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Women’s & Gender Studies Program

Honors Thesis

The Prostitute, the Soldier, and the Individual Girl: The Fight for Morality in World War I

Lancaster and Beyond

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When Dr. Clifford Twombley of the Lancaster Law and Order Society declared “continual warfare” on “antisocial forces” in 1913, many other Progressive reformers shared his sentiments.1 The government’s punitive approach to prostitution and deviant sexuality during World War I reflected Twombley’s call to arms on a much larger scale. Around the same time, Dr. Mabel Ulrich of the national YWCA introduced a “brand new weapon” for the fight against sexual immorality and venereal disease: the knowledge that men did not have excessive “sex needs” and could be held to the same standard of sexuality as women.2 Both Twombley and Ulrich identified a similar enemy, but they fought two completely different battles. While Twombley’s view interlocked with the War Department’s assault against allegedly immoral women, Ulrich represented the preventive, information-centered approach of the YWCA and female physicians. During World War I, some people grew tense when confronted by the issue of prostitution and working-class women’s sexuality. Different groups disagreed about where to lay the blame for venereal disease and immorality, contesting voices lobbied for their cases, but ultimately the federal government’s patriarchal approach to sexual deviancy won out, laying the groundwork for the appalling violations of civil liberties against thousands of women over the course of the war.

Over the course of the war, the type of women who were considered threats to society changed, as did the methods reformers instituted to address such problems. Local organizations competed to govern female sexuality in the city of Lancaster during World War I. This campaign had its roots in the national crusade against prostitution in the early twentieth century. These local trends were connected to and expanded in the national realm. Working with the information

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concerning women in wartime Lancaster, I will show how these local attitudes shaped national programs and were influenced by prevailing national campaigns to identify and remedy the sources of venereal diseases. Women of all kinds became the focal point – and often direct targets – of the fight to protect soldiers after America’s entrance into World War I in 1917. In the war years, social criticism grew to encompass many working-class girls or any girl seen as “wayward,” a historical term often implying the potential for inappropriate sexual or moral behavior as defined by the local authorities. Charity girls were major players in this national crusade against sexual deviancy. Both within Lancaster and around the whole country, these girls pushed the boundaries of acceptable sexual behavior. Charity girls exchanged sexual favors of varying degrees for access to entertainment and commercial culture; this was known as treating. Analyses of events that occur later in the war allow us to understand how this shift in focus became critical. Furthermore, after relating the war’s legacy of patriarchy and punishment, I will delve into the importance of the International Conference of Women Physicians that took place after the war and look into the deeper implications for postwar society. Differing greatly in their attitudes towards women’s sexuality as well as the methods they found most effective in addressing the issue, the Law and Order Society and YWCA were at odds during the war. The YWCA hosted lecturers on sexual education and healthy behavior, while the Law and Order Society sought to protect soldiers by launching campaigns to arrest any women seen as sexually deviant.

A closer look at the city of Lancaster will help to set the context of my conversation surrounding prostitution and vice crusades. Lancaster represented the typical mid-sized Pennsylvania city in terms of the scale and openness of its vice operations in the early twentieth century. This city of 50,000 citizens contained about two hundred full-time prostitutes in 1913.
The vice establishments boasted annual revenue of at least several hundred thousand dollars and served four to five thousand people on a weekly basis. The movement to clean up Lancaster occurred in the midst of other statewide vice crusades. Since the 1880s, the city had experienced rapid progress in industrial and commercial growth. Like Harrisburg and Reading, it experienced immense population growth as well. Lancaster was the fourth most important city in Pennsylvania in terms of manufacturing by 1909, following only Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Reading. Approximately “three hundred concerns employed ten thousand workers in making umbrellas and canes, tobacco, confectionary, cottons, and iron and steel.” The city also became the service and market center for surrounding towns and farm country, at a time when the surrounding county was the wealthiest in the nation in agricultural production. This “dual boom” in manufacturing and farming brought prosperity to the city’s merchants and professionals as well as its vice facilities. Starting in 1913, the Law and Order Society had sponsored investigations of prostitution within Lancaster and vigorously attacked its red-light district, closing the vast majority of the brothels. However, the vice problem encompassed far more than traditional criminal vice.

The Lancaster Law and Order Society undertook various efforts over the early decades of the 1900s to free the city from vice such as drinking, gambling, and prostitution. I specifically focused on the reports concerning complaints related to immoral girls, whether they are classified as prostitutes, charity girls, or by other names. I examined any accounts of women’s interactions with soldiers or sailors during WWI. The daily reports of the on-duty agent from 1918-1919 proved to be especially valuable in identifying what types of women were

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4 Ibid., 511-12.
5 Ibid., 512.
6 Ibid., 512.
categorized as threats and what kinds of offenses they committed. Considering the Law and Order Society’s work as a type of moral crusade, I will try to compare how – if at all – their endeavors at increasing morality corresponded with the YWCA’s Social Morality campaign. I will discern how their efforts differed when the crusade against immorality included the interests of the federal government.

The upheaval in traditional standards of sexuality combined with the immediate crisis of World War I resulted in a flawed system designed to label women as potentially dangerous without first examining the facts. The United States Army felt the negative effects of venereal disease to a significant extent when it came time to assemble healthy troops for battle. Its problems were so great that in the early 1900s almost 30 percent of soldiers suffered from venereal disease, while fully one-third of all lost manpower days came from soldiers under treatment. The army blamed women for venereal disease while men were considered unfortunate victims.

Prostitution, treating, and sexual promiscuity had become the social problems that were foremost in people’s minds during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Additionally, the soldiers seeking companionship recognized the difference between prostitutes and girlfriends. Yet all women – even so-called normal girls – suffered the consequences of being with a soldier if the government found out. When I refer to “normal” girls, I mean average young women who had not taken part in any illegal activity or who were not part of the treating culture. They were generally middle-class. Americans thought that all of these evils had reached great proportions. At that time, great changes began to occur, and people looked for a way to return to a more stable era.

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Morality weighed on white and black women differently. How did African American women fit into the concerns about venereal disease and sexual immorality and shape government policies? Many of the government workers within the War Department easily accepted the stereotype that black women were inherently immoral. Even Raymond Fosdick, head of the Commission on Training Camp Activities, reinforced the stereotype, whether or not he meant to. He agreed with the difficulty of controlling vice among African Americans; when discussing Washington, D.C., he said, “As far as conditions in the city are concerned I believe they are as clean as can be expected in any large center of population in which the negro element so largely predominates.”

African American women were also believed to have high rates of venereal disease. Reform efforts in the early twentieth century often pushed prostitution into restricted areas in poor African American or ethnic neighborhoods of cities, only serving to reaffirm such stereotypes.

Ideas about female sexuality were changing during the early years of the twentieth century. Historian Kathy Peiss has identified a shift from the Victorian ideology of spatial and psychological separation of women and men to a cultural preoccupation with the romantic and sexual bonds between men and women. New forms of commercial entertainment reinforced the idea of heterosociality. The media promoted the importance of “mutual attraction, good sexual relations, and friendship in matrimony.” Women had been released from the restraints of “passionlessness,” but their sexuality had become increasingly commodified. Charity girls experimented with “new cultural forms that articulated gender in terms of sexual expressiveness

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9 Ibid., 161.
11 Ibid., 8.
12 Ibid., 8.
and social interaction with men. Creating this style was an assertion of self, a working-class variant of the ‘New Woman’.”

However, this style did not equal liberation; women were still restrained significantly by their economic status. The middle-class categories of “respectability” and “promiscuity” did not accurately describe the “complexity and ambiguity of working-class sexual norms, norms that were complicated further by ethnic, religious, and generational differences.”

While prostitutes, charity girls, and so-called normal girls often blurred together in the eyes of moral reformers, a continuum did exist. The women themselves made careful moral distinctions about sexual behavior. Sexuality was a complex issue that meant different things to different people and depended heavily on its context; middle-class reformers often failed to grasp the layered implications of the changing sexual standards.

During this period, social conservatives like Dr. Twombley lamented the loss of the “traditional family” and sought to uphold the values they associated with American life, including restoring women to their proper place. Middle-class reformers viewed prostitution as a cultural symbol of how the “cold, impersonal values of the marketplace could invade the most private areas of people’s lives.”

As historian Ruth Rosen suggests, “In considering deviant behavior, it is wise to remember that it is not the prevalence of deviance which triggers social reform, but rather what deviance symbolizes;” reformers recognize certain actions as symbolizing “deviance” and then attempt to reform society on the basis of such convictions.

This quotation will prove to be invaluable when considering the war and the activities surrounding women’s morality. At the heart of Progressive Era reform were two overriding assumptions – that the state had to take a more active role in regulating the social welfare of

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13 Ibid., 6.
14 Ibid., 109.
16 Rosen, The Lost Sisterhood, 39.
citizens and that the private and public sphere of activity could not be separated. Prostitution reaffirmed this intricate relation between home life and street life.\textsuperscript{17} During the time of intense change socially and economically, people attempted to claim their identities. The competing forces of new values and old ones resulted in a clash.

Progressive reform was not a singular movement; it was an informal alliance of different movements that were going in roughly the same direction. Leaders of prohibition, suffrage, and settlement house organizations found a common cause. Their reform ideas offered a middle ground, addressing the restlessness of society by offering moderate alternatives. When the Progressive Party formed in 1912, it gave the movement a central focal point. Branches of Progressivism were diverse. Some wanted to achieve social justice; others to restore honesty and democracy to politics. Also, many wanted to curb sinful behavior. As we can see through reformers of the Law and Order Society and the women of the YWCA, different goals and priorities motivated these loosely connected Progressive organizations. Progressive Era reform gathered its strength from the middle class of American society. However, leadership of the movement and its most zealous supporters consistently came from the upper-middle class, well educated, affluent, mostly Protestant, native born people.\textsuperscript{18}

Anti-prostitution reformers claimed to have achieved the impossible on the eve of America’s entrance into war: prostitution had changed its form, moving underground. No longer openly plying their trade in concert hall, cabarets, or nightclubs, prostitutes had moved out of sight.\textsuperscript{19} During World War I, women’s personal sexual choices became crimes against the state.


Having relations with a soldier could result in venereal disease and further weaken the army; such action by a woman could hurt America’s chances of winning the war. The federal government devised new ways of controlling these women. Is immorality permanent? Are these girls inherently immoral? The different perspectives on this question greatly influenced the actions taken against prostitutes. The dominant approaches varied; many reformers cited elimination as their ultimate goal for prostitution and pursued various methods. In 1915, sociologist Robert Park observed the development of “moral regions” as the urbanization of cities progressed. “Moral regions” symbolized parts of the city that were segregated because of interests or tastes; the vice districts found in most cities were examples of “moral regions.”

Many of these red-light districts existed, but they created concern among Progressive reformers. Large cities – with their increasing populations and influxes of immigrants – became the primary hubs for anti-prostitution activity. Two fundamental problems hindered reformers: “defining the kinds of behavior that constituted prostitution and deriving aggregate estimates of its extent.”

While reformers insisted on the use of these statistics (as vague and diverse as they were) to publicize the extent of vice in a certain area, they also pushed for legislation. Instead of relying on the publication of immorality as a call to action, anti-prostitution reformers issued a continuous demand for legislation to suppress prostitution. Great ambiguity existed about how exactly to implement such legislation. In a broader sense, anti-prostitution forces produced a wealth of information on prostitution and “labored diligently to remove its most obvious and obnoxious forms, but they never really confronted the causes of its persistent existence.”

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21 Ibid., 16.
22 Ibid., 24.
23 Ibid., 27.
In Lancaster the Law and Order Society sponsored two reports on the vice conditions in the city, in 1914 and 1915. Representatives from the Department of Investigation of the American Social Hygiene Association of New York had conducted both vice surveys in the city of Lancaster. The Society believed that “the authorities of the city were allowing houses of ill-fame to be run because they were but carrying out the wishes of the public in the matter;” therefore, the publication of these vice reports gave the public “some of the real and terrible results of such a policy, through facts gathered in such a way that they could not be doubted.”

The first report in 1914 resulted in the calling of a public meeting in order to discuss the adoption of a policy of strict vice suppression. According to the *Lancaster Intelligencer* on February 18, 1914, Dr. Theodore Appel, a Lancaster physician, gave a well-received speech:

> The house of prostitution should go. It can do and does much harm and no good in the community. License, segregation and regulation are a failure. The house of prostitution is a menace and the examination of the women is a farce. The only hope for the human race is absolute closing the houses and the keeping of them closed with all the power of the law.

The prominent men of Lancaster agreed with Dr. Appel’s adamant claim that prostitution could only be taken care by using the full force of the law. On behalf of the “human race,” houses must be closed to save the citizens’ morality. Such a forceful call to action foreshadows the War Department’s future battle against venereal disease and its willingness to utilize repressive legislation against girls.

The mayor of Lancaster, F.B. McClain, claimed that there was no act of assembly which provided fully for the prosecution of “the inmates of houses of ill fame;” hence the authority of the police was circumscribed. Furthermore, he noted that Lancaster had no house of correction,
a necessary institution when commercialized vice is attacked. The police department could only
do what the law allowed, and the mayor did not think that solicitation on the street could be
stopped legally. Nevertheless, the mayor issued an order on February 23, 1914, to close all of
the twenty-seven parlor houses of prostitution and fifteen houses of assignation. The chief of
police sent warnings to the owners of these houses. Correspondingly, seven raids were made
upon such houses, five keepers were sent to jail (four for three months each, one for five
months), and two trials were pending at the time when the second vice report was published in
1915. By then, prostitutes and madams had moved out of the city, but a number of them had
simply relocated within Lancaster and begun working again clandestinely. The second report
pointed out the improvement “which had been brought through repressive measures, and
convincingly demonstrated that Lancaster was no longer considered a wide open town.”

Beginning in June 1917, the YWCA established a War Work Council committee on the
National Board in an effort to utilize the resources of their organization to help meet the needs of
girls and women affected by the First World War. From that point forward, the YWCA
combined their previous work surrounding sexual health and morality with new techniques and
ideas to offer their unique perspective on the issue of women’s concerns throughout the war. In
November 1917, at least forty women from Lancaster went to Reading, Pennsylvania, in
response to a call issued by the National War Work Council of the YWCA. Lancaster was

27 Ibid., 4.
Collection: 1868-1972, 8.
29 Ibid., 9.
30 “Commercialized Prostitution Survey, Lancaster, Pa. May 7-12, 1934,” Folder 25, Box 2, The Lancaster Law and
31 Records from the Law and Order Society, the Women’s Humane League, and the YWCA help strengthen our
understanding of how these organizations perceived the women of Lancaster as well as how they interacted with
them. The YWCA records have been drawn from both the local and national branches with the intention of
connecting the city of Lancaster to the larger, countrywide activities that took place during WWI. The YWCA of
Lancaster was part of one of the most active organizations during the First World War in terms of mobilizing non-
treating women for the war campaign.
responsible for raising $10,000 of the National Board’s $4,000,000 war budget. Officials told the women “the fundamental task in the winning of the war was the woman’s task, for upon them depended the morale of the American Army. It was their duty to conserve the girlhood of the country in order that they might conserve the manhood. It was for them to keep the nation pure and clean.”

On November 17th, the Lancaster YWCA launched its five-day War Work Campaign. Shortly afterwards, members began to raise funds to reach their $10,000 contribution to the national YWCA War Fund.

The YWCA made numerous attempts to redirect the fervent patriotic spirit of the girls away from the soldiers and into productive war work. During 1918 and 1919, the YWCA took part in many events nationally that helped shape and disseminate their ideas about women’s place within a wartime society. Established during that period, the YWCA’s publishing house Woman’s Press, “cultivate[d] an attitude of honest, open, scientific interest in the subject of sex.” The YWCA spearheaded programs to increase awareness about sexuality and responsibility, including launching a national Social Morality campaign. The Lancaster YWCA supported the A.A. Club for young women (standing for Alalayeous Algapon in Greek, meaning “Love one another”), a club that promoted a deep sense of fellowship and “stimulate[d] active interest in the great moral and social issues of the day.”

The A.A. Club held its monthly meetings at the Orange Street YWCA. During the war, the girls helped the Red Cross and marched in the 3rd Liberty Bond Parade. Anne Schutte, the girls’ work secretary of the Lancaster YWCA, attended a field conference in Wernersville conducted by the War Work Council of the

33 Ibid., 125.
34 Historical Timelines, Papers, YWCA of Lancaster Records (YWCA, Lancaster, Pennsylvania).
National Board in 1919. First organized locally as the Patriotic League, the program changed its name nationally to the Girl Reserves. This group attracted thousands of young girls, promoting the cause of patriotic work long after the war had ended. The official pledge each girl took was “I pledge to express my patriotism: By doing better than ever before whatever work I have to do; By rendering whatever special service I can at this time to my community and country; By living up to the highest standards of character and honor, and by helping others to do the same.”

Certain events encouraged an open dialogue between educators and young women, allowing prejudices or fear to be pushed aside in order to gain knowledge and empowerment. The young women of the YWCA attended a lecture by Dr. Mary Thornton on social hygiene in May 1919. Dr. Thornton, of the Women’s Medical College of Philadelphia spoke to young women working in industrial plants on behalf of the War Work Council of the YWCA. On May 1, 1919, she addressed the members of the Girl Reserves in Lancaster after a supper given by the YWCA. Following her talk on “social hygiene”, the meeting was opened up so that the girls might ask questions; this proved to be “a most interesting feature.” On May 2, a mass meeting was held at the Shreiner Auditorium to allow all of the working girls to hear Dr. Thornton’s lecture if they had not previously been able to. This event featured a “question box” in which girls could deposit any questions they might have about social hygiene; Thornton would address the queries at the end of the evening. The idea of the question box allowed the girls to preserve their modesty by anonymously posing queries, instead of asking about sexuality in an outright way.

36 “Local Secretary Will Boost Girl Reserves,” *The Lancaster Intelligencer*, 1 May 1919, 3.
38 “Dr. Mary Thornton Here For Work Among Girls,” *The Lancaster Intelligencer*, 1 May 1919, 3.
39 Ibid., 3.
Furthermore, the United States government appropriated the YWCA’s Social Morality program for the new Lecture Bureau of the Division of Social Hygiene in the Department of War. One more key event was the International Conference of Women Physicians, where women doctors from many countries discussed “women’s physical condition, emotional health, and immature attitude towards sex.” All of these events focus on sexual education; however, the attitudes of the women of the YWCA began to diverge from those in the federal government. While the YWCA tried to promote honest discussion and education, the federal government resorted to tactics they considered more efficient – punishing women and scaring them out of sexual deviancy through propaganda, detainment, and arrest.

The Women’s Humane League of Lancaster papers provide a sparse, yet important idea of how local female activists viewed problematic girls and the steps taken to protect them. The list of their yearly accomplishments sheds light on the actions they took against a variety of issues and suggests what method they found most effective for dealing with endangered girls. These records correspond with the YWCA’s in order to represent the view of the female activists during WWI, while the Law and Order Society Collection conveys the local male opinion. Combining the efforts of the YWCA and the Women’s Humane League reveal the ideology of female reformers during the war; after analyzing the records, perhaps it would even be more appropriate to label these society’s endeavors as feminist in some senses. When compared side by side with the initiatives of male reformers, the female activists advance more distinctly feminist agendas.

Historical Timeline, Papers, YWCA of Lancaster Records (YWCA, Lancaster, Pennsylvania).
Common Christian Roots?: The Law and Order Society and YWCA

The Lancaster Law and Order Society and the YWCA both have their roots in Christianity and sought to utilize their religious perspectives to improve society, but had different emphases in this period. The Law and Order Society framed its attempts to clean up the city in the form of a moral crusade to eliminate vice. The YWCA expanded the scope of its work, relying upon the essence of its religious roots for guidance in further endeavors to rectify society’s ills. Protestantism in this period expanded its social responsibilities through the Social Gospel. Unlike traditional religious movements, the Social Gospel “stepped outside the churches to intersect the political, social, and economic forces of changing America” and grew into maturity during the Progressive Era. When addressing the problem of vice, the Law and Order Society focused on prosecution and eradication, on the one hand. It attacked the problem at its surface level, failing to engage with the deeper problem and identify the causes of prostitution. On the other hand, the YWCA women focused on education – they believed that preventive work was more useful than rescue work or punishment. According to the Ladies’ Christian Union (the forerunner of the national YWCA) in 1868, “It is well to strive to undo evil that has been done, but is it not far better to avert evil?” Each organization’s philosophy can be seen in action through the various wartime activities it pursued regarding the issue of female sexuality.

41 The Progressive reform era had its underpinnings in Protestantism. According to Mark Connelly, “Civilized morality was imbued with the rhetoric of evangelical Protestantism, but for all the God-fearing ministers and physicians who preached it, there was little overt theology in civilized morality. It was repressive and puritanical, but its fears and concerns were distinctly of this world. In this respect, civilized morality reflected the dominant orientation of American Protestantism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was increasingly coming to focus on secular and nondoctrinal matters, such as alcohol and evolution” (Connelly, The Response to Prostitution, 9).
While both share a common religious background, the reasons for establishing each organization stand in sharp contrast. Women who found that they were often excluded from any positions of power or authority within the Protestant church founded the YWCA. Inspired by the religious revival of the 1850s, a group of elite women formed a prayer group in New York City. This circle soon progressed into the formal Ladies’ Christian Union, which stated its purpose as “encouraging Christian women of all denominations in New-York to unite their efforts to do good among their own sex.”\(^{44}\) In 1870 younger members broke off to establish what we know as the Young Women’s Christian Association. Similar organizations then started up in various cities in the northeast, such as Philadelphia and Boston. By 1871 these organizations formed a loose federation and then became the International Board of Women’s and Young Women’s Christian Associations.\(^{45}\) The Lancaster YWCA was founded in 1889 when the northeastern branches of the YWCA continued to expand to more locations.

From the time of its reorganization, the present version of the Lancaster Law and Order Society (holding its first meeting in 1912) included numerous religious influences. Dr. Clifford Twombley, pastor of St. James Episcopal Church, resurrected the Society and garnered the support of laymen and clergy from Lutheran, Methodist, Evangelical and Reformed, Episcopal, and other churches in Lancaster.\(^{46}\) The Society had a specific vision on what its place in the city would be:

The church represents and stands for certain moral philosophies, unselfish living, clean and honest government, sound bodies and healthy minds, and a society where each person contributes to the welfare of the whole. As such, it must study and judge the activities of those who…run houses of prostitution…There has to be continual warfare between the church and antisocial forces. Roland M. Rice states: “A halfhearted Christianity is no match for a wholehearted paganism.”\(^{47}\)

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 12.
\(^{45}\) Ibid., 13.
\(^{47}\) Ibid., 223.
This statement of purpose clearly attests to the driving force of religion behind the Society’s various activities. This research was also an attempt to embarrass the Lancaster government and the police to do something. Furthermore, it reaffirms its vision of vice elimination as a type of “warfare,” as opposed to the YWCA’s plan of education and guidance to prevent immorality.

The YWCA took a more positive stance concerning women’s sexuality – the female reformers encouraged open discussion of the topic; sexuality was not a taboo issue. One example of this was the opportunity for girls to ask questions at the end of social morality lectures. The organization offered education and the opportunity for empowerment, while the Law and Order Society focused solely on eradication. In the eyes of their agents, immorality was often incurable and recidivism was inevitable. However, the Society may have viewed its repressive measures as a means by which other young women could be prevented from “falling.” When the girls witnessed what became of the prostitutes and charity girls, they would reconsider acting immorally.

Although numerous forms of vice (such as gambling and drinking) existed in the Lancaster, the Law and Order Society concentrated heavily on the issue of prostitution. They found the deviant women, carefully monitored their behavior, and tried to make sure the appropriate legal action was taken against the prostitutes. All of the investigations were conducted by male agents and supported by prominent men from the city. Lancaster did not have a female police officer until 1923, years after the period that I am examining.  

48 Miss Agnes Sharon Wood discusses the phenomenon of the policewoman, starting in the late nineteenth century, in *The Freedom of the Streets*. Cities across the Northeast and Midwest began to employ police matrons at this time. While their duties varied from place to place, the police matron sheltered and protected women and children in police custody. She searched women for contraband, supervised their imprisonment, accompanied them to court, and offered assistance and encouragement to any women who wanted to reform. The national WCTU (Women’s Christian Temperance Union) advocated for the use of police matrons and played a key role in the selection process in many cities (104). For supporters of this movement, “protection” meant preservation from assaults on women’s dignity or to their person. Many advocates for police matrons also called for separate jail facilities for women (120).
Ferriter, a trained social worker, assumed the job of policewoman. She was not only Lancaster’s first female law enforcement officer, but also the first in the state of Pennsylvania. At the opposite end of the spectrum was the YWCA – an organization composed of women who sought to educate other members of their sex in order to avoid immorality.

Both organizations hailed from similarly Christian backgrounds, but were starkly divided in terms of gender. Historian Arthur Schlesinger examined the actions of American Protestantism during this time within the framework of “challenge-response,” looking at how different Social Gospel organizations met the challenges of urbanization and industrialization on the social-political front. Considering that not all social gospelers were uniform in theory or practice, the YWCA and the Law and Order Society perceived different social challenges within society, and each group’s perspective was influenced by the reformers’ gender. We need to be aware of “the ambivalence present in both the perceptions of the city and the prescriptions for change” when talking about the Social Gospel. The women reformers of the YWCA can be viewed through Peggy Pascoe’s lens of “female moral authority” – the conviction that white, middle-class women’s nature and experience granted them a measure of purity and piety that enabled them to guide and regulate the behavior of others. These women, along with other female activists of the time, believed that they occupied a privileged position from which they could work for the benefit of the less fortunate among their own sex. The reformers claimed authority on the issue of social morality during the war, providing what they thought were the

Proponents for these reforms showed a deep understanding of the sexual double standard as well as society’s failure to provide the same type of justice for men and women. They believed that “men judged women too quickly and failed to understand women’s distinctive experience;” police matrons could help shield women from unjust accusations as well as humiliating treatment (121).

50 Schlesinger in Hopkins and White, The Social Gospel, xii.
51 Ibid., xvi.
best informed opinions on prostitution and female delinquency. The idea of female moral authority legitimated the YWCA’s efforts at educating women about sexuality. The prominent men of the Law and Order Society seized upon their roles of power in the churches to affirm their moral authority. Their black-or-white assessment of vice caused them to judge women as moral or immoral, and then punish them accordingly. In the Law and Order Society’s patriarchal system of justice, agents either arrested immoral women or sent honest women home; regardless, the Society marginalized the roles of law-abiding women in the public sphere. The YWCA tried to give the women alternatives, such as classes in housekeeping, reading clubs, and camps during the summer.

The Society adhered to traditional gender roles, reaffirming through the organization’s actions the message that moral women stayed out of the public sphere. Men had the final word, and they expected the women to be passive and accepting of their commands. Both the Law and Order Society and the YWCA worried about the well-being of women in the workforce. Rev. Clifford Twombley of the Lancaster Law and Order Society’s believed that women working for low wages were prey to temptation. He questioned, “What about our women tobacco strippers in Lancaster; our girls in the silk mills…?” The YWCA also assumed the language of motherhood, seeking to protect unfortunate working-class girls from the evils that could befall them if they were alone in a city. The association sought to “provide the influence and protection of a Christian home” for “poor, lonely, and isolated” workingwomen.

The paternalism and power of both organizations are only one part of the equation. Women’s replies and resistances are also significant (although harder to find because not systematically recorded). Both groups of reformers felt they acted from positions of authority –

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the YWCA women drawing upon their moral authority, the Law and Order men their religious conviction and superiority as men within the community. Did the young women passively accept the information being given to them? Did the actions of the Law and Order Society persuade women to stay in their homes and away from immorality? While the YWCA lecturers spoke to their students about the importance of chastity and the problem of prostitution, their discourse caused the girls to question their ideas, spreading a discourse of their own, and therefore creating a two-sided dialogue. When the Law & Order Society agents staked out potential houses of ill repute, women sometimes contacted the mayor and complained.\footnote{Agents’ on-duty reports, 29 October 1918, Book 13, Box 4, The Lancaster Law and Order Society Collection: 1868-1972 (The Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania).} They did not always take their unjust victimization with a grain of salt.

**Leading Up to 1917: The Lancaster Law and Order Society**

Even though an organization by the same name existed during 1889, the version of the Law and Order Society that focused on Progressive Era work did not form until the 1900s. Dr. Clifford Twombley, pastor of St. James Episcopal Church, reorganized the Lancaster Law and Order Society in 1912, inspired to action by his discovery of a brothel down the street from his church. As a man of “puritanical character,” he was appalled that the city of Lancaster was “wide-open.”\footnote{Cobey, “The Lancaster Law and Order Society,” 113.} The Society’s by-laws, adopted in 1921, stated: “The purpose of the Society shall be the suppression and elimination of unlawful, immoral and corrupting conditions and agencies in the community, and other benevolent undertakings along kindred lines.”\footnote{Ibid., 112.}

The Society began issuing annual reports in 1914, and its investigations proved to be an “eye opener” for many citizens of Lancaster. The surveys revealed the considerable extent of
prostitution in the city, and Dr. Twombly calculated that up to five thousand boys and men patronized the local prostitutes. The Society monitored places of leisure, such as the dancehalls, because of their tainted morality. According to the reformers, the halls, “unsupervised and unregulated, were the recruiting grounds of vice and the ruination of young girlhood in many instances. Agents of vice often were seen among the dancers.” The Society’s members soon realized that the job of transforming the city was too large for a limited group of zealous citizens. To remedy this problem, the Society employed an agent to observe what was going on in Lancaster. The agent had numerous duties – checking magazine stands, dance halls, and motion picture houses as well as keeping a record of “who was sinning and where.”

In the years prior to the American entrance into war, the Lancaster Law and Order Society dealt with the sizeable problem of rooting out prostitution from the city. Its work was motivated by the desire to see its city cleared of vice; there were no other national crises looming. Removing prostitution was not done to protect the soldiers or abide by a national morality campaign. In the Commercialized Prostitution Survey, the Society stated:

In 1913, when the truth about commercialized prostitution, its menace to the health and general welfare of communities began to be recognized, a committee of public spirited citizens in Lancaster decided to get at the facts. An intensive survey was made, and in a published report, dedicated to “The People of Lancaster,” existing conditions were exposed. The report quoted the investigators’ findings, and in the summary stated “vice reports” were found “at fifty three separate addresses,” a decidedly large number for a city of 47,227 population.

The Society was concerned about the wellbeing of Lancaster’s citizens and felt as though immorality was overrunning the city. However, without complete legal support behind them, the survey could only be presented to the city in hopes that it would convince people that a positive

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59 Ibid., 109.
60 Ibid., 109.
61 “Commercialized Prostitution Survey,” 1.
change was desperately needed. I have examined the recommendations laid out in the vice report of 1915, as well as other surveys of prostitution compiled by the society. After a thorough assessment, I then compared them to the actions taken during the war by various organizations.

“A 2nd Report on Vice Conditions in The City of Lancaster, Pa. 1915” examined the general conditions of prostitution since the first report had been completed in 1914. The overall conclusion of the study was that the majority of commercialized houses of prostitution had been eliminated; however, prostitutes still existed in places such as saloons, hotels, and rooming houses. Conceding that a problem still existed, the Society offered some further recommendations on what actions should be taken. It recommended the closing of all side-rooms of saloons by the court order to prevent the mingling of immoral men and women. Disorderly restaurants, Sunday Beer Clubs, and Drinking Clubs should be held under strict surveillance, an action already permitted by the law at that point. Furthermore, the Society recommended a more drastic campaign by the police to arrest “mashers” (men who were aggressive in their sexual advances towards women) and street-walkers, noting that “not a single one of whom, so far as we know, has been arrested since the First Vice Report was published over a year ago.” They also called for the publication of the names of men as well as women who were caught; this form of nonsexist humiliation was not to be followed through with, according to the subsequent reports. As the investigations unfolded, a blatantly sexist approach to humiliation became apparent; male offenders, by and large, remained unidentified while the female offenders were always named. This occurred within the notes of the Society and the press. However, the Society

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63 Ibid., 48.
64 Ibid., 48.
wanted a greater feeling of responsibility on the part of Lancaster citizens in order to support and aide the efforts of the Law and Order Society.\(^{65}\)

Both the Society and the police could be seen as looking out for men’s best interests in different ways. The police force did not attack prostitutes and madams as aggressively as it could have, perhaps allowing men to continue to solicit vice; the Society sought to eradicate the promiscuous women, thus ridding men of temptation and the potential of venereal disease. In the Appendix of the report are several speeches given at the meeting called by Mayor McClain of Lancaster on February 17, 1914, in the YMCA building, to discuss vice. James Bronson Reynolds, Esq., of the American Social Hygiene Association outlined his ideas for the most effective ways to eliminate prostitution in the city. Instead of rounding up and arresting any woman suspected of prostitution, he described a plan in which a certain time period would be laid out within which any of these girls, willing to undertake an honest livelihood, would be given the opportunity to do so through the resources gathered by the city. A committee, formed through an order by the mayor, would make arrangements for housing, employment, and whatever else a girl might need.\(^{66}\) Whether or not any of the women would accept assistance was the only problem with the plan he explained. Reynolds cited several examples of cities where over 200 prostitutes were offered help, but only a handful of them accepted it. He justified this response by stating, “The fact of it is, gentleman, that women who have lived a life of professional prostitution for any considerable length of time have had the moral character, moral ambition and the stamina so burned out of them that there is little left in them that gives them the power to do honest work.”\(^{67}\) If he truly believed in these women’s immutable immorality, I

\(^{65}\) Ibid., 48.  
\(^{66}\) Ibid., 51.  
\(^{67}\) Ibid., 53.
question why he would even offer women the chance to restart an honest life. His words described prostitutes as basically devoid of any type of moral functioning.

After their list of recommendations for eliminating prostitution, the Society offered another idea on what should be done with known prostitutes once they were caught. Upon being arrested, instead of being put in prison, the women should be sent to a reformatory where they could be “intelligently studied, medically treated and morally reformed if possible.” However, the Society noted that such action was not currently possible. The members hoped that someday public opinion would be roused enough to cause the state to pass the necessary legislation to accomplish this action. The Society’s opinion on the potential for rehabilitation of prostitutes seems more hopeful than that of Reynolds. However, its plan of holding women in reformatories offers the women no freedom, whereas Reynolds’s idea would have given them the chance to live as normal members of the city. While these reformers considered several options, the predominant approach of the Society became punitive. Strikingly, these reformers never seemed to rouse the amount of public support necessary to become successful in their anti-vice crusade. As seen through the number of raids that occurred after the first vice report was published – only seven, as previously mentioned – the police force did not seem to be completely onboard with the Society’s agenda. If the police had agreed with the Society’s recommendation to send immoral women to reformatories, a larger number of women would have been apprehended.

Furthermore, the investigator’s reports from 1913 and 1916 show that the Law and Order Society was concerned about women’s sexuality beyond prostitution. In the reports compiling evidence against prostitutes and parlor houses, there are also various exhibits with the names of charity girls as well as information about them. For example, Exhibit No. 20 in the 1913 reports is the “Name and address of ‘charity’ girl in her own handwriting. See Affidavit No. 122 –

68 Ibid., 49.
Sources of Supply, “Charity”, Clerk in Candy Store” and Exhibit No. 33, “Names and addresses of IRENE STROBLE and KITTY FRAILEY, two charity girls. See affidavit No. 132 – “Sources of Supply – “Charity” – 5 & 10 [cent] Store Salesgirl – Employed.” 69 These “exhibits” are placed in sequence with the calling cards of prostitutes and photographs of brothels in Lancaster. At least half of the total exhibits collected by the investigator related to different charity girls, their addresses, and letters they had written; the others concerned prostitutes and brothels throughout the city. Furthermore, the majority of the girls discussed were listed as working in stores or factories; they were the working-class females who Dr. Twombly previously believed would fall into immorality. Exhibit No. 36 stood out due to the fact that it identified “a man whom BARBARA FOREMAN declared was the partner of her first sexual offense.” 70 There was a photograph of the man – Elmer Underkophe – attached under the information about this charity girl. Within all of the reports and minutes, this was the first time that I had come across a clear identification of the male perpetrator. However, whether or not the Society ever followed up with him is another question.

Clearly, the Law and Order Society considered charity girls a legitimate concern in its vice crusade. A Mrs. Minerva Mullen stated that she:

Found more ‘charity’ girls on the street than prostitutes. The regular girls appear to be few in number and hard to interview. ‘Charity’ girls walk in pairs; they appear to be schoolgirls and shop and factory girls. They dress modestly, very little paint and powder, but decidedly bold in their flirtations. There appear to be a regular lot who are well known to all the students, and who can be found nightly on parade on Queen Street from the Railway Station to W. King Street. 71

69 Investigator’s reports, 1913, Folder 70, Box 8, The Lancaster Law and Order Society Collection: 1868-1972 (The Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania), 198,208.
70 Ibid., 212.
71 Affidavit No. 19, Investigator’s reports, 3 November 1913, Folder 67, Box 8, The Lancaster Law and Order Society Collection: 1868-1972 (The Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania), 49.
Mullen’s observations coincide with Peiss’s description of charity girls as often going about in pairs – “The single woman alone might be taken for a prostitute, but hunting in pairs permitted women to maintain their respectability in the aggressive pursuit of pleasure.”

Furthermore, these friendships strengthened a woman’s ability to “negotiate the public, heterosocial world of commercial amusements rather than maintain a privatized female one.” In the context of Lancaster, the strategy of walking in pairs did not prevent the charity girls from being noticed by reformers. Perhaps because they seemed to be more visible than prostitutes, their behavior was closely monitored. Open solicitation on the streets of Lancaster was unusual for prostitutes at this time; they planned their activities more carefully and many women stayed in brothels. However, Mullen clearly differentiates between prostitutes and charity girls; the new categories remained distinct throughout the records of the Society.

**WWI: Lancaster and the Nation**

In Lancaster and around the nation, women’s presence in employment, higher education, and political activism expanded the idea of women’s place in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Lancaster, during the era of World War I, reinforced the dominant national trend towards dealing with the subject of “deviant” female sexuality. Sexual norms were in a state of flux, as tradition gave way to the sexual standards dictated during the Progressive Era, and middle-class reformers struggled to maintain some type of control over women's activity in the public sphere. Following the 1880s, the expanding workforce disrupted the old “geography of gender and class;” middle-class women now mixed with their working-class peers on the

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72 Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 114.
73 Ibid., 14.
These interactions exposed the class assumptions behind the “spatial codes of urban life: either working-class women had been unjustly sexualized by their presence in public, or middle-class women now cast doubts on their own chastity when they went unescorted into the streets.”75 The dominant cultural constructs of the past were under strain and weakened by the changing realities of women’s lives.

The emerging ideal of the “New Woman” “imbued women’s activity in the public domain with a new sense of female self, a woman who was independent, athletic, sexual, and modern.”76 At the same time, between 1900 and 1910, the total number of all female wage earners grew from 5.3 to 7.6 million, a net increase of 43%. In the same decade, the number of women employed as stenographers and typists increased 200%, female bookkeepers and accountants increased 150%, female telephone and telegraph operators 300%, and female factory workers 600%.77 In Lancaster County, cigar production was an important industry; Lancaster not only outpaced its neighboring counties in cigar production, but it also produced most of the cigar filler tobacco used in Pennsylvania. Female workers made up about 56% of cigar factory workers in 1919 and outnumbered men 2,015 to 1,601.78 From 1910 to 1920, the national proportion of female workers in non-manual jobs rose from 17 to 30%; women made real gains in service-sector occupations.79 While women may have willingly assumed this new identity, embracing a lifestyle with expanded opportunities, middle-class reformers were much slower to accept change. Old stereotypes and sex roles lingered long past their expiration date, resulting in conflict and crusades.

75 Ibid., 117.
76 Peiss, Cheap Amusements, 7.
77 Connelly, The Response to Prostitution, 31.
78 Patricia Cooper, Once A Cigar Maker: Men, Women, and Work Culture in American Cigar Factories, 1900-1919 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 200, 205.
79 Gilfoyle, City of Eros, 311.
The city of Lancaster represented a microcosm of national society, embodying the intense concern over the spread of female sexual delinquency and seeking a solution to this problem that now even affected national security: the health of soldiers during World War I became a critical problem during the preparation to enter combat. However, the question of who was to blame for prostitution and promiscuity inevitably resulted in very different answers, the women or the men. The assumptions surrounding women’s presence in the public realm undoubtedly tainted reformers’ views of the root of such problems. Whether or not women had a right to be on the street, unchaperoned, affected debates on many other issues. Many single women found themselves in precarious situations, living away from their parents and trying to maintain a sense of respectability. They often lived with relatives or boarded with strangers instead of risking their reputation by living alone; women who lived alone would undoubtedly be labeled as promiscuous and immoral, whether or not the title was warranted. Female activists, especially those who supported the idea of a police matron, often claimed “poor and working-class women were not temptresses whose sexuality defined the dangerous neighborhood; rather, men with money created danger whenever they felt secure in exploiting women’s poverty by bargaining for sex.” The Law and Order Society, the Women’s Humane League, and the YWCA of Lancaster were all organizations that confronted this issue head-on. Their work corresponded with the larger, countrywide efforts to suppress female sexuality, and as a result, strengthen the double standard.

The YWCA’s work with Social Morality lectures began in 1913 when the National Board provided lecturers who were “committed to a definitely constructive viewpoint, to experiment in

80 Peiss, Cheap Amusements, 73.
preparing teachers to deal intelligently with sex psychology."\textsuperscript{82} Starting in 1915, Dr. Mabel Ulrich gave numerous lectures to the women of the YWCA at colleges and community centers on the topic of how to educate teenage girls and young women about the sex. Ulrich, who had also married a doctor, had opened a private practice. Ultimately, she gave up her practice to work as lecturer in social hygiene and preventive medicine. She considered her service in anti-venereal disease campaigns as a "career choice more compatible with family life."\textsuperscript{83}

Her lectures, while designed to reinforce the importance of morality in young women, displayed a progressive openness about sexuality and the need for an honest dialogue about the topic. Dr. Ulrich explained without fear:

\begin{quote}
If you are trying to do anything with girls do not be afraid to tell them things. Do not get the idea that a girl can argue about it – because she cannot… The amount of curiosity on the part of children is something which we, who have forgotten our own, almost never comprehend… Even girls…I have never been to a single university where I have given a lecture that one or more have not come up and said: ‘I do not understand what you mean.’ It is not stupidity. It is just this…attitude toward sex things…The very fact that you can say those things in a perfectly unimpassioned tone of voice…is like a cold bath. They suddenly realize this thing cannot be so bad – why did they feel that way?\textsuperscript{84}
\end{quote}

Dr. Ulrich considered the "secret" nature of sexual knowledge to be one of the leading causes of immorality. According to her studies, once sexual education was brought “in the fresh air all of the fascination of it for most young people…entirely departs.”\textsuperscript{85} Her lectures reaffirmed the conviction that education would lead to prevention of multiple evils, including venereal disease and prostitution. If young women understood their sexuality and the repercussions of promiscuity, they would be less likely to experiment with deviant behavior, become pregnant, or spread venereal diseases.

\textsuperscript{82} Typescript, n.d., “Section V”, reel 155, YWCA of the U.S.A. Records, Sophia Smith Collection (Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts).
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 8.
Some of the nation’s first sex education pamphlets and movies for young people sprang from the government’s Social Morality campaign during the First World War.\textsuperscript{86} Ulrich’s lectures and the YWCA’s activities in the realm of sexual education were ahead of their time. During the early years of the twentieth century, sex education simply did not exist in the average school system. The YWCA’s lecture bureau provided a remedy, educating women on how to speak to girls about sexuality and relationships. While public school teachers had sporadically offered lessons on sex education since the beginning of the twentieth century, formal instruction did not gain popular support or become widespread until the 1940s. When the sex-related curricula did appear, courses were not federally or state mandated; they were experiments that emerged in specific contexts, building upon a dialogue among social hygiene and educational professionals.\textsuperscript{87} One experimental means of teaching students was through the use of a medical professional who addressed the audience on the topic of “social hygiene”, warning about the dangers of venereal disease and stressing the importance of sexual purity.

While these women did not have uniform beliefs on the most effective cure for social evils, they were united in their sincere desires to protect and help girls. This very fact illuminates the divergence of intentions between the women working for the War Department and the men. The female physicians who worked for Social Morality during the war embodied a vast range of perspectives concerning the changes in social and sexual mores that took place in the early twentieth century. There was not a single collective answer among these doctors on the questions involving morality. Many female physicians disputed the double standard, seeking to impose a single, female standard of chastity onto all of society.\textsuperscript{88} Some women who took a more

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\textsuperscript{86} Susan Kathleen Freeman, \textit{Sex Goes to School: Girls and Sex Education Before the 1960s} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, c2008), 5.
\textsuperscript{87} Freeman, \textit{Sex Goes to School}, x.
\textsuperscript{88} Morantz-Sanchez, \textit{Sympathy and Science}, 291.
\end{flushleft}
conservative approach to sexuality supported the eugenics movement. The struggle between how best to solve the contemporary social hygiene problems represented a battle between science and education. Some female doctors felt disheartened when attempts at preventive education did not result in improved sexual conduct. Dr. Katherine Bement Davis of the Commission on Training Camp Activities of the War Department originally placed her faith in educational programs, but later concluded that female delinquency needed a better solution. Dr. Rachel Yarros belonged in a group of female physicians who actively supported the birth control movement. She believed that contraception would foster positive sexual relations and preserve marital happiness; such information would also lessen the burden of working-class women, allowing them to space their children carefully. However, Yarros’s support of birth control depended on the supposition that two people were married. The few female physicians who supported condoms or birth control in general based their opinions around the traditional ideal that sexual relations occurred within marriage.

However, the YWCA’s lecture program took on a different tone than some of the scare tactics issued by the War Department; Dr. Ulrich’s ideas reflect the philosophy of prevention while also emphasizing the importance of empowerment through knowledge. Although connected to the War Department by affiliation, the YWCA’s lecture tour focused on education and positive sexual health. Dr. Ulrich’s lectures provided a rare occasion when sex was an open topic for discussion. Ulrich framed the topic of sexual desire in terms of the current problems concerning young women and soldiers. She implored the lecturers to empathize with the young women – “If you are honest with yourself you know that when you were fourteen or sixteen

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89 Ibid., 292.
90 Ibid., 295.
there wasn’t anything that had the same sort of excitement and so forth that a man could have.\textsuperscript{91} She provided examples of her colleagues at Amherst who tried to address this problem by offering prizes to girls who did other tasks instead of interacting with soldiers, but she noted that such efforts were not the most efficient way to divert women’s sexual energy. Ulrich promoted the use of physical activity instead of asking young women to use their developing mental forces to sublimate this drive.\textsuperscript{92} The organization of girls’ clubs would offer young women the chance to have a good time while keeping their self-respect. In her opinion, a girl will “do the thing to cause the least mental conflict in her own soul.”\textsuperscript{93} Ulrich appeared to outline a plan for education in which young women were openly given the facts about sexuality and disease prevention, while being offered alternatives to immorality; however, the girls were allowed a measure of agency to act on their own innate decency. How could young women be blamed for their sexual deviancy if no one ever bothered to educate them about facts and consequences? One of the most famous wartime lecturers, Dr. Yarros, instructed girls that they must comprehend the dangers of “coquetting” and “leading on;” such behavior may be pleasing to girls, but men viewed it as an enticement to take further liberties. Young women needed to realize that it was “wrong to play with love.”\textsuperscript{94} Given the proper education, young women would be able to make responsible choices within a wartime society full of temptation and protect themselves.

Dr. Ulrich did not condemn sexuality as a taboo subject or blame prostitutes for their incurable immorality; rather, she acknowledged sexual needs and passion, while examining the underlying causes of prostitution. She condemned the double standard as well, citing how it was

\textsuperscript{91} Ulrich, “II,” 11.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 11-13.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 13.
taken for granted “men will sow his wild oats.” Ulrich quickly struck down the idea that women are to blame for prostitution – “I feel very strongly that a man who is so weak-kneed that he is going to a prostitute because a girl wears a suggestive dress, etc., is so weak he will go anyhow. We ought not to put up to the girl that she is responsible…” Once again, education was a necessary step in elimination of a problem. Referring to prostitution as an unnecessary evil, Ulrich noted the importance of educating young people with a “brand new weapon” – the knowledge that extensive sexual gratification for men is not a necessity, as previously believed. Finding out the real truth about the question of “sex needs” and whether or not it was “just a high falutin, sentimental opinion that men can be just as chaste as women” would lead to the eradication of prostitution. Her lecture underscored the problematic conditioning of men that resulted in an innate belief that they had insatiable sexual desire.

Even though she still stressed the virtue of chastity and monogamy after marriage, her discourse was surprisingly candid concerning how to talk about sexuality with teenage girls. Ulrich dismissed the tendency of many people to talk about sex in overly scientific terms, instead discussing it in more humanistic terms. She mentioned the importance that girls understand the biological explanation of sexual intercourse and stressed the everyday application of the discussion. However, while Dr. Ulrich lectured on sexuality in ways relevant to young women, she took pains not to sound overly sentimental about the topic. Accordingly, one of the general themes tying her lectures together centered on the contemporary problem of mothers discussing sex with their daughters in ways that were entirely too emotional and metaphorical. This form of

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96 Ibid., 4.
98 Ibid., 7.
education resulted in unrealistic, idealized visions of sex and love as linked concepts on every occasion.

During the war, the Social Morality Committee of the YWCA became the official lecture bureau of the Section on Women’s Work in the Social Hygiene Division of the CTCA of the War Department. Dr. Katharine Davis, director of the Section on Women’s Work, oversaw this incorporation. The CTCA felt the need for a lecture program that specifically served the communities near camps or other centers where the presence of soldiers disrupted the order of normal life. The YWCA’s official connection with the War Department ended on March 1, 1919, and the Social Morality Committee resumed its previous role within the organization. Over those years, the Bureau secured about seventy-five female physicians who agreed to give lectures at numerous times and locations. From 1917 until 1919, 183 lectures reached audiences of women numbering more than one and a half million. The Bureau assumed all of the responsibility for making these lectures a success; they provided the local communities with all the necessary publicity materials, sent organizers ahead of time, and paid for all of the costs accrued.

Appointed by the YWCA, more than fifty female physicians met with girls near training camp communities “to promote sex instruction and to emphasize the responsibility of women and girls for right social standards.”

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100 Ibid.
101 Mary Odem, Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 123; By the end of nineteenth century, female physicians numbered between 4 and 5 percent of the profession, a figure that remained relatively stable until the 1960s (Abrams 63). Over seven thousand women were serving as physicians, including white Protestants as well as (over one hundred) blacks, Jews, and immigrants (Abrams 57). These women secured a spot in the world of medicine by creating a professional role that was believed to bridge the gap between the public and private. Their role applied “domestic” values to societal concerns and utilized scientific advances for the improvement of life in the home (Abrams 67). However, during the First World War, American officers refused to allow women physicians to serve even when the soldiers “faced the last dreadful drive from the enemy, and when there was a dire need of immediate aid and skillful relief for the wounded and suffering men…” The volunteers helped the French instead
purpose when it took over on behalf of the national government. The CTCA turned the YWCA’s attempts at sexual education into a campaign of fear and consequences concerning immorality. The efforts focused directly on warning girls about the serious moral and health risks associated with illicit sex. The supplemental materials distributed to girls were intended to frighten them into chastity by displaying horrible illnesses, physical deformities, and harsh social consequences that could result from venereal disease.\textsuperscript{102} While the text of the YWCA’s lectures did not encourage this campaign of terror, the CTCA saw to it that their message was explicitly spread to young women in other powerful ways.

The dichotomy of virgin/prostitute was permanent according to the CTCA; the question of whether or not women could be redeemed appeared to have a bleak answer. One of the more poignant examples of the War Department’s propaganda came in the form of a feature-length film, \textit{The End of the Road} (1918). The film addressed the two main paths that girls could pursue during the war – “Two Roads There Are in Life. One reaches upward toward the Land of Perfect Love. The other reaches down into the Dark Valley of Despair where the sun never shines.”\textsuperscript{103} The storyline followed two girls, Mary and Vera. Mary accepts education from her mother, following a life of abstinence and finding true love, while Vera is “a hard worker in a nonessential industry – the sowing of wild oats” and gets venereal disease.\textsuperscript{104} The moral of the film was that happiness depended on sexual purity. The dichotomy portrayed through the characters of Mary and Vera permeated the rest of the CTCA’s programs as well. Numerous posters and pamphlets drove home the need for soldiers to steer clear of “a whore” who could

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and were awarded for their meritorious service with the Croix de Guerre (Ruth Abrams, “\textit{Send Us a Lady Physician}.” \textit{Women Doctors in America, 1835-1920} (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985), 227).\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{102} Odem, \textit{Delinquent Daughters}, 124.

\textsuperscript{103} Bristow, \textit{Making Men Moral}, 91.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 91-92.
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“smirch your record.” While at one point during the film, Vera appears as though she may start on the upward path, she ultimately falls into disease and disgrace permanently. This mirrored the fact that CTCA reformers’ early acknowledgment of women who defied categorization gave way to restrictive policies that lacked a behavioral middle ground. Women had to be placed into one of the two categories because there was not a place for women whose behavior could not be neatly identified as good or bad.

Historian Nancy Marie Robertson identified the impact of servicemen on the female civilian population as the primary concern of members of the YWCA during the war. While both the government and the YWCA recognized the need for regulation of sexuality, they did not agree on who needed to be protected. As seen through the example of the lecture tour, the YWCA educated women to make responsible sexual decisions. These activists did not want the women influenced by servicemen. One idea implemented to ensure the safety of women was the Hostess House. The War Department requested that YWCA establish houses where women friends who visited soldiers in training camps could be entertained. The Hostess House was the organization’s solution. These houses “served simultaneously to protect the female friends and relatives of servicemen and to provide a moralizing influence on the soldier.” The pamphlet “One Year With the Y.W.C.A. War Work Council” stated that between 1917 and July 1918, eighty-three Hostess Houses were established. More specifically, fifty-one white houses were built and three colored, while twenty-one more white houses were authorized as well as eight colored ones. The houses were located in or near training camps and away from districts of

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105 Ibid., 92.
106 Ibid., 92.
107 Robertson, Christian Sisterhood, 48.
108 Ibid., 48-49.
commercialized leisure. They contributed to the YWCA’s long-term commitment to empower women and protect their moral standards.  

The CTCA had also opened dance halls near the camps in order to promote healthy socialization and recreation for the soldiers. However, in comparison to the Hostess Houses, the CTCA had a much narrower view of what constituted appropriate female visitors. The reformers in charge of the dance halls attempted to eliminate young women of working-class backgrounds from the soldiers’ dances. The organizers wanted to maintain high standards and bring in “women of a better class who would be glad to try to help the soldiers in their social life.”

Guest lists for the dances were highly selective, and working-class girls held slim chances of receiving an invitation. Eliminating working-class influences from their lifestyles provided the men with higher ideals and placed all of the soldiers at an equal level. Ironically, all of the soldiers gained a sense of solidarity – even those with working-class roots – while the female civilians were carefully discriminated against and grouped into categories of acceptable and unacceptable.

Although the female activists treated the women differently than the government did, their concern over women’s behavior was shared to an extent. The YWCA sought to revive appropriate moral standards and educate the next generation of women to be responsible. The government utilized more coercive measures and employed a vocabulary that criminalized women. The changes in norms of sexuality correlated to numerous societal changes. Instead of accepting pre-marital sex or unchaperoned dates as new elements of adult sexuality, activists found different answers. Male reformers indisputably linked changes in family life – such as

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110 Robertson, *Christian Sisterhood*, 49.
112 Ibid., 83-84.
more mothers in the workplace – to prostitution.\textsuperscript{113} This laid the blame for sexual promiscuity on women once again; mothers were not home to raise their daughters, hence a life of prostitution ensued from their neglect. Additionally, women’s entrance in the public sphere “blurred the clear divisions between the ‘lady’ and the prostitute;” virtually any activity outside the home could be characterized as “whorish behavior.”\textsuperscript{114} These beliefs would lay the groundwork for the government’s explanation of its aggressive campaign against the spread of venereal disease.

The Women’s Humane League focused on the protection of animals, aged persons, children, and girls. The League’s purpose was listed as the following: “This Corporation is founded for the prevention of cruelty to, and care of, children, girls, aged persons, and animals within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and to enforce all laws enacted by the Pennsylvania legislature or by Congress for the protection of the children, girls, aged persons and animals.”\textsuperscript{115} Its emphasis on protecting young women and steering them away from a life of sexual delinquency can be seen through the organization’s investigation in white slavery cases and other examples of intervention. There are numerous documented incidents where the League helped return runaway girls and sent troubled girls to reformatories.\textsuperscript{116} One particular reformatory where girls from the Lancaster area could be sent was Sleighton Farm in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania. The primary goal of this institution was to “train girls to become good housewives and mothers, to channel their misguided sexual energy into preparation for marriage and motherhood.”\textsuperscript{117} Martha Falconer was the head of Sleighton Farm; her establishment became the model for a number of later reformatories.

\textsuperscript{113} Rosen, \textit{The Lost Sisterhood}, 45.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 45.
\textsuperscript{115} Papers, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1, Women’s Humane League of Lancaster County Records, Archives & Special Collections Department, Shadeck-Fackenthal Library (Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania).
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 21,40.
\textsuperscript{117} Odem, \textit{Delinquent Daughters}, 117.
Martha Falconer and the Commission on Training Camp Activities

Maude Miner, Martha Falconer, and the women of the YWCA found themselves in an uncomfortable position. While they approached their work with the best interests of girls as their foremost priority, their employer, the War Department, had a whole different set of prerogatives. Martha Falconer was a Quaker woman who had a history of active participation in various forms of civic and welfare work. In 1906, she came to Philadelphia and took charge of the House of Refuge, a juvenile reformatory. Through her role, she enacted her idea of discipline, in contrast with many of her superiors. Falconer believed that the girls in her institution should have more freedoms.\textsuperscript{118} She allowed them to attend church services in the outside community, and this decision proved to be a beneficial step. Such privileges helped to reduce many of the fights and disorderly behavior that used to prevail during daily life. This system encouraged the girls to work for these opportunities.\textsuperscript{119}

When the farm relocated to Glen Mills, cottages were built in the country to house the girls. Falconer decided that a reorganization of the program for the girls was necessary as well. She appealed to many college women to work on her staff and institute new, progressive measures.\textsuperscript{120} Falconer brought the city to her girls – in the place of stores, she had a shop in the basement of one of the cottages so the girls could buy small gifts and food. She always rewarded the girls for good behavior and offered plenty of incentives. Punishment did not play a prominent role in Falconer’s idea of discipline.

Considering Falconer’s personal philosophy of discipline, she may have acted in ways that did not necessarily correspond when the government’s intention of punishing women.

\textsuperscript{118} Martha Falconer typescript, n.d., Folder 506, Box 41, Miriam Van Waters Papers, Schlesinger Library (Radcliffe Institute For Advanced Study, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts), 1.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 2.
During World War I, Falconer became the advisor for the federal government’s Committee on Protective Work for Girls. This organization was a branch under the CTCA.\textsuperscript{121} Falconer worked under Raymond Fosdick of the CTCA. The government gave her division a considerable amount of money to “develop institutions for delinquent girls and women who were flocking to the camps and who were a menace to the men in the service.”\textsuperscript{122} This statement coincides with the prevailing argument that the federal government had a single focus when assessing how to protect its soldiers.

Congress passed the Selective Service Act in May 1918 after the creation of the CTCA; the language of the act served to eliminate soldiers’ contact with vice. Section 13 addressed prostitution and access to women of “ill repute,” giving the Secretary of War broad powers “to do everything by him deemed necessary” to suppress “houses of ill fame, brothels, or bawdy houses within such distance as he may deem needful of any military camp, station, fort, post, cantonment, training, or mobilization place.”\textsuperscript{123} This act encouraged the suppression of prostitution. Some reformers and physicians believed that women bore the sole responsibility for the diseases; few stopped to consider how the prostitute acquired her infection. A Dr. A.J. McLaughlin wrote, “I would say that about 90 percent of infections are due to women and 10 percent to men. Men take more precautions and are more particular about treatment and prophylaxis. Women are very negligent…One woman will infect ten men for every one woman that one man will infect.”\textsuperscript{124} With such a hostile attitude toward women and their sexuality, we can understand how easily the repressive measures against prostitutes and charity girls escalated so quickly. The CTCA shifted its emphasis to the individual prostitute when it realized that the

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\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 121-122.
\textsuperscript{122} Falconer, 3.
\textsuperscript{123} Clement, \textit{Love For Sale}, 117.
\end{flushleft}
closing of the red light districts did not eliminate vice or venereal disease. The commission’s annual report for 1918 stated that closing the districts only caused prostitutes to move to “less convenient and more hazardous places” and turn to more clandestine forms of prostitution that were difficult to control.\textsuperscript{125} Due to this realization, the CTCA embarked on a project to remove prostitutes from training camp areas permanently. It developed a system of detention houses and reformatories where these women could be housed during the war.\textsuperscript{126}

In 1918, the Law Enforcement Division of the CTCA adopted a policy of required “physical examination, detention, and quarantine of women suspected of harboring a venereal disease infection.”\textsuperscript{127} Although some of the female social workers opposed these rigorous and often misguided attempts to suppress sexuality, many others such as Falconer continued to support the CTCA and help enforce its campaign against female sex offenders. Falconer was given the job of directing the Section on Reformatories and Houses of Detention. Whether or not Falconer inherently believed that the federal government was justified in its crusade against immoral women, she continued to work within the reformatory system. Perhaps she was trying to gain legitimacy and support for her model of discipline. She acted as an advocate for the delinquent girls and women; from her privileged role within the government commission, she could speak for these women.

During 1918, the Committee on Protective Work for Girls moved away from its efforts to eradicate the problem of prostitution. By April of that year, the CTCA, with the blessing of the Justice Department, adopted law enforcement methods that clearly violated civil liberties. Being detained without having committed an actual crime became a common occurrence. A woman would now be arrested on the slightest suspicion of immoral behavior. She then went through the

\textsuperscript{125} Bristow, \textit{Making Men Moral}, 112.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 112.
\textsuperscript{127} Odem, \textit{Delinquent Daughters}, 124.
process of being examined for disease, treated in a hospital, and finally prosecuted, which generally resulted in a long-term detention. All women were guilty until proven innocent; these new guidelines became the epitome of punishment for women during the war. The new orientation of the CTCA’s work was described as the following: “It will concern itself with delinquent girls and all girls between the ages of 10 and 21 against whom there has been any definite complaint. The Protective Work Section will also be responsible for work with the so-called charity girl and professional prostitute, whether diseased or not, and with women having venereal disease.” The CTCA employed 150 women as “protective officers” to patrol the streets in search of “wayward” girls in addition to their already established sexual education and moral propaganda. Fosdick also created a Section on Women and Girls under the Law Enforcement Division of the CTCA. This action suggested the defeat in the CTCA’s morality campaign and a renewed emphasis on repression; it reaffirmed the reformers’ fears that the war signaled “the beginning of a more liberal sexual mores for women, a shift that would be fully recognized in the next decade.” Individual girls, overcome with emotion and lured by the uniform, were contributing to the venereal disease problem. Recognizing this type of behavior in women other than prostitutes was very disturbing. The male reformers determined that it was too late for any type of morality campaign to be effective.

This new framework combined the work with prostitutes with that of charity girls, and this reorganization led to some serious questions. Maude Miner, the chairwoman of the protective committee since September 1917, resigned in light of the new framework. In her private correspondence, Miner revealed that while she was committed to working for the

128 Bristow, Making Men Moral, 124.
129 Ibid., 126.
130 Brandt, No Magic Bullet, 83.
131 Ibid., 84.
protection of girls, she felt that the CTCA did not share her concerns. She realized that “the protection of girls was not really the thing which was sought by the Commission, but that the entire emphasis was being placed on the protection of the soldier;” she lamented that the “girl interests [were] entirely subordinated to the interests of the soldier.”

Each step these women made toward their goal of education and protection was counteracted by new repressive measures introduced by the government.

Fosdick viewed the CTCA and its mission very differently from the female reformers; the CTCA undermined the education and prevention it supposedly promoted through its own actions. In his article “The War and Navy Departments Commissions on Training Camp Activities,” Fosdick classifies the work of the commission into two categories: the first, a positive program set up to combat the evils of alcohol and prostitution and the second, suppressive work. However, he noted that the more perfect the development of the first part, the less the necessity for suppressive work. After thoroughly detailing the healthy recreational programs that had been established in the training camps, Fosdick then noted that, simultaneously, “strict repressive measures” had been taken against prostitution so that “factors deadly to military efficiency have been reduced to a minimum.”

He remarked that the Social Hygiene division assumed responsibility for “ stamping out” these evils, using language reminiscent of Dr. Twombley’s call for “warfare” against vice. To these men, immorality needed to be eradicated by any means necessary. Considering this, I believe that Fosdick’s seemingly contradictory explanation of the work of the CTCA corresponds to the events occurring at the time. In writing, the CTCA strove for preventive and protective work first, resorting to

132 Bristow, Making Men Moral, 127.
134 Ibid., 141.
suppression last. This philosophy attracted many of the women who worked for the Commission. However, in action, the men of the CTCA spent much less time and money on the educational side of the program than they did in establishing new legal ways to eliminate vice.

Fosdick mentioned how the Law Enforcement Division had created a section to deal with “camp followers” who sprung up around the training camps, drawn “by the lure of the uniform.” He claimed that this section provided safeguards for women who had been forced into prostitution because of their living conditions; helped to secure laws against prostitution; and obtained institutional care for the “feeble-minded.” This is a loaded explanation. The work of the section itself sends divergent messages about the protection of girls and women. The “safeguards” and laws he referred to only resulted in the detainment of thousands of women, innocent and criminal. Furthermore, his reference to the “feeble-minded” foreshadowed later claims that a large percentage of immoral women were in fact “feeble-minded” and needed to be institutionalized for their own good. This term was a blanket classification that enabled the CTCA to detain women who had committed no criminal acts. Historian Ruth Rosen suggests that, “Rather than indicating mental deficiency, the label feeble-minded instead referred to prostitutes’ refusal or failure to conform to middle-class values and behavioral patterns.”

Fosdick concluded by stating that the Social Hygiene Division was “educational in its function, having been created for the purpose of informing the public, both men and women, as well as army and navy, as to the necessity of combating prostitution and the resultant venereal disease.” In this explanation, he managed to establish a single focus for the Commission (prostitution) and explained that promiscuity was followed by disease; the two are inherently

135 Ibid., 141.
136 Ibid., 141.
137 Rosen, The Lost Sisterhood, 23.
138 Fosdick, “The War and Navy Departments,” 142.
related. While he again noted the educational aspect of the program, the rest of his article efficiently undermined this component. Seemingly, women learned by example and were educated the hard way by being arrested and detained.

The July 1918 federal Chamberlain-Kahn Act created a “civilian quarantine and isolation fund,” providing $1 million to assist states in building these extra facilities for the incarceration of delinquent girls.\textsuperscript{139} The act first established an Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board that allotted money to the states, while also recommending appropriate state measures and uses of the funds. Section 3 created a Division of Venereal Diseases within the Bureau of Public Health Service.\textsuperscript{140} The Division of Venereal Diseases worked hand in hand with the state boards to bring about the treatment of civilian carriers of disease. The Public Health Service devised standardized board of health regulations that the states needed to adopt in order to receive its funds.\textsuperscript{141} States had to enact or enforce previously enacted measures designed to control venereal disease. As of 1919, only Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia had failed to adhere to the guidelines of the act; Pennsylvania was fighting disease without the help of federal assistance.\textsuperscript{142} Two million dollars, one million for the 1918 fiscal year and the other million for the next year, was to be distributed through the Public Health Service to the state boards of health. However, on November 26, 1918, the controller of the treasury informed the Social Hygiene Board that it had no power to spend the funds on the construction or repair of buildings not owned by the federal government. Due to these restrictions, twenty-seven existing reformatories and detention centers throughout the country used only $177,089 of the original allotment.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{139} Odem, \textit{Delinquent Daughters}, 125.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{143} Brandt, \textit{No Magic Bullet}, 88.
Over 30,000 young women suspected of illicit activity, prostitution, or venereal disease were apprehended by law enforcement; ultimately, the federal government committed about 18,000 to institutions. These women, placed in forty-three federally aided detention houses and reformatories, spent an average of seventy days in the detention houses and one year in the reformatories. Thousands more were likely detained in local jails. Only one-third of these women were charged with prostitution; the crime most of the women committed was their failure to conform to the progressive sexual code. If the Board had been able to distribute all of the money provided from the Act to the state boards, an even troublingly larger number of women would have faced internment. Notably, no efforts were ever made during the war to quarantine men in the army. The sexual double standard sounded loud and clear within the language of wartime legislation.

The government’s moral stance on this critical problem minimized its efficiency. Providing prophylactics for the troops and educating them would have been a more effective and reasonable approach than removing all of the young women who could tempt the soldiers. The military discontinued its distribution of condoms to the soldiers when protest erupted from Progressive reformers, thus choosing the moral (and patriarchal) path over the scientific one. Framing the issue this way allowed the federal government to focus on morality instead of the actual disease itself and justified the use of “extreme governmental measures to attack prostitutes as the source of infection for soldiers and sailors.” Essentially, the battle between morality and science reflected a struggle between targeting men or women. The federal government set out its standards of sexuality, and the plan it believed would be the most efficient for combating

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144 Odem, Delinquent Daughters, 126.
145 Bristow, Making Men Moral, 129.
146 Ibid., 129.
147 Brandt, No Magic Bullet, 86.
148 Clement, Love For Sale, 118.
venereal disease and maintaining healthy soldiers. If the moral path was chosen, the women could be attacked. Women who were more vulnerable could symbolize the enemy: disease. This moral high ground would serve as justification for whatever repressive policies were needed to be victorious. Someone had to serve as the scapegoat. This path allowed women to take the blame for men’s promiscuity.

Overall, black women became more likely to face arrest and detention due to the CTCA’s acceptance of racist beliefs and its failure to develop any positive programs for African American women. Furthermore, these women faced far worse conditions during the duration of their detention. The CTCA’s attitude seemed to convey the belief that immorality for African American women was a given and that effective control was not possible, so the CTCA did not even try to promote prevention in any capacity.

During the Progressive Era, while the crusades for morality addressed the problem of prostitution in various ways, what remains significant is the relative absence of race as explanation. Theories on the causes of prostitution had shifted from moral to economic to biological reasoning, moving back and forth between ideas. However, race was never clearly pinpointed as a reason for becoming a prostitute. Social historian Willoughby Waterman developed a version of the last-of-the-migrants thesis, arguing that because black women were among the “latest group to enter [big cities], they must start at the bottom.” African American women were disproportionately represented among the arrested and convicted prostitutes. However, the data on black women’s length of participation within prostitution are not available. This absence of information speaks for itself. While the social reformers collecting data hoped to gather information on fallen women in an attempt to rescue them, the lack of data on black

149 Bristow, Making Men Moral, 162.
prostitution demonstrated their lack of concern with black women.\textsuperscript{151} As for the social mobility limitations facing them at the time, Kevin Mumford sums it up by stating, “Combine restricted opportunities with dwindling reform resources, and the situation facing black women becomes clear.”\textsuperscript{152} The success of vice committees before World War I in closing white vice districts along with the removal of prostitution as a major political issue almost assured the “invisibility” of the problem of black prostitution.\textsuperscript{153}

While the YWCA addressed the issue of immorality within the black community on some level, the work of reformers became ambivalent. Wartime publicity included statements such as, “Everything that is done by the YWCA for white women is done also for colored women.”\textsuperscript{154} However, while the total War Work budget for 1917 to the end of the war was $5 million, African American programs received only four percent of the funding. African American women were also excluded from the YWCA’s overseas efforts.\textsuperscript{155} During the war, a number of “colored” Hostess Houses were erected near training camps to address the needs of the black soldiers. Whether or not these Houses were seen as important safeguards for the African American women remains questionable; undoubtedly the same amount of money and effort did not go in to the YWCA’s programs for black women during the war. Furthermore, many feared that the extensive attention paid to protecting white women would have negative consequences for black women, exposing them to a higher likelihood of temptation. Eventually, the YWCA opened Hostess Houses for African Americans in seventeen camps to serve 380,000

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{154} Robertson, \textit{Christian Sisterhood}, 51.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 52.
black men. The black women who directed the Houses reported to the executive hostess, who was always a white woman.\footnote{Ibid., 53.}

The “colored” YWCAs ignored the problem of fallen women, but provided classes and other support services. Instead of assisting single mothers, reformers like Mary Church Terrell spoke out against “black flappers” for their immoral style and leisure habits, alluding to the extent to which sexual conservatism permeated the African American middle class.\footnote{Mumford, \textit{Interzones}, 47.} Mumford highlights the fact that “black women reformers were hampered by a legacy of sexual stereotyping that continually undermined their moral authority, and can be seen as the reason for the persistence of sexual conservatism within African-American social reform.”\footnote{Ibid., 47.} The War Department separated itself from what it viewed as inevitable immorality and virtually erased the issue from white consciousness. African Americans actively worked against such beliefs and tried to maintain respectable sexual standards, fighting a battle against stereotypes that they could not win.\footnote{Ibid., 47-48.}

While the CTCA obviously considered African American women as highly immoral and disease-ridden, it did not bother to incorporate the threat of such women into its campaign of propaganda. Through historian Elizabeth Alice Clement’s study of various forms of propaganda, including posters issued by the CTCA during World War One, black women were completely absent. While Clement noted that War Department investigations attested to the fact that African American women engaged in a variety of social and sexual activities with the troops, from courtship through treating and prostitution, none of the posters depicted them.\footnote{Ibid., 47.} She argues that while racist assumptions resulted in the increased surveillance and harassment of African

\footnote{Clement, \textit{Love For Sale}, 163.}
American women around training camps, these women did not serve as public warnings to the troops. Their absence from propaganda made it seem as if African American women did not exist at all.\textsuperscript{161}

\textbf{Treating and Courtship During the War}

Although reformers targeted prostitution as a means of spreading venereal disease, thus posing a viable threat to the war effort, they cast their nets far wider when assessing the root of the health problem amongst the armed forces. "The social hygiene problem created by this war is not a problem of common prostitution. It is a problem of the individual soldier and the individual girl - the man cut away from his ordinary amusements and social life, the girl responding to the unusual and romantic glamour of the uniform," asserts historian Allan Brandt.\textsuperscript{162} Originally the government attacked prostitutes, blaming them for the defilement of heroic American soldiers. However, the view of women’s sexuality shifted as the government realized that disease was not as easily prevented as previously thought. The individual girl causing such hysteria was often a charity girl or any one of the innumerable adolescent girls chasing after men in uniform. These girls began to blend into the continuum of sexual deviance; although they were not official prostitutes, they now seemed to pose an equally serious problem to the state.

The broad categorization of all women once again raised the question of whose best interests the CTCA had in mind. The notion of women’s sexuality had shifted during the early twentieth century. The government assessed the “girl problem” during the war with a concerned acknowledgement of this revised view of sexuality and desire, recognizing that “no longer were young girls seen as essentially passive and sexually anesthetic, but rather as dangerously

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 163.
\textsuperscript{162} Brandt in Odem, \textit{Delinquent Daughters}, 122.
lustful.” Sexual rendezvous threatened the army whether or not they occurred within brothels or red light districts. Once the CTCA chose to go after the individual women who broke its moral codes, instead of fighting the institution of prostitution itself, it focused on all promiscuous or potentially deviant women. The reformers “blurred the lines dividing the foolish, the delinquent, and the criminal female” which had originally been “fundamental” to their programs.\textsuperscript{164}

The origins of the notion of treating lie in the rise of cheap, commercial culture and the large number of young women who wanted to enjoy it. There were many single women in the workforce who spent their free time out in the city, away from the stress of their jobs. Charity girls typically offered companionship and some type of sexual favor in exchange for gifts or tickets to amusements. Treating offered easy access to entertainment, “a public world often both economically and morally denied to young women”, and allowed them to claim some ownership of “their own sexuality within an admittedly limited set of constraints.”\textsuperscript{165} Working-class girls were often paid very low wages and found few freedoms within their everyday lives; treating allowed them to negotiate the terms of an exchange between themselves and a man. Peiss stated that many self-supporting women “had no qualms about accepting treats from unknown men or chance acquaintances;” one working woman noted, “the acceptance on the part of the girl of almost any invitation needs little explanation when one realizes that she often goes pleasureless unless she does accept ‘free treats.’”\textsuperscript{166} The women often held the upper hand in this situation, being as sexually active as they chose. They understood that leisure was the realm in which they could most effectively negotiate dependency and claim some autonomy, choice, and pleasure in their otherwise restrictive lives.

\textsuperscript{163} Brandt, \textit{No Magic Bullet}, 81. \\
\textsuperscript{164} Bristow, \textit{Making Men Moral}, 113. \\
\textsuperscript{165} Clement, \textit{Love For Sale}, 165. \\
\textsuperscript{166} Peiss, \textit{Cheap Amusements}, 54.
As Clement notes, “Wars often accelerate the pace of courtship, and [World War One] proved no exception.” What reformers viewed as immorality and crime was often simply a heightened progression of relationships between girls and soldiers. While the government had its eye on girls, the soldiers still sought them out; the men were hardly passive victims in the grips of diseased-ridden prostitutes. However, I disagree with Clement’s argument that “both soldiers and young women routinely slipped through [the officials’] patrols and ignored their advice” and that the government was reluctant to restrain charity girls. As is evident from the detainment of thousands of girls during the war, the government took a concentrated stand on stopping immorality. While the soldiers escaped any type of negative consequences from their sexual endeavors, the girls were not as lucky. The CTCA clearly identified charity girls as the enemy; the shift in focus to their suppression efforts demonstrate this. However, Clement does explore the ways in which treating changed due to the war and how it became intertwined with many girls’ understandings of patriotism. Also, she engages the ideas of entitlement and masculinity with the trend of wartime treating. One soldier defined his attitude by asserting, “We are fighting for you girls, and you ought to do something for us.” He was seeking out sexual compensation for risking his life overseas. In other words, if “men would sacrifice their bodies in war for the nation, young women must also sacrifice their bodies for the pleasure and affirmation of the soldiers.” Viewed through this lens, soldiers were hardly victims of female sexuality; quite the reverse proved true.

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168 Ibid., 144-145.
169 Considering this, along with the rise of institutionalizing girls and the new laws designed to protect soldiers, Clement’s argument loses credibility. 
170 Ibid., 151.
171 Ibid., 151.
The government failed to comprehend that the morality problem stemmed from both men and women. Considering the gendered hierarchy of power, it is surprising that the government did not think soldiers would use their status to convince women to give them sexual favors. Young women received conflicting messages – soldiers wanted sex and the government wanted chastity for the sake of the army. Girls faced the difficult task of deciding whom to listen to and faced dire consequences if they made the wrong choice. An explicit connection between treating and patriotism was expressed by both the girls and soldiers. The language used to describe the encounters between the two parties often conveyed a sense of sympathy and duty towards the soldiers who were going off to war and could die.172

Instead of changing the dynamics of the treating exchange, the war rendered it more “acceptable and widespread.”173 However, while young women’s actions may have been more accepted by their peers, the War Department had a different opinion. Women seemed to gravitate almost exclusively to men in uniform. Prostitutes preferred soldiers because they were safer; vice cops could disguise themselves as civilians, but they could not legally dress as soldiers and sailors.174 Women often went out with servicemen because they assumed the men had more money to spend. The treating that existed during the war maintained a working-class character. War Department records show that the majority of young women who socialized with soldiers held jobs in factories or as domestic servants.175

The Society’s Actions: Examining Agents’ Reports

172 Ibid., 149-150.
173 Ibid., 150.
174 Ibid., 138.
175 Ibid., 147.
The Lancaster Law and Order Society’s on-duty agent reports for the months during World War I reflect its concern with the declining morality of women within the city, containing numerous complaints about prostitutes and individual girls. The agent, John Kline, often described women who had male callers, and he monitored them regularly in his notes. He also observed the prostitutes on Water Street and complained about a woman on Mulberry who “lets them bring trade” into her house.176 His surveillance of interracial encounters between men and women also brings the issue of race into the picture. The agent kept detailed notes on occurrences such as a white man talking to three “colored” girls and then driving them somewhere or on Maud Seidel, who lived with a colored man.177 According to the Commercialized Prostitution Survey, Seidel was a known Madam who lived at 226 W. Mifflin Street.178 This fact explains why Kline was especially interested in the behavior of a woman he already considered very immoral. His vigilance of relationships between black and white people suggested his belief in the potential for indiscretions to occur.

Kline appeared to share Reynolds’s belief in immoral women’s fixed fate. Throughout his on-duty reports, Kline made many references to women he regularly watched because they had been in trouble in the past. He, along with other members of the Law and Order Society may have believed in the idea of “hereditary degeneration,” the notion that immorality and degeneracy is inculcated through adverse environmental factors, and then passed down through the generations of a family. In other words, hereditary degeneration was “a downward spiral of evolution in reverse.”179 Kline and others frequently described women as degenerates, especially

177 Agents’ on-duty reports, 20 April 1917, 24 May 1917.
when referring to prostitutes or charity girls within numerous reports. This use of language leads me to conclude that these male reformers may have considered these women incurable because of their hereditary degeneration. Kline wrote about a Mr. Anthony who had complained about his daughter, age twenty-four, married to Ed Duffy. His daughter went around with Mrs. Weaver to a side room and a house in Columbia where she had male callers. From what the agent learned, “This woman ha[d] been bad when a young girl.”\(^{180}\) He kept the house of Miss Elizabeth Shank at 518 West King Street under surveillance on a frequent basis. She had three girls at her house, as well as male callers at all hours of the night. Her house had been “under suspicion for some time.”\(^{181}\)

The Law and Order Society’s work was not always a one-sided dialogue – women did speak up and assert their own agency in reaction to the society’s activities. Kline watched the same group of women’s houses on such a consistent basis that several of them filed complaints against him. Anna Herr wrote a letter to Mayor Harry Trout (mayor of Lancaster from 1915-1920) complaining that an officer watched her house. The letter was turned over to Chief Bushong who questioned Officer Bear about Agent Kline’s involvement in the matter.\(^{182}\)

One revealing encounter between a woman and a soldier occurred on April 20, 1918. The agent recounted the arrest of a woman and soldier, noting that she was a known streetwalker and had a daughter. A week later, the report mentioned that the hearing for her case was held. The woman was returned to jail, and a new lock placed on her cell.\(^{183}\) The following week, the agent wrote down that the woman had plead guilty and was sentenced to six months in the county

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\(^{180}\) Agents’ on-duty reports, 9 December 1918, Book 12, Box 4, The Lancaster Law and Order Society Collection: 1868-1972 (The Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania).


\(^{183}\) Agents’ on-duty reports, 27 April 1918.
A “colored” man, David Hunter, was arrested for keeping a disorderly house. During the raid, a soldier was found with Bertha Warfel. Both the soldier and Warfel were locked up, but he was shortly released to his cantonment. In neither the agent’s report or the newspaper was the soldier identified. Furthermore, we can only assume that he faced no criminal charges. In “Sent to Jail,” Warfel was condemned for soliciting and adultery and sent to the prison. The Humane League took her child and sent her to the Children’s Home. She ultimately paid for both of their actions, while her companion remained protected and anonymous.

We can discover a clearer picture of Bertha Warfel by consulting the census records and prison records. She was a twenty-four-year-old married woman from Lancaster who was employed as a housekeeper. She was white, with gray eyes, and brown hair with good health. She attended school until the age of fourteen and could read and write. Her father was still living at the time of her arrest in 1918. Both of her parents had been born in Germany. The official crime was listed as adultery; she was fined $25 and sentenced to six months in prison. Warfel was released on November 4, 1918, and was never arrested again from that point on in the Lancaster area. According to the national census, by 1920, she and her husband had left the area and were living in Morris, New Jersey.

John Kline recorded another detailed observation of soldiers in Lancaster on Saturday, November 9, 1918. When the agent headed downtown for his usual nighttime surveillance of the city, he witnessed the immoral actions of many soldiers and young girls. He located soldiers from Middletown, Pennsylvania on North Prince Street, between Orange and Chestnut Street downtown. Some soldiers were drunk and sitting with women on the seats of trucks. He “could

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184 Agents’ on-duty reports, 4 May 1918.
185 “Kept Disorderly House,” The Lancaster Intelligencer, 22 April 1918, 2.
186 “Sent to Jail,” The Lancaster Intelligencer, 22 April 1918, 3.
see soldiers with girls and women going all directions. Kline described the actions of the drunken soldiers and women on Prince Street as very indecent. A soldier remarked to him that military officers had no control over their men. After 12:30 that night, the officers were still going around and gathering their men up. A short time later, agent Kline made out a report for Mr. Miller on the conduct of the soldiers he witnessed on North Prince Street. Kline had frequently recorded incidences of soldiers or men in uniform, accompanied by women, going in and out of houses of ill repute in the city.

The soldiers observed in the preceding situations played active roles in the indecent behavior that took place. The women did not always seduce them, as was commonly believed by male reformers. The soldiers acted upon their sense of masculine entitlement and used the prestige of fighting in a war to attract women. Kline mentioned a conversation he had with a Mrs. Gutacker. She informed him that four soldiers “were hunting the women of 454 W. Vine St,” but unable to find them, they left without having seen the women. This was a popular location for the soldiers; during his nightly tallies of who entered and exited the house, Kline often noted soldiers patronizing the place off and on all night. The soldiers sought out companionship and should not have remained unidentified and shielded from legal repercussions. While Kline eagerly identified any women he may have recognized or worked to discover the identity of those he did not, the soldiers always remained unnamed. However, Gutacker’s language revealed her perspective on the soldiers’ action – by stating that they “hunted” the women, she implied an aggressive, perhaps nonreciprocal, form of behavior. Her

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188 Agents’ on-duty reports, 9 November 1918.
189 Ibid.
190 Agents’ on-duty reports, 27 November 1918.
191 Agents’ on-duty reports, 19 December 1918.
words also endowed the men with the strength and agency, portraying the women as passive victims.

Investigator Paul Kinsie vividly described the various encounters he had with charity girls throughout his reports, noting everything from the girls’ personal appearances to the conversations he had with them. In Affidavit No. 132, he discussed how he met Kitty Frailey and Irene Stroble in Lancaster. The girls smiled while passing Kinsie and his friend on the street, then waited at the corner as if they expected the men to follow them. Kinsie approached them and set up a date for that evening. When he failed to bring his friend with him, the girls were disappointed. Kinsie remarked, “Well, I guess I can take care of both of you,” a statement used to learn if the girls were really “charity.” He reasoned that the statement was completely harmless, unless immorally minded girls read into the suggestiveness of it. The girls consented, thus identifying themselves as charity. Kinsie later lamented, “Of the girls of this type, in Lancaster, these seemed to be the worst. They think nothing of asking you to buy them whatever they see. Four times during our short stay together, the girls openly and boldly requested that I buy them toilet articles. I asked them if they thought I looked like Santa Claus. Kitty replied, ‘Be a good fellow, come on, get us that.’” That is exactly how Kinsie’s affidavit of the encounter ended; we are left to wonder what ensued between him and the charity girls. He appeared quick to pass judgment on them, identifying the girls as some of the worst charity girls he had seen. At the end of his encounters with charity girls, Kinsie would sum up his opinions on their characters and level of immorality. Many of the girls were deemed inherently bad, but some were labeled as naïve and foolish. Yet he did not do that in this case.

192 Affidavit No.132, Investigator’s reports, 18 November 1913, Folder 68, Box 8, The Lancaster Law and Order Society Collection: 1868-1972 (The Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania), 53.
193 Ibid., 54.
Many of the charity girls Kinsie encountered spoke their minds freely, often surprising him with their honest comments. They felt confident, did not think they were doing anything wrong, and as a result, had nothing to hide. His experiences with the girls were undoubtedly two-sided dialogues as well. He did not counsel them on the immorality of their ways without getting some angry replies back. When Kit Cassell and Lou Helm told Kinsie how they went out with married men from out of town, he seemed taken aback. Cassell replied, “Say, anybody that don’t live in Lancaster we’ll go out with. Married men, why they are the best ever. Just as long as their wives are at a safe distance away.” When Kinsie said, “If I were to tell you I’m married and have four children,” Helm quickly screamed, “I’d say you’re a damn liar.”

Kinsie never addressed the danger of their ways with the girls themselves; however, in the concluding statements of the affidavit, he sums up his thoughts on them. While he admitted to having “no conclusive proof” of the girls being charity, he based his judgment on their adventures with married men. Kinsie was “most certain that they are of the charity type. It is also known that traveling men will not waste time and money upon young girls who will not yield.”

This observation revealed that men played an active role in women’s sexual deviancy, whether or not they took any of the blame. While Kinsie used his view of men’s sexual nature to reach the conclusion that Cassell and Helm must have been promiscuous, he inadvertently admitted that men were part of the problem. Instead of attacking the problem by demonizing the young charity girls, investigators should have taken a closer look at the complex relationships these girls had with men.

Overall, Kinsie encountered some very diverse and outgoing young women during his investigations who were not afraid to fight back. On November 20, 1913, Kinsie came across two girls, about 15 years of age, who acted exceptionally vulgar and refused to identify

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195 Ibid., 69.
themselves. He accompanied them to Christian Street so they could smoke. When Kinsie asked one girl how long she had been smoking, she replied, “What the f--- do you care. C----- you guys want to know more than anybody. Come on kid, slip it to me here, right under the old apron” and drew him close to her. Kinsie “promised them everything” in an attempt to learn their names; one girl retorted with, “You can go f--- yourself, who the hell are you?” and berated him further before running away with her friend. These charity girls would not put up with Kinsie’s persistence and saw through his lies. They defended themselves and then fled. These two girls represented everything Kinsie probably thought that women should not be: cigarette smoking, foul-mouthed, and aggressively sexual. However, men could act this way without a second glance. The girls may have not fit the typical characterizations of charity girls, but their encounter with Kinsie reaffirmed the idea that his interactions with deviants were very much two-sided dialogues. At the end of his summary of the situation, he simply described the girls’ appearances, but did not evaluate their moral standing. Kinsie labeled all of the other girls; perhaps, he was too taken aback by this particular encounter.

Kinsie recounted in great detail the night he spent in a dancehall filled with prostitutes, pimps, and “respectable women” – his use of quotations and the subsequent descriptions of their behavior resulted in a meaning quite the opposite of respectable. Many of these girls probably fit into the charity girl category. He made sure not to group them in with the prostitutes, but also conveyed their immoral behavior throughout his report. Kinsie described the people at the Mannerchore Hall as “the roughest, lowest type imaginable” and noted the presence of “young girls whom [he] had previously seen walking about the streets…seated among the prostitutes and

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197 Ibid., 102.
198 Affidavit No. 153, Investigator’s reports, 26 November 1913, Folder 68, Box 8, The Lancaster Law and Order Society Collection: 1868-1972 (The Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania), 123.
pimps, of whom there were a great many.\textsuperscript{199} He recounted an incident that occurred while he stood next to the gentlemen’s bathroom where “two young girls about 18 years of age followed their companions as far as the wide open door, and, thrusting their heads in, shouted, ‘Quit shaking your best friend.’”\textsuperscript{200} Both ruffians wheeled about and exposed themselves. The girls did not turn away but watched until they adjusted their clothing.\textsuperscript{200} This behavior was shocking to Kinsie, and undoubtedly represented for him the appalling immorality displayed by charity girls in Lancaster. While charity girls caused concern within their normal setting of streets and stores, they ran an even greater risk by attending dances such as this – mingling with prostitutes and pimps only increased the likelihood of a further downward spiral into full-fledged prostitution for these girls. Surely Kinsie realized this, and it only strengthened the Law and Order Society’s resolve to eradicate the problem of treating.

Because the Law and Order Society did not have concrete proof of sexual indiscretions committed by the charity girls, it could not punish the girls as it may have wanted. For the most part, charity girls appeared to have escaped with moralizing warnings from Society agents; these girls were also closely watched in the future in case they decided to officially go down the path of prostitution. The local police force had no real grounds for arrest. However, if the Society’s vision of a local reformatory system had gained more public support and become a viable option, I have no doubt that the Society would have made sure that the charity girls were institutionalized for their own good.

\textbf{The War Ends: Aftermath of the Social Morality Campaign}

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 123.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., 124.
Although World War I officially ended with the armistice on November 11, 1918, the YWCA’s Social Morality committee, once again independent from the War Department, continued to give lectures to young women about sexual education and healthy lifestyles. The culmination of the YWCA’s work was the International Conference of Women Physicians – a conference in New York City in September 1919. It brought together numerous female doctors from over thirty-two different countries to speak on issues such as venereal disease, sexual health, and the effects of the war. Some representatives from the Medical Corps and the American Social Hygiene Association attended as well to provide their views on the topics. This conference offers us an example of the implications of wartime practices concerning female sexuality. Female physicians witnessed how both educational and punitive methods impacted women over the years. Then, these reformers took their experiences to address the problems that arose and looked toward the future of women’s health.

Dr. Katharine Davis spoke on the problem of prostitution as one of the most critical concerns for the conference to address. She broke down the meaning of the word prostitute, defining it as “a person who has sexual relations with at least several men…without affection and for personal gain of some sort.” Davis then differentiated between the professionals who devoted all of their time to such pursuits and the clandestine prostitutes who also hold legitimate jobs. Her classifications blanket all sexually deviant women and extend to charity girls. She noted that charity girls were becoming a problem that could not be ignored; however, she hesitated to explicitly fit them into her definition of prostitution by downplaying the gains of

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their sexual relations. Davis stated that charity girls did not receive a “material return other than in some instances the good times which this course of conduct makes possible.”

When enumerating the causes of prostitution, Davis’s first concern corresponded precisely with the beliefs Dr. Mabel Ulrich mentioned in her YWCA lectures, the ongoing acceptance of men’s excessive sexual indulgence as necessary and healthy. The bulk of reasons to explain why the institution of prostitution had perpetuated for so long relate to the double standard of sexuality in various ways. The monogamous marriage was the only acceptable form of relationship in the Western world; however, in order to ensure the success of such a marriage, women must remain chaste. They had been trained from a young age to inhibit sexual impulses while men had not. Women remain faithful in order to guarantee the paternity of their children. Overall, men affirm ownership over their wives and daughters while also being able to exercise their sexual impulses freely. Hence prostitution allowed men to have sexual relations without ruining women who were future wives.

Davis outlined several attitudes that could be assumed by society in order to determine which route to take in dealing with the issue of prostitution. Her speech conveys a cautious progressiveness, while also being sure to mention the other options openly. Basically, people must choose to agree with that period’s belief in a double standard for men or to hold both men and women to a single standard. Here she even expanded the single standard into either the option of a modified male standard for both or a chaste female standard. Davis put forward some advanced ideas for her time, such as modifying divorce laws “to secure the possibility of separation without stigma or scandal where marriages have proved unsuccessful.”

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202 Ibid., 57.
203 Ibid., 58.
204 Ibid., 60-61.
205 Ibid., 61.
Furthermore, for all approaches, she stressed the importance of education as the most powerful tool to spread awareness of social morality. Davis concluded her speech on a powerful note for women:

Whatever [morality] program they accept and endorse they are in a position as never before to enforce. Do we object to laws arresting the prostitute upon the street and punishing her for soliciting without equal punishment for men who molest women? This is unjust, but, if we think so, we can just as well enforce a law, for example, arresting and punishing both men and women taken in a disorderly house...If we do not make these attempts it is now absolutely our own fault if we are discriminated against in law enforcement...  

Davis’s words, along with the organization of the conference itself, attest to the new roles that women were assuming. They slowly and carefully began to utilize the power they possessed, sometimes easing gradually away from the restrictions of the past. Davis wanted those women to realize that now was the time to step up. She stated, “One result of the war which we cannot overlook has been breaking down not only of conventions but of forms of inhibitions.”  

It was up to the women of the war to capitalize on victory and ensure positive change.

The conference allowed female physicians from around the world to present their individual perspectives on issues of international importance. Edith Hooker, a social worker who specialized in social hygiene, confidently noted that, “Women in medicine have marked the beginning of the really rational treatment of the social evil.” She also drew out the coincidence that the advent of women in medicine correlated with the use of reason instead of prejudice when governing the treatment of venereal disease. At this time, the willingness to excuse male promiscuity as sexually necessary began to disappear.

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206 Ibid., 62.  
207 Ibid., 62.  
208 Ibid., 81.  
209 Ibid., 81.
The issue of prophylaxis arose when debating how best to confront the problem of venereal disease. The female physicians seemed to stand directly opposed to the Army and Public Health Service. The Public Health Service agreed to assist soldiers who demanded prophylactic treatment, but prophylaxis was not officially part of the government’s program. The women rallied against this decision, speaking out about the many reasons why prophylaxis was not the most effective answer to disease prevention. Hooker stressed the fact that morals were being left out of the question. Women doctors opposed prophylaxis for strictly rational and scientific reasons. She mentioned the need to treat venereal disease as a hygienic problem, approaching it as they would any other dangerous, infectious disease. Her priority was preventing contacts between infected and uninfected persons.

The rhetoric opposing prophylaxis once again highlighted the problems associated with the sexual double standard. Hooker argued that the government’s use of “early treatment” for venereal disease reaffirmed men’s belief that their promiscuity was acceptable, and it gave them a false sense of security against disease that did not really exist. Furthermore, she provided a scenario to accurately portray the discrepancy between soldiers who sought prophylaxis and promiscuous women who did the same. She claimed that if men could have early treatment facilities, women would have to be given them as well. In that case, “all penalization for sexual irregularities on the part of women would have to be abandoned.” Hooker adamantly condemned masculine promiscuity, noting the great cost society had to pay because of it — venereal disease, prostitution, illegitimacy, and so on. She blamed the failure to turn this

210 Ibid., 82.
211 Ibid., 85.
212 Ibid., 87.
information into law, penalizing men for their acts, for the perpetuation of each generation to “live over the painful experiences of the past.”²¹³

The pivotal condom debate that occurred during the war – and continued afterwards, as seen through these speeches from the conference – presented a double bind for women reformers. If they supported the distribution of condoms for soldiers, they encouraged male entitlement. Condoms were scientifically effective and a potential way to prevent venereal disease, but women reformers viewed them as a way to victimize women. Condoms would allow men to pursue their sexual desires at the expense of women. From today’s perspective, condoms seem like an obvious solution; however, these women lived within a specific historical context and things we may not have even considered influenced their perspectives. While they wanted many things that were very forward and progressive for their time, such as honest sexual education and a standard of sexuality that held men accountable, condoms held mixed meanings for many women. Furthermore, whose best interests would be in mind? The reformers wanted to protect women, not the soldiers. Even when Dr. Rachel Yarros expressed her support for birth control, this support hinged on the fact that contraceptives would lessen the burden of women within a marriage, allowing them to space out their children. Her opinion did not extend to the case of soldiers and women. The struggle between these women’s morality and rationality was constant.

Hooker’s mention of a wartime newspaper article – “The Way Lillian’s Hair Was Dressed Arouses Patrolman’s Suspicions” – provided a concrete example of the inherent inefficiency and prejudice that surrounded the current methods of vice suppression. Lillian Simon was seen by police on the street, arrested, taken to the hospital for physical examination, and committed for three months to the House of Correction because of the word of one

²¹³ Ibid., 91.
policeman.214 With all the education, scientific advancement, and constitutional rights existing at the time, a woman could be forcibly examined and detained because of her unusual hairstyle? Hooker and the other female physicians understood the problems at hand concerning the government’s programs during the war, and they sought to advocate for improvements for postwar society. The system of quarantine that existed during the First World War did not eliminate venereal disease by any stretch of the imagination. Hooker pointed out:

> Although we have had for a century the lock hospital treatment of women and although we have found on excellent authority it has not done a particle of good, still we have at this moment included in the programs of all the thinking men of America the lock hospital and I think, until medical women rise up and demand that this particular measure should be given over, we shall presumably continue to have this measure in operation.215

Once again mentioning the plight of Lillian, she noted that Lillian’s time in a jail will not “rehabilitate her but…will turn her out a much more perverse person than she was when she went in.”216 Not only were innocent girls being targeted and detained, but also a system supposedly of prevention had become an institution of punishment with allegedly lifelong negative consequences.

Colonel Pierce of the Medical Corps provided a male perspective at the conference when he spoke on the topic of how the United States government took up the problem of venereal disease during the war. Congressional action created the Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board and established the division of venereal diseases in the Public Health Service. To combat the spread of disease, each state board of health was given the opportunity to coordinate its efforts with those of other states in order to create a uniform plan throughout the country.217 The bill to create the national organizations included additional funding for state organizations if they

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214 Ibid., 92.
215 Ibid., 95.
216 Ibid., 95.
217 Ibid., 117.
accepted the terms set out for them by the government. The first regulation that had to be followed in order to receive allocated funds was that gonorrhea, syphilis, and chancroid be reported to physicians and then to the state board of health. In six states, laws required the reporting of the disease by name. In the other forty states, the disease was to be reported by serial number.\textsuperscript{218}

When discussing the correlation between prostitution and the spread of disease, he elaborated on the difficulty of eliminating prostitution. Pierce compared prostitutes to mosquitoes, noting that while insects can be killed, we cannot destroy “these poor misguided women.”\textsuperscript{219} He claimed that seventy-five percent of prostitutes were “feeble-minded” and should be in institutions. These women needed re-education to meet the competition under the new conditions they lived in. He ruminated that while it could be possible for a large percentage of these women to carry on some legitimate means of livelihood, for those who were subnormal, the community would protect them for as long as necessary.\textsuperscript{220} Feeble-minded was a loaded term during the early twentieth century – it basically encompassed all forms of immorality and sexual deviance. Reformers blamed promiscuous women’s actions on their mental deficiency. The rate of feeble-mindedness was grossly exaggerated during that time period. Furthermore, while Pierce acknowledged his belief in the possibility of re-education, he also made it clear that the supposedly incurable would remain detained for as long as the government deemed necessary. Misdiagnoses based on unsound medical evaluations of prostitutes or charity girls could result in years of alienation and humiliation.

\textsuperscript{218} Pennsylvania and Nevada did not have laws requiring the report of venereal diseases to the board of health (Ibid, 118-119).
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., 123.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 124.
Conclusion: Postwar Sexuality

The battle to police women’s sexuality started long before World War I, picking up support during wartime due to the intense concerns about venereal disease, prostitution, and military preparedness. The Lancaster Law and Order Society and the YWCA highlighted some of the great diversity that existed in terms of how to address sexual deviancy. The two basic approaches that predominated in the early twentieth century focused on either punishment or prevention. However, based on the sheer magnitude of women and girls who were detained, imprisoned, or institutionalized, we can surmise that the punitive approach prevailed.

The war provided a unique context in which to deal with the issue of sexual delinquency. Due to the national implications of venereal disease, reformers were able to institute repressive measures that would not have been successful within any other peacetime setting. The protection of the country and its soldiers was valued over the safety of women. War always represents a great sacrifice on the part of many; during World War I, women sacrificed the right to control their own sexuality, whether or not they consented to it. The War Department blindly pursued the elimination of prostitutes and charity girls without addressing the underlying causes of their behavior or considering the active role that men played within the whole scenario.

Such a patriarchal vice crusade ultimately had important implications for the future. Following the war, female reformers – especially women physicians – continued to question the double standard of sexuality. If men and women had been held to the same expectations, the repressive campaign instituted during the war would have never occurred on such a large scale. Could a more efficient, education-based plan have been developed to address the problem of venereal disease? Furthermore, the debate over birth control gained intensity. The war ended, but the concerns over the shifting nature of sexuality persisted. Also important to consider is the fact
that the government’s punitive approach to women’s sexuality had laid a framework that would be drawn upon in the future, if needed:

With the end of the war, the social hysteria about venereal disease subsided, along with the mass arrests and detention of young women and girls. What remained, however, were the legal mechanisms of social control – female police and probation officers, the courts, detention centers, and reformatories – which continued to monitor and regulate working class female sexuality.\(^{221}\)

The government’s approach prevailed throughout the duration of the war, but charity girls may have demonstrated the most long-term effects. Sexuality slowly evolved into what we recognize as the current system of dating and marriage. Historian Elizabeth Alice Clement noted that treating had become more acceptable and widespread during World War I.\(^{222}\) I believe that this fact had far-reaching implications. During the 1920s, Margaret Sanger led the birth control campaign in the United States. While she opened birth control clinics and advocated for public acceptance of contraceptives, Sanger failed to gain the support of the medical establishment for many years.\(^{223}\) For the first time, starting in 1930, contraceptives could be advertised and sent through the mail legally. A federal court decision allowed “advertisement and shipment of contraceptive devices intended for legal use – in most states ‘for the prevention of disease.’ Under cover of that and similar euphemisms such as ‘feminine hygiene,’ a booming business in contraceptives rapidly developed.”\(^{224}\) Finally, in 1937, the American Medical Association officially endorsed birth control. Many doctors had pleaded for the AMA to offer its guidance in the ethics of contraceptive practices and especially in choosing among the hundreds of contraceptives on the market. This committee asked that the association “undertake the

\(^{221}\) Odem, *Delinquent Daughters*, 127.

\(^{222}\) Clement, *Love For Sale*, 150.


\(^{224}\) Ibid., 212.
investigation of materials, devices, and methods recommended or employed for the prevention of conception.”

This point marked the medicalization of birth control.

With the changes in ideas of courtship and the gradual acceptance of a more open sexuality, “treating” slowly began to transform into modern dating. World War I pushed treating into the national consciousness, unwillingly popularizing it even more. The metaphors for courtship moved away from home and family and began to focus more on the marketplace and commercialized leisure. The shifting of analogies and metaphors “through which individuals understood and described courtship…changed the way courtship was understood in the culture, and actually influenced the meaning of individual acts and decisions.”

Historians John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman identify the 1960s as the point when sexuality began to take center stage. When comparing the time periods of World War I and the 1960s:

[One] might reasonably wonder what was new or distinctive about this world of urban nightlife and sexual encounters. After all, working-class youth at the turn of the century had sustained a sexual subculture rooted in commercialized amusements. But the unmarried youth of that era had elicited pity, scorn, or fear from the middle class who sought to control their behavior and made them the object of reformation efforts. Now, in the 1960s, young adults of the middle class were glamorized; they embodied the unspoken fantasies of a consumer society extended to the sphere of sex. These young singles very quickly became…”a new, privileged, spotlighted, envied group.”

Comparing the situation of the charity girls to our own environment drives home the point of how unfairly these girls were discriminated against. Today, the concept of a charity girl may not seem like such a radical notion. According to historian Beth Bailey, we have learned (from studies such as the Kinsey reports) that the sexual experiences of individuals had been less and less in line with public conventions. Since the “buttresses had been crumbling slowly…”[they]

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225 Ibid., 215.
finally could no longer support this structure of meaning. The true revolution was, perhaps, not in sex, but in the metaphor that gave it meaning. 228 In American society today, dating often entails a man paying for a woman’s dinner or amusements, and sexual relations are not unusual. The government would never be able to tell a woman today that she could not partake in consensual sexual activity, and the public would be appalled if it tried.

Overall, in assessing the efforts that were made during World War I to address the concerns of venereal disease and prostitution, we need to view the situation from multiple perspectives. Male and female reformers took a very different approach as to what the enemy was, and views within each group varied as well. There was not one single, monolithic opinion to describe the approach of men or women. Certainly, the work of the Law and Order Society and the YWCA showed diverging concerns and practices both locally and nationally. Close examination of their language and publications reveal how deeper issues of patriarchy, morality, and numerous other influences impacted each organization’s stance. Even with the extensive punitive apparatus set in place by the federal government, changes in sexuality still resulted in the transformation of dating. Charity girls might have had the last word after all.

228 Bailey, From Front Porch to Back Seat, 141.
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