields and farms as agricultural laborers.[117] The rate of children leaving school early for farm work exasperated one Woman's Committee member to the point of claiming that state laws designed to allow children out of school early for farm work essentially led to the possibility "for children under 14 years of age to be out of school indefinitely."[118] And, even though the Woman's Committee urged branches within the states to monitor the rates of truancy resulting from the high levels of wartime work available to children and to interview families of working children to ascertain what may bring the child back to school, the rates of childhood workers increased throughout Children's Year and helped to undermine national laws concerning child labor.[119]

The Back-to-School Drive, the Recreation Drive, and the Weighing and Measuring test of Children's Year organized through the coalition led by the Children's Bureau and the Woman's

[116] Ibid.
[117] "Tendencies in Education, Child Welfare, and Social Services," 4-5.
[118] Ibid.
[119] "Final Report from Child Conservation Section."

Committee ultimately succeeded in propelling children's health and education to the forefront of wartime home defense and demanded the enforcement of laws already enacted as well as new laws from states and the federal government to address the health and educational needs of children. Most significant in these efforts were the results of the weighing and measuring tests conducted on over six and a half million American children who received medical care from licensed physicians and nurses.[120] The results of the test created a rallying call among women who supported and lobbied for the opening of over 143 new health centers, new milk stations and depots in ten states that did not have them before the war, and the hiring of hundreds of public health nurses in 24 states.[121] With eleven million women volunteers organized by the Children's Bureau and Woman's Committee coalition and activated into sociopolitical reform through voluntarism, the Children's Year drives in 1918 helped promote state and federal laws for the protection of children and women's health.[122]

The women's sociopolitical bloc that grew during 1918 through the Children's Year drives also implemented reforms, passed new legislation, and sometimes helped enforce existing laws for children's and women's health within the states. While the weighing and measuring test tabulation cards came from the federal Children's Bureau to the states through Woman's Committee state division directors, statistics and reports on conditions in the states, as well birth registration records, were initiated by state division directors who forwarded collected information to the Children's Bureau through the Woman's Committee.[123] State division directors organized conferences for women within their states to attend, drafted lists

[120] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion,* 99.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Short but detailed state and territorial reports on Children's Year drives are available. See: "Activities of the Child Welfare Department," and, "Tendencies in Education, Child Welfare, and Social Services."

of essential state reforms and local actions to achieve the goals of Children's Year as they applied to their states, implemented publicly-supported school lunches in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Education, drafted state-supported public health bills that benefitted children and women, demanded college training for nurses and hospital beds for ill maternity patients, implemented new sanitation laws in localities throughout the states, and managed to create a few children's mental health clinics.[124]

In January 1918, as the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau joined to form a coalition in support of women's and children's health and wellness and plot a national agenda for the implementation of Children's Year, one unidentified member of the coalition stressed the impact of war on children as she wrote on the first page of a program:

> In war times the breaking up of the restriction of normal family life, the economic pressure brought to bear on women and children, to enter wage earning occupations and the danger of a reduction in population due to war casualties, make the protection of the child in the community more essential than in times of peace. The experience of all warring nations has shown that the life of the nation in wartime, from the broad point of view depends upon the life and well-being of its new citizens, the babies and children. The longer the United States is involved in this war, the more apparent will become the necessity for safeguarding its child life.[125]

During Children's Year, the lives of the nation's children received support from the eleven million women who volunteered their time and energies to advocate and work for reform. Yet, an essential part of those reform efforts included broad understandings of

---

[124] Two reports concerning the states appear in the national Woman's Committee records at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, and a fifty-year history written by Children's Bureau executive Dorothy Edith Bradbury summarizes the work of Children's Year on the national and state levels. While individual states and even specific localities within the states differed to varying degrees on the number of reforms enacted, bills proposed, and legislation passed, each state did report some political action for reforms at the state level. See: Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children*, 14-15; "Activities of the Child Welfare Department," and "Tendencies in Education, Child Welfare, and Social Services."

[125] No author, "National Child Welfare Program." January 18, 1918. RG 62, Box 910, Folder "Child Welfare." WCCND Collection.

children's health as a nation and as individual states. The work of those volunteer women who assisted Children's Year drives in numerous ways helped develop significant statistical platforms for reforms and implemented programs while collecting data that improved the lives of children and women. The work of women who volunteered also aided the long term plans of the Children's Bureau for its push for nationalized health care for women and children. In her history of the first fifty years of the Children's Bureau, Director of the Division of Reports Dorothy Bradbury summarized the importance of the coalition during Children's Year by stressing the essential information that the women who volunteered in their communities through the Woman's Committee worked for zealously. Bradbury credits Children's Year volunteers for "getting investigations underway and reporting on the social health…gathering and analyzing data on infant and maternal mortality and morbidity. Collecting data on the growth of infants and young children. Developing a plan for action that culminated in 1921 in a grant-in-aid program for maternity and infancy."[126] Beginning in 1915, before the United States entered the war, and resuming following the armistice in November of 1918, the Children's Bureau and its supporters testified before the U.S. Congress on the need for nationalized health care, especially for women and children and the work of the wartime volunteers aided in efforts for nationalized health care initiatives.

The war and its exposure of Americans' poor health propelled the nation's women into action under the auspices of the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee during Children's Year in 1918. The three drives of Children's Year were designed in cooperation with the coalition the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau directed and both of these

[126] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 6.

federal agencies had specific roles in their efforts to save the lives of women and children and promote health, well-being, and education in American youths. The Children's Bureau, while designed to collect information and propose solutions for problems related to the nation's children, lacked the ability to organize women into their work. The Woman's Committee provided an opportunity for the Children's Bureau to advance social welfare on behalf of children but also connect to women in their communities and neighborhoods across the country for efforts such as the passage of state laws designed to benefit children and women's health. The activism of women in their communities during the weighing and measuring tests and the subsequent home visits by doctors and nurses and follow-up care for those children identified as needing extra help proved successful as between 1915 to 1921, "infant mortality fell substantially" by twenty-four percent and the "largest decrease took place among infants 1-12 months old."[127]

Women's wartime activism in the area of health care also forced states and eventually the federal government to provide publicly-supported infant and maternal health care through the passage of new laws. Women not only staffed the clinics, weighed and measured infants, and rallied their neighbors, but they also contributed to the passage of legislation that was directed by women's sociopolitical involvement in their communities and in their country's needs. Horrified by the appalling lack of physically and mentally fit men to serve in the country's military during the Great War, women seized the opportunity provided through the Woman's Committee to link the national crisis to the need for publicly-supported health care and threatened the use of sociopolitical power with the vote. The women who volunteered

[127] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 8.

with the Woman's Committee to take on the tasks the Children's Bureau so desperately needed done, felt they were providing for home defense by ensuring the nation's survival through the investment in maternal and infant health care. After the armistice in November 1918 and the ratification of the suffrage amendment in 1920, women remembered their wartime service in health care and groups such as the Women's Joint Congressional Committee were able to capitalize on women's involvement in these wartime health efforts to obtain political might and force the passage of the first national health care bill, the Sheppard-Towner Act, in 1921.

Chapter Four: "Working Women, Wartime Labor: The Battle Over Working Women's Reforms"

If equal pay irrespective of sex is to be paid, there can be no doubt that it will be a great gain for the women to replace men…But even this advance should not obscure the need for constant scrutiny of the wages. To allow women to undercut men would be a danger to the standard of living of the whole nation. What more unpatriotic service could the women perform than to depress the wage scale against the return of men coming from service at the front at the close of the war to re-enter industry?[1]

Samuel Gompers, Chairman of the Labor Committee for the Council of National Defense, 1918.

When the American Federation of Labor President and Chairman of the Labor Committee for the Council of National Defense Samuel Gompers approved of the plan of action for a Women In Industry subcommittee, he expressed concerns about working women's desires for equal pay and the continuation of hiring and wage privileges to male workers that feminists' targeted as needed reforms. Gompers and many others involved in unionization, wartime industries, and women's working rights held various and shifting opinions regarding feminists' claims for working women's equal pay and maternalist reformers' demands for protection of women workers from abusive labor policies and state-paid pensions so that working women

[1] Samuel Gompers, Chairman of the Labor Committee of the Council of National Defense, "Women Replacing Men: A Wartime Development," Plan of action submitted by the Secretary of the Committee on Women In Industry of the Council of National Defense, RG 62, Box 405, Folder "110." WCCND Collection.

who chose to could stay home with their children.[2] As the Woman's Committee's national chairmen met for the first time in Washington, DC to arrange for the ways in which they could organize the nation's women into a wartime volunteer force for home defense, the drive to reform the American workplace for women and children's benefit created a problematic coalition with the Labor Committee for the Council of National Defense led by Samuel Gompers. Within a few months following the Woman's Committee's official beginning in the spring of 1917, the chairmen realized that calls for workers to fill industrial and support positions in wartime industries demanded the Committee's attention as war-related industrial burdens combined with the increased numbers of men leaving factory positions for the war enticed children to leave school early for the workforce and brought countless women into war-related hourly and piecework jobs. Faced with an increasingly difficult partnership with Gompers' Labor Committee, the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee concentrated efforts on collecting research on working women's lives in wartime industries contracted with the federal government. The research conducted by the Woman's Committee revealed the conditions under which women worked and the wages paid to women directly involved in wartime industries. The information collected by the Woman's Committee helped advance both feminist and maternalist work reforms and also revealed growing divides among reformers on how best to advocate for working women.

[2] During the Great War federal monetary aid programs were established for families of enlisted men serving in Europe; other aid programs that supplied cash or goods to whom? were supported by state and federal budgets. For more on federal pensions and aid programs during World War I by one of the reformers who helped pass pensions, see: Grace Abbot, "Recent Trends in Mothers' Aid," *Social Service Review* 8, no.2 (June 1934):191-210, URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/30010222; Wendy Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference Versus Equality Policy Debate: Postsuffrage Feminism, Citizenship, and the Quest for a Feminist Welfare State," *Signs* 17, no.2 (Winter 1992). 329–62; Kriste Lindenmeyer, *A Right to Childhood: The U.S. Children's Bureau and Child Welfare, 1912-1946* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 108-138.

The divisiveness of legislative efforts aimed at reforming the workplace for women and children workers revealed a growing rejection of certain reform efforts within the workplace as many women differed on whether protective legislation or legislation based on equal standing regardless of gender should be the focus of women's workplace reforms.[3] By the closing of the last few state divisions of the Woman's Committee in the early 1920s, demands for equality in the workplace undercut protective legislation efforts and splintered women's wartime coalitions into camps that increasingly argued with each other. As social reform activism grew among American women during the war through the coalitions established by the Woman's Committee, women outside of the traditionally white, middle-class and middle-aged women's reform movement differed in their particular desires for legislative reforms.[4] Social reformers welcomed especially working-class women, but the inclusion of these women complicated the reforms the Committee sought to engage women workers in as communities worried over the future of the American family while many working women demanded equal pay. The Woman's Committee's problems with forming a cooperative coalition with Samuel Gompers and the Labor Committee of the Council of National Defense, the unions, women's reform groups, and the Department of Labor threatened the Committee's abilities to form a clear agenda and

[3] Davis, "Welfare, Reform and World War I," 521; Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Debate," 329-330.

[4] Susan Ware and Kristi Andersen, in separate works, have examined the predominance of white, middle-class, middle-aged women in the time period from the winning of suffrage in 1919 to the reform movements of the New Deal in the 1930s. Ware and Andersen both found that reform movements were mostly made up of white, middle-class and middle-aged women members and although black women's reform movements were also significant, they oftentimes were excluded in the coalitions that white women reformers formed during World War I. See: Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal.* (Harvard Univ. Press: Cambridge, MA, 1981). Kristi Andersen, *After Suffrage: Women In Partisan and Electoral Politics Before the New Deal.* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996). For more on African American women reformers of the Progressive Era, see: Victoria W. Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit.* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2001). Penelope Noble Brownell, "The Women's Committees of the First World War: Women in Government, 1917-1919." PhD diss., Brown University, 2002. ProQuest UMI 3050865.

program of work that ultimately prevented integrating working-class women into social welfare activism for the workplace under the Woman's Committee's leadership.

As war already demanded an increased number of workers in 1917, Woman's Committee chairman Ida Tarbell called for a subcommittee on Women in Industry to be formed under the auspices of the Woman's Committee and to partner in coalition with women's labor and trade unions to safeguard working women and to eliminate child labor. Tarbell recommended that Agnes Nestor of the Women's Trade Union League and International Glove Makers Union oversee the Women in Industry subcommittee. Tarbell, who had written path-breaking investigative articles on the labor and workplaces abuses of Standard Oil and other companies, had little direct experience in initiating workplace reforms. While Tarbell had gained much popularity among reformers and the working class for her investigative journalism and lectures to the public, she remained an investigative journalist much more than an active reformer in American workplaces.[5] Tarbell's recommendation of appointing Agnes Nestor as chairmen of the Women in Industry subcommittee of the Woman's Committee allowed for a greater degree of activism on behalf of workplace reforms and state legislative efforts as well as assisted in creating bonds to women's unions that attracted more women to sociopolitical reforms.[6] The addition of Nestor and other women active in labor unions into the Woman's

[5] Tarbell admitted to her lack of understanding the demands of working women, especially those women who joined unions. While her articles and books exposed the abuses of workers by large corporations, Tarbell herself did not work in factories and had received advanced degrees in science and journalism. In Tarbell's autobiography she often mentioned her country-wide lectures tours and other speaking events but did not mention any involvement in the labor union movement or in women's workplace reforms. Tarbell only wrote about her organizing experiences as a volunteer and reformer during World War I while serving on the Woman's Committee and while she underscored in her autobiography that she understood the calls for workplace reforms and unionization, she was not an organizer for such reforms. See: For more on Tarbell's early experiences in a small Pennsylvania working-class town, educational advancements, and career, see: Ida M. Tarbell, *All in the Day's Work: An Autobiography,* introduction by Robert C. Kochersberger, Jr. (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2003).

[6] Mary Chamberlain, "Women and War Work," *The Survey,* (May 19, 1917), 153-154.

Committee increased the abilities of the Committee to incorporate working-class women into social welfare activism for protective labor legislation in the states and federal governments.[7] The creation of the coalition, however, also remained a difficult task as the interests of the Council of National Defense significantly complicated efforts by the Woman's Committee to include working women into women's social welfare activism with the power to influence state and federal laws.

During the Progressive era, according to historians, women's presence in the workplace radically increased in number and in the positions women held as workers.[8] While women's presence increased in jobs traditionally held by men, women were finding it much more financially difficult to remain at home with their children and by the end of the 19th century, employment surged in jobs traditionally held by women, such as secretaries and store clerks as well.[9] American working-class and women's historian Kathy Peiss also found that women employed in factory positions dramatically rose during the Progressive era as factories increased production through the standardization of tasks; women rapidly filled that demand and gained greater financial and social freedoms through working.[10] During the Great War the rise of women in the workplace, and the social and financial advantages that accompanied that

---

[7] Besides Nestor, Sara A. Conboy of an unidentified textile workers' union and Melinda Scott of the New York Women's Trade Union League were appointed to the Women In Industry subcommittee of the Woman's Committee. Other chairmen were Mrs. Borden [Florence] Harriman for the Council of National Defense, Marie Obernauer of the Bureau of Information and Registration of the League for National Service (another wartime voluntary agency active among younger women aged 14-21), Grace Abbott of the Children's Bureau who had been appointed in 1916 to uphold the Child Labor Law that passed Congress but was in the process of being challenged in the Supreme Court in 1917. Other chairmen include Pauline Goldmark of the National Consumers' League, Mrs. V. Everitt Macy and Mrs. George Vanderbilt. See: Mary Chamberlain, "Women and War Work," 153.

[8] Andersen, *After Suffrage.* Maurine Weiner Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States* (Cornell University Press, 1990), 3-45.

[9] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 4. Andersen noted that in 1870, paid women secretaries numbered about 10,000 but by 1900, women in secretarial positions rose to 239,000.

[10] Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York.* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple Univ. Press, 1986); Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work,* 3-15.

rise, sponsored reform activism and the creation of specialized branches of government to address women's particular concerns and abuses in the workplace. According to social historian Allen F. Davis, during the war women "entered hundreds of occupations formerly barred to them, and their presence led to the establishment of the Women in Industry Service and ultimately to the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor."[11] The establishment of these federal branches devoted to women in working-class jobs indicate the problems experienced early in the war as the Woman's Committee and the Council of National Defense squared off to determine which group would shape labor demands and working-class families' livelihood during the war, which ultimately forced the federal government to ameliorate the situation through the establishment of federal branches of government that specifically addressed women as workers. The Woman's Committee's Women In Industry subcommittee and the Gompers' Women In Industry subcommittee for the Labor Committee paved the way for the creation of the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor. The research on women's wartime work done by the Woman's Committee offered the Women's Bureau important information to support reforms for working women.

Davis found that the war also invigorated struggles for workplace reforms that benefitted all workers through the establishment of "the National War Labor Policies Board, the United States Employment Service and other wartime agencies [that] recognized collective bargaining, the minimum wage and the eight-hour day, improved conditions of work and reduced the exploitation of women and children in industry."[12] New federal branches to address workers' rights and wartime needs advanced the workplace reform agenda, but their

[11] Davis, "Welfare, Reform and World War I," 525.
[12] Davis, "Welfare, Reform and World War I," 521.

new authority supplanted efforts of the Women in Industry subcommittee to shape protective legislative efforts for women workers in the states and federal governments.

Robyn Muncy, in her history of the wartime coalition of the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee for children's health and the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act in 1921 mentioned that the coalition for child welfare was not "the only female policymaking network in the United States. Women also took control of policy regulating female workers…to do so, these female policymakers built an organizational nexus very similar to that of the child welfare dominion."[13] The Woman's Committee efforts to advocate workplace reforms suffered from divisions and internecine struggles that contrasted with the Committee's more successful coalition-building in public health and food administration. The interlocking networks of reformers in the latter reform programs did not form in effective and concrete ways in the case of women's work and protective legislation. Indeed, the coalition built by the Women in Industry subcommittee encountered challenges from both the union movement and the Council of Defense that drove the development of the Women in Industry Service for the federal Department of Labor, a predecessor of the Women's Bureau. The creation of the Women in Industry Service, and ultimately the Women's Bureau, removed the need for the Woman's Committee to remain at the forefront of workplace reform efforts.

In 1917, however, the addition of Agnes Nestor as chairman of the Women in Industry subcommittee to the Woman's Committee helped to forge a stronger alliance between the mostly middle-class, white, women reformers and working-class women. In 1910 and 1911, during the garment workers' strikes for better pay and workplace safety before and following

[13] Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, Xii.

the tragic workplace deaths of over a hundred working-class, immigrant, and young women at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York, middle-class and working-class women formed a tentative partnership for reforms.[14] Yet, even with some preliminary support from national women's groups, they were unable to advance this partnership outside of New York state and a few other larger American cities until the war demanded more women in factory positions and doing piecework jobs.[15] With Agnes Nestor leading the Women in Industry subcommittee, chairmen Ida Tarbell and Anna Howard Shaw hoped to cement a coalition with the Women's Trade Union League and its associate member unions. The Woman's Committee, as an advisory body to the Council of National Defense, was limited in the types of reforms it could advocate and supported workplace reform agendas for women through investigating and conducting sociological studies on workplace abuses of women and children workers that helped advance legislative reforms to support the elimination of child labor, expand mother's aid programs to allow low-income mothers to stay at home with their young children, and provide statistical information on women's wartime wage scales and hours worked. The statistical and sociological studies of women workers employed by manufacturers contracted with the military conducted by the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry established the need for the permanent Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor to monitor women's working conditions and track violations of work laws.

---

[14] Richard A. Greenwald, "The Burning Building at 23 Washington Place: The Triangle Fire, Workers and Reformers in Progressive Era New York," *New York History* 83, no.1 (Winter 2002), 55-91; Leon Stein with Introduction by William Grieder and Foreword by Michael Hirsch, *The Triangle Fire, Centennial Edition* (Cornell University Press, 2001).

[15] Arthur F. McEvoy, "The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911: Social Change, Industrial Accidents, and the Evolution of Common-Sense Causality," *Law and Social Inquiry* 20, no. 2 (Spring, 1995), URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/828955, 621-651.

When President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of War Newton Baker created the Council of National Defense in 1916 to oversee natural resource management, shipping, industrial output, and labor for the potential of an American entry into the war, Wilson appointed labor leader and union activist Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor in charge of managing labor needs and workers' rights.[16] Through his over-twenty year leadership in the American Federation of Labor, Gompers had redirected the AFL into an umbrella group that represented the interests of a variety of trade and craft unions.[17] Gompers advocated a form of business unionism that advanced trade and craft unions more so than unions representing general laborers, including many women.[18] The appointment of Gompers as chairman in charge of the Labor Committee for the Council of National Defense led the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee into a combative and subordinate role that many in the Woman's Committee refused to accept. Just as Nestor joined the Woman's Committee Gompers used his authority to curtail the Woman's Committee's abilities to represent the needs of working women. Concerned over the abilities of women's unions to shape workers' laws through the activism of the Women's Trade Union League affiliate unions, Gompers's AFL already had censured women's voices in the labor movement in the decade before the outbreak of the war by not allowing affiliated women's unions the right to vote

[16] For more information on the creation of the Council of National Defense, see William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam At Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919*. (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1984).

[17] Simeon Larson, *Labor and Foreign Policy: Gompers, the AFL, and the First World War* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Pres, 1974).

[18] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*, 144-146.

during the national meetings of the American Federation of Labor.[19] While the loss of the vote in AFL meetings reduced the abilities of the WTUL and other women's unions to have their demands incorporated into national labor goals, the calls for workplace and labor reforms grew within women's groups concerned with protecting the American family during the Progressive era.[20]

When Nestor joined the Woman's Committee in the late spring of 1917 to chair the Women in Industry subcommittee, she helped pass four essential resolutions for women's wartime work. Journalist Mary Chamberlain summarized these resolutions in May of 1917 in *The Survey*, the banner journal for social reform and social work during the Progressive era. According to Chamberlain, an early morning meeting of the Women in Industry subcommittee passed the following resolutions:

> Resolved, That all organizations and committees willing to give service in upholding standards for women in industry be invited to cooperate with this committee in order to avoid duplication of effort and to make the best possible utilization of the available woman power of the nation;
>
> Resolved, That we reiterate the statement of the Labor Committee of the Council of National Defense, that in the interest of health, output and peace in industry there should be no movement to relax existing labor standards, especially in regard to hours of labor and weekly day of rest;
>
> Resolved, That we view with alarm the increase of employment of married women with young children, and believe that efforts should be made to stem this movement as far as practicable, especially as regards to night work, and that these women should be the last to enter into industry. Since women in their generous impulse to render service are offering to enter industry, therefore be it,
>
> Resolved, That their attention be called to the danger of undercutting existing wage standards and of displacing workers dependent on their own earnings.[21]

---

[19] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform,* 145. Nancy Schrom Dye, "Feminism or Unionism? The New York Women's Trade Union League and the Labor Movement," *Feminist Studies* 3, no.1/2 (Autumn, 1975), URL: http://jstor.org/stable/3518959, 114-116.

[20] Dye, "Feminism or Unionism?," 111-113.

[21] Chamberlain, "Women and War Work," 153-154.

The first two resolutions helped to clarify women's wartime work by encouraging women's unions and reform groups to partner with the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee as the primary group for addressing workplace concerns among women and tried, at least initially, to distance their program for working women from the Council of National Defense's Labor Committee under the leadership of Samuel Gompers while simultaneously offering support for the overarching needs to continue labor standards. The final two resolutions, however, limited women's wartime activism in some manners as the Women in Industry subcommittee embraced notions of women's presence in the workplace as damaging to demands from male workers; namely, that women and children workers tended to be paid much less for the same jobs done by men at a higher wage and, therefore, threatened to either lower wages across industries or lead to the hiring of more lower-wage women and children workers rather than male workers with dependents. The final two resolutions also limited women's abilities to work certain hours and to accept employment if they were the mothers of young children or married.[22] This resolution in particular constrained women's abilities to earn a livelihood of their own and impacted the financial lives of countless American families who became dependent on women's wages during the war. Yet, these resolutions also reflect maternalist reformers' social concerns about women's increased presence in the workplace as a leading factor in the rise of juvenile delinquency and the destruction of the family in general.[23] Some states, such as Oregon, had already begun passing legislation to limit

[22] In the Progressive era, the phrase "young children" usually was used in regards to children less than five years of age.

[23] Jane Addams, Jacob Riis, and many other social workers and journalists during the Progressive era revealed a growing concern about rises in juvenile delinquency and oftentimes mentioned the lack of parental supervision and involvement in children's lives as a primary driver of juvenile delinquency. During the Progressive era, many cities and states revised criminal law codes to address the age of juvenile offenders and underscores the

the hours and times a woman could legally work outside of the home and cited the reasons for such legislation as protection of the home and protection of women's physical health (especially as mothers or potential mothers), both of which greatly concerned reformers and the Woman's Committee in particular.[24] The desire to keep the family and motherhood sacrosanct conflicted with the demands for equal wages from some women workers who insisted that their wages kept their families from financial disasters. Other women workers desired to stay at home with their children and families and supported protective labor legislation that restricted their abilities to work. These two different interpretations by working women and reformers prevented a consensus on what types of reforms to support and affected the Women in Industry subcommittee's abilities to advocate effectively for any reforms besides the elimination of child labor and the most horrendous workplace offenses.

The initial resolutions the Women in Industry subcommittee drafted in 1917, while well-intended, also demanded the attention of Gompers as chairman of the Labor Committee for the Council of National Defense. Gompers's position allowed him to coordinate *all* American labor for the war effort, women included, and also gave Gompers a great deal of power to shape national legislation in favor of workers' demands.[25] During this crucial period of formation for the Women In Industry subcommittee of the Woman's Committee, Gompers's

---

increase in efforts to reform offenders, including public support, living wage demands, and continued education to families so that their financial and social lives improved and crime was reduced. See: Allen F. Davis, introduction to *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, by Jane Addams (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1972). Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1914).

[24] For more on the legal history of the Muller v. Oregon case and the Supreme Court's upholding of the decision, see: Jennifer Friesen and Ronald K.L. Collins, "Looking Back on Muller V. Oregon," *American Bar Association Journal* 69, no. 4 (1983), URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20755425, 472–77.

[25]Peter J. Albert and Grace Palladino, eds. *The Samuel Gompers Papers, Volume 10: The American Federation of Labor and the Great War, 1917-18* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 54-60, 65-67, 81-83, 85, 91, 95, 98-102, 121-122; Frank L. Grubbs, *The Struggle for Labor Loyalty: Gompers, the A.F. of L. and the Pacifists, 1917-1920* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1968).

own representative to the Woman's Committee's Women In Industry subcommittee, in personal correspondence to a colleague, wrote jokingly to ask if she "was privy to hear what the new Labour [*sic*] Dictator is going to do to us all—will our heads all be cut off?"[26] While serving as chairman of the Labor Committee for the Council of National Defense, Gompers continued to address demands coming from men's unions affiliated with the AFL, including initiatives such as the eight-hour day, workman's compensation, unemployment insurance, and a host of other national and state worker-friendly laws that also benefitted women workers.[27] Perhaps feeling challenged in his authority, by the late summer of 1917 and within three months of the birth of the Women in Industry subcommittee of the Woman's Committee, Gompers attempted to absorb the Women in Industry subcommittee into his own Labor Committee under the auspices of the Council of National Defense.[28] Rather than working with the Woman's Committee chairmen in their own subcommittee that had already formed, Gompers challenged the authority of the Woman's Committee to guide labor and workplace policies and laws for women and children workers and thereby began the first salvo in the battle for women's wartime work reforms.

On August 17, 1917, Mrs. Orton H. Clark, chairman of the Women in Industry subcommittee of the Michigan division of the Woman's Committee, along with her colleagues in the other states, received a letter from Samuel Gompers after they had already begun organizing their state divisions for subcommittees on Women in Industry under the authority of

---

[26] Handwritten correspondence from Florence J. Harriman (Mrs. J. Borden Harriman) to Miss Amy Hewes. January 18, 1918. 2 pages. RG 62, Box 399, Folder "Harriman, Mrs. Borden." WCCND Collection.

[27] Davis, "Welfare, Reform and World War I," 521.

[28] Letter from Agnes Nestor to Amy Hewes. March 21, 1918. 1 page. RG 62, Box 400, Folder "Nestor, Miss Agnes." Letter from Amy Hewes to Agnes Nestor. March 23, 1918. 1 page. RG 62, Box 400, Folder "Nestor, Miss Agnes." WCCND Collection.

the Woman's Committee. In the form letter to the state chairmen of the Women in Industry subcommittees, Gompers assured them of his authority to create and direct a Women in Industry subcommittee for the Council of National Defense's Labor Committee. Gompers wrote that "As a member of the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense, I am chairman of the Committee on Labor, including the conservation and welfare of workers. Out of my Committee on Labor, I have created a Committee on Women in Industry, whose duties are largely to conserve and maintain the welfare of the women workers in industry."[29] The absence of a plan to conserve and maintain the welfare of the women workers appeared to the Woman's Committee as a lackluster and patronizing attempt at assuaging women's social activism for working women. Tarbell and Nestor and the division directors in the states worried that Gompers would not advocate for women workers when confronted with pressures from the mostly male unions that were concerned with retaining high wages and preferential hiring statuses of their male workers. The Woman's Committee, however, also remained constrained by the authority Gompers retained in his appointment as Labor Chairman to the Council of National Defense and when the Woman's Committee organized its Women in Industry subcommittee, they failed to confer with Gompers prior to sending out organizational materials to the state divisions' Women in Industry subcommittees. The lack of foresight to meet with Gompers prior to starting the Women in Industry subcommittee also jeopardized greater labor goals that Gompers and member unions of the AFL desperately desired and saw as beneficial to all workers, women as well as men, including the eight-hour day and the federal minimum

[29] Official letter from Samuel Gompers to Mrs. Orton H. Clark, Chairman, Michigan Division of Women in Industry. August 17, 1917. RG 62, Box 403, Folder "Correspondence—Michigan State Committee." WCCND Collection.

wage. The Woman's Committee had little experience in labor issues, even after the introduction of Nestor, whom many on the Committee considered as an outsider to their reform movements[30] and this inexperience created a crisis that hampered the ability of the Woman's Committee to effectively incorporate demands from working-class women into social welfare activism.

As the situation with Gompers swelled to a blistering point, the women who coordinated the states' Women in Industry subcommittees for the national Woman's Committee began to form plans for the adoption of workplace reforms for women and children. In July, Tarbell wrote a personal letter to fellow Woman's Committee chairman, Florence Harriman, that summarized the complications in organizational issues Gompers's new subcommittee created. Tarbell wrote that in their desire to start concentrating on workplace reforms, chairmen of the Woman's Committee and its state branches acted too quickly and without the foresight of seeking Gompers's approval prior to sending out the Women in Industry subcommittee's plan of work.[31] Not only did the Woman's Committee commit to a plan of work without Gompers's consent but it also allowed the state divisions much leverage in developing their own specific labor goals during the war which had the potential of directly interfering with the Council of National Defense's coordination of labor, materials, and shipping for the war effort and may have curtailed national legislative reform efforts for the labor movement.[32] Tarbell, through her connections with members of the federal Labor Department,

[30] Letter from Mary Van Kleeck to Miss Edith Campbell. November 26, 1917. 2 pages. RG 62, Box 402, Folder "Van Kleeck, Miss Mary." WCCND Collection.

[31] Personal letter on Woman's Committee letterhead from Ida M. Tarbell to Mrs. Borden Harriman. Dated August 9, 1917. RG 62, Box 402, Folder "Woman's Committee." 1pg. WCCND Collection.

[32] Personal letter on Woman's Committee letterhead from Ida M. Tarbell to Mrs. Borden Harriman. Dated August 9, 1917. RG 62, Box 402, Folder "Woman's Committee." 1pg. WCCND Collection.

understood that by overstepping their boundaries, the plans for the Women in Industry subcommittee of the Woman's Committee was in jeopardy of being completely shut out of any workplace reform discussions and began working with Gompers's Women in Industry subcommittee to create a collective plan for reforms.[33] Unfortunately, given the experiences of over twenty years of working alongside the AFL and Gompers in particular, many of the women's unions partnered with the Woman's Committee and represented under Nestor's leadership desired a separate and independent Women in Industry service from Gompers and the Council of National Defense. While Gompers created his own Women in Industry subcommittee under the auspices of the Council of National Defense, the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee tried to balance competing interests. It tried, on the one hand, to remain relevant to Gompers while on the other retaining allegiances with both women's unions that desired specific legislative reforms to protect women as *workers* and maternalist reformers who wanted state legislation to protect women as *mothers*. Such fears, however, underscored women's growing concerns over changes to the interpretation of their gender roles and positions in society while also revealing demands for equal pay for working women.

As Gompers created the Council of National Defense's Women in Industry subcommittee, Tarbell attempted to gain an exact understanding of the role of the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee in their relationship with Gompers's subcommittee. Tarbell understood "that we should not have committees in the state actively engaged in working on the problems of women in industry. All we want representatives on our

[33] Ibid.

state committees for is so that when your [Women in Industry subcommittee of the Council of National Defense] or the Labor Department…asks a special service of us…we may have here the proper person to help carry out through our machinery the requested cooperation."[34] Tarbell wanted to replicate the organizational success of the Food Administration collaboration by using the Women in Industry subcommittees in the states as a channel for communicating wartime labor needs. Tarbell continued to claim that the federal Labor Department would put the Women in Industry subcommittee of the Woman's Committee into use "so that we can keep in touch with what is going on and help carry out anything in which the [Labor] Department may think our cooperation will be useful" but also understood that "we are merely a channel helping to make the work devised by the Government Departments more generally understood, and more effectively carried out."[35] While Tarbell seemed to acquiesce to the Council of National Defense and Gompers, she and others also took some umbrage with Gompers's heavy-handed tactics. When Gompers issued demands that all members of the national and state Women in Industry subcommittees sign an oath of allegiance to the government in order to obtain or retain their positions in Women in Industry subcommittees and also required that appointments to Women in Industry subcommittees be approved of in advance by Gompers directly, state chairmen of Women in Industry organized by the Woman's Committee complied with the demands but also reasserted their abilities to create connections to other groups regardless of Gompers's approval of such connections.[36]

---

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] For more information on the Oaths of Allegiance, see personal letter from Mrs. Borden Harriman to Mrs. Orton H. Clark. August 27, 1917. RG 62, Box 403, Folder "Correspondence—Michigan State Committee." Personal letter on Woman's Committee letterhead from Nellie Sawyer Clark (Mrs. Orton H. Clark), Chairman Dept.

While the dispute over the purpose of the subcommittees continued, Gompers and the AFL had in 1917 already started to create some coalition sentiment among the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittees and the state affiliates of the Federation of Labor. In August of 1917, Gompers drafted a letter as Chairman of the Committee on Labor for the Council of National Defense to the Secretary of the Michigan State Federation of Labor concerning cooperation with women representing the interests of women workers and the scope of funding for such work.[37] In the letter Gompers stressed that although the AFL and its state affiliates "fully appreciate the importance and the scope of the problem of woman's work arising out of war conditions…the committee that must deal with this problem will have to secure its own finances for State work" and that "the work of the Committee must be protective as well as constructive; or in other words the thousands of women that will come into war industries must be protected against exploitation and in addition given an opportunity to organize for economic betterment."[38] While Gompers, the AFL, and the state Federations of Labor affiliated with the AFL agreed that women reformers could play a significant role in addressing the challenges faced by women workers and in combating child labor, they offered no tangible financial support to assist women in their reform efforts and seldom offered more than platitudes to women reformers who increasingly demanded protective legislation for women and children workers and wage equity. Gompers, however, also understood that although women reformers targeted policymaking efforts towards laws that they believed

---

Women in Industry, to Samuel Gompers, Chairman Committee on Labor. August 25, 1917. RG 62, Box 403, Folder "Correspondence—Michigan State Committee." WCCND Collection.

[37] Letter from Samuel Gompers, Chairman Committee on Labor of the Council of National Defense to Perry J. Ward, Secretary Michigan State Federation of Labor. August 21, 1917. 2 pages. RG 62, Box 403, Folder "Correspondence—Michigan State Committee." WCCND Collection.

[38] Ibid.

would benefit the American family, such as Mother's Aid pension programs, as well as restrictive legislation such as limiting the times women were allowed to work and banning child labor, such policymaking efforts did not restrict the earning capabilities of men and might have actually helped bolster men's wages.[39] Gompers, therefore, did not seek to restrict or redirect women's reform efforts on behalf of women and children workers during the war but did not support such programs through financial assistance either.

Gompers hoped to attract women who had experience with both the women's reform movement and the union movement to assist in the creation of his Women in Industry subcommittee. Gompers insisted that although the Woman's Committee and its state divisions were to direct the work of women broadly during the war, the specific roles of women as workers were to be directed by himself as Chairman of Labor for the Council of National Defense. In the summer of 1917, though, the Woman's Committee began to organize its state divisions to address concerns about women and children workers. The Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee stressed that although the state divisions were to begin some preliminary organization, they were to wait for further notice before appointing chairmen to their respective subcommittees.[40] Waiting for appointments to be authorized by Gompers and the Council of National Defense not only caused much confusion within the state divisions of the Woman's Committee, but also brought into question the authority of the Woman's Committee to organize women workers for the war effort. In letters from the chairmen of the

[39] Albert and Palladino, eds. *The Samuel Gompers Papers, Volume 10*, 54-60, 81-83, 85, 91, 95, 121-122.

[40] For more on appointments of women to state divisions of the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittees, see: Letter from Samuel Gompers, Chairman Committee on Labor, Council of National Defense, to Perry J. Ward, Secretary Michigan State Federation of Labor. August 21, 1917. 2 pages. Letter from Samuel Gompers, Chairman Committee on Labor, Council of National Defense, to Mrs. Orton H. Clark, Chairman Michigan Division of Department of Women in Industry, Kalamazoo, Michigan. 1 page. RG 62, Box 403, Folder "Correspondence—Michigan State Committee." WCCND Collection.

Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee to women organizing in the states for wartime workers, several complications arose over which Women in Industry had authority to direct women's and children's labor, the roles of the states in provided that labor, and the inclusion of union women on the Woman's Committee.[41] The Woman's Committee was caught in a tangled web of confusion and challenges to legitimate authority. The Woman's Committee also juggled outside interests and wartime labor needs limited the Committee's abilities to form any consensus on workplace reform efforts for women.

As the conflicts over coalition-building with Gompers and the Woman's Committee continued throughout 1917, state divisions' Women in Industry subcommittees began to assess the abilities of working women within their states and strove to maintain social cohesion within communities concerned about the welfare of the family when women began entering wartime industries. Many of the state divisions were quick to organize branches of Women in Industry, yet the state divisions could not form a consensus within their own states on how to best protect women workers. The state divisions remained divided in their support for either a gender-equal wage and hiring program for legislative reform efforts or a maternalist approach to legislative reform that concentrated on identifying women workers separately from men workers and designing labor laws that essentially restricted women's working hours but also provided for specific benefits for women workers such as work benches and women-only

[41] See letters: Samuel Gompers to Michigan Division of the Woman's Committee, "Michigan—List of Women Workers Suggested for Membership on State Committee by Mr. Gompers." 1 page. Undated (circa Summer 1917). RG 62, Box 403, Folder "Correspondence—Michigan State Committee." Letter from Alice H. [Ira Couch] Wood to Miss Mildred Chadsey. July 16, 1917. 1 page. RG 62, Box 402, Folder "Woman's Committee." Letter from Miss Mildred Chadsey to Alice H. [Ira Couch] Wood. July 7, 1917. 1 page. RG 62, Box 402, Folder "Woman's Committee." Telegram with unidentified newspaper clipping attached, from Alice H. Wood to Miss Pauline Goldmark. June 1, 1917. RG 62, Box 402, Folder "Woman's Committee." WCCND Collection.

bathrooms.[42] Since state divisions could not come to a consensus on what sort of reform program to support, they looked to the national Woman's Committee for some guidance. Yet, even as the Woman's Committee wrestled to create a coalition with Gompers to formulate a plan for combining the Women in Industry committees, Gompers began corresponding with the state divisions of the Woman's Committee concerning Women in Industry programs and general plans that appeared to support the maternalist approach to legislative reform. Gompers may not have clarified what sort of reform agenda the Women in Industry subcommittees in the states should follow; letters sent from Mary Van Kleeck to Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, whom President Wilson had appointed to the Federal Industrial Relations Commission and had been a long time leader in the Women's Trade Union League, [43] within weeks of Gompers's letter declared that women in the states should support standards that offered some wage equity with men workers while also supporting protective legislation and urged Harriman to pressure Gompers to advocate for wage equity.[44] Van Kleeck wrote to Gompers that clarification needed to be made in the Women in Industry subcommittee concerning the number of hours women should be allowed to work and whether or not overtime wages would be paid for more than eight-hours of work per day.[45] Van Kleeck desired that the official standards drafted in collaboration with Gompers's Women in Industry and

---

[42] Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Toward Defining Maternalism in U.S. History," *Journal of Women's History* 5, no.2 (Fall, 1993), 110-114; Friesen, Jennifer, and Ronald K.L. Collins, "Looking Back on Muller V. Oregon," 472-477.

[43] Van Kleeck was the head of the Army Ordnance Industrial Service Section in 1917 and was appointed just as she received the Woman's Committee's offer to be the chairman of the Women in Industry subcommittee, which Van Kleeck declined in June of 1917. See: Letter from Mary Van Kleeck to Mrs. J. Borden Harriman. June 6, 1917. 1 page. RG 62, Box 402, Folder "Van Kleeck, Miss Mary" WCCND Collection.; Albert and Palladino, eds. *The Samuel Gompers Papers, Volume 10,* 484.

[44] Albert and Palladino, eds. *The Samuel Gompers Papers, Volume 10,* 482-483.

[45] Letter from Mary Van Kleeck to Miss M. Edith Campbell [Secretary for Gompers's Women in Industry, Council of National Defense]. November 26, 1917. 2 pages. RG 62, Box 402, Folder "Van Kleeck, Miss Mary." WCCND Collection.

representatives of the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry be changed prior to sending those standards to the state divisions. Van Kleeck insisted on clarity by suggesting that Gompers authorize the change to the standards concerning women's hours of work to read " 'In no case shall the hours exceed ten per day. All overtime shall be paid for at the rate of at least time and a half.' [Since] It is not clear whether the committee intended to count work in excess of eight hours overtime, or whether it refers to overtime above ten hours, nullifying the intent of the first part of the sentence."[46] The states demanded clearer program goals such as those that the Woman's Committee made with the Children's Bureau and U.S. Food Administration. The fairly clear program guidelines the Woman's Committee managed to formulate in its coalitions with the Food Administration and the Children's Bureau allowed women reformers to use the war effort to draw women into social welfare activism that supported sociopolitical reforms. The coalition that struggled to develop among the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee and Gompers's Women in Industry, however, threatened to distance working women from joining in social welfare activism coalescing within the Woman's Committee.

As the situation with Gompers continued to complicate the plans of the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee, federal officials in the Department of Labor became increasingly aware of the need for one group to remain in control of women's labor during the war. In the summer of 1918, the federal government authorized the creation of the Women in Industry branch of the Department of Labor. While adding to the confusion of authority by naming its branch the same as the Woman's Committee's subcommittee and as Gompers's subcommittee, it was perhaps a way to combine both subcommittees into a larger,

[46] Ibid.

federal branch of government with more permanent status. This plan of combining subcommittees into one larger body already was underway in the coalition with the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau and allowed for the sharing of chairmen on the boards of directors, which in turn allowed for a more cohesive plan for Children's Year in 1918. The creation of the Labor Department's Women in Industry branch served a similar purpose as it combined the leadership of representatives of the Council of National Defense, Woman's Committee, and other branches of government such as the Army Ordnance Department into a unified group with federal authority to direct women's wartime labor. In August of 1918, a circular sent from the Woman's Committee to the state divisions welcomed the combined leadership of influential members of the Council of National Defense, the AFL, the WTUL, the Woman's Committee, and the military into the Women in Industry Service of the Department of Labor. Addressed to the Women in Industry chairmen of the state divisions of the Woman's Committee, the circular highlighted "the hope expressed…that the Department of Women in Industry of the Woman's Committee might work in close cooperation with the newly created woman's division in the Department of Labor, seems about to be realized."[47] The creation of the Women in Industry Service of the Department of Labor in the late summer of 1918 helped to ameliorate the competition among Gompers's Women in Industry subcommittee of the Council of National Defense and the Women in Industry subcommittee of the Woman's Committee. The Women in Industry Service of the Labor Department, as the official branch of government charged with investigating issues concerning women's labor, remained sensitive to

[47] "Circular No. 211, Department of Women in Industry Circular No. 10 Transmitting a Suggested Program of Work for the State Department of Women in Industry." Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense. 2 pages. August 19, 1918. RG 62, Box 402, Folder "Woman's Committee." 1. WCCND Collection.

the demands of these groups that comprised its directorship. In the late summer of 1918, Mary Van Kleeck, who had been an influential member of the National War Labor Policies Board under the chairmanship of Felix Frankfurter,[48] had been appointed as the director of the Women in Industry Service for the Labor Department and "organized a council to consider questions relating to women in industry."[49] Van Kleeck formed an advisory council that established the first directorship of the Women in Industry Service of the Labor Department and included "women representatives from each of the divisions of the Department of Labor and from the industrial service sections of other departments. It also includes a representative from the Committee on Women in Industry of the Advisory Committee [to the Council of National Defense] and from the Department of Women in Industry of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense."[50] Van Kleeck helped to organize a council to advise the Labor Department and also stressed the importance of using the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee to reach American women for wartime labor needs and to update women leaders in the state divisions of the Woman's Committee on any new policies or procedures that affected working women.[51] The coalition built through the combined leadership of Van Kleeck's Women in Industry Service of the Department of Labor also allowed the Labor Department to quickly organize women workers for specific needs related to the war. Van Kleeck appointed Agnes Nestor to the council. "She will thus be in touch with plans and policies in the making," Van Kleeck hoped, that in turn "will be transmitted to the state

[48] "Labor and the War," *Monthly Labor Review* 7, no.2 (1918). Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor: URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/41827399, 63–105.

[49] "Circular No. 211, Department of Women in Industry Circular No. 10 Transmitting a Suggested Program of Work for the State Department of Women in Industry." Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense. 2 pages. August 19, 1918. RG 62, Box 402, Folder "Woman's Committee." WCCND Collection.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

chairmen [of the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittees] at frequent intervals and as need arises they will be called upon for aid in specific causes."[52] Nestor, once appointed to the new Women in Industry Service of the Department of Labor had a direct connection to the wartime policymaking process as it concerned women workers and she used the state divisions of the Woman's Committee's to rally women workers for not only specific wartime industrial demands but also for labor legislation and policymaking that affected women workers.

Cooperation between the various interests involved in women's roles as workers also allowed Woman's Committee chairmen to directly influence the Department of Labor for the sake of women workers. As the Women in Industry branch of the Department of Labor formed in the summer of 1918, representatives from the state divisions of the Woman's Committee were told that the formation of this coalition did not diminish the roles of the state divisions in protecting and advocating for women and children workers, especially as many members of the Women in Industry Service of the Labor Department believed that state division chairmen understood the needs and abilities of working women and children in their local communities and were able to better communicate local and state needs to the Women in Industry Service.[53] In turn, the Women in Industry Service meant to use the state divisions of the Women in Industry subcommittees of the Woman's Committee to "urge action by federal authorities where national issues are concerned or to suggest to the states remedial action for local problems wherever [the Women in Industry Service of the Labor Department] can be helpful."[54]

---

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

Local labor issues varied significantly across communities within the United States, so the Women in Industry Service hoped that the state divisions of the Woman's Committee would assist the Labor Department with maintaining oversight of state departments of labor to maintain efficiency and vigilance in checking for labor violations and local and state compliance with labor laws. On August 19, 1918, one day following the announcement of the newly-created Women in Industry Service, the Woman's Committee released to the state divisions a suggested program for the Women in Industry subcommittees. In the suggested program, the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry pledged to support efficiency and compliance with labor legislation by urging state divisions to inspect and prepare reports that indicated the "number of yearly inspections of factories and mercantile establishments, the number of yearly prosecutions and convictions of illegal employment of women and children" that state departments of labor pursued as well as reports on how well equipped state departments of labor were in handling labor issues for their respective states.[55] State chairmen of Women in Industry subcommittees were asked to provide reports to the national Woman's Committee to forward to the Department of Labor's Women in Industry Service that indicated the "number of men and women [factory] inspectors and whether more are needed…[and] give total budget for enforcement of labor laws provided from state funds."[56] The women involved with the Women in Industry subcommittees in their states also were to prepare reports on changes in labor laws in their states "since the beginning of the war and whether resulting in the breakdown or the improvement of previous standards," and provide information on the "number of women and children respectively employed in factories and mercantile

[55] "Suggested Program for State Committees."
[56] Ibid.

establishments…[and] give the total figures for 1916 and 1917 to show increase or decrease [by] get[ting] official figures as far as possible."[57] And, while extorted to work in cooperation with "all existing local agencies or organizations which are concerned with Women in Industry; this would include State and local factory and health inspectors, women's clubs, women's trade unions, Consumer's Leagues, Women's Trade Union Leagues," the women involved in their state divisions of the Women in Industry subcommittee had much latitude in their investigations and provided a measure of public accountability for state labor departments.[58] The women involved in collecting the information for reports for the Women in Industry Service of the Labor Department also were encouraged to publicize their findings widely in newspapers and magazines, exhibits, posters and placards, speeches and lectures and study courses so that others may be aware of labor laws and the federal and state governments' commitments to the laws.[59]

Prior to the start of the Women in Industry Service of the Labor Department in 1918, state departments of labor attempted to provide some clarity on state and federal labor laws for the Women in Industry subcommittees in the state divisions of the Woman's Committee. In the summer of 1917, as working women struggled to understand wartime demands for their labor and how and to whom to report abuses in wartime industries, state departments of labor tried to offer assistance for the enforcement of labor laws. In the industrial state of Michigan, the State Department of Labor commissioner, Richard Fletcher, not only promised to cooperate with the Woman's Committee Michigan division of the Women in Industry subcommittee but

[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.

also promised "the committee my best efforts and the efforts of this department in enforcing the labor laws of this state in all factories where women or children are employed whether on war contract or other work" and defended his personal "belief that women employed in the manufacture of government supplies are entitled to the full protection of the state labor laws."[60] Fletcher, and other state labor commissioners throughout the U.S., not only advocated for working women and children by pledging support for the state branches of the Women in Industry subcommittees, but they also provided essential information for the women in the states to investigate certain industries and factories that contracted with the government and employed women and children in government contract work for the war effort. Michigan state labor commissioner Richard Fletcher also shared confidential information such as lists of government-contracted factories with the Michigan Women in Industry subcommittee and also agreed to give "careful consideration and investigation" to lists of factories employing women and children that had already caught the attention of Michigan's Woman's Committee division after receiving complaints of labor law violations.[61]

While some of the states enjoyed a fairly open and constructive coalition with state departments of labor, the national Woman's Committee Women in Industry subcommittee struggled to ascertain some basic statistics to aid in their understanding of the labor situation during the war as it applied to women and children workers. Woman's Committee Women in Industry chairman, Agnes Nestor, attempted to gain some basic information on the numbers of women and children in factories contracted to do war work to help state and local chairmen

[60] Letter from Michigan Department of Labor Commissioner Richard H. Fletcher to Mrs. Borden Harriman. July 19, 1917. 1 page. RG 62, Box 400, Folder "Michigan Department of Labor." WCCND Collection.

[61] Letter from Michigan Department of Labor Commissioner Richard H. Fletcher to Miss Mildred Chadsey, Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense. July 31, 1917. 1 page. RG 62, Box 400, Folder "Michigan Department of Labor." WCCND Collection.

understand the labor situation in their particular states and locations as many of the state and local chairmen had no real understanding of labor demands on working women and children. In a moment of exasperation at trying to find information to educate state affiliates, fellow labor advocate and Woman's Committee member Amy Hewes complained to Nestor that she was "aghast at our state of ignorance" and that she was trying desperately to "get the fundamental facts regarding the actual employment of women in war industries and find that we have almost nothing."[62] In their attempts to understand how the war impacted women and children workers, Nestor and Hewes searched for any information that they could pass onto the state divisions that might have helped state and local branches understand their labor situation, national wartime industrial needs, and the number of factories contracted for war work that employed women and children.[63] Previous personal and intergroup connections suggested that Nestor contact the National League for Women's Service, a non-governmental women's group that also provided some organization for women who desired to volunteer for the war effort, to inquire if they had the statistical information desired by the Committee.[64] Yet, even as Nestor and her compatriot Amy Hewes attempted to gather statistical information to assist the state divisions of the Women in Industry subcommittees, they quickly realized the paucity of information available from the federal Department of Labor and its state branches.[65] Faced

[62] Letter from Amy Hewes to Agnes Nestor. January 31, 1918. 2 pages. RG 62, Box 400, Folder "Nestor, Miss Agnes." WCCND Collection.

[63] Signed letter from Agnes Nestor to Amy Hewes. February 7, 1918. 2 pages. RG 62 Box 400, Folder "Nestor, Miss Agnes." Handwritten letter and telegram from Caroline Bartlett Crane to Anna Howard Shaw. November 23, 1918. RG 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division—Mrs. C.B. Crane, Oct.-Dec." WCCND Collection.

[64] Idem.

[65] Signed letter from Agnes Nestor to Amy Hewes. February 7, 1918. 2 pages. RG 62 Box 400, Folder "Nestor, Miss Agnes." Handwritten letter and telegram from Caroline Bartlett Crane to Anna Howard Shaw. November 23, 1918. RG 62, Box 466, Folder "123 Michigan Division—Mrs. C.B. Crane, Oct.-Dec." Letter from Michigan Department of Labor Commissioner Richard H. Fletcher to Miss Mildred Chadsey, Advisory Committee of

with the difficult realization that they had no real tangible information to guide programs for women and children in wartime work, the Women in Industry subcommittee of the Woman's Committee and its state branches focused on supporting existing labor standards in regards to child labor and women's labor laws in cooperation with the Department of Labor and tentatively began to advocate for social welfare programs to better the conditions of working families and their communities.

Reform groups led by women increasingly demanded the end of child labor as more children entered the factories opening and expanding during the second industrial revolution in America.[66] Children worked on farms and in small shops for many generations but the rapid expansion of large factories and competitive production costs demanded more workers willing to labor for low pay rates. The tremendous growth in urban populations and the subsequent rapid expansion of cities during the Progressive era created high costs of living in American cities as housing, food, and utilities increased with the demands of larger populations. Starting in the 1880s, factories located in urban areas hired more women and children workers to meet production demands. As American men left their factory positions to join the Great War in 1917, many factories sought to fill their positions with women and children workers when possible and wartime needs, such as uniforms, required more workers in factories contracted with the government and in piecework jobs done under the authority of the military. The Woman's Committee's state and national chairmen witnessed the transition from rural to urban population growth at the turn of the century and while they worried over the numbers of

---

the Council of National Defense. July 31, 1917. 1 page. RG 62, Box 400, Folder "Michigan Department of Labor." Letter from Amy Hewes to Agnes Nestor. January 31, 1918. 2 pages. RG 62, Box 400, Folder "Nestor, Miss Agnes." WCCND Collection.

[66] Lindenmeyer, *A Right to Childhood,* 109-124.

children leaving school early to participate in the Food Administration's plan for harvesting work in 1917, the leadership of the Woman's Committee dreaded the rise of child labor in factories. The Woman's Committee's coalition with the Children's Bureau also helped to concentrate reform attention on child labor issues during Children's Year in 1918. In a fifty-year history of the Children's Bureau written in 1962, Dorothy Bradbury, Director of the Division of Reports for the Children's Bureau, described the efforts the Children's Bureau to expose the abusive system of child labor in manufacturing.[67] Bradbury wrote that:

> Beginning in 1916, the Bureau undertook a whole series of studies of the conditions under which children worked in specific industries and occupations…the boys and girls who worked—their homes, their workplaces—were visited by members of the Bureau's staff. Through the eyes of the Bureau, the United States began to see the long procession of her toiling children—grimy, dirty boy workers in mines picking slate from coal; small children working far into the night in tenement homes on garments or artificial flowers, where home was a workshop; groups of small children toiling in fields under a hot summer sun setting onions, picking cotton, topping beets; children packing shrimps and working in canneries; youngsters working at machines in factories...[68]

The Children's Bureau's studies into the laboring conditions of America's working children resulted in the passage of the first national child labor legislation in 1916 and was set to start enforcement in September 1917.[69] The legislation, however, remained problematic for farming families and families who owned small businesses as the new law made the employment of children in family businesses and farming legally questionable, prompting immediate challenges in the courts.[70] The Woman's Committee's Women in Industry

---

[67] Dorothy Edith Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children.* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962).

[68] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 19-20.

[69] Transcript of Keating-Owen Act of 1916, 64th Congress of the United States, September 1, 1916, URL: http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=59&page=transcript.

[70] Lindemeyer, *A Right to Childhood,* 109-124.

subcommittee also regarded child labor issues as an essential sociopolitical problem and hoped to put more pressure on federal and state politicians to support the Keating-Owen federal child labor bill that was signed into law in 1916.[71]

Just as reformers, many of whom were women, managed to pass the first federal child labor law in 1916, the new legislation was challenged in federal courts and a mere nine months following its passage, the first federal child labor law was struck down as unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court.[72] Even as the child labor reform movement reeled from the defeat, the Women in Industry subcommittee and its state branches reassembled for another attempt at passing child labor legislation and felt some encouragement when Congress passed a bill in 1917 that levied a tax of ten percent on any products produced in the United States by children under the age of fourteen.[73] And, as Allen Davis argued, "A Supreme Court decision did not seem very important when Secretary of War Newton Baker and other members of the Wilson administration were saying publicly: 'We cannot afford, when we are losing boys in France to lose children in the United States at the same time.'"[74] While the Woman's Committee as well as the Children's Bureau and child welfare reformers took some encouragement from the support of high-ranking members of the Wilson administration, the Supreme Court decision greatly disrupted the plans of the Women in Industry subcommittee to investigate labor

---

[71] Need footnote from primary source on WC and Keating Owen Labor Law for children's labor. Check notes for chapter four

[72] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 19-20.

[73] Davis, "Welfare, Reform & World War I," 521-522; Florence Kelley, "The War and Women Workers," 628-631.

[74] Quoted in Davis, "Welfare, Reform & World War I," 521-522. See footnote 25. Davis cites the importance of Secretary of War Newton Baker's position as President of the National Consumers League in 1917 exposed Baker to the sociopolitical issues concerned with child labor prior to the war and also cites that Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, who was considered a progressive reformer for his crusade to stop U.S. Navy seamen from contracting sexually transmitted diseases in New Orleans by banning prostitution and arresting and detaining known prostitutes in specialized health camps for the duration of the war, supported the elimination of child labor in government war contracts.

practices where women and children were employed and left the state branches without a clear program.

As the Woman's Committee refocused on child labor reforms, the state and national chairmen asserted their beliefs that child labor and the need for women workers damaged the American family and American communities. Rises in juvenile delinquency, especially in urban areas, and the poor health conditions of the nation's children that were revealed in separate studies done by the Children's Bureau in 1916 and in 1918 and from the weighing and measuring tests of Children's Year done in partnership with the Woman's Committee increasingly alarmed women in communities throughout the country. During the war, according to Dorothy Bradbury, the Children's Bureau conducted juvenile delinquency studies and asked juvenile court judges to provide some opinions on the rise of wartime juvenile delinquency in cases that the judges heard during the war.[75] The primary opinions of the juvenile court judges cited "high wages paid to child workers and… the social unrest that is everywhere manifest"[76] While the Children's Bureau's studies on juvenile delinquency claimed that demands of the war, including wartime labor needs, contributed to the rise of juvenile delinquency, the coalition with the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee confirmed that the war's need for laborers significantly affected children's health and educations. During Children's Year in 1918, the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau included a Back-to-School drive as part of its plans to promote reforms for children's education. In its official final report on the programs of Children's Year submitted to the Council of National Defense, the Woman's Committee explained that the impulse for the Back-to-School drive "sprang from the national belief in

[75] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 18.
[76] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 18.

universal education, and the national objection to child labor."[77] The Woman's Committee increasingly linked child labor with declines in children's education and since the U.S. military linked draftees' failure rates to physical and well as mental defects, children's educations became a topic of national interest. While the Woman's Committee claimed that home defense included focusing on the health and well-being of American families, the Woman's Committee also increased public support for children's education, especially among women, and claimed that the war drove children to leave school for early employment and, thereby, endanger the American family. In the final report on Children's Year, the Woman's Committee claimed that although "economic necessity causes child labor, in war time other causes are added to this one…wages are higher than in peace times and 'fat jobs' tempt children to leave school at as young an age as they can legally go to work…yielding to greed or to false notions of patriotism, some employers urge children to go to work, and in too many cases parents are induced to approve and permit of their going."[78] In attempts to suppress what the Woman's Committee believed was inappropriate forms of patriotism designed at manipulating and destroying the American family, they encouraged parents and employers to restrict child labor by focusing on providing financial help to struggling families and supporting restrictions on child labor to encourage the educational well-being of upcoming generations of Americans.

The Woman's Committee advocated for Mothers' Aid legislation, which already had been enacted in some states before the war but saw its greatest expanse during the war.[79] Mother's Aid pensions advocates centered on federal and state legislative reforms concerned

[77] "Final Report from Child Conservation Section of the Field Division of the U.S. Council of National Defense, October 1, 1918—July 1, 1919." 38 pages. Unpublished. 3. RG 62, Box 910, Folder unmarked. WCCND Collection.

[78] "Ibid.

[79] Grace Abbott, "Recent Trends in Mothers' Aid," *Social Service Review* 8, no.2 (June 1934), 192-193.

with allowing women workers to stay at home with their young children rather than be forced through financial need into industrial positions.[80] Mothers' Aid legislation allowed for a mother to stay at home with her young children and receive a monetary payment in the form of a pension for her work as a parent. During the Progressive era and Great War, Mother's Aid programs increased in number and scope throughout the states and offered women workers opportunities to raise their children and maintain their family through a small benefits payment provided by their respective states.[81] Gompers and the union movement did not object to these pensions, and the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee supported the expansion of Mothers' Aid programs and advocated for national legislation that recognized women's roles as mothers. The Department of Labor and its state branches offered no impediments to the Woman's Committee and its state divisions' support and advocacy for Mothers' Aid programs either. Mothers' Aid programs saw a dramatic increase in the number of states that adopted the pension plan between 1912 and 1920 when forty states already adopted some form of Mothers' Aid legislation.[82] Reform groups and social settlements joined in supporting working women's rights and, according to historian Allen Davis, "cheered the progress of women's rights…[through] the establishment of the Women in Industry Service and ultimately the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor."[83] With no tangible opposition and with a growing precedence among reformers for the expansion of economic aid programs for families during the war, the Woman's Committee's support and advocacy for Mothers' Aid

[80] Ibid.

[81] Mothers' Aid legislation was first proposed at the White House Conference on Care of Dependent Children in 1909 when reformers became concerned for widows and poor women who had no childcare options and had to work to support their families. See: Grace Abbott, "Recent Trends in Mothers' Aid," 191; Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 15.

[82] Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children,* 15-16.

[83] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*, 224-225.

programs increased as more women linked familial poverty to a host of social ills that plagued America, including the need for children's wages.

As the Woman's Committee advocated for Mother's Aid pensions and the end of child labor, the Women in Industry subcommittee planned to offer support for the federal child labor law that had already passed Congress and was in the process of being challenged and reviewed by the United States Supreme Court. In August of 1917, prior to the decision by the Supreme Court to strike down the child labor law as unconstitutional, the Women In Industry subcommittee addressed letters to state chairmen asking for assistance in reporting violations by factories of the child labor law and state laws concerning the working conditions of women.[84] Even as the Women In Industry subcommittee began organizing its state divisions for this work, the manufacturers involved in wartime production began their own crusade to whittle away at the laws already established concerning women and children workers. From April to September of 1917, the Woman's Committee received reports from its state divisions that revealed an increasing trend by manufacturers and legislators to either ignore or throw out certain national and state labor laws to meet the labor demands of the war. In a report that summarized trends to undermine labor laws submitted to the Council of National Defense in the late fall of 1917, the Woman's Committee highlighted that many of the manufacturing states were considering changes to their labor laws. State division chairmen in Massachusetts and Vermont reported to the Woman's Committee that their states "passed laws in the spring [of 1917] authorizing an Industrial committee composed of employers and employees to break

[84] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War.* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1918), Chapter VI, accessed February 12, 2009, Stable URL: http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/comment/Clarke/Clarke10.htm.

down their labor laws."[85] Meanwhile in neighboring New England states of New Hampshire and Connecticut, the governors were given "power to suspend labor laws referring to women and children at the request of the Council of National Defense."[86] The Council of National Defense, when it became a federal wartime agency in 1916 under the orders of President Wilson, included manufacturers and industrial leaders as well as Samuel Gompers as its Labor Committee and were charged with orchestrating labor needs and industrial output for the war.[87] The Woman's Committee, as an advisory body to the Council of National Defense, found itself battling with its parent organization for authority to direct women during wartime.

Once the Woman's Committee's Women In Industry and Gompers's Women In Industry for the Labor Committee of the Council of National Defense were combined into the Women In Industry Service for the U.S. Department of Labor in 1918, the battle over authority to direct women and children worker reforms lessened and the Woman's Committee began to seek ways to influence public opinion for reforms while also meeting the labor demands of the war. In Michigan and other states, the chairmen of the state divisions of the Woman's Committee found new positions in the Women In Industry Service state agencies of the Labor Department that allowed for greater authority in affecting public opinion for labor reforms. In November 1918, the official newsletter of Michigan's Woman's Committee, *Carry On*, published an article by Mrs. Daniel Quirk, chairman of the Women In Industry subcommittee for the state, that explained the new relationship and positions of the state branch of the Women In Industry

---

[85] "Tendencies in Education, Child Welfare and Social Service Reflected in Activities of the State Council of Defense, April to September 1917." 18 pages. No author. RG 62, Box 910, Folder "Child Welfare." 11-12. WCCND Collection.

[86] "Ibid.

[87] William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam At Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919*. (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1984).

Service.[88] Quirk summarized the organization and goals of the Women In Industry Service in Michigan by reporting that

> In each county there is already established a committee of five known as the Community Labor Board. This organization is the federal agent of industries….On each Community Labor Board are two women...[and] one of the most practical fields of work for this committee is in the influencing of public opinion on the questions of the needs, rights, and safeguards necessary for the efficient employment of women for the present and for the future…As the whole proposition of women in industry is in a state of evolution, we must effect a flexible, strong organization which by working through the federal agents as the Community Labor Boards shall be of real service in the problems of reconstruction in the near future.[89]

Quirk and her counterparts in the rest of the state branches understood that although the demand for women workers remained an essential part of the American war effort, the various state and national committees concerned with organizing women workers presented a confusion over the direction of women's workplace reforms. In 1917, Mary Chamberlain wrote in *The Survey* that "the conflict between the aims of the national committees dealing with women's work and the action of state authorities can only be solved by the interference of federal regulation and supervision."[90] The state branches of the Women In Industry subcommittee of the Woman's Committee and the Council of National Defense's Women In Industry subcommittee to the Labor Committee greatly confused women workers as each of these branches had varying visions for women's working lives. With the creation of the Women In Industry Service of the Labor Department the calls for workplace reforms changed direction once again. Concerns about women's workplace reforms increased during the war and

---

[88] Mrs. Daniel Quirk, "Women in Industry." *Carry On*, Official Publication of the Women's Committee, Michigan Division, Council of National Defense. No. 1 (Nov. 23, 1918). Kalamazoo, MI. A-92, Box 14, Folder 3. WMU Regional Archives, Caroline Bartlett Crane Collection.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Mary Chamberlain, "Women and War Work," 154.

afterwards as "by 1920, women comprised 23.6 percent of the labor force" in the United States and Americans worried that women's working roles would lessen their abilities to mother their children and create stable homes.[91] Unions themselves were divided over the proper direction. For example, the Women's Trade Union League, which was a partner of the Women's Committee, split between rank-and-file demands for organizing drives to secure equal rights for women in the workplace, and the calls by a wealthier leadership for an emphasis on education and protective legislation.[92]

With the mixed messages on how to lead the nation's working women, the Women In Industry subcommittee was presented with difficult choices in the direction of women's labor goals and chose to concentrate on monitoring violations of existing labor laws. In 1917 Mary Chamberlain wrote in *The Survey* that the Consumer's League reported "home work," or piecework, increased rapidly as "flags and khaki uniforms particularly are being finished in the home" and factories that accepted government war work contracts were "sub-letting to other factories in states where there are no child labor laws or laws regulating the work of women."[93] Chamberlain and others called for "rigid federal regulations" to limit such abuses.[94] Chamberlain also cited the need for federal regulation and inspections as industries that hired women workers for war production oftentimes contrived with state governments to undermine or loosen labor laws for women and children workers.[95] States such as Vermont, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts all enacted legislative measures to extend the working hours of

[91] "Women in Industry: The New Position of Women in American Industry." *Monthly Labor Review* Vol.12 (Jan. 1921).

[92] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage*, 34-35.

[93] Mary Chamberlain, "Women and War Work," 154.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

women and children as well as the positions women and children could hold during the war.[96] The extension of working hours for women contradicted with the prevailing legal opinions in the Supreme Court decision in *Muller v. Oregon* in 1908. Oregon had limited working hours for women in that state to ten hours or less in one day and was challenged by employers who argued that the law "impaired women's freedom of contract and thus violated their rights under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution."[97] The Court sided with the state, permitting states to engage in sex discrimination by limiting women's working hours. The decision revealed divisions among reformers over the need for equal pay and for protective legislation. States that limited working hours could also agree to relax them, a temptation that gained ground as wartime labor shortages prompted employers to expand the working day. Understandably, concerns over equal pay and restrictions on hours plagued the Women In Industry subcommittee. It had hoped to sustain legislation concerning the number of hours women were allowed to work and also to advance the calls for equal pay for equal work so that women workers' pay equaled that of their male counterparts. The subcommittee warned against "overstrain and over fatigue" from long hours of work that would "exhaust vitality and hamper efficiency."[98] Gompers also agreed that women should be paid equally to their male counterparts but also urged deference to men in the hiring process for fears that too many women in the workplace would depress wages across industries.[99] The Woman's Committee's Women In Industry subcommittee also agreed that equal pay for equal work should be

[96] Mary Chamberlain, "Women and War Work," 153-154.

[97] Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State, 2nd Edition,* 199. Friesen and Collins, "Looking Back on Muller V. Oregon."

[98] Mary Chamberlain, "Women and War Work," 153.

[99] Samuel Gompers, Editor, and Secretary of the Committee on Women in Industry of the Council of National Defense, "Women Replacing Men: A Wartime Development." RG 62, Box 405, Folder "110." WCCND Collection.

supported and included that investigations into piecework rates and factory positions for women must be part of determining how to bring women's wages to parity with men's for similar positions.[100] Complaints to the subcommittee regarding manufacturers that replaced men with cheaper women workers surfaced as early as May 1917, in some cases prompting strikes for equal pay.[101] Leaders in the suffrage movement and the settlement house movement supported equal pay for women and inspections of factories and piecework establishments for abusive practices.[102] In the spring of 1917, suffrage leader and Woman's Committee chairman Carrie Chapman Catt urged chambers of commerce in five hundred cities to assist local Woman's Committee leaders and suffragists in securing "reasonable working hours and equal pay for equal work for the women who take men's places" and pledged to create "vigilance committees…in every industrial locality to cooperate with the chambers of commerce and to inform themselves as to the working conditions in local plants."[103] Gompers and the Council of National Defense's Women In Industry also agreed that industries employing women needed to be scrutinized but also urged cooperation with industries in offering suggestions for improving women's working conditions and wages.[104] Gompers insisted that "the responsible heads in the large industries are apparently open to suggestions as to the best methods of handling the questions at issue" and believed that "they will respond to public sentiment, if it is informed and well directed."[105] The Woman's Committee and the Council of

[100] Mary Chamberlain, "Women and War Work," 153-154.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Davis, *Spearheads for Reform,* 223.
[103] Mary Chamberlain, "Women and War Work," 153.
[104] Samuel Gompers, Editor, and Secretary of the Committee on Women in Industry of the Council of National Defense, "Women Replacing Men: A Wartime Development." RG 62, Box 405, Folder "110." WCCND Collection.
[105] Ibid.

National Defense hoped to sway public opinion to the plight of working women and concentrated on investigating factories and piecework jobs to provide information to the public on wartime working conditions and to expose any abuses by industries contracted with the federal government for war work.

Of similar importance to the Woman's Committee and Gompers's Women In Industry subcommittees was the protection of women workers' health on the job. Protecting women workers, however, remained a debated issue and the Women In Industry subcommittees could not form a consensus on how to deal with it. In a report written by the Woman's Committee's Women In Industry subcommittee and edited by Gompers's Women In Industry subcommittee, suggestions on women's working hours, pay, work clothing, and prohibitions on the amount of weight women were required to lift generated agreement on needed precautions "since legislative protection is almost entirely lacking…because there were no women employes [*sic*] needing this protection" before the start of the war, according to Gompers.[106] Both Gompers's and the Woman's Committee's Women In Industry subcommittees, however, agreed on five protections for women workers and hoped to sway public opinion to support these protections. Both subcommittees agreed that the hours women worked should be limited and preferred that women, especially those with young children, not be allowed to work overnight shifts.[107] They also supported a mandatory "Weekly Day of Rest" to ensure that women workers would not be overworked and that lifting of heavy weights, defined as more than twenty-five pounds, should not be required of women.[108] The subcommittees also insisted that the physical health

[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.

of women workers be supported by employers through offering protection from exposure to the weather in certain industries, the assurance of clean and orderly lunchrooms and toilets and the adoption of overalls and other work clothing in industries where power-driven machinery was present.[109]

In 1917 and 1918 the Woman's Committee authorized members of the Women In Industry subcommittee to hire college-educated women social workers to investigate wartime industries. The Women In Industry subcommittee concentrated its investigations into industries that supplied war materials and offered comparisons between piecework jobs and factory positions offered to women. In some cases, the investigators found little to complain about. For example, in New York state, investigations into the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company revealed adoption of the suggestions made by the Women In Industry subcommittees.[110] At Curtiss, women worked alongside male counterparts and the factory offered clean work areas and lunch rooms although the company did not practice equal wages for male and female employees.[111] Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company operated five manufacturing plants in Buffalo, New York and employed seven hundred women out of a total of 13,627 employees.[112] Such ratios of women to men workers revealed that although many were worried about women replacing men, men still retained preferential hiring status. Curtiss not only employed significantly higher numbers of men than women, but they also paid male workers significantly higher wages than female workers. Reports from the Women In Industry inspectors working for the Woman's Committee revealed that Curtiss, while offering clean work areas and limiting the

[109] Ibid.

[110] Information on Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company. Woman's Committee, Women In Industry subcommittee. March 13, 1918. RG 62, Box 409, Folder "167." WCCND Collection.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.

weights women were required to lift, paid women workers ten to twenty cents less per hour than their male counterparts working next to them on the line and overtime pay was offered at one and a quarter times regular wages to women while men earned one and a half times their regular wages for overtime.[113] At Curtiss's Elmira, New York plant women were not allowed to work night shifts and earned twenty-five cents an hour after six months on the job while men were hired in at thirty cents an hour.[114] Curtiss's Victory plant, however, offered unskilled employment to both men and women and paid both the same wages of twenty-five cents an hour, suggesting that concerns over women workers depressing wages may have had some credence as Curtiss's other factories in New York generally offered higher wages to men who had gained employment before the war but once the war demanded more workers at Curtiss's plants, wages for new workers were reduced by five to fifteen cents per hour.[115] Curtiss also reduced the number of hours women were allowed to work to eight per day while men were allowed to work for ten hours per day but did not separate male workers from female workers on the factory lines.[116] While the Women In Industry subcommittee were concerned over the lesser pay for women, they were impressed with the clean and modern work spaces and facilities.[117] The Woman's Committee also used the Curtiss study to compare with the piecework jobs done by women hired through military contractors. The Curtiss study became an important tool in presenting the variety of wartime employment women obtained.

Piecework jobs, however, presented the Woman's Committee with opportunities for inspections as many of the uniforms for the U.S. military were being made by women in their

[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.

homes and, in many cases, in temporary shantytowns built next to military bases. During the war, military bases in the United States offered piecework to women directly at the military depots and was orchestrated by army and naval quartermasters. Navy and army uniforms and other clothing for soldiers were done by piecework and women employed by the Schuylkill Arsenal nearby Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Brooklyn Naval Yard in New York, the Jeffersonville, Indiana Arsenal, and the Charleston, South Carolina Naval Yard all received their pay based on the numbers of uniforms they could complete.[118] Each of these arsenals and naval yards caught the attention of the Woman's Committee for allowing abusive practices in the manufacturing of military uniforms that jeopardized the lives of women and children. While each of the arsenals and naval yards offered some work for women in onsite factories, the majority of sewing jobs were done at home with only inspections of finished uniforms and other textiles done in the onsite factories.[119] Women In Industry investigators D. Pope and A. Wiesner, both trained social workers, interviewed hundreds of women who contracted for piecework with the Charleston Naval Yard and found that the majority of the women were 20-40 years old and had worked for the Charleston Naval Yard for 3-5 months and many were

[118] Letter from Pauline Goldmark to Grace Abbott of the Woman's Committee. September 11, 1917. 2 pages. RG 62, Box 398, Folder "Grace Abbott." "Preliminary Report on the Manufacture of Army Shirts and Other Articles with a Survey of the Home Work System at the Quartermaster's Depot, Jeffersonville, Ind." RG 62, Box 406, Folder "139." WCCND Collection.

[119] "Preliminary Report on the Manufacture of Army Shirts and Other Articles with a Survey of the Home Work System at the Quartermaster's Depot, Jeffersonville, Ind." RG 62, Box 406, Folder "139." Records concerning the Charleston, South Carolina quartermaster's depot were assembled by the Women In Industry subcommittee but were not summarized in a report like that of the Jeffersonville depot because the inspections of the Charleston depot were done in February of 1918 and the subcommittee did not yet have time to complete a report as the armistice ended the war and the Woman's Committee abandoned plans for suggesting changes to the military's system of home work. See records: Women In Industry subcommittee, Social service and worker information cards with statistical tables regarding employees, conditions of employment, employee housing, and pay information. RG 62, Box 408, Folder "Charleston Navy Yard—Misc. Materials." WCCND Collection.

unmarried, widowed, or divorced.[120] Pope and Wiesner asked in their interviews of piece-rate workers what previous work histories these women had, their standard of living and satisfaction with the work while employed with the Charleston Yard, and also wrote personal reflections on the conditions in which these women lived and worked.[121] Pope and Wiesner found that although many of the women interviewed did not like the low rates they were paid and the finicky requirements for passing inspections of their finished work, the women were able to work at home and supervise their children while working.[122] While cautious to complain about their conditions, the majority of the women told Pope and Wiesner that the weekly pay offered for piecework was too low for the work. One worker interviewed by Wiesner who was 33 years old and married with three children struggled to meet her family's financial needs even though her husband worked and made $15 per week while she averaged about $2 per day.[123] This worker felt that she needed to take on the job even though "she did not want to go out and work but she wants to send Vivian, the girl of 14, thru [*sic*] high school, so she has to."[124] While some hoped to provide better for their children, the high cost of housing, according to Wiesner, drove many women to take on more work than they desired.[125] Housing costs averaged $18-$25 per month for white women with options such as an indoor toilet and bath and many of the piece-rate workers took in lodgers to help defray their housing costs.[126] Black women had a more difficult time meeting their expenses as they were paid less than their

[120] Charleston Naval Yard information. RG 62, Box 408, Folder "Charleston Navy Yard—Misc. Materials."
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Interview Questionnaire and Comment Cards, Interview of Evelyn Bellinger by A. Wiesner. Charleston Naval Yard information. RG 62, Box 408, Folder "Charleston Navy Yard—Misc. Materials." WCCND Collection.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.

white counterparts. Black women who contracted with the Charleston Naval Yard earned about half the pay that white women did for the same amount of piecework and many boarded together in rented rooms to reduce their costs.[127] Several of the married black women who worked for the Charleston Yard complained that their wages were too low and their need to take on extra jobs to get by were damaging their relationships with their spouses and children.[128] The Woman's Committee's Women In Industry subcommittee hoped that the Charleston Naval Yard would either increase its pay rates or offer a factory for such work so that women would not be tempted to take on more piecework to increase their pay and overwork themselves.

The preliminary report submitted by the Women In Industry subcommittee on the Jeffersonville, Indiana quartermaster's depot also raised deep concerns over working women's housing and pay. Piece-rate workers for the Jeffersonville depot found that there was insufficient housing for them and many of the workers built shantytowns for the duration of their work with the depot. Because the materials for the uniforms were handed out by the quartermaster at the depot, women had to live close by to get materials in a timely and orderly fashion and many women discovered that the closer they were to the depot, the quicker they would hear of new shipments of supplies coming in for them to sew. Social workers who interviewed the women who did piecework reported that their living conditions were "squalid" and one family had taken up lodgings in an old barn while "equally undesirable dwellings were

[127] Handwritten statistical tables and computations done by D. Pope on African American women workers at the Charleston Naval Yard. Interview Questionnaire and Comment Cards, Interview of Mrs. H.W. Mitchell, February 23, 1918. RG 62, Box 408, Folder "Charleston Navy Yard—Misc. Materials." WCCND Collection.

[128] Interview Questionnaire and Comment Cards, Interview of Mrs. H.W. Mitchell, February 23, 1918. Interview Questionnaire and Comment Cards, Interview of Mrs. A.E. Hamilton, February 22, 1918. Questionnaire and Comment Cards, Interview with Mrs. F.L. Howard. RG 62, Box 408, Folder "Charleston Navy Yard—Misc. Materials." WCCND Collection.

occupied by the workers who lived in the 'shanty-boats' along the banks of the river."[129] Although "the shanties are picturesque…many of them are unsuited for human habitation," the report continued. "They are entirely without sanitary conveniences and are situated on low ground which is covered with water at the flood season when some of them are actually afloat."[130] The women who lived in these shanties also worked at sewing uniforms for the military and although there were factory positions available at the depot for cutting cloth for shirts and counting buttons, those positions were given only to men.[131] The inspectors recommended that "Home work on army shirts and other articles for military use manufactured at the Jefferson Depot should be abolished" and that the work be transferred to other locations where clothing was manufactured prior to the war and offered "adequately trained and experienced" textile workers in factories recommended to take on government contracts.[132] While the social workers who conducted the study of the Jeffersonville Depot understood that the military needed uniforms, their recommendations revealed the need for safe working conditions and adequate pay for women workers.

The subcommittee hoped that these studies could help sway public opinion regarding women's labor during the war. Yet, the reports came too late for significant attempts at workplace reforms. Inspections of government-contracted factories and military depots did not begin until early in 1918 and when the armistice was called in November 1918, the Women In

---

[129] "Preliminary Report on the Manufacture of Army Shirts and Other Articles With a Survey of the Home Work System at the Quartermaster's Depot, Jeffersonville, Ind." RG 62, Box 406, Folder "139." 28. WCCND Collection.

[130] "Ibid.

[131] "Preliminary Report on the Manufacture of Army Shirts and Other Articles With a Survey of the Home Work System at the Quartermaster's Depot, Jeffersonville, Ind." 32.

[132] "Preliminary Report on the Manufacture of Army Shirts and Other Articles With a Survey of the Home Work System at the Quartermaster's Depot, Jeffersonville, Ind." 40-42.

Industry subcommittees and the Department of Labor were unable to use these reports to alter women's workplace rights in war industries. Following the armistice, the national Woman's Committee was officially disbanded by the spring of 1919 and the armistice also ended the piecework system for the military that had employed many women in such horrendous conditions and at very low pay rates during the war.

As the Woman's Committee struggled to form a coalition with the Gompers-led Women In Industry for the Council of National Defense in 1917 and then with the Women In Industry Service of the Department of Labor in 1918, they appeared to support both protective legislation and equal pay legislation. While the competing Women In Industry subcommittees argued over the authority to direct workplace reforms for women, they did agree that child labor should be eliminated but the decision by the Supreme Court in 1917 on the Keating-Owen Act created a problematic situation where states decided on the working abilities of children in lieu of a federal law. Arguments concerning the hours that women could work and the required facilities for women workers, such as separate bathrooms and work benches, created a situation where the Woman's Committee could not direct the nation's reform efforts for working women and suggested that the battles over workplace reforms would continue into the 1920s as women reformers could not agree on restrictive reforms that limited women's working abilities or on demanding equality in the workplace. The two Women In Industry subcommittees did agree that child labor should not continue during the war, but divisions within the union movement and among reformers seeking equal pay and protective legislation deeply complicated any attempt at a unified effort by the Women's Committee to reform the workplace. Widespread fears that hiring women workers would depress the wages of male

workers led to calls for pay equity that continued into the 1920s and became a central argument in the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment in 1924.

Chapter Five: "The Closing of the Woman's Committees and the Failed Transition of Women's Wartime Social Welfare Activism"

The American woman's movement,

and her interest in great moral and social

questions, is splintered into a hundred

fragments under as many warring leaders.[1]

Progressive Party leader and equal
rights advocate Frances Kellor, 1923.

On November 11, 1918, at 11 am, soldiers of the warring nations laid down their arms and the battles of the war officially ended. The news came as somewhat of a shock to the Woman's Committee as they were engaged in several campaigns for the war effort, and while they were happy to see the war come to a close, they had failed to plan for what roles the Woman's Committee and its state divisions and local branches may have in the transition from war to peace. In its short existence, the Woman's Committee partnered in coalitions with federal agencies and tied women's organizations, clubs, and associations to their social welfare goals while also advancing the war effort in local communities by asking American women to devote themselves to home defense, specifically in ways that supported the family, women, and children. The Committee's coalitions to federal agencies and departments also helped pave the road to women's political participation. By partnering with federal agencies and state

[1] Frances Kellor quoted in Dorothy Brown, *Setting a Course: American Women in the 1920s,* (Twayne, 1987), 50.

branches of federal agencies, the Woman's Committee introduced average American women to social welfare activism that promoted women's participation in political processes such as policymaking and implementation of new laws. The Woman's Committee and its division and branches in the states remained heavily entrenched in promoting food policies with the U.S. Food Administration to ensure that soldiers and allied countries would have enough food and also that in the process of conserving food for soldiers and allied countries, American families and children also would have their nutritional needs met. As the conscription of American men revealed the poor health of Americans, the Woman's Committee advocated grassroots and national programs for maternal and infant health care with the Children's Bureau in efforts to raise generations of Americans who would be healthy and educated enough to prosecute any upcoming wars and mentally and physically capable of advancing American interests in peacetime. In their partnership with the Department of Labor and the Council of National Defense, the Woman's Committee attempted to work with labor leaders to advocate for working women and to end child labor while actively engaged in sociological research on wartime working conditions for women. Although the Woman's Committee's relationship with the Labor Committee of the Council of National Defense was complicated, by 1918 the partnership led to the creation of the Women in Industry Service of the Department of Labor, which was the precursor of the permanent Women's Bureau for the Labor Department. In its work with these federal branches of government, the Woman's Committee attempted to attract women through social welfare programs meant to support the family and the home during the Great War. The linkage of social welfare to national home front defense helped foster consensus concerning single-issue political demands among American women during the

war that would have repercussions for political parties after the conflict ended. The crisis of the war encouraged more unity among women's reform groups as the federal government called for civilian, and especially women's participation in wartime programs and the Woman's Committee was federally-mandated to organize American women for home front defense. Leading women reformers staffed leadership positions within the national Committee and its state divisions and organized the nation's women into social welfare activism to protect the home front, which they interpreted as protecting the American family from the social upheaval of wartime. By the signing of the armistice, the Woman's Committee managed to organize over 10 million American women into wartime social welfare activism that helped support the creation of hundreds of local and state laws that benefitted American families and women. As the Woman's Committee closed its operations in 1919 and the state divisions began shut-down procedures, the unity of women's social welfare activism during the war appeared to continue after the suffrage amendment passed Congress in 1919. The Republican and Democratic parties, seeking to absorb newly enfranchised women in the 1920s, attempted to adopt many of the single-issue political demands supported by women's wartime social welfare activism while arguments among women's groups over legislation, such as the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act and the proposed Equal Rights Amendment, revealed schisms within the women's sociopolitical bloc that the Woman's Committee helped build and direct during the war. As the women's bloc began to dissolve into warring factions in the mid-1920s, the major parties co-opted some of these issues and incorporated women's social welfare demands and equality-based legislation into toothless platforms that marked the failure of the women's social welfare activism of the war years to transition into a women's voting bloc. Three months

following the armistice, the Woman's Committee received orders from President Wilson and Secretary of War Newton Baker through the Council of National Defense to disband their organization, assemble their records, and notify the state divisions of the closure of the national Committee.[2] Unfortunately, the abrupt end of the war caused by the armistice and the relative financial and organizational independence exercised by the state divisions led to a haphazard system of closing the state divisions, local subcommittees, and national Committee. While the national Committee quickly packed materials for storage and answered questions on last-moment closing procedures, some of the more financially-independent state divisions remained relatively calm and began planning staged closings of local subcommittees, assembled and arranged materials and records, and plotted a course for their own orderly shutdowns. Divisions in states that had little or no funds closed within weeks of the announcement of the armistice and other divisions were absorbed into mixed-gender state committees assigned with transitioning their states into peacetime.[3] Within the states that kept their Woman's Committee divisions open following the armistice, the women who organized and conducted the business of the local branches remained committed to immediate pressing

[2] Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee,* 145.

[3] The abrupt closings of the divisions and local branches in states that had little to no funding also led to problems with storage of their files and organizational minutes. When the Woman's Committee formerly announced their closing on March 15, 1919, they informed state divisions to assemble records from local branches into one large report for the entire state and keep local branches' records in libraries or other public buildings with appropriate storage facilities such as City Halls. Many of the state divisions that closed quickly never forwarded closing procedures to local branches, including storage of records, and several state divisions are missing final reports due to these abrupt closures. In states that had funding or that had merged their Woman's Committees into mixed-gender state committees for postwar reintegration of soldiers and transitioning to peacetime production, records of the Woman's Committee were mixed into new post-war committees or kept by former state division chairmen and have appeared, in truncated portions, in personal records. For example, the Michigan division records are part of the state chairman's personal records held at Western Michigan University's Archives and Regional History Center, Carolyn Bartlett Crane Collection A-92. In Grand Rapids, Michigan, the local branch of the state division retained their records in a fireproof metal filing cabinet that was found in the early 2000s in the Grand Rapids Public Library's Main Branch's attic by local historians Diana Barrett and Gordon Olson. The Grand Rapids local records consisted only of the registration cards for 21,000 city and suburban women who volunteered with the Grand Rapids branch of the Woman's Committee, Michigan Division.

needs within their states and local communities including the Spanish Influenza epidemic, the needs of returning soldiers, and job displacements of wartime women workers in the transition back to peacetime production. Many of the local subcommittees in states that continued to operate their divisions following the closure of the national Committee concentrated on immediate post-war needs in their local communities without the guidance of the national Woman's Committee.[4]

Immediately following the war, many of the suffragists who had formed the core of the Woman's Committee's national and state leadership returned to demanding national suffrage rights as a constitutional amendment. At the start of the Woman's Committee in 1916, the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw in particular helped to cement the membership of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association (NAWSA) as the primary base for the women's wartime sociopolitical bloc. Yet the leadership of the Woman's Committee, including Anna Howard Shaw, were drawn from nationally prominent groups of women reformers and supported several single-issue sociopolitical goals with a combined maternal-feminist perspective. Many of the social welfare programs the Woman's Committee's leadership supported and advanced maternalist reforms that focused on protecting the home and advocating for children; yet, the leadership of the Committee also hailed from suffragist groups that believed women were best capable of providing protections by using political power,

[4] Many of the Midwestern state divisions' offices and services remained open for nearly two years following the official closing of the national Committee. Michigan's Woman's Committee, for example, held their last meeting on May 22, 1919, nearly three months after the national Committee closed its headquarters in Washington, D.C., while local rural counties in Iowa, Nebraska, and Utah remained operating until 1922. The lack of a complete hierarchical organizational system, the local and state-level funding arrangements, and local and state-level decisions on reconstruction following the Armistice allowed several local subcommittees to remain operating state programs long after the war and only ended once the local communities decided services were no longer needed.

especially the vote. Historian Molly Ladd-Taylor argued that "maternalists were wedded to an ideology rooted in the nineteenth-century doctrine of separate spheres and to a presumption of women's economic and social dependence on men."[5] The women who led the Woman's Committee, however, supported sociopolitical goals that stressed some aspects of maternalism such as motherhood and the importance of protecting children and yet questioned women's economic dependence and roles as mothers of future citizen-workers in ways that incorporated ideas of Progressive era feminism.

The Woman's Committee was created during a time of transition in the Progressive era's women's movement. Organizations such as Alice Paul's National Women's Party embraced what many maternalists thought were radical ideas that ignored women's roles as mothers and as guardians of the home and protectors of children in favor of a feminist ideology that stressed the equal status of men and women in social, economic, legal and political arenas. Feminists during the Progressive era, as defined by American women and gender historian Nancy Cott, emphasized the individuality of women, encouraged political participation, and stressed the need for women's economic independence.[6] The Woman's Committee, while unwilling to embrace the more radicalized demands of Paul and the National Women's Party, adopted a platform that combined elements of both maternalism and feminism. In its desires to understand demands on women workers and to investigate abusive practices in workplaces and wage scales, the Woman's Committee's Women in Industry subcommittee attempted to incorporate a feminist perspective on women's economic lives into social welfare programs the

[5] Ladd-Taylor, "Toward Defining Maternalism in U.S. History," 110.

[6] For a more detailed definition of Progressive era feminism, see: Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 3-10.

Woman's Committee advocated for during its rocky relationships with Samuel Gompers's Women in Industry of the Council of National Defense's Labor Committee. Yet, even as the Woman's Committee attempted to adopt some feminist ideas, they also advocated maternalism. The Committee's most successful programs concentrated on providing for the needs of the family, especially of children. And, while the Committee's partnership with the Children's Bureau remained a cooperative and convivial relationship which helped advance Children's Year in 1918 and led to the proliferation of women's and children's health clinics nationwide, the base of its success stemmed from maternalist ideas of protecting women and children through special laws that subordinated women and children and thus, inadvertently, challenged the more feminist ideas of other subcommittees of the Woman's Committee.

Once the 19th Amendment passed the U.S. Congress in 1919 and the ratification process began in the states, the suffragists who had formed the core of the Woman's Committee hoped that open access to national political processes and offices for women offered opportunities to reshape American politics in ways that benefitted men, women, and children. Historian Ellen Carol DuBois best explained the hopes that enfranchisement brought suffragists, including those who chaired the Woman's Committee, as expectations of women using

> the ballot to protect themselves and to impose their viewpoint on political issues. They anticipated that by strategic use of their political power women would break open new occupations, raise the level of their wage scales to that of men, win strikes, and force reforms in marriage and family law in order to protect themselves from sexual abuse, the loss of their children, and the unchecked tyranny of their husbands. The demand for suffrage drew together

> protest against all these abuses in a single demand for the right to shape the social order by way of the public sphere.[7]

As women gained the vote in 1920, the women's movement that formed into a sociopolitical bloc during the war started to fracture as maternalists and feminists began to bicker over single-issue political demands that had remained fairly fluid during the war but required clearer definitions once the war ended and women gained the right to vote. During the war, the Woman's Committee was capable of combining a maternal-feminist approach to single-issue political demands as patriotic fervor demanded unity for the war effort and women were asked to provide for both home defense and wartime production. Through programs developed in cooperation with its state divisions, the Woman's Committee devoted its best efforts towards protecting and nurturing children by demanding health care for pregnant women and infants provided by state and federal monies as well as private donations, providing food for the war effort and for American families in innovative ways, supporting educational programs that encouraged civic participation, and swaying public opinion in attempts to end child labor. Yet, even as the Woman's Committee helped to provide a basis for consensus on these single-issue political and social problems during the war, those who volunteered for wartime service under the banner of the Woman's Committee may not have embraced notions of Progressive-era feminism. As Ladd-Taylor noted, that despite differences in "a wide range of political perspectives and positions on woman's suffrage," maternalists and feminists "coexisted and at times overlapped in the 1920s, when the bitter debate over the Equal Rights Amendment drove them apart."[8] During the war, volunteering for service with the

[7] Ellen Carol DuBois, *Woman Suffrage & Women's Rights,* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1998), 50.
[8] Ladd-Taylor, "Toward Defining Maternalism in U.S. History," 110.

Woman's Committee allowed maternalist reformers to collaborate with feminist reformers and, while the two groups differed in many of their purposes for reforms, generally they agreed that child labor needed to be outlawed and women workers needed protection from overt and oftentimes sexualized abuse, wholesome foods be made available to families at reasonable prices that encouraged local production and community engagement, and health care be made available for free or reduced cost to young children and pregnant women.

Prior to the American entry into the war, women who supported maternalist and feminist reforms found some avenue for political impact in 1912 with the emergence of the Bull Moose Progressive Party led by former Republican President Theodore Roosevelt, which embraced some notions of both maternalist and feminist reforms.[9] In the 1912 presidential election, Theodore Roosevelt adopted a platform that included women's suffrage, the end of child labor, and "using government as an agency of human welfare."[10] Such a political platform drew many reformers to the Bull Moose Progressive Party, but Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" altered the Progressive platform to include calls for "greater unity in American life" and the deference of "individual and sectional interests to the greater good of the nation."[11] Democrat Woodrow Wilson's 1912 presidential platform, which he termed the "New Freedom," affirmed individual rights and the importance of states' rights and especially sanctioned the right of states to extend suffrage to women.[12] Yet, even as Wilson supported the right of states to extend suffrage, women in the western states may have approved of his ideas as a way of

[9] David Traxel, *Crusader Nation: The United States in Peace and the Great War, 1898-1920,* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 34.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Traxel, *Crusader Nation: The United States in Peace and the Great War, 1898-1920,* 35.

[12] Traxel, *Crusader Nation: The United States in Peace and the Great War, 1898-1920,* 80.

protecting their own voting rights. According to Allison L. Sneider, suffragists had long fought a state-by-state campaign to win women voting rights and by the late 1880s, many of the western states extended at least partial voting rights to women within their borders.[13] When Wilson came up for reelection in the 1916 campaign, the Democratic and Republican parties had begun to adopt some progressive reforms, including the consideration of a women's suffrage bill, that essentially deflated support for the Bull Moose Progressive party. Yet, both Democrats and Republicans supported legislation that had maternalist impulses, including protective labor legislation and the banning of child labor, that attracted suffragists to both parties. As the United States prepared to enter the Great War in 1916 and 1917, newly-reelected President Wilson established the Woman's Committee and issued invitations that read like marching orders to prominent suffragists to form the directorship to lead the nation's women in home-front defense and to protect social welfare for Americans. When Wilson issued these orders to the chairmen of the Woman's Committee, it was the hope of Anna Howard Shaw and other suffragists that by proving women's abilities to contribute to the war effort, they would earn national suffrage rights. Yet, even as Shaw and other suffragists and reformers who formed the leadership of the Woman's Committee considered what their duties to the country were during wartime, they retained their original goals of shaping social welfare policymaking and creating opportunities for women to provide for the war effort while advocating for the needs of families and women.

[13] Allison L. Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question, 1870-1929,* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), see especially Chapter 3 "Western Expansion and the Politics of Federalism: Indians, Mormons, and Territorial Statehood, 1878-1887."

The millions of American women who had volunteered to support their country and promote social welfare through their local Woman's Committee branches during the war propelled demands for full federal enfranchisement through the passage of a constitutional amendment. In a joint resolution, the U.S. Congress passed the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on June 4, 1919, a mere three weeks after its introduction to Congress. And, in August of 1920, Tennessee became the last state to ratify the amendment that enfranchised twenty-six million American women.[14] Yet, even as the amendment was ratified into constitutional law, political disagreements among women reformers threatened to undermine the power of the sociopolitical bloc that was advanced during the war through the efforts of the Woman's Committee. Those disagreements centered on differences in creating legislative reforms that focused on maternalist impulses to protect women as mothers and safeguard the family and feminist-inspired ideas that concentrated on women and men as political, economic, legal, and social equals. Kristi Andersen found that during the 1920s, women reformers and political activists who became members of the Democratic and Republican parties formed a "general consensus on a political agenda which included protective legislation for women and children, women's rights, consumer protection, and industrial health and safety legislation."[15] Yet, even as the Republicans and Democrats attempted to integrate some of the reforms women demanded, the purposes and intent of certain reforms in the 1920s undermined efforts to use the unity among women reformers during the war as a political tool to enforce changes in the party system. The Woman's Committee, although disbanded just as women gained national enfranchisement, created a bridge between maternalists and feminists women

[14] Brown, *Setting a Course: American Women in the 1920s,* 50.
[15] Andersen, *After Suffrage*, 9.

reformers to rally for social and political changes that supported ideologically fluid issues. While the Woman's Committee advanced social welfare, the organization of the Committee and its state divisions and local subcommittees allowed for much individual control over the implementation of state and local level programs advocated as part of home defense by the Woman's Committee. Through the fairly independent status of many local branches and state divisions, the finer details of reform activism under the auspices of the Woman's Committee remained allusive and, as Daniel Rodgers described, "shifting, ideologically fluid."[16]

As the national Committee and many of the state divisions disbanded in the few months following the armistice, women reformers who had participated in the wartime programs of the Woman's Committee looked forward to accomplishing sociopolitical reforms efforts in the coming decade. As Allen Davis noted, social reformers believed that "their confidence that the experiments and social action of the war years would lead to even greater accomplishments in the reconstruction decade ahead."[17] As reformers prepared for the upcoming decade, a general belief was that women who had been involved in the suffrage movement would enter political offices in "state and national legislatures…[and] would simply make for better legislation, especially because the interests of women and children [would] be better represented."[18] Women who had been active politically through their memberships in suffrage groups oftentimes supported maternalist reforms but also advocated some feminist ideas of equality in the late Progressive era and into the early 1920s but the process was in transition during the war. According to women and gender historian Wendy Sarvasy, the transitional process helped

[16] Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 114.
[17] Davis, "Welfare, Reform and World War I," 531.
[18] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 17; 112-113.

form a synthesis of feminism and maternalism that functioned, albeit clumsily at times, until the polemical debates among women reformers during the proposed Equal Rights Amendment in Congress in 1923 by the more radically feminist National Woman's Party.[19] Sarvasy discovered that although "women disagreed about how to achieve a combination of formal equality and gender difference," women reformers were conceptualizing gender equality in ways that recognized both protective legislation based on gender and legislation that was structured to ignore gender, such as in laws concerning jury duty, family law (including divorce and custody), and naturalization of citizens.[20] Dorothy Brown also discovered this synthesis of feminist and maternalist policymaking among women reformers following the passage of the 19th Amendment and found that politically-active women had their choice of three coalition-based women's organizations to represent their interests.[21] According to Brown,

> The largest, best organized group fought to continue and expand the reforms of the Progressive Era…the smallest, most militant group, led by the dynamic Alice Paul and her eight-thousand member National Woman's Party, saw the suffrage victory as only the first step in the fight to win full equality for women. The third group used the vote to gain access to the [political] party structure and worked for positions in the legislature and in executive offices as the most practical way to reform the system. Their unity had won constitutional victories…at the beginning of the 1920s, [but] the constitutional defeats in the child labor and equal rights amendments graphically underscored their divisions at the mid-point of the decade.[22]

Women reformers appeared to be united in a potential voting bloc at the end of the war and into the 1920s, but their differences in approaching the details of single-issue politicking as

[19] Wendy Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Debate: Postsuffrage Feminism, Citizenship, and the Quest for a Feminist Welfare State," *Signs* 17, no.2 (Winter, 1992), 330.
[20] Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Debate," 329-330.
[21] Brown, *Setting a Course: American Women in the 1920s,* 50.
[22] Ibid.

feminist or maternalist threatened to undo that collaboration, which had been a hallmark of the Women's Committee's efforts.

As the Woman's Committee national chairmen officially resigned their positions on February 27, 1919, former suffrage leader and Chairman of the Directors of the Woman's Committee Anna Howard Shaw officially joined with former President William Taft in the summer of 1919 on a lecture circuit to support American entry into the League of Nations as President Wilson had proposed during the treaty negotiations in Versailles, France. Within a day after delivering an article based on a speech titled "What the War Meant to Women," Shaw died following a short bout of pneumonia in Moylan, Pennsylvania on July 2, 1919.[23] Shortly before her death, in honor of their service to the nation during the war, President Wilson conferred Distinguished Service Medals upon Shaw and Woman's Committee's Resident Director Hannah Patterson.[24] Shaw's unexpected death did not end cohesion among women reformers but small schisms began in the women's sociopolitical bloc that Shaw and the Woman's Committee had carefully crafted during the war. Changes in professional social work, so important to women's politicized actions, had concentrated on "the social and economic environment" as reasons for poverty during the war and claimed that "the fault lay not with the individual, but with conditions that could be ameliorated by legislation and social action."[25] Even as the causes of poverty had occupied social workers prior to and during the Great War,

[23] Ida Husted Harper, "The Passing of Anna Howard Shaw," 1919. Page 7 of 10. For the published text of the speech Shaw gave shortly before her death, see: Anna Howard Shaw, *What the War Meant to Women,* (New York: League to Enforce Peace, 1919), accessed August 5, 2014, Stable URL: http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/42uf0x. Nineteenth Century Collections Online. See note on front cover of bound speech.

[24] Blair, *The Woman's Committee United States Council of National Defense*, 145-146.

[25] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage*, 37.

the Woman's Committee designed programs for local communities and states to support that provided help to the poor and advocated for an American family living wage, whether that wage be earned by a father or a mother, and guaranteed health care to those most vulnerable, women and children, regardless of income. But, in the 1920s, the social work profession underwent fundamental changes that affected how women reformers approached poverty-related issues. During the 1920s, professional social work methods "began to concentrate less on improving the social environment through reform, and more on curing the problems of individuals."[26] American social historian, Allen Davis, concludes that the war did not end the progressive movement "but rather the rejection afterward of the wartime measures for social justice."[27] The post-war turn away from progressivism affected professional social workers and reformers who began to concentrate less on the social origins for issues such as poverty as they began to concentrate on individual choices as the basis for issues that plagued Americans. Part of the rejection of progressivism resulted from many of the reforms that were passed in the war years. Allen Davis attributed the loss of the progressive reform impulse among reformers in the post-war years to their success and their lack of planning to sustain those successes.[28] According to Davis, progressive reformers "were victims of their own confidence and enthusiasm, for the social reforms of the war years were caused more by the emergency situation than by a reform consensus…[and] by 1920, there was little left from wartime social reform except prohibition, immigration restriction and racist hysteria."[29] While Davis found a lack of sustainability by progressive reformers as early as the 1920s, women reformers

[26] Ibid.
[27] Davis, "Welfare, Reform and World War I," 533.
[28] Davis, "Welfare, Reform and World War I," 532-533.
[29] Davis, "Welfare, Reform and World War I," 533.

continued with many of their wartime plans for sociopolitical reforms. Yet, even as women reformers grappled with focusing their reforms towards maternalist or feminist ideologies, mounting problems in American society during the immediate post-war years threatened to undo many of the reforms passed during the Great War.

Immediately following the armistice, Americans began debating President Wilson's plans to have the United States join the League of Nations. The ensuing political fight over occupied much of the Wilson administration's time and energies. Wilson himself suffered a debilitating stroke while on a whistle-stop campaign in support of the League. With Wilson sequestered while attempting to recover from his stroke, his administration, according to Davis, "lost interest in human conservation and reform, it abandoned public housing and social insurance…[and] the gains of labor during the war proved ephemeral…woman suffrage and the other rights won by women during the war had little effect on the mood of the country. The hopes that women would usually vote for progress and that a generation of young men would be transformed by their army and training camp experience proved groundless."[30] Along with the administration's lack of continued progressive reforms, over 3,000 labor strikes involving four million American workers rocked the 1920s and by 1921, recession "drove Gross National Product down 10%, toppled 30,000 businesses, brought 500,000 mortgage foreclosures, and left five million jobless."[31] Within a year or two of the armistice, Americans struggled with the purpose for progressive reforms as cost of living skyrocketed and previous progressive reforms seemed unable to meet their needs. Although the post-war recession was brief, the short

[30] Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform,* 228-229.
[31] Brown, *Setting a Course,* 3, 6.

economic crisis and the post-war criticism of wartime governmental policies also hailed a change in Americans' sentiments towards reforms.[32]

Women reformers, following the armistice, concentrated on providing progressive reforms to benefit women in particular during the immediate post-war years. Not only did the suffrage amendment present an important moment for suffragists and other reformers to engage in political actions but other federal laws seemed to confirm women's new roles in American social, economic, and political life. Prohibition, for example, had been long sought by maternalist reformers seeking to protect families from the corrosive effects of alcohol. It became law during the last moments of the war when temperance advocates demanded that the grains that went into alcohol and beer production would be better used in feeding those in Europe and in America whom the war made hungry. At the same time, women reformers concentrated on other laws that provided more for women's independent status as equal citizens. Feminist reformers followed wartime precedent and formed a coalition with the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor, the Children's Bureau, and the Women's Joint Congressional Committee to pass the Cable Act in 1922,[33] which allowed American-born women to retain their citizenship if they married a foreign-born person who was not a naturalized American citizen and overturned a 1907 federal court decision that had made an

[32] McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*, 299-305.

[33] Brown, *Setting a Course,* 57. For more on the Cable Act, see: Meg Hacker, "When Saying 'I Do' Meant Giving Up Your Citizenship," *Prologue: Journal of the U.S. National Archives,* accessed January 3, 2016, Stable URL: http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2014/spring/citizenship.pdf. "Cable Act (1922)," U.S. National Archives and Records Collections, http://www.ndhs.org/s/1012/images/editor_documents/library/issues_and_controversies_in_american_history_-_cable_act__1922_.pdf.

American woman's citizenship status the same as her husband's following marriage.[34] The passage of the Cable Act by Congress affirmed women's independent citizenship and seemed to acknowledge women's separate statuses from their husbands. Feminist reformers were pleased with this achievement, but changes to the Mann Act stressed a maternalist idea of providing protective legislation for women, especially young women. The Mann Act, passed by Congress in 1910 but recodified as a federal crime in 1921 when the Department of Justice transferred responsibility for the Act's enforcement to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, answered calls by maternalist reformers to provide protective legislation for girls and young women and is more commonly known as the White Slave Traffic Act. The Mann Act was designed to prohibit the transport of girls and young women across state lines for illicit purposes, usually sexual.[35] While the initial portions of the Mann Act passed Congress in 1910, the recodification of the Act in 1921 concentrated on eliminating organized prostitution and sought to protect women and girls from men who coerced them into prostitution or other illicit activities. The Mann Act's impetus was protective in nature and while well-intended, also stressed the vulnerability of women and girls and the need for the federal government to make special protections for them. Maternal reformers embraced such laws and also began to organize again for the elimination of child labor following the Supreme Court's decision in 1917 to strike down the child labor law as unconstitutional. In attempts to organize against child labor again, women reformers formed a coalition much like the Woman's Committee during World War I.[36] The American Federation of Labor had tacitly approved of the Woman's Committee's Women In

[34] "Cable Act (1922)," U.S. National Archives and Records Collections.

[35] "Classification 31: White Slave Traffic Act," U.S. National Archives and Record Collections, URL: https://www.archives.gov/research/investigations/fbi/classifications/031-white-slave-traffic.html.

[36] Brown, *Setting a Course,* 57.

Industry subcommittee's support for child labor bans and investigating suspected abuses of child laborers during the war, the AFL joined in coalition with the Women's Joint Congressional Committee and the League of Women Voters.[37] Yet, a counter-coalition of former antisuffragists rallied to keep the bill from passing Congress.[38] The counter-coalition proved successful and child labor regulations continued to be one of the few Progressive era reforms that debated until the passage of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act, which outlawed much of the child labor that horrified Progressive reformers. The creation of this counter-coalition of former antisuffragists in the early 1920s and their opposition to legislation that would end child labor, however, revealed to politicians that the women voters and reformers were not as cohesive a force as believed.

Historian Robyn Muncy studied the efforts of the Children's Bureau during its infancy in World War I and the fight for nationalized health care for women, infants, and children that culminated in federal legislation commonly called the Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921 and acknowledged that the coalition with the Woman's Committee during the war helped to increase support among women for health care legislation.[39] The coalition's greatest achievement prior to the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act was the spread of health care laws in the states by the end of Children's Year in July of 1919 and Sheppard-Towner, while a

[37] The League of Women Voters is an organization directly descended from the suffrage organization, the National Woman Suffrage Association. Once the 19th Amendment passed Congress and became ratified by the states, NAWSA changed organizational tactics and restructured their programs to support educating the voting populace, women included, on legislative items and politicians. NAWSA officially changed its name and organization to support non-biased political education in the early 1920s and officially became the League of Women Voters.

[38] Brown, *Setting a Course,* 57.

[39] For a detailed discussion of the relationship between the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee in the passage of Sheppard-Towner, see: Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform,* Chapter Four "Consolidation and Expansion of the Dominion: The Sheppard-Towner Maternal and Infancy Act, 1918-1924."

significant step towards some form of nationalized health care, remained problematic as it required re-appropriation bills every two years and, therefore, was subject to defunding. The passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act in 1921, however, was the second attempt after the war ended to pass a maternity and infancy national health care law. In 1918, Jeanette Rankin, the first woman to serve as a U.S. Senator, introduced a federal bill for the protection of maternity and infancy in 1918 with the support of Julia Lathrop of both the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee.[40] The bill failed and was reintroduced in 1921 by Senators Morris Sheppard of Texas and Horace Towner of Iowa.[41] The timing of the bill's reintroduction by Senators Sheppard and Towner remains an important indicator of the growing sociopolitical power of women. Prior to the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, any maternal and infancy health bills or other health bills, according to historian J. Stanley Lemons, faced a difficult Congressional battle and "little progress was made toward its passage until the full enfranchisement of women in 1920."[42] Once women received full enfranchisement, the proposed Sheppard-Towner bill rallied women to directly engage in political lobbying and threatened politicians, most likely for the first time, with the punishment of the woman's vote.

Before 1920, the National American Woman's Suffrage Association, under the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw, served as a prominent political agitator for women's rights and after the passage of the 19th Amendment, the group renamed itself the National League of Women Voters and reorganized to provide political information to its mostly female membership. In 1920, the National League of Women Voters still retained its abilities to agitate

[40] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s," 777.

[41] The Sheppard-Towner Act was a bipartisan bill. Morris Sheppard was Democrat and Horace Towner was a Republican.

[42] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s," 777.

its membership for specific causes and lobby for women's rights as it had done prior to the enfranchisement of women. According to Lemons, once women won the vote, "passage of the maternity bill was the first goal of newly enfranchised women, and it took precedence over all other efforts."[43] During the 1920 political campaigning season, as many women prepared to vote for the first time, the National League of Women Voters appealed to the Democrat, Socialist, Prohibition, Farmer-Labor, and Republican parties to support a maternity and infancy health bill and all but the Republican party did endorse the bill even though Republican presidential candidate Warren G. Harding publicly supported such a bill during his speech for Social Justice Day on October 1, 1920.[44] Perhaps fearful that the Republicans, if they won the majority in Congressional seats in the 1920 elections, would not respect women's political equality and demands by adopting new platforms as the other parties had done in support of maternity and infancy health care, the National League of Women Voters and nearly two dozen other prominent women's groups that claimed a joint membership of over 20,000,000 members created the Women's Joint Congressional Committee with the intent to have this committee represent the political interests of women.[45] Lemons commented that in 1920 the Women's Joint Congressional Committee "lobbied vigorously, while the constituent organizations drummed up grass roots support and deluged Congress with a torrent of letter, telegrams, and personal delegations. If a woman read any of the mass circulation women's magazines…she was exposed to many articles which favored the Sheppard-Towner bill."[46] The grass roots mobilization campaign for passage of Sheppard-Towner occurred just as the states

[43] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s," 778.
[44] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s," 777.
[45] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s," 778.
[46] Ibid.

had finished passing laws for the health care needs of pregnant women, infants and children. New state laws passed during the war helped to establish and fund public health clinics and nurses to provide care and the Woman's Committee provided opportunities for women to engage in social welfare activism that helped pass these laws. As the Sheppard-Towner bill advanced to a Congressional vote,

> A principal force moving Congress was fear of being punished at the polls. The women's vote was an unknown quantity at the time. For years, the suffragists had promised to clean house when they got the vote, and they claimed that women would be issue oriented rather than party oriented. Politicians feared that women voters would cast a bloc vote or remain aloof from the regular parties.[47]

Fear of punishment at the polls by women voters who, it was predicted by their own organizations, would most likely vote on issues rather than for party loyalties were reinforced when powerful and influential women such as Florence Kelley, who served on a subcommittee of the Women's Joint Congressional Committee, "interviewed Congressmen at the rate of fifty per day."[48] And, as Kelley made her rounds to the offices of Senators and Representatives in support of maternal and infancy health care, she used the threat of the woman's vote as "Congressmen reported that they were told that if they voted against the measure every woman in their district would vote against them in the next election."[49] Kelley also appeared before Congress to testify for the bill and likened Congress to the biblical Kind Herod by condemning infants to death if they refused to pass the bill.[50] The efforts of Kelley and the Women's Joint Congressional Committee were rewarded in July of 1921 as only seven out of

---

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s," 778-9. For more on the lobbying power of the WJCC of which Florence Kelley was a part, see: Charles Selden, "The Most Powerful Lobby in Washington," *Ladies Home Journal,* April 1922.

[50] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s," 778.

seventy voting senators opposed the bill and the House of Representatives passed the bill with a vote of 279 in favor and only 39 against.[51] Within the first year following the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act, forty-one states joined the program and by its end in 1929, only Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Illinois had not partnered with the federal government in the Act's joint cooperation to provide maternal and infant health care at public expense.[52] The Woman's Committee provided the statistical help through tests and actions done through local branches that established a need for state and federal involvement in children's and women's health.

The Sheppard-Towner Act, which provided free health care to pregnant women, infants, and young children through a combined state-federal funding plan, some women began to decry such federal policies as intrusive and felt that local communities were better able to support pregnant women and children through local charities.[53] The Act also received much criticism from medical professionals affiliated with the American Medical Association who threatened to further break the women's coalition over the proposed legislation. When the Sheppard-Towner Act was proposed to Congress in 1921, women reformers, both feminist and maternalist, supported the legislation as well as newly-elected Republican President William Harding and the Children's Bureau of the federal Department of Labor.[54] Progressive historian J. Stanley Lemons remarked that "Harding's endorsement of this bill was important because many members of Congress not only opposed this 'new fad appropriation' but also feared the

[51] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s," 777-778.

[52] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s," 782.

[53] For more on local versus federal controls of social welfare programs in the 1930s, see: Susan Stein-Roggenbuck, *Negotiating Relief: The Development of Social Welfare Programs in Depression-Era Michigan, 1930-1940,* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State Univ. Press, 2008).

[54] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 777-778.

unknown power of the women's vote."[55] Some members of Congress believed the Sheppard-Towner legislation created a new relationship between the federal government and the states that allowed for socialized health care. In the immediate post-war years, fears over socialism and communism led to the first Red Scare when political dissidents, including socialists, communists, and anarchists, were investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and subject to arrest or worse.[56] Women reformers, many who had been members of the Woman's Committee, supported the Sheppard-Towner bill and allied themselves with the Children's Bureau and other women's groups that had formed a coalition for advocacy and lobbying support.[57] In the politically hostile years of 1919 to 1923, reform coalitions similar to the Woman's Committee faced fierce accusations of socialism and communism that also helped to undermine reforms supported by women. The women's coalition that supported Sheppard-Towner had gained experience in conducting basic medical programs in rural and urban communities during the war with the coalition the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee created and attempted to advance wartime health care laws into a federal program with Sheppard-Towner. The proposed bill would be funded through a federal-state partnership where the state provided half of the funding and the federal government matched the funding the state set aside. Although the bill's proposed funding arrangement to provide health care services had been used with other state-federal programs such as road-building, the bill immediately came under attack as socialism during debates in Congress in 1922 and 1923 and again every year it came up for renewal following its passage in 1923. J. Stanley Lemons found

[55] Ibid.

[56] For more on the Red Scare of 1919 and its effects on reformers and women, see: Kim E. Nielsen, *Un-American Womanhood: Antiradicalism, Antifeminism, and the First Red Scare* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2001).

[57] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 779.

that during the debates over the bill, "extreme conservatives condemned the plan as part of a Bolshevist conspiracy against America," while more moderate conservatives claimed that the bill violated states' rights.[58] As members of Congress debated the potential problems with such social welfare legislation, the American Medical Association entered the fray with a coalition of former anti-suffrage women's groups.

Many of the anti-suffrage women's groups joined with the Woman's Committee during World War I as a sign of their commitment to the country and desired to contribute to the war effort as a symbol of their patriotism. Yet, once the war stopped, calls for unity among women for the war effort ended and anti-suffrage groups separated from progressive women reformers who had made the core of the leadership of the Woman's Committee. Once the former anti-suffragists joined ranks with the American Medical Association, the accusations of communism and socialism against women reformers increased and the coalitions that had developed among women during the war split in their support for sociopolitical programs and laws. The American Medical Association had also supported progressive social welfare reforms that the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau advocated during Children's Year in 1918 as well as a host of other progressive reforms. The American Medical Association, according to Lemons, "had marched within the broad ranks of progressivism from 1900 to World War I and vigorously campaigned for pure food and drugs, protection of the public from medical quackery, a federal department of health, and the elevation of standards in medical practice and education," yet, the reforms that the AMA supported generally also benefitted the group by helping to professionalize the medical field and provided protections for licensed

[58] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 779.

doctors.[59] On other health-related problems and conditions including overcrowding and poor living conditions in slums and tenements, factory-related injuries, childhood injuries and disabilities due to working in and nearby heavy machinery, and the effects of sweatshop labor on women and children, the American Medical Association had no official political position.[60] The American Medical Association objected to the Sheppard-Towner bill because it put limitations on physicians' charges, created a bureaucracy for staffing clinics and, most significantly, offered no tangible benefits for the doctors, hospitals, and medical schools of the AMA's membership. During the war, the health care programs initiated, the statistical information compiled, and the organizational example set by the coalition of the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau provided legitimacy to a nationalized health care program of some sort and the maternalist impulse of many of the women who had staffed and led both the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee in the war years viewed the Sheppard-Towner bill as a federal extension of the state protective laws enacted for public health care during Children's Year in 1918.[61] And, while the AMA and the former anti-suffrage women's groups created a powerful coalition to defeat the bill, the coalition of women who advocated for the bill welcomed the support of "the Mayo brothers and other prominent medical figures from hospitals and universities" who endorsed Sheppard-Towner.[62] Even with the endorsements of respected medical doctors and institutions, the power of the AMA and its coalition with former women's anti-suffrage groups created a hostile climate of debate for the passage of the Sheppard-Towner bill.

---

[59] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 780.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State,* 183.
[62] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 781.

The AMA and its coalition for defeating the Sheppard-Towner emerged at the end of the Great War once calls for national unity for the war effort subsided and the Woman's Committee disbanded the coalition it formed with the Children's Bureau for health care reforms during the early months of 1919. The AMA's coalition to defeat Sheppard-Towner formed in 1921 and also received state support from medical associations and organizations in New York, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, and Massachusetts.[63] The AMA, according to Lemons, joined with the former National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage that had been renamed and reorganized following the enfranchisement of women with the 19th Amendment in 1920 as the Woman Patriots.[64] While the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage had partnered during the war with the Woman's Committee for home defense and wartime national solidarity, the group since its foundation before the passage of the 19th Amendment, believed and advocated "that feminism and woman suffrage were the same as socialism and communism."[65] Once the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920, the promise of women reformers cleaning up politics with the vote seemed inevitable and groups such as the Woman Patriots believed that women reformers who advocated for federal legislation for protective or equality reasons removed autonomy from local communities to handle social welfare needs among their local residents, including health care. While the Woman's Committee operated,

[63] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 780. Lemons also focused on the fight in Massachusetts for the Sheppard-Towner Act's adoption by the state. Lemons found that the coalition that developed for the implementation of Sheppard-Towner for the states also was heavily debated in state legislatures. In Massachusetts, Lemons noted that the Woman Patriots and the AMA were the main coalition force but had the active support of other former anti-suffrage groups, many of them women's groups. Lemons cited the AMA/Woman Patriots coalition in Massachusetts as having active support from the Woman's Municipal League of Boston, the American Constitutional League, the Constitutional Liberty League of Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts Public Interest League.

[64] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 779.

[65] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 779.

the national and state chairmen supported and planned federal programs that not only allowed much local variance in programming for local needs, but also encouraged variations on programs for food preservation and conservation, child-related issues including education and labor, and health care for women and children. The organizational structure of the Woman's Committee compelled grassroots activism and involvement, especially among women, and embraced local variations on programs as long as those variations supported national goals related to home defense and wartime production of foods and industrial war-related materials. But, the battle between coalitions following the disbanding of the Woman's Committee in the spring of 1919 brought the pre-war divisions among women reformers back onto the national stage during the debates to pass Sheppard-Towner in 1921 and focused on states' rights, accusations of communism and socialism, and local control of social welfare that had been nullified during the crisis of the war.

In 1921, as the AMA and Woman Patriots formed their coalition to block passage of the Sheppard-Towner bill, some of the states pledged a political stand-off if the bill passed the national Congress and was signed into law. J. Stanley Lemons recounted that "in New York, Governor Nathan Miller…told the opening session of the 1922 legislature that he would veto any [state] bill which would accept Sheppard-Towner."[66] Yet, once the bill passed Congress in 1922, the states that claimed to block Sheppard-Towner health care benefits were buffeted by a coalition of women's groups that pledged to support the enactment of the federal law within their states. In New York state, Governor Miller, who had pledged to veto any state bill that would support the enacting of the legislation, found himself confronted with twenty-eight

[66] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 782.

women's organizations that formed a coalition and called it the "Association for the Sheppard-Towner Act" and quickly organized to apply political pressure on state legislators to "appropriate $75,000 for the program."[67] While the coalition publicized their efforts, Governor Miller remained persistent in his insistence on vetoing any enabling legislation from the state legislature and publicly declared "that he would not be influenced if every woman in the state signed" a petition that beseeched the governor to support the bill that was circulated by the Association for the Sheppard-Towner Act.[68] In 1923, according to Lemons, "Miller lost the next election to Al Smith, who pushed the Sheppard-Towner plan through [the New York state] legislature" and Governor Al Smith "credited the New York League of Women Voters for the passage of the bill."[69] The New York League of Women Voters were one of the main coalition groups that joined in forming the Association for the Sheppard-Towner Act during Governor Nathan Miller's time in office and may have been influential in influencing the vote against Miller for Smith who had pledged his support for the bill during the campaign for the governorship.[70]

In Connecticut and many of the other states that questioned the right of the federal government to legislate such programs over the interests of the states, the Sheppard-Towner Act presented an opportunity to impede the federal aid process for social welfare legislation. During the war, the Woman's Committee also encountered many problems with funding for their programs, especially from the states, and relied instead upon donations and services

[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

rendered as voluntarism for the war effort. Following the federal passage of the Sheppard-Towner measures, however, private donations and services rendered were not included in the bill's funding measures. Instead, the funding for the maternal and infancy health care programs provided by the Sheppard-Towner relied on a matching-funds arrangement where the states would pledge an appropriation for the costs of administering the health care programs and the federal government would match whatever sums the states appropriated. Connecticut claimed federal overreach with such social welfare laws and established state laws that essentially allowed for the same types of health care programs as the Sheppard-Towner but did not tie the state that enacted such legislation to the federal act's programs.[71] States that questioned or blocked the authority of the federal government to enact the legislation developed state laws such as Connecticut. Connecticut passed its own state law for maternity and infancy health care protections, but instead of such state laws being an equal alternative to the Sheppard-Towner, these states often took monies from existing programs that benefitted women and children and re-appropriated them to new state health care laws.[72] In his work that summarized the history of the states' battles with Sheppard-Towner, J. Stanley Lemons concluded that such re-appropriated monies from existing social welfare programs for new social welfare laws served as a sacrifice to the arguments for states' rights to control social welfare legislation.[73]

The threats of socialism and communism, the arguments for states' rights to control social welfare laws, and the entrenchment of the coalitions for and against the legislation

[71] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 782-783.

[72] In Connecticut, the state legislation that provided health care for maternity and infancy care re-appropriated $30,720 from funds earmarked for the state's Bureau of Child Welfare which had been heavily advocated as a needed bureau by the state's League of Women Voters. Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 782-783.

[73] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 782-783.

became the hallmarks of debates each time the Sheppard-Towner Act needed Congressional approval for federal appropriations. Since the act required matching funds from the federal and states' governments each time it came up for renewal in 1924 and in 1926-1927, the key components of the debates reemerged and the coalitions that supported and attempted to block the bill made similar claims at each re-appropriation attempt.[74] In the 1924 debates over the Sheppard-Towner, the heavily-biased nationalistic newspaper *The Dearborn Independent* published a spider-web chart that made claims that certain people, many women reformers who had supported federal social welfare legislation in the 1910s, promoted communist or socialist political social welfare and advocated socialist and communist political ideologies.[75] Some of the women reformers and the organizations tied to them were coalition partners with the Woman's Committee or other federal branches of government during the war. As federal branches of government such as the Women's Bureau, the Children's Bureau, the Department of Labor and women's groups such as the Women's Joint Congressional Committee, Women's Trade Union League, Parent-Teachers Association, League of Women Voters, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union were all linked to the spider-web chart, accusations of social

[74] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 779; Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 183.

[75] According to Dorothy Brown, the spider-web chart published in March of 1924 made many false accusations of communist and socialist political ideologies among prominent women reformers and social welfare advocacy groups. Among some of the accused groups were the Women's Joint Congressional Committee, the Women's Trade Union League, Jane Addams of the Hull House Settlement and the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom, Grace Abbott of the Children's Bureau, and other prominent women reformers. Some of those reformers worked with the Woman's Committee chairmen on World War I programs. For more on the accusations *The Dearborn Independent* claimed against social welfare activists and women reformers, see: Brown, *Setting a Course,* 57; Nielsen, *Un-American Womanhood*.

welfare legislation as creeping socialism and communism threatened renewal of the Sheppard-Towner each time the act entered Congress.[76]

In 1926, the coalitions that formed to block the Sheppard-Towner re-appropriation again publicly declared the act as socialist and condemned its supporters as part of a "feminist-socialist-communist plot" to control the federal government.[77] The Women Patriots and another former anti-suffrage women's group, the Sentinels of the Republic, along with the American Medical Association, formed the core of the coalition to block the re-appropriation of the act, but the Women Patriots and the Sentinels of the Republic accused the act's backers of socialism and communism much more so than the AMA.[78] The Women Patriots and the Sentinels of the Republic filed a thirty-six page petition with Senator Thomas A Bayard of Delaware who read it into the *Congressional Record.*[79] Such accusations damaged the ability of both maternalist and feminist women reformers to advocate for social welfare reforms and in 1927, Congress compromised in its re-appropriation of the act.[80] While Congress agreed to fund the act for two more years, until July of 1929, it agreed to formally repeal the law effective on July 29, 1929.[81] The work the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau did for Children's Year in 1918 helped propel health care, at least for women and children, into federal legislation that appeared in 1921 as the Sheppard-Towner Act. Without the millions of weighing and measuring tests and follow-up exams done by women volunteers in their local communities under the authority of the Woman's Committee, the quantitative and qualitative information to

[76] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 784-785; Brown, *Setting a Course,* 54-57.
[77] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 784.
[78] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 784-785.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.

support Sheppard-Towner would not have existed and the bill may not have been proposed.[82] Even as the Sheppard-Towner Act officially ended in July of 1929, the legislation proved highly successful.[83] By the time the law was abolished, "nearly 3,000 child and maternal health centers were established in forty-five states, chiefly in rural areas…[and] the nation's infant and maternal mortality rates dropped significantly during [the act's] limited life."[84] In those health centers, according to J. Stanley Lemons, combined federal and state monies allowed staffers to conduct "183,252 health conferences" and distributed "22,020,489 pieces of literature" to mothers and pregnant women on maternal and infant health care.[85] In total, more than four million babies and over 700,000 new and expectant mothers received health care services and education while just over three million home visits were made by licensed nurses hired through the Sheppard-Towner programs.[86] The organization of the Sheppard-Towner programs mirrored the World War I Children's Year programs developed from the coalition of the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee. During Children's Year, the Woman's Committee helped promote health care programs as a national need for the future and during the eight years that the Sheppard-Towner programs began in the states, less than three years since the end of Children's Year in the summer of 1919, the federal government invested in social welfare programs to develop a healthy upcoming population that would be able to defend the country. The experiences of the draft rejection rates compelled federal involvement

---

[82] For more on the significance of the coalition of the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau, see: Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1870-1929,* especially chapter four "Consolidation and Expansion of the Dominion: The Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act, 1918-1924."

[83] Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State,* 184; Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform,* 93-123; Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 781-782, 784-785.

[84] Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State,* 184.

[85] Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act," 785.

[86] Ibid.

in health care concerns during the war and the continuation of federal involvement in health care for women and children was a lasting result of the efforts of the Woman's Committee's coalition with the Children's Bureau.

While the battles to pass, and then continue funding, maternal and infancy health care programs under the Sheppard-Towner Act continued throughout the 1920s, the fight to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1920s created a different schism within the women's reform groups that had been united under the Woman's Committee during World War I. Kristi Andersen connected the passage of suffrage to the rising fears of a women's voting bloc among politicians in the 1920s and the political ramifications of women entering into "mainstream male politics wholesale—that women would vote, campaign, and run for office—as well as the possibility that political outcomes would be affected."[87] While politicians worried over the changes to their political landscape with women's suffrage, in American households, women's suffrage also "challenged the assumption of male authority over women" on political and legislative issues as "the vote itself was clearly an individual right."[88] Yet, as Andersen noted, while much speculation concerning women's political impact remained a widely discussed topic in the early 1920s, these discussions also revealed "a tension between advocacy of a 'maternalist' political agenda and the realization that such an agenda was based on women's confinement to the private realm."[89] This confinement to the private realm meant that in the early 1920s, women's involvement in American politics and in shaping legislative agendas remained in designing maternalist reforms that benefitted the family, namely children and

[87] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 3.
[88] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 3; 35.
[89] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 35.

women, and yet limited women's political policymaking abilities for equal rights-based legislation.[90] As women entered the American political system in the early 1920s, those who supported and advanced protective, maternalist legislative reforms began to split from women who advocated and designed legislative efforts for equal rights.[91] During the war, the Woman's Committee was able to use the national crisis to mollify divisions among women reformers, but following the armistice, when calls for unity for the war effort began to decline, women reformers divided over the scope of what types of reforms to support and to advocate to newly-enfranchised women.[92] As the women reformers who had been such an important unifying force for political reforms during the war began to bicker and divide in the early 1920s, women who had been less involved in political reforms prior to the war but had joined in the Woman's Committee programs in their local communities lacked any clear leadership on political reforms. During the war, the Woman's Committee managed to find a balance of both maternalist and feminist policymaking agendas and programs as part of the war effort. Once the war ended and the national Woman's Committee and many of the state divisions were disbanded, women reformers divided into what feminist reformer Frances Kellor called "a hundred fragments under as many warring leaders."[93]

Women reformers divided into warring parties over debates on the Equal Rights Amendment throughout the 1920s. Susan Ware tracked women's political involvement in the Equal Rights Amendment debates and in gaining access to political positions during the two

---

[90] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 35; Brown, *Setting a Course,* 57-60; Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 76-78.

[91] Brown, *Setting a Course,* 59.

[92] Brown, *Setting a Course,* 58-60; Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 76-78; Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Debate," 337.

[93] Frances Kellor quoted in Dorothy Brown, *Setting a Course,* 50.

decades following the passage of women's suffrage and discovered that among women reformers "the main bone of contention was the effect of the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment] on protective legislation."[94] Ware found that the ERA revealed that women reformers argued over whether or not the proposed amendment restricted women's opportunities or protected women from social and economic conditions that embraced gender-based differences.[95] American women's historian Wendy Sarvasy also found that women reformers were deeply divided in their support for feminist-based, equal-rights legislation such as the ERA, or advocacy for protective legislation as the maternalist reformers advocated. Sarvasy found that once women gained suffrage rights following the war, the women's reform movement "divided because the two groups approached the common aim of universal worker protections and progressive social policy from different political vantage points."[96] These vantage points, according to Sarvasy, Ware, Andersen, and Brown, centered on differences between feminist and maternalist women reformers.[97] According to Ware, feminist reformers proposed and advocated the Equal Rights Amendment "as the next step toward winning full equality for women under the law" by outlawing economic and legal discrimination due to gender differences.[98] Feminist women reformers supported the ERA because they "claimed that laws limiting night work or setting minimum wage levels for women workers did more harm than good by restricting opportunities for women workers" and insisted that "women could never be

[94] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 76.
[95] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 76-78.
[96] Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Debate," 337.
[97] Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Debate," 337; Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 76-78; Brown, *Setting a Course,* 58-60; Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 35.
[98] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 76.

free until laws and custom eliminated sex-based distinctions."[99] Maternalist women reformers, including significant reform organizations such as the National Consumers' League and the Women's Trade Union League, opposed the ERA because they believed "that men and women were fundamentally different when it came to physical strength and emotional makeup, thereby concluding that women in the work force needed the protection of special legislation…[and] they were unwilling to sacrifice the good position that protective legislation had provided for women workers in order to strike down other legal discrimination."[100] The divisions among women reformers concerning the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923 remained the primary moment when the coalition that formed during the crisis of the war broke and women reformers, maternalists and feminists, lost their abilities to retain any power of a women's bloc in politics.

While the ERA divided women reformers into fractious camps concerned with supporting feminist and maternalist bases for policymaking, in the state and local governments across the United States, women gained access to political offices and held sway over many political decisions in their local communities and in their state governments. Kristi Andersen found that by 1928, local political offices and state governments experienced a 223% increase of women in political positions at the city, town, and county offices since suffrage was extended to women in 1920.[101] A significant part of the increase, according to Andersen, was in town and

[99] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 76-77.

[100] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 76-78.

[101] Figures of political offices held by women was based on a report by former Woman's Committee chairman and reformer Sophonisba Breckenridge who helped the League of Women Voters conduct a study of women officeholders in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Connecticut and Michigan in 1928. Breckenridge reported the results of the study in 1933 and Kristi Andersen quantified the information from Breckenridge's report on the League's study. See charts 5.2 and 5.3 for women officeholders in Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 119.

city political positions "where the average increase per state is 96%."[102] The increased numbers of women officeholders in state, local, and town governmental positions, however, concentrated women into mostly specified areas of political involvement and women remained unable to obtain certain political positions in their state and local governments. Andersen found that although women officeholders increased significantly during the 1920s and into the early 1930s, the majority of the positions women held were as secretaries of state and state superintendents of public education but in comparison, "by 1930 no woman had served as a state attorney general."[103] Women officeholders in the 1920s dominated or controlled positions primarily in areas related to education and social welfare, revealing a tendency that women politicians in the states tended to remain in positions that directly influenced children and families. As women politicians in the states filled offices in educational departments and other positions that directly influenced families, such as on boards of health, they had the potential to continue maternalist-based laws or establish new ones.

Many state and local women officeholders may have taken some of their political leanings in the 1920s from the national women politicians and political leaders, but by the end of the 1920s, many women political leaders involved in national politics began to concentrate on the federal government and relied less on organizing women at the grass-roots level in the states.[104] During the war, women at the grass-roots level had the ability to access federal as well as state politics and policymaking not as politicians but as part of an active and engaged

[102] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 119.

[103] Andersen notes that some of the women officeholders were elected while others were appointed but by 1928, over 1,000 women held political office in their state or local governments. Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 115.

[104] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 73.

citizenry. The women in their states and local communities volunteered with the Woman's Committee and were able to form public policies that supported women and children and yet sought to also balance political demands from the Committee's feminists. By 1928, women national political leaders began concentrating on federal policymaking initiatives and formed conferences to encourage local and state women politicians to focus on national initiatives as priorities and deemphasized grass-roots organizing in favor of advocating political party membership in both the Democratic and Republican parties.[105] National Democratic women leaders hoped that by organizing local and state women to join the party, they could widen the scope of reform efforts as party platform planks and "thereby…expand women's perspective 'beyond the saddle galls of local politics.'"[106] Women leaders in the Republican Party also advocated for women's growing inclusion in national politics and hoped to adapt their party's platform to include issues that women in local communities in the states supported by organizing grass-roots women volunteers to canvass their neighborhoods on behalf of the Republican party.[107] The efforts by both the Republicans and Democrats to absorb any remaining portions of the World War I women's bloc during the political infighting among women's coalitions over the Sheppard-Towner Act and its re-appropriations and the proposed Equal Rights Amendment complicated women's abilities to address myriad grass-roots demands coming from women voters.[108]

---

[105] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 73; Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 88.
[106] Mary "Molly" Dewson quoted in Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 73.
[107] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 80-82.
[108] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 88.

During the war, the Woman's Committee's programs were designed to allow for local variations depending on different needs in the communities throughout the states. But, the abilities for women active in their communities to access federal departments and suggest policies in their states and local governments following the war diminished as politically-active women became absorbed into the political parties. Kristi Andersen found that women reformers involved in suffrage activism and who formed the board of the Woman's Committee had "spent their formative years in a political culture that was aggressively and universally partisan, and frequently asserted that parties were central to politics, and that only by working through the parties could one engage the levers of change."[109] Carrie Chapman Catt, one of the chairmen of the national Woman's Committee and a longtime suffrage leader, advocated for women's involvement in the organized political parties in the late winter of 1920, just as the suffrage amendment was in its final stages of ratification. Emily Newell Blair, who became a national leader in the Democrat party of the 1920s, also rallied women to join a political party and run for political offices.[110] While influential women such as Catt and Blair advocated membership and active participation in political parties, the League of Women Voters, which had transitioned from its previous fight for women's suffrage to developing educational information on political candidates to inform new women voters, sponsored debates between political opponents and helped "shift the focus toward candidates at the expense of party enthusiasm and loyalty."[111] Even though the League of Women Voters attempted to keep women focused on candidates and political issues under debate, the former suffragist group

[109] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 29.
[110] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 40-41.
[111] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 12.

also had to juggle the party system as the Republican and Democrat political candidates adopted national party platform planks as general answers to political questions. As women had been largely excluded from formal political parties prior to national suffrage, the sudden calls from nationally prominent suffragists to join a party may have contributed to the decline in social welfare issue-based politicking that women participated in since the 1890s.[112] As the political parties centralized platform planks and encouraged candidates to support national party plans, issues that remained important to women became increasingly represented through either coalitions of reformers or the political parties. Since many of the women reformers who had joined coalitions to support Sheppard-Towner were accused of being socialists or communists, the use of coalitions to support social welfare by issues-based politicking was less appealing than during the war. The parties, therefore, may have presented a viable alternative for engaging in politics.

In February of 1920, suffrage leader and Woman's Committee chairman Carrie Chapman Catt addressed suffrage supporters and workers at the last meeting of the National League of Women Voters and admonished the crowd to join the political parties even though suffragists had endured many disappointments with the Republican and Democratic parties before the extension of national suffrage to women.[113] Yet, as Kristi Andersen, Linda Kerber, and Julie Reuben point out, a fundamental change in conceptions of citizenship were underway in the years just prior to the enfranchisement of women.[114] Citizenship had been defined in terms of one's ability to protect and defend the nation-state but by the late Progressive era, women's

[112] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 4-5, 11-12; Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 62.
[113] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 40-41, 77, 95; Muncy, 127.
[114] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 39.

involvement in the political realm as lobbyists, petitioners, and reformers began to redefine citizenship as one's ability to do good works for the nation-state.[115] Public schools taught citizenship to high school and elementary students as community involvement for the public good and stressed the need for everyone in their communities to engage in programs and ideas that underscored the interconnectedness of all people in America.[116] This new approach to teaching citizenship obligations and responsibilities increased during the war as calls for civilian involvement in the war effort included every American regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or race. Susan Ware concluded that women especially were called upon by the United States government in periods of extreme national crises.[117] Ware found that politically-involved women, many of whom were engaged in non-governmental positions in civic groups, increased in the number of politically-appointed federal positions and state governmental jobs during both the World Wars and in the economic and social crises of the Great Depression. Ware called these women "crisis women" and found that while they were appointed to or elected into federal and state governmental offices, that these positions oftentimes were temporary and ended once crises were over.[118] During the Great War, the "crisis women" who entered federal and state emergency positions were drawn heavily from the national suffrage movement and other prominent women's clubs and organizations, many of which supported

[115] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 39. For more detailed descriptions of this change of understanding concerning citizenship as defined by obligation and not rights, see: Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship,* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), especially chapter five, " 'A Constitutional Right to be Treated Like American Ladies': Helen Feeney, Robert Goldberg, and Military Obligation in Contemporary America." For more on the teaching of citizenship as obligatory service learning, see: Julie A. Reuben, "Beyond Politics: Community Civics and the Redefinition of Citizenship in the Progressive Era," *History of Education Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (Winter 1997), 399-420.

[116] Reuben, "Beyond Politics," 399-420.

[117] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 62.

[118] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 116-131.

protective legislation for women and children. The Woman's Committee and its state divisions reveal how the "crisis women" of World War I were utilized in partnerships with federal agencies and how those women suffused their political ideas into policymaking and legislation.

Following the armistice, however, the need for "crisis women" abated, but the extension of suffrage to women within a year of the armistice created a new political crisis as the political parties attempted to absorb the influx of millions of newly enfranchised voters. Women had appeared united during the war as the extenuating circumstances demanded women's involvement in wartime industries, food production and conservation, and national health care as the expansion of women in emergency wartime political positions allowed women reformers to have direct access to policymaking and legislative efforts that they did not have prior to the war. Their involvement in national and state politics and direct connections to federal as well as state agencies and departments helped support the idea among the political parties that once women obtained the vote, they would use the power of a women's bloc to continue advocating protective legislation. Yet, the divisions in women's groups and organizations that erupted during the debates concerning hallmark protective legislation such as Sheppard-Towner and the provisions in the Equal Rights Amendment, which attempted to create equality-based legislation that also provided protective benefits for women and children, underscored a schism in the sociopolitical bloc that women formed during the war.

Anticipating the entry of women voters as a bloc, the Republican and Democrat parties began to draw women to their parties through offering political positions to women and by utilizing women in local communities to organize and advocate for party membership. Carrie

Chapman Catt, Emily Newell Blair, and other women who had been politically active prior to the extension of suffrage encouraged women to join the party of their choice and stressed that the political parties, while not always friendly to women before suffrage, still were at the center of American political power.[119] In 1920 at the convention of the League of Women Voters, several women debated the need for women to join the party system and challenged those women, including Catt, who advocated for party membership. Catt responded with an impromptu speech in which she asserted that while women were not incorrect to question the power of the political parties, they needed to understand that "it is not a question of whether they ought to be powerful or ought not to be powerful; they are."[120] Emily Newell Blair also supported Catt's position on the power of the political parties when she "argued that there were only two ways for women to get political power: by holding office and be becoming effective in political organizations."[121] Blair and Catt saw the political parties as women's best path to political parity and activism and encouraged women to organize for the parties and support party-selected political candidates.

Even as politically-astute women such as Blair and Catt advocated for women to join the Democrat or Republican parties, other women found that party membership was not a clear path to women's political parity or to political office. Anne Martin, who had been a suffragist and a Senate candidate from Nevada, wrote in 1925 that Catt and Blair's fervent advocacy for party membership left women "exactly where men party leaders wanted them, bound, gagged,

[119] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 39.
[120] Carrie Chapman Catt quoted in Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 40.
[121] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 41.

divided, and delivered to the Republican and Democrat parties."[122] For Martin and other women who had joined one of the parties following national suffrage, women's political power was radically diminished as they felt that membership in the parties decreased women's collective political voice. Following the passage of the 19th Amendment, women reformers believed that they would be able to "purify the cities, abolish child labor, clean up politics, end all wars," but by joining the political parties, these efforts were subsumed by other political needs and women found themselves increasingly disillusioned by their perceptions of their political might as the 1920s presented more divisions in the women's bloc.[123]

During the Progressive era and the Great War, many women believed Progressive reformers' criticisms of political parties when they claimed that the parties created corrupt politics and politicians by promoting self-interested politicking that oftentimes centered on personal ambitions of certain politicians and groups that financed political policymaking.[124] In 1927, the first chairman of the Republican Women's Committee in Illinois, Winifred Starr Dobyns expressed her disappointment with women's inabilities to alter the purposes of political parties when she wrote that "with some possible exceptions, the aim of the political organizations is not good government, patriotic service, public welfare. These are but phrases used for campaign purposes."[125] Dobyns also criticized her own party, the Republicans, as well as the Democrats when she wrote that women who joined these parties to reform "from within," herself included, deluded themselves as Dobyns increasingly felt that women's

[122] Anne M. Martin quoted in Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 77.
[123] Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 5.
[124] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 42.
[125] Winifred Starr Dobyns quoted in Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 42-43.

membership in the political parties meant that women would no longer reform the political system as they had claimed before and during the war, but that instead, women's party membership meant that they would "condone its actions, accept its standards."[126] Dobyns's experiences with the Republican Party in Illinois and her general understanding of women's roles in party politics during the 1920s led her to warn other women that joining a political party was "not the way to carry on the fight for decency."[127] Certainly the debates involved in the Sheppard-Towner Act and its re-appropriation bills in the 1920s underlined not only the divisions in women's reforms, but also highlighted the involvement of outside interest groups and their abilities to sway political opinion. Although the Woman's Committee and a variety of its coalition partnered women's groups and clubs during the war advocated political lobbying and other pressure tactics for policymaking and political changes, once the schisms began in women's groups following the war, the same tactics that had proven so successful for reform efforts became employed against Progressive women's groups.

While the claims that women would clean up politics and significantly alter the political goals and environment of the country through political party membership became stifled, these claims also reminded women of the unity of the war years and the struggle for the suffrage. In 1919 just before her death from pneumonia, Anna Howard Shaw foresaw the difficulties for the next generation of women reformers and wrote to Emily Newell Blair that she "was sorry for

[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.

you young women who have to carry on the work for the next ten years, for suffrage was a symbol, and now you have lost your symbol."[128]

Even as women lost their unifying symbol with the winning of the suffrage, those with connections to reform groups and the suffrage movement seemed poised to enter politics and political offices through their party memberships. Kristi Andersen found that many suffragists in smaller communities and rural areas tended to vote Republican,[129] whether through official membership in the party or not, and Republicans began catering to local interests and local needs in these communities, especially in the Midwest.[130] Much of the small-town and rural support of the Republican Party among women in the 1920s may have centered on the Republican calls for local control of social welfare policies. American social and women's historian Susan Stein-Roggenbuck found that during the 1930s New Deal reforms, many women and men in their local communities and city neighborhoods rejected federal controls or attempted to shape federal social welfare policy implementations by interfering with social workers who contracted with state and federal agencies to establish food programs, health care, and other social welfare programs.[131] People in Michigan's local communities and cities, according to Stein-Roggenbuck, largely were guided by beliefs that local community members made better decisions regarding social welfare benefits because of their intimate knowledge of their communities and neighbors rather than the federal government. Stein-Roggenbuck refers

---

[128] Anna Howard Shaw to Emily Newell Blair, quoted in Ware, *Beyond Suffrage,* 5.

[129] Andersen, however, is quick to note that voting patterns by gender are difficult to understand or uncover from empirical records. Andersen found in her research on voting patterns of women and political party membership, that votes were not tallied by sex and "systematic, electorally relevant survey research did not exist until much later," Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 6.

[130] Andersen, *After Suffrage,* 62-68.

[131] Susan Stein-Roggenbuck, *Negotiating Relief: The Development of Social Welfare Programs in Depression-Era Michigan, 1930-1940,* (Ohio State Univ. Press, 1999).

to this mentality of local control as “fiscal localism,” in reference to the financial relief programs of the New Deal and local-level rejections of federal monetary controls to guide and shape social welfare. While Stein-Roggenbuck concentrated her investigations during the New Deal era of the 1930s, local control concerning social welfare also appeared in the Woman’s Committee’s relationships with its state divisions and local branches twenty years prior to the New Deal. State divisional chairmen oftentimes featured in reports to the national Committee how women in their local communities and neighborhoods concentrated on specific social welfare reforms and shaped wartime programs to benefit local needs. By allowing much localized controls over wartime social welfare programs that benefitted women and children, the state divisions gathered what programs the local communities supported and advocated as policymaking platforms for the states. Since local women in their communities desired a direct connection to social welfare policymaking and implementation during the war, the national Woman’s Committee developed a fluid, issue-based women’s bloc that generally supported social welfare benefits but demanded local controls over those benefits. As women in various small communities and urban neighborhoods attempted to help the war effort, they also demanded that women’s political ideas and opinions be heard in federal and state legislatures, agencies, and wartime departments. The Woman’s Committee, even though it operated for only a few years and closed shortly after the armistice, provided a temporary access point for women to shape national and federal social welfare policymaking as citizens of their local communities.

Although the wartime coalitions of the Woman’s Committee did not last long after the mid-1920s, the social welfare legislation passed during and in the five years after the Great War

signified women's key roles in establishing federal and state social welfare laws that would continue into the 1930s. In the social and economic crisis of the Great Depression, women who gained valuable experience organizing for social welfare during World War I were able to advance progressive social legislation through Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs. In Roosevelt's administration, women were appointed to key leadership positions, such as Frances Perkins as Director of the Department of Labor. Perkins drafted the majority of the Social Security Act of 1935 and consolidated much of the social welfare goals of Progressive era reformers into the federal legislation. Legislation that was advanced during the Great War by the sociopolitical bloc the Woman's Committee helped form among American women focused on creating state laws that provided for the welfare of the American family and supported federalization of social welfare laws, but the Great Depression offered women opportunities to federalize social welfare in profound ways. During the Great War, the Woman's Committee's lack of funds to run national programs demanded that state divisions and local branches secure their funding independently, which allowed the state divisions and local branches to pick and choose which wartime programs to advance to women. The Woman's Committee, therefore, tied its coalitions with federal agencies and departments to women's reform groups and their memberships to increase funding and attract women unaffiliated with reform groups into the collective calls for wartime social welfare activism. In turn, the Woman's Committee was able to tacitly allow its partners in the women's reform movements to politicize women's social welfare activism and call for new legislation to protect the American family. Through the wartime social welfare activism of over nearly half of the women who became enfranchised in

1920 with the ratification of the 19th Amendment, state laws and some federal laws were established the directly benefitted American women and children.

As the crisis of the Great Depression threatened the social welfare of the American family, the social welfare legislation passed in the states during the Great War through women's social welfare activism could no longer be funded by bankrupt states. As the Great Depression continued, demands for federal assistance provided women who had gained experience during the war an avenue to federalize social welfare.

During the war, women reformers working with the Woman's Committee developed innovative food programs to provide for their local communities and encouraged women's direct involvement in growing, preserving, and distributing food. The Woman's Committee also engaged in connecting local women to federal demands for food needs during the war and coordinated with the United States Food Administration to provide for those needs. During the Great Depression, Americans once again faced food insecurities and the wartime efforts of the Woman's Committee provided a framework for food programs that may have offered some assistance to American families. Public gardens, community kitchens, and locally-traded produce became essential for rural communities during the Great Depression and the use of agricultural colleges to assist in federal food programs reveal a harkening back to programs of the Woman's Committee in World War I.

The Woman's Committee's focus on securing the health of children and pregnant women during Children's Year in 1918 also stressed the importance of women's activism in changing state and federal legislation. The incredible growth of free and low-priced health

clinics and the focus on local communities' active engagement in the health of American families promoted permanent federal involvement in health care starting in the 1920s with the Sheppard-Towner Act. Although the Sheppard-Towner Act would be short-lived, the divisiveness concerning its enactment revealed a growing tension after the crisis of the war among women over who and how health care would be controlled. While some women decried federal laws for health care as a violation of states' rights and creeping socialism in the 1920s, millions of women during the war believed that both the state and federal governments should work together to fund health care initiatives for women and children. Although federally-funded health care remained a divisive topic throughout the twentieth century, the advancements in providing some public funding for health care for women and children were established during the Children's Year in 1918 by the coalition of the Woman's Committee and the Children's Bureau.

During the Great War, the Woman's Committee also attempted to assist working-class women in obtaining both equal pay and better working conditions. Faced with an advisory role to Samuel Gompers's Labor Committee for the Council of National Defense, the Woman's Committee's abilities to engage women in social welfare activism on behalf of women workers remained contested and disagreements over authority to direct women workers with Gompers led the Department of Labor to create the Women In Industry branch, which changed its name to the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor in 1920. The Women In Industry branch of the Department of Labor included directors and key members of the Woman's Committee and of Gompers's Labor Committee and refocused on investigating and collecting information on wartime pay rates and workplace conditions in the factories and piecework contractors tied to

wartime industries. The Women In Industry branch of the Department of Labor, while using the Woman's Committee as an investigative and research arm, established a need for long term federal involvement in laws for women workers. The Women's Bureau in 1920 confirmed their commitment to addressing and advocating for working women and remains an active branch of the Department of Labor in the twenty-first century.

The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense existed for only two years nationally, but it established social welfare as a federal as well as state concern and centered women as active participants and shapers of policymaking on behalf of the American family. The Woman's Committee formed during the crisis of the Great War and managed to organize and motivate millions of American women to join in social welfare activism through coalitions with women's reform groups and federal agencies. The Committee also attracted women unaffiliated with reform groups to social welfare activism by developing innovative programs that both assisted the war effort and also helped to protect the American family from the social upheavals of war. By choosing to call itself the "Woman's Committee," the board of directors, with Anna Howard Shaw at the lead, envisioned a collective response among American women to protect the home front by advocating and advancing social welfare activism into political actions. In the process, American women rejected any "woman slackers" and committed themselves to social welfare activism as home front defense.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archives

Grand Rapids Public Library Public Library Local History Archives, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Hackley Public Library Local History and Genealogy, Torrent House Rare Books, Muskegon, Michigan.

United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

Western Michigan University Archives and Regional History Collections, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Published Primary Sources

Addams, Jane. *Twenty Years at Hull House.* New York: MacMillan Company, 1912. http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/addams/hullhouse/hullhouse.html.

Blair, Emily Newell. "Are Women a Failure in Politics?" *Harper's Magazine* 151 (Oct., 1925): 513-522.

---. "Women in the Political Parties." *American Academy of Political and Social Science* 143 "Women in the Modern World" special. (May 1925): 217-229.

---. "Men in Politics As a Woman Sees Them." *Harper's Magazine* 152 (Dec., 1925): 703-709.

Blatch, Harriot Stanton. *Mobilizing Woman Power*, *with a Foreword by Theodore Roosevelt*. New York: YWCA, The Woman's Press, 1918.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. "Labor and the War." *Monthly Labor Review* 7, no.2 (1918), http://www.jstor.org/stable/41827399, 63–105.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. "Women in Industry: The New Position of Women in American Industry." *Monthly Labor Review* 12 (Jan. 1921): 153-157.

Chamberlain, Mary. "Women and War Work." *The Survey* (May 19, 1917): 153-154.

Clarke, Ida Clyde. *American Women and the World War.* New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918. http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/comment/Clarke/Clarke02.htm

Cooke, Jay. "The Work of the Federal Food Administration." *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* Vol. 78 Special "Mobilizing America's Resources for the War" (July 1918): 175-184.

Crane, Caroline Bartlett. *History of the Work of the Women's Committee (Michigan Division) Council of National Defence During the World War.* State of Michigan: State Administrative Board Publication, 1922.

---. "The Housewife and the Marketing Problem." *National Municipal Review*, Philadelphia, PA, July 1918.

Harper, Ida Husted. *The Passing of Anna Howard Shaw.* New York: National Woman's Suffrage Publishing Co., Inc., July 1919. *Nineteenth Century Collections Online.* http://tunyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/42Ws4.

Hitchcock, Nevada Davis. "The Mobilization of Women." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 78 (July 1918): 24-31.

Kelley, Florence. "The New Woman's Party," *Survey* 47 (March 5, 1921): 827-828.

Piexotto, Jessica B. "The Children's Year and the Woman's Committee." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 79 (Sept. 1918): 259.

Puller, Edwin S. "When Equal Rights Are Unequal." *Virginia Law Review* 13, no.8 (June 1927): 619-630.

Selden, Charles. "The Most Powerful Lobby in Washington," *Ladies Home Journal,* April 1922.

Shaw, Anna Howard. "Leaflet: What the war meant to women," July 1919, Iowa Suffrage Memorial Commission Records, University of Iowa. http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/ref/collection/suffrage/id/1750.

U.S. National Archives and Records Collections. "Cable Act (1922)." http://www.ndhs.org/s/1012/images/editor_documents/library/issues_and_controversies_in_american_history_-_cable_act__1922_.pdf.

U.S. National Archives and Record Collections. "Classification 31: White Slave Traffic Act." https://www.archives.gov/research/investigations/fbi/classifications/031-white-slave-traffic.html.

United States National Archives. "Keating-Owens Child Labor Act of 1916." http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=59; An act to prevent interstate commerce in the products of child labor, and for other purposes, September 1, 1916; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789-; General Records of the

United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives and Records Administration.

U.S. National Archives. "The Smith-Lever Act of 1914." http://www.archivesfoundation.org/documents/smith-lever-act-1914/.

United States National Archives. "Transcript of Keating-Owen Act of 1916, 64th Congress of the United States, September 1, 1916." http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=59&page=transcript.

Wald, Lillian. Testimony, January 27, 1909, United States House of Representatives, 60th Cong., 2nd Sess., Hearings Before the Committee on Expenditures in the Interior Department, on HR 24148, Establishment of a Children's Bureau in the Interior Department, (GPO: 1909), 35.

Woman's Committee Information Department, "The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense: Organizational Charts, May, 1917-1918." Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1918.

Secondary Sources

Abbott, Grace. "Recent Trends in Mother's Aid." *Social Service Review* 8, no.2 (June 1934): 191-210: 191-210.

Andersen, Kristi. *After Suffrage: Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics before the New Deal. Chicago: University of Chicago Press*, 1996.

Barry, John M. *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History*. New York: Penguin Books, 2004.

Beaver, Daniel R. *Newton D. Baker and the American War Effort, 1917-1919.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

Beier, Lucinda McCray. *Health Culture in the Heartland, 1880-1980.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Bellamy, Edward. *Looking Backward, Unabridged Dover Thrift Edition*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1996.

Barker-Benfield, G.J. and Catherine Clinton. *Portraits of American Women: From the Civil War to the Present Vol. II.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.

Boas, Ernst. “The Contribution of Medical Social Work to Medical Care,” *Social Science Review* 13 (Dec. 1939): 626-633.

Boris, Eileen. *Home to Work: Motherhood and the Politics of Industrial Homework in the United States.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Boynton, Virginia R. “Girls, We Must Enlist!” *Chicago History Magazine* 33 (Summer 2004): 26-49.

---. “‘Even in the remotest parts of the state’: Downstate ‘Woman’s Committee’ Activities on the Illinois Home Front during World War I.” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 96, no.4 (Winter 2003): 318-346.

Bradbury, Dorothy Edith. *Five Decades of Action for Children*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962.

Breen, William J. *Uncle Sam At Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919.* Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1984.

---. “Southern Women in the War: The North Carolina Women’s Committee, 1917-1919.” *North Carolina Historical Review* 55 (July 1978): 251-283.

Brody, David. *Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era.* New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969.

Brown, Carrie. *Rosie’s Mom: Forgotten Women Workers of the First World War.* Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002.

Brown, Dorothy. *Setting a Course: American Women in the 1920s.* Boston, MA: Twayne, 1987.

Brownell, Penelope Noble. “The Women’s Committees of the First World War: Women in Government, 1917-1919.” PhD Diss., Brown University, 2002.

Buch, Vera. “Women and the War.” *Class Struggle* 5, No.12 (Dec. 1935). http://www.weisbord.org/FiveTwelve.htm.

Capozzola, Christopher. *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Chambers, Clarke A. *Seedtime of Reform: American Social Service and Social Action, 1918-1933*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963.

Clemens, Elisabeth S. "Securing Political Returns to Social Capital: Women's Associations in the United States, 1880-1920s." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29, no.4 (Spring 1999): 613-638.

Conner, Valerie J. "'The Mothers of the Race' in World War I: The National War Labor Board and Women in Industry." *Labor History* 21 (Winter 1979): 31-54.

Cott, Nancy F. *The Grounding of Modern Feminism.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.

Cuff, Robert D. "Herbert Hoover: The Ideology of Voluntarism and War Organization during the Great War." *Journal of American History* 64 (1977): 358-372.

Davis, Allen F. *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

---. Introduction to *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, by Jane Addams, Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1972.

---. "Welfare, Reform & World War I." *American Quarterly* 19, no.3 (Autumn, 1967): 516-533.

---. "The Social Workers and the Progressive party, 1912-1916." *American Historical Review* 69 (April 1964): 671-688.

Deegan, Mary Jo, ed. *Women at The Hague: The International Peace Congress of 1915* with Jane Addams, Emily G. Balch, and Alice Hamilton. New York: Humanity Books, 2003.

Diner, Steven J. *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1998.

Duffy, John. *The Sanitarians: A History of American Public Health.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

DuBois, Ellen Carol. *Woman Suffrage & Women's Rights*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Dulles, Foster Rhea and Melvin Dubofsky. *Labor in America: A History, 5th Edition*. Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1993.

Dumenil, Lynn. "Women's Reform Organizations and Wartime Mobilization in World War I-Era Los Angeles." *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, No.2 (April 2011): 213-245.

Dunbar, Willis. "The Transformation of Rural Life in Michigan Since 1865." *Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review* 49, no. 11 (Dec. 19, 1942): 352-359.

Dye, Nancy Schrom. “Feminism or Unionism? The New York Women’s Trade Union League and the Labor Movement.” *Feminist Studies* 3, no.1/2 (Autumn, 1975): 111.

Eighmey, Rae Katherine. “‘Food Will Win the War’: Minnesota Conservation Efforts, 1917-18.” *Minnesota History* 59, No.7 (fall, 2005): 272-286. http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHistoryMagazine/articles/59/v59i07p272-286.pdf.

Fisher, Marguerite J. “Equal Rights by Constitutional Amendment.” *Social Science* 26, no.3 (June 1951): 166-172.

Flanagan, Maureen A. *Seeing with their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

---. *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivism, 1890s-1920s.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Ford, Linda. *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman’s Party, 1912-1920.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991.

Frank, Dana. “Housewives, Socialists, and the Politics of Food: The 1917 New York Cost-of-Living Protests.” *Feminist Studies* 11, no.2 (Summer 1985): 255-285.

Franzen, Trisha. *Women in American History: Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman Suffrage.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014.

Friesen, Jennifer and Ronald K.L. Collins. “Looking Back on Muller V. Oregon.” *American Bar Association Journal* 69, no. 4 (1983): 472-477.

Galishoff, Stuart. *Safeguarding the Public Health: Newark, 1895-1918.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. “On Women’s Evolution from Economic Dependence,” in *Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women,* edited by Nancy F. Cott, 366-370. Dutton Paperback, 1972.

Greenwald, Maurine Weiner. *Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States.* Cornell University Press, 1990.

Greenwald, Richard A. “The Burning Building at 23 Washington Place: The Triangle Fire, Workers and Reformers in Progressive Era New York.” *New York History* 83, no.1 (Winter 2002): 55-91.

Grubbs, Frank L. *The Struggle for Labor Loyalty: Gompers, the A.F. of L. and the Pacifists, 1917-1920.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1968.

Hawley, Ellis. *The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order: A History of the American People and their Institutions.* St. Martin's Press, 1979.

Hacker, Meg. "When Saying 'I Do' Meant Giving Up Your Citizenship." *Prologue: Journal of the U.S. National Archives*, accessed January 3, 2016, http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2014/spring/citizenship.pdf.

Hickel, K. Walter, "War, Region, and Social Welfare: Federal Aid to Servicemen's Dependents in the South, 1917-1921." *The Journal of American History* 87, no.4 (March 2001), 1362-1391.

Hodges, Adam. "'Enemy Aliens' and 'Silk Stocking Girls': The Class Politics of Internment in the Drive for Urban Order during World War I." *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 6, no. 4 (Oct., 2007): 431-458.

Jensen, Kimberly. *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Joslin, Katherine. Introduction to *Peace and Bread in Time of War* by Jane Addams, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002.

Keene, Jennifer D. *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Kennedy, Kathleen. *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Kerber, Linda K. *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1998.

Klein, Ethel. *Gender Politics: From Consciousness to Mass Politics.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Kochersberger, Roger C. Jr. Introduction to *All in the Day's Work: An Autobiography*, by Ida M. Tarbell, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003.

Koven, Seth and Sonya Michel. "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880-1920." *American Historical Review* 95 (Oct. 1990): 1076-1108.

Kramer, Howard D. "The Beginnings of the Public Health Movement in the United States." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 21 (May-June 1947): 352-376.

Ladd-Taylor, Molly. *Mother-Work: Women, Children Welfare and the State, 1890-1930.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

---. *Raising a Baby the Government Way: Mothers' Letters to the Children's Bureau, 1915-1932*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986.

---. "Toward Defining Maternalism in U.S. History." *Journal of Women's History* 5, no.2 (Fall 1993): 110-130.

Larson, Simeon. *Labor and Foreign Policy: Gompers, the AFL, and the First World War.* Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Pres, 1974.

Lemons, J. Stanley. "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s." *Journal of American History* 55, No.4 (March 1969): 776-786.

Lindenmeyer, Kriste. *'A Right to Childhood': The U.S. Children's Bureau and Child Welfare, 1912-1946.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997.

Link, William. *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

Lunardini, Christine A. *From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928.* New York: New York University Press, 1986.

McEvoy, Arthur F. "The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911: Social Change, Industrial Accidents, and the Evolution of Common-Sense Causality." *Law and Social Inquiry* 20, no. 2 (Spring, 1995): 621-651.

McGerr, Michael. *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in American, 1870-1920.* New York: Free Press, 2003.

McMillen, Sally G. *Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Mettler, Suzanne. *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Meyer, Stephen. *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921.* Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1981.

Mirel, Jeffrey. *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Mullendore, William Clinton. *History of the United States Food Administration, 1917-1919.* Stanford University Press, 1941.

Muncy, Robyn. *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Murray, Robert K. *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1955.

Nicholas, William E. "World War I and Academic Dissent in Texas." *Arizona and the West* 14, no.3 (Autumn 1972): 215-230.

Nielsen, Kim E. *Un-American Womanhood: Antiradicalism, Antifeminism, and the First Red Scare.* Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2001.

North Carolina State University. "Green and Growing: The History of Home Demonstration and 4-H Youth Development in North Carolina." https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/specialcollections/greenngrowing/essay_smith_lever.html.

Nugent, Walter. *A Short History of Progressivism.* Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Painter, Nell Irvin. *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1987.

Peiss, Kathy. *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple Univ. Press, 1986.

Perry, Elizabeth Israels*. Belle Moskowitz: Feminine Politics and the Exercise of Power in the Age of Alfred E. Smith.* New York: Routledge, 1992.

Peterson, H.C. and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War: 1917-1918.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957.

Platt, Anthony. "The Rise of the Child-Saving Movement," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 381 (January 1969): 21-38.

Pumphrey, Ralph E. "Michael Davis and the Transformation of the Boston Dispensary, 1910-1920." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 49, No. 4 (Winter 1975): 451-465.

Riis, Jacob. *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York.* New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1914.

Rodgers, Daniel T. "In Search of Progressivism." *Reviews in American History* 10, No. 4 (Dec. 1982): 113-132.

Rupp, Leila J. *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Sarvasy, Wendy. "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Policy Debate: Post-Suffrage Feminism, Citizenship, and the Quest for a Feminist Welfare State." *Signs* 17 no.2 (Winter 1992): 329-362.

Schaffer, Ronald. *American in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Scott, Anne Firor. *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Selig, Diana. *Americans All: The Cultural Gifts Movement.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Skocpel, Theda. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1992.

Sneider, Allison. *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question, 1870-1929.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Spruill, Marjorie. *New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Stein, Leon with Introduction by William Grieder and Foreword by Michael Hirsch, *The Triangle Fire, Centennial Edition*. Cornell University Press, 2001.

Stein-Roggenbuck, Susan. *Negotiating Relief: The Development of Social Welfare Programs in Depression-Era Michigan, 1930-1940.* Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2008.

Steinson, Barbara J. *American Women's Activism in WWI.* New York: Garland Publishing, 1982.

Taylor, Lynne. "Food Riots Revisited." *Journal of Social History* 30, no.2 (Winter 1996): 483-496.

Thomas, William H. Jr. *Unsafe for Democracy: World War I and the U.S. Justice Department's Covert Campaign to Suppress Dissent.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.

Trattner, Walter I. *Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970.

---. *From Poor Law to Welfare State, 2nd Edition*. New York: The Free Press, 1979.

Traxel, David. *Crusader Nation: The United States in Peace and the Great War, 1898-1920.* New York: Knopf, 2006.

Ueda, Reed. "Second-Generation Civic America: Education, Citizenship, and the Children of Immigrants." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 29, no.4 Special edition: Patterns of Social Capital: Stability and Change in Comparative Perspective, Part II. (Spring 1999): 661-681.

Unger, Nancy C. *Fighting Bob LaFollette: The Righteous Reformer.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Veit, Helen Zoe. *Modern Food, Moral Food: Self-Control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in the Early Twentieth Century.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.

Ware, Susan. *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981.

Watts, Phyllis A. "Casework Above the Poverty Line: The Influence of Home Service in World War I on Social Work." *Social Service Review* 38 (Sept. 1964): 303-315.

Watson, Bruce. *Bread & Rose: Mills, Migrants, and the Struggle for the American Dream.* New York: Penguin Books, 2005.

Wheeler, Leigh Ann. *Against Obscenity: Reform and the Politics of Womanhood in America, 1873-1935*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

Wiebe, Robert. *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967.

Wolcott, Victoria W. *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit.* Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Wrobel, David M. "Regionalism and Sectionalism in American Historical Writing." in James M. Banner, Jr., *A Century of American Historiography*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.

Zieger, Robert H. *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001.

Zuckerman, Larry. *The Rape of Belgium: The Untold Story of World War I.* New York: New York University Press, 2004.