PATRIOTS, PROSTITUTES, PATRIOTUTES:
THE MOBILIZATION AND CONTROL OF FEMALE SEXUALITY
IN THE UNITED STATES DURING WORLD WAR II

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the wartime processes of both mobilizing U. S. women's "patriotic" sexuality and suppressing "deviant" sexuality. As the United States mobilized for war, the government, the military, and the medical establishments collectively launched a campaign to control and contain women labelled as "prostitutes" or "promiscuous" who came to symbolize the recurrent wartime problem of venereal disease. Social agencies, such as the American Social Hygiene Association, and the media also supported the campaign. But a simultaneous effort to mobilize female sexuality in support of the war effort complicated the campaign. In order to formulate venereal disease control policies, the Army, Navy, Federal Security Agency, State Health Departments, and the American Social Hygiene Association met and drew up the Eight Point Agreement in 1939, marking the official start of sociopolitical efforts to control female sexuality. In 1941, the May Act made prostitution in proximity to defense-related areas a federal crime. The federal government then created the Social Protection Division to serve as a "watchdog" over women's morals. American women became a suspect category, subject to surveillance for the duration of the war. The narrative base of this study rests on the records of the Social Protection Division of the Office of Community War Services, the Army and Navy, the United States Public Health Service, and the American Social Hygiene Association. This
dissertation presents a challenge to existing scholarship regarding World War II and the postwar period. It extends the ongoing historical debate regarding the effects of wartime transformation of the status of American women by looking beyond changes in women's labor force participation. It introduces sexuality as a critical factor in the debate regarding the liberating aspects of war and suggests that the 1950s emphasis on family and domesticity should be reconsidered as, in part, a response to wartime disruption of the sexual system.
Dedicated to SKD
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Appendix.
Introduction

In 1940, as the United States took the first steps toward mobilizing for a war, and while Americans still hoped not to fight, numerous women all over the country enthusiastically joined in defense-related activities. Foot-dragging by the War Department with regard to the formation of a Women's Army Corps prompted individual women as well as women's organizations to begin a letter writing campaign in support of military service for women. When the draft of men went into effect in mid-1940, women's demands to join the war effort through government or military service increased.\(^1\) All over the United States, women indicated their patriotic willingness to aid in preparing for war.

As women began to organize themselves to heed a potential call to arms, their efforts often met with ridicule.\(^2\) Nonetheless, women continued to organize and form groups such as the Molly Pitcher Brigade and the Green Guards of America, self-described as "the women's first military force in the United States."\(^3\) The Women's League of Defense, located in Chicago, enrolled 17,000 women who were ready "to do anything helpful to replace a man in the event of war." And Toledo, Ohio, was home to a unit of the Willys-Overland Women's Motor Defense Corps, whose mission included a proposal to train women for military duties.\(^4\)

\(^2\) Janna Sherman, "'They either need these women or they do not': Margaret Chase Smith and the Fight for Regular Status for Women in the Military," *Journal of Military History* 54:1 (January 1990): 54.
\(^3\) Ibid.
In the period of mobilization, women were on the move all over the country. Some headed for industrial areas in the hopes of acquiring jobs in defense plants; others followed their husbands to military and naval bases. Once the United States entered the war in response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, women moved throughout the United States in increasing numbers. Nurses, both black and white, responded to the call to serve. Women volunteered for all kinds of defense-related activities, including civil defense, the Red Cross, YWCA, USO, and selling war bonds. "We all pulled together in a way that I have never seen happen any other time in this country," one woman recalled. "It wasn't something you could put your finger on," she said, "but it was a feeling that definitely was there, and everybody was connected with it." Or as another recalled, "women, everyone were going to work at that time. We were really patriotic in those days."7

This is the familiar story of wartime mobilization, but it conceals a hidden tale of a different kind of response to the war effort. Dr. Walter C. Reckless, a sociologist, noted that "war has disorganized women more than men ... many women are following soldiers to army camps, hanging around saloons and being runaways in this war today."8 But at the same time as women hanging around saloons and military bases posed a threat to the established order, authorities insisted that the boys in uniform needed female companionship. "Suddenly single women were of tremendous importance. It was hammered at us through the newspapers and magazines and on the radio. We were

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needed at USO to dance with the soldiers," a woman reported to Studs Terkel.9 Or as Dolores Spratley, a WAC officer, recalled, "because of the Fort, hundreds of young men were coming into the city ... a USO was opened ... I went to dances almost every night. We would meet downtown after work. Usually we would meet in some bar or grille for a hamburger and a beer. Then we would go either to the YWCA to dance or we would go to a movie. After our date I would get on a streetcar and go home and the soldier would catch a streetcar and go to Fort Hayes."10

This study systematically explores the untold story of the dual process of mobilizing wartime women's patriotic sexuality and suppressing deviant female sexuality. In this way I join the ongoing historical debate regarding the impact of wartime on women in the United States. By focusing on a complex series of government and social interventions into the territory of female sexuality in the World War II period, it becomes possible to trace the evolution of a discourse concerning excess female sexuality that resulted in an imposition of the labels "prostitute" or "promiscuous" on numerous wartime women. As the United States prepared for war, the apparatus of the state, in an attempt to deal with the recurrent wartime problem of venereal disease, launched a campaign to suppress prostitution and to curtail the activities of so-called "promiscuous" women. Prostitutes have historically been depicted as carriers of venereal diseases, and the World War II campaign to preserve national (male) health enmeshed numerous women, some prostitutes as well as many who were not prostitutes, in a web of criminality, deviance, and disease.11 The campaign to repress so-called dangerous

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11 Edwin M. Schur, *Labeling Women Deviant: Gender, Stigma, and Social Control* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), considers the "routine devaluation" of women through the use of labeling. He contends that "deviance defining" by the use of terms such as "masculine," "aggressive," and "promiscuous" are both materially and psychologically detrimental to women. Social stigmatization of
female sexuality was, however, complicated by a simultaneous effort to mobilize respectable female sexuality in support of the war effort. As the country moved from a state of limited emergency toward total mobilization, female sexuality was in some sense nationalized and a discourse of obligatory sexual/sensual patriotism circulated around American women. Magazines and newspapers featured stories, articles, and advertisements that encouraged women to do their part.

Print media operated as a critical site not only in the area of female sexual mobilization but also in that of control. The policies of government propaganda agencies such as the Office of War Information and its Magazine Bureau, and War Advertising Council, indicate the close working relationship between government and media.¹² Popular magazines, for example, urged wartime women not only to take war production jobs, but also to provide morale-maintaining recreation for servicemen. The United Service Organization (USO) recruited young women for dances and encouraged them to be friendly and open with servicemen. But at the same time women had to be wary about too much intimacy.

As women became visible in new ways to the gaze of the public, their behavior came under close scrutiny. The state's claim that women's bodies were necessary to the war effort in both factory and dance hall clashed with more traditional ideals about women's proper roles and confounded women's wartime service. Consequently, state
and social authorities, while mobilizing women to depart from their assigned spaces and provide diverse wartime services, also spoke of their belief that women in public would become sexualized and masculinized. Such contradictions provoked fear and confusion and seemed to threaten the gendered social structure. Questions arose; the answers often resulted in the devaluing of women's wartime contributions. Paradoxically, many women who responded to wartime mobilization did not appear as patriotic citizens; instead the female body came to represent a threat to national welfare. While sexuality has been, in a general sense, considered irrelevant to citizenship, during World War II sexuality, especially female sexuality, was central. Rooted in the past, a notion of the female body as essentially disordered began to circulate, exacerbating social anxieties related to impending war.

During World War II, women's bodies were nationalized and their sexuality militarized, that is, women's laboring and sexual bodies were, in a sense, drafted for the duration.\textsuperscript{13} The draft called men to serve their country, and women likewise received their orders: to be patriotic and support the war effort, in part by maintaining servicemen's morale. As numerous women volunteered to entertain, that is, to provide pleasure for, the troops, the already unclear boundaries between acceptable and transgressive female sexuality became even more nebulous. Female sexuality, simultaneously prohibited and exploited, could appear as good or morale-maintaining sexuality or as bad, promiscuous and diseased, sexuality. But all too often, the good girl and the bad girl were incorporated in the same woman. Women's contributions to the war effort, subject to rumors of promiscuity and colored by sexual innuendo, became

tainted with charges of sinful and transgressive sex. Growing perceptions that the new wartime woman would spread contagion and disrupt the social order through her promiscuous sexuality led, then, to policies for more stringent control of women. Prostitutes, promiscuous women, and their inevitable consequence - venereal disease - became the enemies on the homefront.

Existing scholarship has documented the stories of the millions of women who agreed to do their part to support the war effort in factories, shipyards and defense plants.\(^{14}\) The ensuing deviations from normative gender roles seemed to threaten the sex/gender system. In part, this threat was mitigated by a gendered process of redefinition that contained female labor power in a discourse or language of domesticity and femininity. As a 1940s newsreel exclaimed: "Instead of cutting the lines of a dress, this woman cuts the pattern of aircraft parts."\(^{15}\) Popular magazines suggested that under every pair of working woman's overalls there remained feminine attire.

But sexual service was less easily redefined in acceptable terms. The sexual innuendo that often framed female sexual mobilization is strikingly illustrated in perfume advertisements featuring a seductively clad woman accompanied by the caption: "Sell It To The Marines." At the same time, articles such as "Public's Health: Program To Prevent Young Girls And Women From Involvement In Prostitution And Promiscuity" typified a parallel discourse of control that evolved in response to perceived dangers that

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\(^{15}\) Quoted in Ruth Milkman, Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987): 61. Popular magazines relied, in part, on conventional images of women to reassure the public that women's roles were not really changing.
circulated around female sexuality. By suggesting in unnoticeable ways that, under the overalls, under the feminine attire, lay a potentially disorderly body, the state cast suspicion on wartime women's responses to the war effort. Such varied but gendered discourses operated to reposition women at or beyond the borders of patriotic citizenship through a process that called women to serve their country while simultaneously reinterpreting their wartime contributions. While the national interest demanded total mobilization, deeply embedded attitudes toward female sexuality served to complicate the issue of women's place in wartime society. An army official reflected the magnitude of such attitudes when he equated prostitution with treason. And as a form of deviance during World War II even the category of prostitute became unstable. This instability is well illustrated by the words of Otis Anderson, a USPHS physician, who referred to those women who agreed to entertain the troops as "patriotutes."

The state's concerns regarding women prompted the formation of policies and the adoption of practices intended to protect the defensive capacities of the United States. General Reynolds, with his charges of treason, along with other officials who had suspicions about wartime women, proceeded to wage an all-out war on prostitutes and so-called "promiscuous women," who came to symbolize venereal disease. In the years before Pearl Harbor, the Army and Navy, the Federal Security Agency, State Health Departments, and the American Social Hygiene Agency formulated the Eight Point Agreement regarding venereal disease control. These eight points mark the official start of wartime sociopolitical efforts to control female sexuality. In 1941, the May Act made

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16 See, for example, Women's Home Companion (WHC) (October 1943): 131. "Public's Health: Program To Prevent Young Girls And Women From Involvement In Prostitution And Promiscuity." Survey (May 1943), 152.
prostitution, within specified areas around military bases a federal crime.\textsuperscript{19} The federal
government then created the Social Protection Division to serve as a watchdog over
women's morals. American women became a suspect category, subject to surveillance
for the duration of the war. In the following years, as many more women became visible
in areas previously closed or forbidden to them, socio-sexual tensions heightened. As
the homefront war against venereal disease began, the enemy had been identified, and she
was everywhere.

I argue here that sexuality is a critical but under-developed category of analysis in
the scholarship on the Second World War.\textsuperscript{20} Alan M. Brandt has analyzed the social
construction of venereal disease; I turn to a more nuanced account of similar material and
look closely at the effects of the venereal disease campaign on women. I explore the ways
that the conflicting interests and ambivalently attitudes of the parties involved in the
campaign operated to construct a complex and often contradictory socio-sexual policy
regarding wartime female sexuality. I suggest that the dual campaign waged by the
apparatus of the state in the attempt to mobilize and control female sexuality operated, in
part, as a counterbalance to women's wartime gains that have been identified in the
existing scholarship. In essence, the messages put forth by the individuals and
organizations of the state apparatus sexualized wartime women, while simultaneously

\textsuperscript{19} See Army/Navy, NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records) for text of the Eight Point Agreement
and the May Act. The May Act became law in July 1941.

\textsuperscript{20} On sexuality and World War II see Anderson, \textit{Wartime Women}; Beth Bailey and David Farber,
\textit{The First Strange Place: The Alchemy of Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii} (New York: The Free
Press, 1992); Alan Berube, \textit{Coming Out Under Fire, The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II}
Disease in the United States Since 1880} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); John Costello, \textit{Love
Sex and War: Changing Values 1939-1945} (London: Collins, 1985); John D'Emilio and Estelle B.
Twentieth-Century America} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); esp. Chapter 5; Michel
demonizing sexual women. In agreement with many scholars, I contend that gender ideology failed to undergo significant change in spite of wartime challenges to the gender system, but I also suggest that women's assigned roles may temporarily have become more rigid. My analysis of the dual campaign to mobilize and control wartime women's sexuality raises questions about the influence of the so-called sexual revolution of the 1920s with regard to changing attitudes toward female sexuality and provides new insight into the call for a "return to normalcy" and ensuing postwar sociosexual conservatism.

Wartime women heeded their nation's call and stepped, by necessity, beyond traditionally acceptable female boundaries. They posed for pin-up pictures, dated lonely servicemen, and even travelled by bus to dances at military bases. Such patriotic responses led, however, to charges that "hordes of harlots" were endangering the physical and moral well-being of the armed forces. In spite of challenges to, and changes in, sexual mores throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century, a middle-class ideology, albeit idealized and prescriptive, continued to circulate in the 1940s.\footnote{See for example John C. Burnham, Bad Habits: Drinking, Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History (New York: New York University Press, 1993): 170. Burnham contends that even though individuals questioned sexual standards, they persisted in seeing extramarital sexual activity as "misbehavior on some level." Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990) discusses the power exerted on female behavior by a "mythical norm." Mark Thomas Connelly, The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980 analyzes the persistence of anxieties regarding changes in women's status.} As a result of pre-conceived notions about and wartime attitudes toward female sexuality, increasing numbers of wartime women were arrested on morals charges, incarcerated, and forced to undergo venereal disease testing. In this construction, female "patriot(tut)ism" could not only be dismissed because it was "typical" of woman's inability to function as a "real" public citizen, but could also serve as support for punitive measures against women who appeared to contravene the national war effort.\footnote{See Carole Pateman, The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989): 4 for an analysis of the ways in which "women are...}
In order to understand this process, I focus on the interests and activities of the "apparatus of the state," the terminology I use to refer to government, military, and medical institutions, as well as the media, social agencies, and individuals and groups who supported and/or actively participated in the campaign to repress and control female sexuality through a variety of measures. The records of the Social Protection Division, Office of Community War Services, Federal Security Agency (SPD), the United States Public Health Service (USPHS), the Army, Army Air Corps, the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA), in addition to professional journals and popular literature, constitute my major sources.

A Note on the Records

In spite of the richness of the primary sources, they present several problems. The records speak from a hegemonic male position. In general, they lie in the realm of the specular, that is, women are described and interpreted by official figures; women are seldom permitted to speak for themselves. And the records of the Social Protection Division, in particular, are frequently devoid of specifics such as dates and names of the parties for whom the documents were intended. Many documents are rough drafts of speeches or possible articles; some are parts of larger reports.

Another salient problem pertains to statistical accounts. Much of the statistical information was gathered to provide a rationale for the repression of prostitution and to

incorporated into the civil order differently from men." In particular, Pateman contends that "the process through which women have been included as citizens [in the liberal state] has been structured around women's bodily (sexual) difference from men. Women have been included as 'women', that is, as beings whose sexual embodiment prevents them from enjoying the same political standing as men." See also Linda K. Kerber, "A Constitutional Right To Be Treated Like Ladies: Women And The Obligations Of Citizenship," in U.S. History and Women's History: New Feminist Essays, eds. Linda K. Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris, Kathryn Kish Sklar (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995): 17-35. Kerber states that "American women's relationship to the state has from the beginning been understood to be different in substantial and important respects from the relationship of their male counterparts and contemporaries."
support requests for funding for social protection programs. The Social Protection Division, operating with a set of preconceived ideas, claimed that female prostitution and promiscuity was rampant and that such women were disease carriers who threatened the health of the armed services. Patricia Cline Cohen points out that "the preexisting concern about the subject being studied inevitably shapes the method of enumerating." Numbers are not necessarily neutral; they can be "freighted with unacknowledged values."\(^23\) Different agencies, numerous sub-groups, and individual officials participated in amassing statistics on a variety of topics; often their reported results conflicted or produced a partial story. In August of 1942, for example, the venereal disease rate in the Army showed a marked jump. The increase was, in fact, due to a new policy initiated in July that allowed the induction of persons with venereal disease.\(^24\)

As a writer in an eastern newspaper noted, "the reported prevalence of VD may have been exaggerated; incidence is one thing, prevalence is another."\(^25\) In May 1940 Dr. Clarke (ASHA) complained to Dr. Parran (USPHS) because the Association had been accused of using scare tactics to back up its claim for more financial support by stating that one out of every twenty people in the United States had syphilis. Clark suggested that it would be a good idea for the ASHA and USPHS to "get together" and agree on a number.\(^26\) An editorial in *New York Medical Week* had accused the ASHA of inflating the VD rate, calling it a "gross and deliberate exaggeration" for the purpose of "scaring" the public into "taking certain steps against venereal disease." The ASHA wrote


\(^{24}\) See for example Lt. Col. Thomas B. Turner, Chief, VD Control Branch, Preventive Medicine Division, Office of the Surgeon General, U.S. Army, "Immediate Wartime Outlook and Indicated Post-war Conditions with Respect to the Control of the Venereal Diseases," *American Journal of Public Health (AJPH)* 33:11 (November 1943): 1309-1313. On page 1310, Turner stated that between October 1942 and June 1943, over 55,000 men with venereal disease had been drafted. They were treated after induction.

\(^{25}\) V. D. General Prevalence Survey, May 1940. *American Social Hygiene Papers, Social Welfare History Archives Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Box 115. (ASHA Papers)*. The newspaper mentioned in files was the *Mt. Holly, New Jersey News* (May 16, 1940).

\(^{26}\) Letter from Clark to Parran, May 10, 1940. *ASHA Papers, Box 115.*
to Surgeon General Parran suggesting that ASHA and USPHS "should promptly get together and agree upon the estimates of the prevalence of syphilis." Selective Service blood tests uncovered unknown cases of venereal disease and inflated the rates. Rejected men were not forced to take treatment.

A particularly problematic area of statistical reports concerned the allegedly high venereal disease rate among African Americans. Many physicians challenged the accuracy of these numbers. Statistics regarding the age of females classified as prostitutes or promiscuous also presented difficulties. They often focused on extreme youth - sometimes as young as ten or eleven - and were challenged as erroneous in several instances. Mr. Teske of the Federal Security Agency sent a memo to Eliot Ness (SPD) regarding sets of statistics that had been disseminated by the Division, noting that he had found "misstatements of facts in all statements that I have checked." He called attention, for example, to the ages of girls as reported in the El Paso report that claimed that girls as young as ten had been apprehended. Teske said that the youngest was sixteen, and that only twelve, not, as the SPD claimed twenty-six, of the young women were under twenty.

Charles P. Taft, Director, Office of Community War Services, also cautioned that "statistics are pretty unreliable without careful review of each situation." He particularly challenged the statistics on rising juvenile sex delinquency, saying that "there are no

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27 See for example a letter from Lester B. Granger, Executive Director, National Urban League to Dr. Clarke, ASHA, January 23, 1943. ASHA Papers, Box 117. Granger was responding to a copy of the ASHA's "Proposal for a Negro Educational Project." He lodged a strong objection to several parts of the proposal including a quote from Surgeon General Parran, which Granger called an "unfortunate choice." The quote, he said "makes a blanket assertion regarding the rate of syphilis among Negroes which has been repeatedly challenged by competent authority." See also ASHA Papers, Box 128 on "discrepancies in Negro commercialized prostitution survey," New Orleans, May 1945.

28 See for example a letter from Raymond F. Clapp, SPD, to Katharina Lenroot, Children's Bureau, Department of Labor, December 22, 1942 that "corrected" an earlier set of statistics. And a memo from Mr. Teske of the Federal Security Agency to Mr. Ness, Director, Social Protection Division regarding erroneous statistics. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Statistics and Studies).
overall statistics," and that "all statistics should be taken with a grain of salt."29

Amazingly, while there are numerous reports regarding the number of red-light districts and houses of prostitution closed, there are no statistics on the total number of prostitutes believed to be in business or of those arrested during repression.

As official groups, especially the Social Protection Division, constantly pushed for more statistics and higher numbers to support their programs, various officials warned them that they were leaving room for challenges. In addition to claiming that very young girls were sexually promiscuous, the SPD also claimed that rape had decreased. Rape, which emerged as a public concern in the face of repression of prostitution, had, in fact, increased during the war years.30

While the gathering of statistics both to support the venereal disease campaign and to keep the spotlight on women and girls as responsible for the transmission of these diseases continued, even those who agreed with repression sometimes demurred. In 1943, when the SPD requested more detailed statistics regarding, for example, descriptions and/or names of alleged contacts and locations of the encounters or assignations, several Army and Navy officers objected and refused to give additional

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29 Charles P. Taft (OCWS), "Address before the 50th Annual Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police," August 11, 1943. NA RG 215, Box 13 (General Records).
30 See interoffice memo from Manfred Lillefors to Thomas Devine, Director SPD, March 22, 1945 advising him to stop the Division's practice of releasing statements claiming rape had decreased when houses of prostitution had been closed. Lillefors pointed out that rape had increased according to FBI records, and that "someday someone will quote the FBI crime report" that shows the increase. NA RG 215, Box 2 (Statistics and Studies). See also Estelle B. Freedman, "'Uncontrolled Desires': The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1930-1960," *Journal of American History*, 74 (June 1987): 83-106. She points out that male sex crimes were under-reported, if not deliberately suppressed, during the war years. Her contentions are supported by the document discussed above that stated that forcible rape had increased, but statutory rape had decreased. A number of under-age girls were arrested, some in "compromising" circumstances, but servicemen were not prosecuted as they could have been for impairing the morals of a minor, if not for statutory rape. See also Dr. Ralph S. Banay, "Emotional Factors in Wartime Delinquency," *Probation* 21:4 (April 1943): 103 who said that during wartime male crimes of violence and sex were increasing. Although instances of forcible rape were suppressed, in at least one case a rape was prosecuted; the men involved were African American. See *The Crisis* (March 1943): 95 and (June 1943): 180-181 and (July 1943): 212. Three black soldiers were accused of raping a white woman in Alexandria, Louisiana and were quickly tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death.
information.\textsuperscript{31} In terms of statistics, then, the records require careful reading, cross-checking, and the ability to re-compute percentages. These often misleading or erroneous statistics supported the attack on prostitution and female promiscuity; diseased women became automatically suspect whenever the venereal disease rate increased in the armed services.

The scope of the campaign to prevent and control venereal disease through the repression of female prostitution and promiscuity, as well as the numerous contradictions and complexities that emerged as the apparatus of the state endeavored simultaneously to mobilize female sexuality in support of the war effort, is discussed and analyzed in the following chapters.

\textbf{Chapter One}, "Prelude To War," situates the problem of female sexuality within a discourse of preparedness. As the United States moved closer to total mobilization, labor conversion and the draft occupied government planners. But since war demanded a healthy military machine, government and social agencies also began to discuss ways to offset an expected rise in venereal disease in the armed services. As the prostitute and the promiscuous woman became symbols for venereal disease, the apparatus of the state created a morals agency, the Social Protection Division, to police female sexuality. This chapter traces the concurrent construction of the sexually dangerous (female) individual and the sexually alluring morale builder. Consequently, mobilization on the homefront presented numerous complications both for the state and for individual women.

\textbf{Chapter Two}, "The Long Arm of the State," lays out the organizational structure of the agencies that participated in the repression effort, with particular attention to the Social Protection Division. It explores the collective creation of policies by government institutions and social agencies during wartime. While the campaign to repress prostitution

\textsuperscript{31} Letter from Mrs. Winifred Ferguson, regional SPD representative in Minneapolis, to Eliot Ness, July 21, 1943. NA RG 215, Box 3 (Regional Files).
operated out of the Social Protection Division, numerous committees and subcommittees, such as the National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection, also had substantial roles in the effort to control and contain female sexuality.

**Chapter Three**, "Reservoirs of Infection: Medical and Scientific Discourses on Contagion," begins with a discussion of tensions between conceptions of venereal diseases as a moral failing and as a contagious illness. Through an analysis of historically specific representations of women in areas such as social work, criminology, and biology, this chapter traces a continuously negative discourse that circulated around female sexuality and provided a rationale for repression. Not only all women, but also African American men, were affected by socio-political discourses that gave them excess visibility as sites of venereal infection while simultaneously rendering them invisible in terms of their contributions to the war effort. Discourses of sex and race served both to reinforce stereotypes and to retard the prevention and control of venereal disease.

**Chapter Four**, "She May Look Clean...But," includes a discussion of the regulation of prostitution juxtaposed against military reluctance to suppress prostitution. It analyzes the effects of militarized sexuality on men as well as on women, as well as the effects of an incitement to sex fostered by extensive prophylaxis provided to servicemen. This chapter presents case studies to illuminate the ambivalent attitudes about repression on the part of various military officials.

**Chapter Five**, "Sell It to The Marines: The Contradictory Messages of Popular Culture," explores two strands of sexual discourse in 1940s print media. I focus first on a wide range of mass circulation popular magazines such as *Look*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, *Reader's Digest*, and *American Mercury* and their condemnation of prostitutes and promiscuous women as the vectors of venereal disease. The second strand of wartime sexual discourse that I analyze consists of general portrayals of women's sexuality in magazines that targeted white middle-class women, working-class women, and African
Americans. In contrast to the emphasis on disease and deviance in the first set of publications, militarized sexuality as a female wartime obligation emerges strongly in the second set of publications.

**Chapter Six**, "Behind the Lines: The War Against Women," examines specific wartime measures taken to control female sexuality, including the role played by many professional women who supported the repression campaign. It presents case studies and statistics regarding women and girls subjected to charges of criminal moral transgressions and discusses several ways that the female body was marked as deviant. This chapter discusses several incidents of protest by women against the policies and practices of repression.

**Chapter Seven**, "Conclusion," suggests that the 1950s emphasis on family and domesticity should be reconsidered as, in part, a response to wartime disruption of the sexual system. Wartime women should not, however, be seen as passive or merely as victims of the state apparatus. Women did gain a foothold in jobs previously closed to them and, through their wartime services, invariably challenged, albeit at great expense, the sex/gender system. Complex forces operated to mobilize and control women's sexuality during World War II; an analysis of the process helps us to understand the consequences of the war for women in the United States, both for the duration and in the postwar years.
Chapter One

Prelude to War

The repression of prostitution is essential to the wartime health of the Nation and the government cannot afford any measures short of success.

Eliot Ness (1942).

A State of Emergency

In late 1939, when the war that would ultimately involve the United States intensified in Europe, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared a limited state of emergency. His pronouncement immediately sparked not only discussions and debates over preparedness for war, but also strong public and political isolationist sentiment. Nonetheless, the United States government, accepting the probability of military involvement, began to prepare for defense-related emergencies. The process of mobilization, characterized by controversies over industrial conversion and a peacetime draft, as well as by anti-foreign war sentiment, held the attention of the public and private sectors. Behind closed doors, however, another topic occupied some of the official planners: sex. More specifically, government, military, and medical officials expected a sharp rise in already high venereal disease rates as military and industrial expansion progressed. Moreover, they saw this sharp rise as inevitable because they also anticipated a significant increase in female prostitution. Government officials and social work
authorities believed that wherever soldiers gathered, prostitutes followed. And with prostitutes, as one official said, "always come disease." ¹

Equating national health with male health, government, military, and medical authorities began to develop plans to control dangerous female sexuality. Disorderly female bodies posed an unacceptable threat to homefront defense plans that sought to ameliorate the chaos of impending war. "To protect the armies of field and factory" the Government of the United States took action to defuse the danger by initiating a campaign to repress prostitution. ² Official plans to control female sexuality became complicated, however, by a simultaneous effort by the government to mobilize women to support the war effort in a variety of ways.

Significant scholarship on World War II has been devoted to labor conversion and the peacetime draft. ³ In Labor's War at Home, Nelson Lichtenstein documents the controversies over industrial conversion that concerned business and labor. Labor, especially unions, while agreeing on the necessity of building a military defense to resist facism, also had concerns that a militarized economy could adversely affect unions and postwar workers. Business was reluctant to undertake the necessary expansion since there was no guarantee of stability in the postwar economy, an understandable concern given ten years of depression. Nonetheless, by early 1940 many industries had initiated a switch to military production, and labor conceded to the inevitable as the United States moved closer

² Ibid., 2.
to military involvement in the war. During this period, the government and the military also began to formulate selective service plans. Proposals for a peacetime draft also provoked dissension both in government circles and in society at large. The draft, always a controversial matter, went into effect in late 1940. At this point, when it was apparent, at least to certain officials, that there was little chance of avoiding American involvement in the war, the war machine went into high gear. Talk of more widespread mobilization gained currency in the discourse of preparedness.

Population distribution began to undergo significant change as existing military forces moved to maneuver areas and as industrial conversion to war production demanded an enlarged labor force. Large manufacturing cities grew larger and some small towns and cities expanded into so-called "boom" towns. In addition, large numbers of men were summoned to report to their draft boards and ultimately inducted into the armed services. The necessities of preparedness prompted a massive migration of war workers, both female and male, as well as of servicemen heading for military and naval bases. As a result, serious logistical problems emerged in areas such as transportation, housing, sanitation, health, and recreation. Maintaining high morale was another important goal that concerned the authorities during this period. Defense-related problems became evident as early as 1939 when the United States Public Health Service engaged in "sanitary reconnaissance work in Army maneuver areas." The public health service continued to expand its endeavors as mobilization and industrial expansion progressed.4 Protecting and maintaining the national health emerged as a critical defense priority. From the USPHS came statements such as Surgeon General Parran's regarding the possibility of total war: "heretofore we have sought health primarily for its value to the individual. Now we must

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obtain it for the nation’s security." Assistant Surgeon General Vonderlehr also addressed national health, speaking of "the necessity for comprehensive defense of the nation."5

National health in this scenario required the maintenance of an efficient military and an efficient labor force and depended, in large measure, on controlling communicable diseases, including venereal disease. According to individual officials such as Parran, Paul V. McNutt of the Federal Security Agency, and officers of the Army and Navy, as well as officials of organizations such as the American Hygiene Association, venereal disease could sabotage defense efforts.6 As government officials took the lead in conceiving and implementing extensive social hygiene policies, the primary goal in the war against venereal disease quickly became the repression of prostitution.7 An official consensus emerged that featured prostitutes as the vectors of venereal disease. In short order, the category of disease-bearing females expanded to include so-called promiscuous women. Regarding this area of preparedness there was little disagreement or debate. In wartime, the threat posed by venereally diseased women emerged as a clear and present danger to national health and therefore to national defense.

Women became more visible in the public realm as they responded to the needs of national defense. Supporting mobilization, women migrated to take defense work, moved

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5 A quote from Surgeon General Parran used on fund-raising materials. ASHA Papers, Box 116. From remarks by Vonderlehr to be released to the Press on June 22, 1940. ASHA Papers, Box 114. Numerous military officials and other authorities coached discussions of venereal disease in terms of defense needs and military efficiency reinforcing the equation of national health with military health. On the Sixth Command’s Campaign: "Plan To Win" by saving men, material, money, and time. The Chief of Staff of the Sixth Command commented that Hitler would be happy if he was as successful as venereal disease in rendering so many men "ineffective," reinforcing the idea that prostitutes and promiscuous women aided and abetted the enemy. NA, RG 215, Box 6 (General Records)

6 Alan M. Brandt, No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Diseases Since 1800, and Claude Quetel, History of Syphilis, trans. Judith Braddock and Brian Pike (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). At the time, venereal disease was extremely difficult to treat or cure. Not only were venereal diseases considered "shameful," but also required lengthy, painful, and costly treatment. Total cure could not be assured, and treatment was unattainable to large segments of society. Penicillin, which could cure venereal diseases quickly, did not become available until 1944, and then in only limited quantities.
near military bases to be near husbands, and volunteered to meet the need for morale-maintaining entertainment for servicemen through organizations such as the USO and the YW/YMCA. However, in meeting their wartime obligations, women adopted necessary behaviors and practices that were simultaneously considered inappropriate for women, and they became more liable to charges of promiscuity. From this paradox arose the perception that female sexuality required stringent measures of control. I do not mean to suggest that prostitution did not exist at this time, but rather to show how prostitution and promiscuity became elastic terms, used to define widely diverse wartime women's activities. These activities were sometimes, but not always, of a sexual nature.

**Mobilization and Military Health**

In expectation of serious and ongoing wartime emergencies, particularly in the areas of health and welfare, the leaders of government, military, medical, and social institutions met to discuss pertinent issues. Since records indicated that the World War I Army (considered the "cleanest" army in the world) lost seven million days of service due to venereal infections, the current expectation of a sharp increase in an already high venereal disease rate caused considerable concern. Sexually transmitted diseases were, at the time, widespread, serious, difficult to treat, and to complicate the matter further, more often considered in terms of sin than of disease. The Venereal Disease Control Act passed in 1938 grew, in part, out of USPHS Surgeon General Thomas Parran's concerns with the equation of venereal disease with sin that he saw as interfering with diagnosis and treatment. Accordingly, he called for acceptance of the disease model and, along with the American Social Hygiene Association, for a focus on extending treatment and improving education regarding sexual matters. USPHS and ASHA felt that some progress had been

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7 See for example **Annual Report of the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service of the United States** (Fiscal Year 1941): 3. The report discusses studies of prostitution conducted in defense areas by the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) and the ASHA prior to 1941.
made along these lines; but war mobilization re-focused the disease discourse on transgressive female sexuality. The double standard took on new life in this period.

When the Selective Service, in 1940, adopted the practice of routine blood testing for all draft registrants summoned to report for induction, officials became well aware of the magnitude of venereal disease in that segment of the male population. While statistics indicated that sixty thousand of the first million draftees (six percent) were rejected due to venereal disease, the numbers failed to remove the spotlight from females as the vectors of disease. The rejectees were, for the most part, sent back to their communities untreated. In mid-1941, according to the USPHS Surgeon General's report with regard to deferred individuals, "in twenty-two states, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii, where this information was available for tabulation only thirty-one percent of the cases were brought under treatment or shown to be already under treatment."  

At this point, however, black men entered the disease discourse and provided another diversionary focus that allowed the venereal disease rate in the larger population to be overlooked. The United States Public Health Service released statistics that indicated that the rate for whites was 18.7 per thousand and the "Negro" rate was 274.7 per thousand. In any case, the problem of venereal disease, especially for those engaged in defending the nation, emerged near the top of the "emergency" list. In the eighteen months before Pearl

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8 See Thomas Parran, M.D. and Raymond A. Vonderlehr, M.D., Plain Words About Venereal Disease (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1941) and Broughton, "Prostitution and the War."  
9 Parran and Vonderlehr, Plain Words and David Klassen and Kay Flaminio, Celebrating 80 Years. (Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: American Social Health Association, 1994). During wartime, the military received venereal disease education that focused, in large measure, on prevention by means of prophylaxis. With the exception of attempts to initiate early diagnoses in industry (for more efficient defense), the campaign against prostitution diminished venereal disease control in the larger society. See Uniform Crime Reports for the United States and its Possessions issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U. S. Department of Justice, National Archives, Washington, D. C. (NA). RG 287, Box 1.  
11 Statistics as reported by Dr. Vonderlehr (USPHS) in 1941. ASHA Papers, Box 15. See also Parran and Vonderlehr, Plain Words.
Harbor, funding for venereal disease control increased 300 percent, with a significant portion of the money allocated to protecting the troops.\textsuperscript{12}

In 1939, government officials from the War and Navy Departments, the Federal Security Agency, and State Health Departments came together and drew up the Eight Point Agreement "for the control of the venereal diseases in areas where Armed Forces or national defense employees are concentrated." The agreement covered matters such as early diagnosis and adequate treatment, contact reporting (especially of enlisted men with infected civilians), quarantine of infected persons, the repression of prostitution, education, and developing and stimulating support for the preceding measures.\textsuperscript{13} In fact, the Eight Point Agreement primarily targeted organized and clandestine prostitution. Operating concurrently with this attention to women as vectors of disease, official meetings discussed topics such as increasing prophylactic materials and facilities for servicemen, the removal of penalties for servicemen who contracted venereal disease, and the possibility of drafting and treating venereally diseased men.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Annual Report Surgeon General USPHS}, (1941): 122. Under provisions of the Venereal Disease Control Act of 1938, congress appropriated $6,200,000 for venereal disease control for the fiscal year 1940-1941; this was a significant increase. The total amount of funds from all sources (Federal, state, local, and others) was $13,000,000, 25% of which went to venereal disease control in national defense areas.

\textsuperscript{13} See the appendix for the full text of the Eight Point Agreement.

\textsuperscript{14} On meetings, see Meeting of the National Research Council, Division of Medical Sciences on June 7, 1940 to discuss, in part, the role of USPHS in the control of venereal disease in the civilian population adjacent to areas of military concentration. This meeting discussed the removal of penalties for men who acquired venereal diseases. (Widely employed from the beginning of the war, this policy became official in 1943.) Records of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, National Archives, Washington, DC. (NA). RG 52, Box 9. See also a memo of January 31, 1941, to Admiral McIntire on the subject of venereal disease control discussed a meeting of Dr. Hazen's committee on prophylaxis. This discussion focused on the immediate need for "pro" stations in areas with numerous servicemen. NA RG 52, Box 2. Dr. Hazen was appointed by the ASHA and the USPHS as the Chairman of a Special Joint Committee [on VD]. Pro stations were places that servicemen could go to get treatment after unprotected sexual activity. Condoms were widely available on base or at the pro-stations. During January, March and July, 1941 the Subcommittee on VD met to discuss various subjects related to VD, such as whether or not to draft men who test positive, who should be responsible for treatment, in general, and other questions of coordination. See also the \textit{Annual Report Surgeon General USPHS} (Fiscal Year 1941): 132. In 1941, the USPHS said that men with "uncomplicated gonorrhea should be inducted into service and promptly treated." Popular media took up the cause also. See for example "National Defense vs Venereal Disease," \textit{Life} (October 13, 1941).
In October 1940, Major General Charles R. Reynolds, M.D., spoke to a special session of the American Public Health Association on national defense and venereal disease. He went back to colonial times to emphasize the seriousness of the problem. He claimed that George Washington had "directed the attention of the commanders of the armed forces to the gravity of venereal diseases" as spread by camp followers. Ever since, according to Reynolds, the venereally diseased women who followed the troops "have been the chief cause of disability and consequent loss of efficiency in the military establishment." Ignoring the predominance of sexually transmitted diseases in the civilian male population, Reynolds came quickly to the point. "Throughout military operations," he stated, "it is the prostitute who supplies the venereal infection; it is the prostitute who must be controlled to prevent venereal disease in the military forces." He went a step further, however, referring not only to prostitutes, but also to "other women differing from them only in nomenclature."15

In early 1941, the Social Protection Division, in the Office of Community War Services, part of the Federal Security Agency, was formed to coordinate the war against venereal disease. Point Six of the Eight Point Agreement served as their "raison d'être:" the repression of prostitution. And, in July 1941, the May Act, often referred to as the "Prostitution Act," which made prostitution in military areas a federal offense, was signed into law by the president.16 In a short space of time, the war on venereal diseases almost exclusively targeted the (supposed) carriers: diseased women. During the Second World

15 Charles R. Reynolds, M.D., "Prostitution as a Source of Infection with the Venereal Diseases in the Armed Forces." NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings). This piece was also read at an ASHA Conference in October 1940 and published in the AJP in November 1940.

16 For text of the May Act see NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records). See also appendix. On Sept. 8, 1941 a letter was sent from the Commanding Officer, Fort Lewis, Washington to the Commanding General, Presidio, California regarding memos from headquarters that had been sent almost immediately after passage of the May Act to mayors in nearby cities and towns that had unacceptable prostitution conditions. A representative of the Federal Security Agency was waiting for authorization to proceed with the threat of invoking the May Act. NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records). Supporters of the May Act generally agreed that the threat of invoking it would suffice to convince many localities to support repression. Use of the May Act will be treated more extensively in Chapter Three.
War, all women arrested on morals charges, or for vagrancy, loitering, and related charges, were forced to undergo venereal disease testing. This practice constituted a significant change in attitudes toward women, who a few years earlier were rarely tested in several states with pre-marital venereal disease test requirements. Mandatory testing of women had been perceived as an insult to "pure womanhood," but this was no longer the case.\(^{17}\)

**The Battle on the Homefront Begins**

The state apparatus had a clear target in existing prostitution districts, but officials also planned a pre-emptive strike on women deemed potentially promiscuous. In general, planning sessions for the implementation of the war on venereal diseases made it clear that women were, on the one hand, a sexually suspect group, and, on the other, a sexually available group. The authorities strategized and planned ways to use women for varied forms of entertainment in order to maintain male morale while simultaneously acting to repress and suppress female sexuality. For example, James E. Moore, a physician, while engaged in a discussion of Service Clubs, called for the availability of "games - pool, billiards, cards, etc, and young women for game or dance partners."\(^{18}\) The USO regularly provided young women to serve as hostesses for servicemen. The Cincinnati USO bused 300 girls from Cincinnati to Fort Knox every other Sunday. They departed in the morning, lunched at Fort Knox, then served as dancing hostesses at a tea dance, and returned home around 11 o'clock in the evening. After a few weeks the same service was provided on the intervening Sunday to Camp Atterbury.\(^{19}\) In Louisville, Kentucky, a committee of citizens appointed by the Director of Public Welfare and functioning under the Welfare and Recreation Division of the Mayor's Military Affairs Committee identified a

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\(^{17}\) Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 148-149.

\(^{18}\) On recruiting young women and college girls see "Statement of James Earle Moore, M.D., Chairman, Subcommittee on Venereal Diseases, National Research Council, before the Joint Army and Navy committee on Welfare and Recreation, February 28, 1941. NA RG 52, Box 10."

\(^{19}\) Records of the Ohio War History Commission, Series 1142, Box: Social Concerns, June 1941. Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.
need for a center for transient serviceman. Accordingly, in March 1941 they opened such a center where servicemen could engage in a variety of activities including meeting girls and dancing. The committee also advocated a community hospitality program to integrate servicemen into the community through churches and by inviting them to Sunday dinner.\textsuperscript{20} Paradoxically, then, numerous women, in meeting their obligations, traveled beyond traditional gender boundaries and became vulnerable to charges of suspicious behavior. For example, when women volunteered to attend dances at military encampments they traveled in buses and trains, but at the same time magazine articles referred to trainloads of girls arriving in military areas as, at best, potentially promiscuous.\textsuperscript{21}

These conflicting attitudes toward women who traveled beyond normative spaces led government and civilian officials to the conclusion that unrestricted female sexuality would result in an epidemic of venereal disease. As sexuality, particularly female sexuality, became the topic of numerous publications, reports and meetings, the discussions and debates regarding the venereal disease problem produced a discourse of anticipatory stigmatization around women's expected sexual activities. Dr. Moore, who served as a frequent witness, appeared before committees of the War and Navy Departments to speak about the causal relationship between prostitution and venereal diseases. His testimony reinforced a notion that, once deregulated by the necessities of mobilization and war, immoderate female sexual activity would ease, spreading venereal disease and imperiling the health and efficiency of the armed forces. Dr. Moore epitomized the contradictions of the war on prostitution and the venereal disease campaign. In March 1941, for example, he spoke strongly in support of the repression of prostitution as an effective measure for "minimizing potentially infectious contacts." And, in the course


\textsuperscript{21} See for example F. S. Wickware, \textit{The Army Fights Venereal Disease," Reader's Digest} (December 1941): 14-17.
of his lengthy speech, he also provided insight into the mobilization aspect of female sexuality as he advocated providing hostesses at Service Clubs to maintain morale. Then again, Moore is also on record as considering the viability of regulated prostitution as a means of providing clean sex for servicemen. It should also be noted that Moore was a consultant to the Tuskegee Experiment (1932), at which time his belief that venereal disease manifested differently in blacks and whites did much both to rationalize the experiment and to maintain the fiction that blacks were inherently different from whites. 22

Many officials concentrated on this theme in articles such as "Prostititution as a Source of Venereal Diseases in the Armed Forces" and in meetings to discuss the necessity for contact tracing of allegedly diseased women. A representative memo discussed, in part, repression of prostitution, including some factors such as eliminating segregated districts and individual brothels, as well as refusing to tolerate "flagrant solicitation" whether it occurred on the streets, in cabarets, dance halls, honkey tonks, and by "trailer girls." A discourse of women on the loose/loose women circulated privately and publicly in state documents, professional publications, and in the popular press.23 As this discourse

22 Statement of James Earle Moore, M.D., Chairman, Subcommittee on Venereal Diseases, National Research Council before the Joint Army and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation, Washington, DC, February 28, 1941. NA RG 52, Box 10. A memo for Admiral Mc Intire, March 18, 1941, regarding a meeting held by the committee headed by Mr. Osborn (War Department) on the subjects of recreation and morale. Dr. James Earle Moore (Johns Hopkins University), spoke again at this meeting. NA RG 52, Box 10. On regulated prostitution see a letter of August 8, 1940 from Dr. James Earle Moore to Members of the Subcommittee on Venereal Disease and the Committee on Therapeutics and Allied Subjects, National Research Council on the subject of regulated prostitution via militarized houses of prostitution. NA, RG 52, Box 10. On the Tuskegee Experiment see James H. Jones, Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. New and Expanded Edition (New York: The Free Press, 1993): 16. The Tuskegee Experiment was a 40 year study of untreated syphilis in black men conducted by the USPHS.

23 Reynolds speaking on his 1940 article: "Prostititution as a Source of Venereal Diseases in the Armed Forces," NA RG 215, Box I (Committee Meetings). A meeting on June 14, 1941 of the Advisory Committee on Social Protection focused on venereal disease and prostitution, NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings). On January 17, 1941 the National Research Council's Subcommittee on Venereal Disease met to discuss the interconnectedness of prostitution and venereal disease in the armed forces, and the necessity for contact tracing. NA RG 52, Box 10. On the popular press, see for example "All Out War on Prostitution," Newsweek, (September 29, 1941): 58. For a series of reports and meetings from January to March 1940 regarding prostitution, many involving Bascomb Johnson, and for Professor Maurice A. Bigelow's (Columbia University, Educational Consultant ASHA, Special Consultant USPHS) travels to 13 states, between January and March 1941, "networking" with military and civilian authorities regarding problems related to mobilization See ASHA Papers, Box 32. See also Journal of Social Hygiene (JSH)
evolved, it created an inexorable link between women and the contagion of sexually transmitted diseases. Many officials had no doubt that as large numbers of men became concentrated on military bases and in wartime industrial boom towns, "hordes of harlots" would soon follow. As venereal diseases, prostitution, and female promiscuity filled the agendas of committee meetings, hearings, and memos by concerned and interested officials, individuals, and agencies, no one in attendance seemed to disagree with the claim that prostitutes were responsible for the spread of venereal diseases. Many also assumed that numerous other wartime women would exceed the bounds of their assigned sexual space.

**Venereal Disease Control Strategies**

The American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA) began to plan for venereal disease control by focusing on education, particularly for servicemen. For the ASHA, the outbreak of the war in Europe and the inevitability of American involvement gave a sense "of history repeating itself." ASHA leaders thought that the First World War could have "provided the ultimate teachable moment." However, social and political opposition, as well as the brevity of U. S. participation in the war, limited the Association's success. The ASHA expected to be more successful this time since the federal government seemed ready to play a more active role in the fight against venereal diseases through a well coordinated program for the repression of prostitution.

While the ASHA contended that the best way to prevent venereal disease was through education, other participants in the campaign continued to discuss more direct intervention, such as federal regulation of prostitution or federal legislation to suppress prostitution. Such officials challenged the idea of sex education as a viable strategy,

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28:9 (December 1940) with regard to a meeting in November, attended by more than sixty social hygiene executives and medical officers "to consider measures aimed at abolishing commercialized prostitution."

24 See *United States Congressional Record, 77th Congress* for "Remarks by the Honorable L. Geyer who used the term "hordes of harlots."
contending that providing prophylactic information would increase immorality rather than decrease disease. And the very idea of providing women with sexual information was anathema to many of those involved in the social hygiene campaign. While sex education and "pure" womanhood seemed a contradiction in terms to many officials, they still targeted women as sexually promiscuous. Widespread socio-political perceptions that "immoral" women, both prostitutes and promiscuous, were and would be the most significant problems for the national health continued to retard a comprehensive war on venereal disease.

Official teams began to conduct numerous studies in particular areas throughout the United States. The military, for example, did a survey of commercialized prostitution conditions in so-called problem areas in California in 1940.26 And in 1941 the ASHA published a report reinforcing the belief that women would cause problems, saying that "in all probability the problems of prostitution would again become conspicuous as the nation prepared for defense and possibly for war." As a result of such suppositions, the ASHA and the BSH conducted 531 studies of prostitution, leading the authorities to state that "dangerous conditions existed" in the United States.27 Local and state health departments sent investigators into various localities where prostitution, promiscuity, and venereal disease "flourished." Connecticut health officers, for example, visited 96 towns and cities between July 1940 and June 1941. Particularly troublesome areas, i.e., those characterized by female prostitution and promiscuity such as Hartford and New Haven, received multiple visits, 82 and 41 respectively.28 The Detroit police department did their part by arresting "a group of women each day and night on morals charges." Some were "known"

25 David Klassen and Kay Flaimo. Celebrating 80 Years, 12.
26 "Survey of Commercialized Prostitution in California," December 1940. NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records).

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prostitutes, others were so-called first offenders; all were held in jail and examined for venereal disease.29

In June 1941, the Second Army (approximately 75,000 men) held field maneuvers in southern Tennessee. The governmental responses illuminated the gendered workings of the VD campaign. The public health system set up VD clinics within existing health departments and opened special clinics in other locales. In each of the ten counties in and around the maneuver area, a deputy sheriff worked full-time to "apprehend prostitutes and arrest female vagrants." Vagrants could be women who were not local to the area, but the charge of vagrancy could also be used to arrest "on suspicion of," as in the case of women perceived to be potentially promiscuous. Numerous women were arrested, held in jail, examined for venereal disease, and if found infected held in quarantine. "Those suspected of being prostitutes and who had negative blood tests on the first examination were held in most instances for a second examination a week later." Those who tested negative, having been arrested for vagrancy, received a fine. Inability to pay the fine resulted in a sentence to the workhouse. It was later determined that only about 14 percent of the male cases of venereal disease originated in the maneuver area; 86 percent of the men had acquired venereal disease elsewhere.30 While the repression campaign may have reduced sexual contact in the maneuver area, it did not stop the soldiers from engaging in sexual relations. The war against venereal disease became, in a sense, a gendered war, with the repression of female sexuality emerging as the foremost strategy.

29 "Detection and management of venereal disease in women arrested on morals charges," Report of the Social Hygiene Division of the Detroit Department of Health, November 1940. ASHA Papers, Box 115.
Looking Backward

Since neither a quick nor an effective cure for venereal diseases existed at the time, the authorities looked to the past, particularly to World War I, for help in planning strategies for the present and future.\(^31\) Government and military authorities called upon officials who had been involved in venereal disease control during World War I. Bascomb Johnson, Director of Law Enforcement Division of the 1917 Commission on Training Camp Activities agreed to lend his expertise to discussions and planning sessions regarding the topics of venereal disease and prostitution during wartime.\(^32\) Government, military, and medical officials interested in forming a new version of the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA) sought information on the Commission's operating procedures. Officials of the American Social Hygiene Association immediately offered their expertise. Since 1939 the ASHA had been assisting the Army, Navy, and the Public Health Service, in a capacity similar to its role during World War I. As a result of numerous meetings and conferences, the ASHA was asked "to assume the same voluntary role in quietly obtaining the facts and developing public opinion and civilian cooperation for the protection of soldiers, sailors, civilians, and workers in essential industries, that it played during the (First) World War." \(^33\)

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\(^{31}\) On the treatment of venereal disease, see Brandt, No Magic Bullet, esp. pp. 40-41 and 46.

\(^{32}\) Bascomb Johnson had a long-time involvement in the field of social hygiene. He was one of the original founders of the ASHA in 1914. For his 1937 publication: Prostitution in the U.S. see ASHA Papers, Box 173. On the Commission on Training Camp Activities see Brandt, No Magic Bullet and Nancy K. Brisow, Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War (New York: New York University Press, 1996). CTCA was formed in April 1917 by order of President Wilson and the Commission was charged with controlling venereal diseases through providing moral education and appropriate recreation as prevention against venereal disease in the military. Although the CTCA tried to retain power through the demobilization period, the Commission was basically out of business by July 1919.

\(^{33}\) Letter from Snow (ASHA) to Rockefeller, June 25, 1940 (handwritten). This letter also asked to set up a one on one meeting. Snow wrote "it is highly important.....[to] secure at this time the advice of those of you who participated in and guided the work during the World War." BSH RG III, Box 16.
While the military sector could see that, in the event of war, plans for the coming battles would necessitate more modern tactics, both the military and other involved officials continued to look to the past for strategies to fight against venereal disease and the so-called "reservoirs" of disease - prostitutes. Hence, the roots of the sexual discourse that influenced World War II policies were deeply embedded in the socio-scientific lore of the past. Social Protection officials, who would ultimately control the venereal disease program during the Second World War relied heavily on Johnson's prior experiences. Using the CTCA as a model, they succeeded in expanding the power and reach of the federal government. Since many of the more active figures in earlier reform efforts, including the First World War attempt to repress prostitution, remained in positions of authority, the leaders of the World War II effort called upon them, too, to lend their expertise to the current effort.

Jean B. Pinney, editor of the Journal of Social Hygiene during the 1940s, put it this way: "Many of the problems which confronted pioneer social hygiene workers of those first years of the national campaign against venereal diseases, prostitution, delinquency, and public indifference and inaction, are much the same as those faced today in the present national emergency, particularly in regard to today's problems of prostitution and social protection." Pinney stated that experienced social workers believed that it would make good sense to apply the policies used in the past to current conditions, since their earlier efforts had "dealt a deadly blow to a gigantic evil." 34 The World War I notion that "the sexual impulse could be curbed through instruction, exercise, and wholesome entertainment" recurred in the World War II discourse, but was overcome by a competing idea that (white) servicemen's sexuality could/should not be interfered with. 35

35 See Brandt, No Magic Bullet, 107.
Women and men who worked in the interwar years in areas such as prisons, reformatories, the judiciary, and police departments added their suggestions to the organizing effort. In addition, the fact-finding individuals and groups also utilized the large body of progressive era studies and analyses regarding prostitution. While the magnitude of the war against prostitution, female promiscuity, and venereal disease during World War II exceeded that of World War I, the presence of advisors such as Johnson and women who began their professional careers in the teens and twenties ensured the continuation of a strain of social engineering in the thirties and forties. But the World War II campaign to repress prostitution and control female promiscuity went even further, capturing middle-class white women in the web of disease and deviance.

**Repression in the Years Before Pearl Harbor**

As we have seen, representatives of State Health Departments, the Army, the Navy, the Federal Security Agency, and the ASHA met in 1939 and formulated the Eight Point Agreement that set out "measures for the control of Venereal Diseases in areas where armed forces or National defense employees are concentrated." The Agreement covered services that should be developed by state and local health and police authorities in cooperation with the Medical Corps of the United States Army, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery of the United States Navy, the United States Public Health Service, and interested voluntary

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36 Among the women were: Miriam Van Waters, Superintendent, Massachusetts Reformatory for Women; Rhoda Milliken, Captain of Metropolitan Police, in Charge of Women's Division, District of Columbia; Eleanor Hutzel, formerly Deputy Commissioner of the Detroit Police Department and Director of the Women's Division who published a policewoman's manual in 1933; Katherine Lenroot-Children's Bureau, Washington, DC; and Helen Hirokim, Warden, Federal Reformatory for Women, West Virginia. Raymond B. Fosdick chairman of the CTCA and investigator of prostitution for the Bureau of Social Hygiene (1912-1916) was still active during World War II. See for example "Report from the Special Committee, National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection (June 30, 1942). NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).

organizations. Point number six of the Agreement called for "all assistance possible to the cooperating agencies to bring about a reduction in exposures to venereal diseases through the repression of prostitution, both organized and clandestine." In May of 1940, the Eight Point Agreement received the endorsement of the Conference of State and Territorial Health Officers, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, the American Bar Association, the American Medical Association, and other professional and civic organizations.

During this period of policy debate, the Army and Navy, U.S. Public Health Service, Federal Security Agency, and Department of Justice met and recommended to Paul V. McNutt, the Federal Security Administrator (and also Director of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services) that a section be set up within the Office of Defense Health and Welfare to "implement" point six of the Eight Point Agreement. As a result, in early 1941, the Social Protection Division was established within the Federal Security Agency. Later in the year Paul V. McNutt, acting in his capacity as Federal Security Administrator, "delegated the administration of his responsibilities to the SPD." Elliot Ness, formerly of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and more recently the Sanitary Commissioner of Cleveland, became the director. (During the first few months of the agency's operation Bascomb Johnson served as Interim Director.)

Ness called the Eight Point Agreement a "declaration" of the federal government's policy on the repression of prostitution. The Agreement called, in addition, for the "gathering of information" from servicemen regarding sexual contacts (with any woman, not just with prostitutes), as well as the reporting of this information to the appropriate authorities. The representatives of the main groups propelling the campaign against prostitutes, promiscuous women, and venereal disease agreed that social hygiene was a

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38 Army/Navy, NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records). See also appendix.
39 Ibid.
critical area for preparedness activities. "Careful planning - based on stern realization and grim determination was the foundation of the Federal program of venereal disease control." A significant aspect of this "careful planning" became mobilizing public opinion in support of the repression of prostitution.

In January 1941, for example, Dr. Vonderlehr (USPHS) wrote to various officials and agencies regarding the "vital relationship of venereal disease control to current national defense efforts," and the importance of "broad community participation" in VD control. "All public spirited citizens," he said, should be enlisted to support this campaign. Paul V. McNutt (FSA) praised the ASHA's continuous work in support of repression as a "great service to the nation." He then requested continuing assistance from the ASHA in "cultivating and organizing public opinion in support of law enforcement to reduce prostitution and sex delinquency to a minimum." This seemed particularly important in light of public opinion polls that indicated that the public favored regulation. Public opinion was a persistent problem; a Gallup poll taken after repression had begun indicated that 55 percent of those polled still favored regulation. Sixty-one percent of the men responded yes, and forty-nine percent of the women said yes. Regulation meant that prostitutes would be required, by law, to operate in a segregated district and would be subject to regular medical inspection. If found diseased, they would be confined in a treatment facility; if free of venereal disease, they would be issued health cards to that effect.

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40 Ibid.
41 A form letter from Assistant Surgeon General, Vonderlehr (USPHS) of January 28, 1941 sent to numerous officials and agencies, and a letter from Paul V. McNutt (FSA) to Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur (ASHA), March 26, 1941. BSH RG III, Box 16.
42 Unmarked single sheet: Gallup poll taken in November 1942. Regulated prostitution was fairly common in Europe. NA RG 215, Box 8 (General Records). For an excellent study of regulated prostitution see Judith Walkowitz's, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Although Walkowitz studied England's Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s, the commonalities with the World War II campaign is striking especially the loose definition of the prostitute and the arbitrary power of the state. On the difference side, during World War II protest against the treatment of women was minimal.
Ness and his agency acted quickly to close down vice districts, succeeding in eliminating several hundred in a short space of time. Although the Social Protection Section evidenced a good success rate, the mechanisms for enforcement were perceived by many officials, including Surgeon General Thomas Parran, as lacking in strength. Pro-repression officials from government, military, medical, and social institutions sought legislation that would provide the enforcement mechanisms that they found lacking as they attempted to close down red-light districts and arrest prostitutes. With the passage of the May Act in July 1941 they achieved their goal.

In March 1941, Charles P. Taft, Assistant Director of Defense, Health and Welfare (serving under McNutt), held one of many meetings to discuss a federal social hygiene plan. Present at the meeting were Dr. William F. Snow (ASHA), Vonderlehr (USPHS), and Bascomb Johnson. Taft once again called upon Johnson to explain the law enforcement policies used to repress prostitution during W.W. I and to give particular attention to a comparison with the proposed May Act. Johnson recalled, in part, that the country was divided into districts, each one having specific legal and protective measures. Plans for detention houses and reformatories had been drawn up to contain women and girls. Johnson stated that during the First World War most of the administrators were Army officers. Both men and women served as field officers, with the men handling law enforcement and the women in charge of women and girls. He recommended that a civilian be placed in charge of the coming effort, but stressed the importance of full cooperation by the Army and Navy. He then called attention to the word "cooperation" as problematic since there was at that time "some difference of opinion" among naval officers regarding

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43 In Plain Words, Parran accused the military of failing to take sufficient action against prostitution and the federal government of apathy with regard to the problem. See also Brandt, 162. The Congressional Hearings on the May Act include discussion of the inability, or in some cases unwillingness of local law enforcement agencies to handle a "rising tide of prostitution" especially in areas around military bases and in industrial "boom" areas.

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repression. The Army and Navy officers present assured Taft that they would support any "workable" plan.45

That the W.W. II effort was complicated by "turf wars" became evident as this meeting proceeded. Katherine Lenroot of the Children’s Bureau wanted a woman in charge with a staff of women. The representative from the FBI wanted to assure the primacy of his agency's police power. Various others, including Captain Rhoda J. Millikin, Director of the Women's Bureau, Metropolitan Police Department, District of Columbia, spoke to their own agendas.46 Women involved in the campaign, such as Captain Millikin, Katherine Lenroot, Helen Hironimus, and Miriam Van Waters, fit the model of the progressive reformer whose notion of protection for women and girls incorporated social engineering and middle-class biases about the working class. They accepted the notion that working-class women were potentially promiscuous but made little distinction between working-class women and women who entered the work force during

44 Memorandum, March 17, 1941, for Admiral McIntire regarding a meeting held on March 14 to discuss social hygiene. Bascomb Johnson spoke again about policies during World War I. NA RG 52, Box 2.

45 Ibid. From the beginning of the campaign to control venereal diseases, many Army and Navy officers favored regulated prostitution.

46 Ibid. Turf wars plagued the groups and individuals involved in the repression campaign. Mr. Holzoff, an Assistant Attorney General with the Department of Justice, kept insisting, much to the annoyance of the other participants, that all arrests and investigations be handled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Captain Millikin thought that policewomen should have the right to arrest. See also Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Social Protection, June 14 1941. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings). Charles P. Taft presided; representatives from Education, Health, Law Enforcement, Army, Navy, Welfare, the Public, and the Federal Security Agency were in attendance. The record of this meeting makes clear the struggles between the varied groups for control of repression and also illuminates the attitudes of the attendees toward what was to be done with promiscuous women. Female promiscuity was widely accepted as a given, but social work and law enforcement differed over the mechanics of arrest, apprehension, type and place of confinement, and type and length of sentence. See also a letter from Dr. Snow (ASHA) to Mr. Rockefeller, July 1940, in typical Roosevelt fashion, authority had been divided among many groups, a factor that complicated operations. Snow wrote about the "opinion of many of us as to the urgent need for a coordinator... in Washington with the power to do the necessary work of all our health, medical welfare and protective and recreational activities correlated and functioning as a whole..." BSH RG 111, Box 16. But even in 1942, the problem remained. See NA RG 215, Box 4 (Publications) for a discussion of confusion between ASHA and SPD, both of whom were trying to recruit local committees in the same places at the same time. Some small successes were announced, see for example ASHA Papers, Box 128. Notes for a coming broadcast: "Are We Facing a Moral Breakdown in America?" which referred to a "team effort and close cooperation" among the ASHA, USPHS, and SPD in Chicago.
the war emergency. Upon rare occasions, individual women argued for practices such as more realistic sex education for young people, especially women. For example, Dr. Valerie H. Parker, chair of the Social Hygiene Committee of the National Council of Women of the United States, wrote in an ASHA pamphlet that "direct sex character training" was necessary, rather than "the vague and half understood statements concerning purity." She believed that adequate training could help "avert juvenile tragedies."47 For the most part, however, professional women seem to have been in agreement with the government’s suggestions for a repressive program that concentrated on women.

One lonely voice emerged in the early discussions, that of Aimee Zillmer of the Wisconsin Board of Health. She spoke strongly of her "utter disgust" over attitudes toward social hygiene on the part of many military officials in the prewar period. "I remember," she said, "at a social hygiene day in St. Louis on February 5, 1941, my utter disgust with army officials who stole the show by practically squeezing out any moral, spiritual or educational considerations of social hygiene." She was referring, in part, to attitudes toward servicemen who were represented as courageous and brave, but unable to "face a fancy lady and resist her." Zillmer went on to cite a Navy official who, a few months earlier, had spoken about Navy men's "disgust" at the focus on venereal disease, but who responded favorably to more positive arguments for "staying clean." Suggesting that negative attitudes would have later repercussions, Zillmer stated, "I think we have done youth a great injustice."48 Her cautions that both men and women should receive

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48 In October of 1945, at a Regional Conference on Social Protection, Miss Zillmer repeated her earlier cautions. She clearly felt that the military's attitude toward male sexuality during the war years would be responsible for postwar problems in the realm of sexual relations. Zillmer was the only woman at the conference. She said, "I'm sure I was 'rung in' because it was 'good policy.'" NA RG 215, Box 3 (Committee Meetings). See also a memo discussing the withdrawal of the National Council of Catholic Women from the National Women's Advisory Committee on Social Protection because they objected to a
reasonable sex education, and that men, too, should be held responsible for promiscuous behavior, went unheeded. Instead, the war against women perceived as spreading disease intensified.

The May Act Hearings and the Criminalization of Female Sexuality

In late 1940, Major General Charles P. Reynolds introduced a topic that would continue to concern the officials engaged in venereal disease control, that is, "mechanized prostitution." He claimed that contemporary women had great mobility and used various means of transportation, especially automobiles and trailers, to follow the troops. This widely circulated theory gained strength from constant repetition, as in the discourses that repeatedly named women who "flocked" to areas of military concentration as promiscuous. While prostitutes certainly did business in military areas, not all women in these areas were prostitutes. Presumptive terminology tainted women who were on the move for nonsexual purposes. A mythology of mobilized prostitution, especially after the institution of rationing, served to strengthen the idea that women engaged in unpatriotic subversions of defense measures. Reynolds, in fact, referred to prostitution as "a Fifth Column in our midst to be dealt with accordingly."49 Many persons, both female and male were, of course, on the road for a variety of mobilization-related reasons. Nonetheless, women who, in supporting the defense effort, deviated from the travel norms that defined prewar behavior, became suspicious individuals. Such attitudes indicate that, even at an early point in the campaign, prostitution and promiscuity were often broadly conceived categories, applied indiscriminately. Official perceptions regarding rampant promiscuity

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49 Charles R. Reynolds, "Prostitution as a Source of Infection with the Venereal Diseases in the Armed Forces," October 9, 1940. NA RG 215, Box 1, (Committee Meetings). Reynolds was a retired Major General, U.S. Army serving at this time at the State Department of Health in Harrisburg, PA.
gained strength when the venereal disease rate continued to climb even as prostitution districts were closed down.50 Support for federal legislation increased.

In January of 1941, Representative Andrew J. May of Kentucky presented a bill to Congress that would make prostitution in the vicinity of military bases a federal crime. The Committee on Military Affairs held hearings on the May Act during March of 1941.51 The committee numbered twenty-seven and heard testimony from representatives of diverse groups, all in favor of the legislation. Reports of the hearings indicate that the fight against venereal diseases focused almost entirely on women. The proposed legislation was, in fact, referred to as the "suppression of prostitution bill."52 Representatives of organizations such as the American Social Hygiene Association, the American Legion, the Children's Bureau, and several military chaplains all appeared to testify in support of this legislation. The day after the hearings opened, Mayor La Guardia of New York informed The New York Times that not only did he endorse the Act, but that he had suggested an amendment to make it "even more forceful and effective." La Guardia's proposal that the Act include "loiterers" in the vicinity of cantonments, or training stations, not just prostitutes, illustrated how the campaign exceeded an attack on commercialized prostitution. He also recommended that the government be authorized to seize property used for immoral purposes, including automobiles and trailers.53

Dr. Arthur T. McCormack, State Health Officer, Louisville, Kentucky, was one of the first to speak in support of this legislation. Testifying as a member of the Conference

50 Official statistics failed to make the point that venereal diseases had become more visible with Selective Service testing, and as a result of more extensive reporting by private physicians and health departments.
51 See the Congressional Committee Hearings Index, Part IV, 74th-78th Congress (1935-1944): 787-788. Under its terms, prostitution became a federal offense in areas within a reasonable distance of Army or Navy establishments, when the Secretary of War or of Navy believed this step was necessary to protect the health of the men in uniform.
52 Hearings of House of Representatives Committee on Military Affairs, March 1941. Microfiche, State Library of Ohio. Congressman May was the chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee. [Copy of Microfiche in author's possession.]
of State and Territorial Health Authorities, McCormack stated that the group was "unanimously in favor" of the proposed legislation. Based on his experience during World War I, he pointed out that federal legislation conferred the power of persuasion, that is, "you are able to persuade a great many people to do things that you could not do if you did not have the authority that is conferred by this legislation." He suggested that the threat of federal intervention diminished the need for actual prosecutions. McCormack then raised the question of "reasonable distance," since widespread use of automobiles and other improved means of transportation meant men on leave could and did travel long distances. And it was also believed that women had greater mobility. McCormack pointed out that the size of the zone around the camp was of "very great importance" and a "very serious practical problem," given the high rate of venereal disease among servicemen.54 The area of the zone apparently never became standardized since a significant portion of Tennessee came under the control of the May Act in 1942.

When the hearings returned to the need for federal legislation, McCormack pointed out that a large percentage of the men stationed at Fort Thomas and Fort Knox, Kentucky, had venereal disease. He claimed that while a "great many" prostitutes operated in the immediate neighborhood of both camps, due to a lack of effective law enforcement measures not much had been done to eliminate the problem. Moreover, McCormack said that without a federal mandate on repression of prostitution, a particular type of problem resulted. "Cincinnati," he said, "has enforced its laws very well indeed, and that has resulted in driving most of the prostitutes over to Newport, Kentucky where they are welcome and where they like to have them because it increases business in Newport, and as a result they have succeeded in infecting not only soldiers but a great many of the civilians in Cincinnati, because the men seem to follow the prostitutes there, as they do in

54 Hearings of House of Representatives Committee on Military Affairs, March 1941. "Reasonable distance" was a contested term.
other places." The Chairman then inquired if the doctor had any up-to-date information regarding the activities of these women. McCormack replied that "there is one very curious thing that is happening:" on the night before payday at Fort Knox between 50 and 150 automobiles carrying women arrived in the general vicinity. He claimed that his investigators referred to these women as "grass grabbers" who "go around in these cars, get under the trees and set up business for the night, and are gone the next morning." The doctor went on (at length) to make the case for the absolute necessity of federal legislation that will "centralize authority" and support uniform prosecution of (female) offenders. Many who testified in favor of passage of the May Act stated their support in terms of the need for federal intervention if local law enforcement did not comply with the directives to clean up red-light districts by vigorous suppression of prostitution. Accusations, like the one made against "grass grabbers," proliferated and lent strength to the call for federal intervention. The machinery for controlling female sexuality was set firmly in place with the passage of the May Act in July 1941. The battle on the homefront, based not only on charges that some American women were already engaging in sexually "deviant" behavior, but also on an expectation that many more would do so, began well before entry into the "real" war on December 7, 1941.

Sexuality and Surveillance

Once the May Act became law, the Social Protection Division increased its investigations of so-called problem areas. Surveillance had, however, been occurring for some time. In response to a request from McNutt (FSA) for information regarding the activities of the ASHA regarding "national defense problems," Dr. Clarke (ASHA) reminded McNutt that Dr. Snow had already deposited a complete file of the ASHA's reports of "undercover studies" with the office of the Surgeon General of the United

55 Ibid. Catholic and protestant clergy as well as representatives of the ASHA, USPHS, Children's Bureau (to name a few) provided additional supportive testimony.
States. Clarke reiterated the ASHA's general position on educational and environmental measures which were "intended to foster the most advantageous exercise of sex functions in life." But he also stated that "certain pathological practices such as commercialized prostitution and certain communicable diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea, spread mainly by sex contacts" had to be "corrected," since Army, Navy, and defense workers would become disabled as a result of venereal disease. Furthermore, he maintained that "since prostitution constitutes the principal means of spread of these diseases," national defense demanded a solution. The magnitude of the early campaign becomes visible: "209 undercover investigations of prostitution and allied conditions" had been carried out by the ASHA from September 1, 1939 to January 1, 1941 in twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia. Given that representatives of the Association had discovered numerous areas of problematic sexual activity, Clarke reiterated the necessity of "adequate law enforcement against prostitution and juvenile delinquency." He informed McNutt that the Association had been and would continue to inform state and local officials of "situations" in need of remedial action in order to protect the "health and morale of the armed forces." The FBI acted on such information; the records indicate a significant rise in the number of women arrested on morals charges. FBI statistics for 1941 and 1942 show arrests of women

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56 The sources indicate that there was some difficulty over funding these "undercover" investigations. The records, which only tell a partial story, seem to suggest that there was concern over legal issues. See for example BSH RG III, Box 15. This seems likely given the terminology "undercover." From time to time concerns also arose regarding the legality of procedures used to repress female prostitution and promiscuity. For example, questions arose about entrapment, arrest without a warrant, and the constitutionality of the May Act was challenged. For constitutional challenge, see NA RG 52, Box 10. For discussion on warrants see NA RG 215 (General Records). See also appendix for further examples of possible legal difficulties.

57 The ASHA also conducted 86 studies in 1940 and 425 in 1941 which focused on existing prostitution and expectations of increased prostitution. BSH RG III, Box 15. See also a letter from Clarke (ASHA) to McNutt (FSA) of January 21, 1941. Clarke contended that some cities that had closed their vice districts were "re-establishing a form of regulation contrary to law, and others tolerate very bad conditions through lack of law enforcement. The profit motive and lecherous public opinion have conspired to permit the re-establishment of the illegal business of prostitution in a surprisingly large number of American Communities." NA RG 215, Box I (Committee Meetings). See Appendix for map of "Activities for National Defense."
under twenty-one increasing by 64.8 percent for prostitution and by 104.7 percent for "other sex offenses."\footnote{Uniform Crime Reports, NA RG 287, Box J. FBI statistics reinforced the belief that prostitution and promiscuous female sexual activity was rapidly increasing. As a result, surveillance...}

In December 1940, the government undertook a survey of commercialized prostitution in the area around March Field, a sizeable army base in California. As government officials took to the field both to investigate sexual vice and to institute repression programs when necessary, they encountered different responses and reactions. The March Field survey concentrated on two cities: Riverside and San Bernadino, both in close proximity to the army base. The ensuing report touted Riverside as a place with an "enviable record so far as commercialized prostitution is concerned," that is, there was none. San Bernadino, commonly referred to as B'Doo, however, had a long-standing reputation as a "wide open" city. A general consensus in Riverside held that when March Field reached full operation - 35,000 men - things would have to change. In particular, the businessmen of Riverside contended that the "long-hairs" and their "puritanical policies" would have to go because B'Doo, which was ten miles further from March Field, would get all the business. One businessman spoke of growing support for a red-light district in Riverside for two reasons: it would be good for business and "men need sex." The servicemen who were interviewed enthusiastically agreed. A local taxi driver supported the charge of lost business by referring to a soldier he had encountered the previous evening. "He was hot as hell for a woman," the taxi driver said, "asked every cabbie in town...no dice...the guy went to San Bernadino." As talk of repression grew louder, businessmen in San Bernadino added their voices to support for segregated districts, pointing out that "rape and seduction are bound to result if any attempt is made to close the line."

This study illuminates several of the themes that arose repeatedly during the campaign to repress prostitution: business interests, other than organized crime, favored...
maintenance of segregated prostitution; the fear, in many communities, that if prostitution were repressed servicemen would get sex one way or another; and the pervasive belief that men needed sex. The author of this study, whose affiliation and name are not listed, was confused by such responses. He claimed that those who saw the coming of a prostitution district to Riverside as good for business were indulging in wishful thinking. And he denied the servicemen's eager anticipation of "changes" in Riverside, contending rather that they were "eagerly awaiting the non commercial entertainment and recreation" being planned by community groups such as the YMCA.

The interviewer also questioned prostitutes in B'Doo who discussed their business expenses, as well as their connections with the Police Department and the procedures for venereal disease examinations. Several "working" girls talked about their "Christmas gift;" they had been informed by "D" (police) that the police department's general practice of intermittent pickups and fines scheduled for late December would be delayed until after the holidays... " And on "periodical examinations," one woman revealed that two police officers checked cards once a month, and that the women could be examined by a private doctor or at a clinic. The soldiers who were interviewed regarded the "line girls" (those in the segregated district) as "absolutely safe" with regard to venereal disease.59 The interviewer made no recommendations in this early investigative study, the purpose being only to gather information on existing conditions with regard to prostitution. During the following year, however, the authorities cracked down on towns and cities that had red-light districts.

59 December 1940, "Survey of Commercialized Prostitution Conditions, March Field, California. NA RG 215, Box I (Committee Meetings). Attitudes similar to those of the business men discussed above were fairly common throughout the war period. See for example, a memo from the Office of War Information, July 1942 that referred to the "policy of regulation and toleration still practiced in some communities..." NA RG 215, Box I (Committee Meeings), and the September 18, 1942 meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee which mentioned that some states had failed to adopt repression. NA RG 215, Box I (Committee Meetings).
In July 1941, the Army issued a warning to Tacoma, Washington, by calling attention to the May Act and suggesting that the city might want to avoid federal action. After brief consultations between the Mayor and city officials, it was decided that since "the federal government meant business" Tacoma would institute a repression program. On August 21, the Mayor ordered Tacoma's twenty-four houses of prostitution closed. Local businessmen vigorously protested the closings based on an argument of loss of business, but they lost the argument. In short order, city officials claimed that repression worked: the venereal disease rate was significantly lowered in Tacoma, and "civic morality" had improved greatly. Neither businessmen nor local officials wanted the federal government to interfere in local affairs. They did not wish to appear unpatriotic and they did not want their communities declared off-limits to the military. In other cases, cities would comply with government directives on repression but only temporarily.

In September 1941, representatives of the Social Protection Division visited El Paso, Texas. At this time the houses of prostitution that had been closed in June were "quietly" reopening. The El Paso situation was complicated by geographical proximity to Juarez, Mexico; as border cities, they had developed around Fort Bliss, established at the time of the war with Mexico. Since the late 1840s, Juarez had remained a popular site for soldiers from Fort Bliss in search of "a good time." El Paso, a much smaller city prior to World War II, had almost continuously maintained a segregated district. Earlier attempts to close this district had met with limited success. Local politics rather than any real support of repression seemed to characterize such attempts. However, as early as March 1941, under government pressure, a crackdown started, resulting in the arrests of sixty-one women and

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60 Excerpts from an article in Survey Graphic entitled "No War Boom in Venereal Disease" by William F. Snow that referred to the Tacoma warning of July 1941. No date. NA RG 215, Box 4 (Publications)
three men. SPD representatives reported that both public officials and some army authorities believed in the efficacy of a segregated district, therefore they planned to take steps to convince the army to take a united stand on a program of repression. A disparity between the Army's public stand and the personal opinion of some officers continued, however, and contributed to city officials' growing uncertainty regarding the viability of repression. Public officials "believed that prostitution was inevitable" and maintained that the police maintained effective control in the segregated district. The Army officials at this time were generally convinced that a segregated district with medical inspection was the answer to the problem." The army was willing to support "added protection" by means of increased attention to prophylaxis. Social Protection representatives decided it was time for a discussion with the Commanding General of the Eighth Service Command. They insisted that army officials at Fort Bliss take "a strong stand on the question of prostitution." Threatened with the May Act, repression soon became the official policy at Fort Bliss. Next, Social Protection officials took on the task of "selling individuals (in the city) on the program and of applying necessary pressure to get the job under way."

Surveillance procedures in El Paso, as elsewhere, were carried out by "vice" squads. In 1941 the El Paso police department added a second policewoman to the force. With the addition of one male Sergeant, the vice squad was ready for business. Members of the squad patrolled the streets and watched taverns and other places of amusement beginning at 8:00 p.m. each evening. The vice squad also conducted raids on those establishments suspected as serving as houses of prostitution or sites of assignation. In the first month of the repression campaign in El Paso, nine women were taken from houses of

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63 Ibid. Social Protection representatives threatened recalcitrant officials with the May Act. Neither military nor public officials wanted the federal government intervening in their areas of influence. Some
prostitution and eighteen were taken from cabarets. Any woman suspected of having venereal disease was subject to arrest and incarceration in city or county jails.

The El Paso situation is representative of Social Protection tactics: that is, officials threatened to use the May Act and instituted other coercive measures. The SPD always tried to mobilize local police forces to support the repression campaign; the presence of a nationwide and sympathetic Police Advisory Commission indicated their success. In the case of El Paso, the work of the local SPD representative was not quite finished. He then visited the Mayor of Juarez, Mexico, in an attempt to convince him to support repression. But the Mayor was firmly in favor of segregation and regulation. It was neither the first nor the last time that the Social Protection Division would attempt to extend its program outside the United States.  

In the summer of 1941, an Advisory Committee to the Social Protection Division met to discuss "problems and programs." McNutt opened the meeting in a characteristic manner with strong words. "You have," McNutt said, "the most delicate task there is in this whole defense program, and there are opportunities for getting into no end of trouble." Having acknowledged that the committee was chosen for a tough job, he assured them that the federal government would support them, but, "if you don't perform we will find someone who can." In referring to the "tremendous job" facing the committee, McNutt reminded them that "it is of vital importance to the whole defense program." Taft took over for McNutt and moved to the question of public relations. He reiterated McNutt's statement: "It isn't that we are fearful of publicity if we are doing the

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64 The Social Protection Division also attempted to enforce compliance in the Caribbean; when they interfered in Great Britain's possessions, complaints were forthcoming. In fact, the SPD was not welcomed in many locales. (Ultimately the mayor of Juarez gave in and supported repression.)

65 Minutes of an all-day meeting to discuss problems and programs held on June 14, 1941 that was called by the Office of Coordinator of Health, Welfare, and Related Defense Activities, Division of Social Protection. Meeting attended by representatives from Education, Health, Law Enforcement, Army,
right thing..." McNutt and Taft sought the advice of those summoned to the advisory
committee because they thought their status as outsiders, i.e., not directly serving in the
Social Protection Division, would be most useful.

The conference participants moved on to a number of topics, including quarantine
for infected women as well as procedures regarding contact reporting. The first person to
speak was Bascomb Johnson, who strayed from the agenda and went on about the way the
ASHA classified the communities that they investigated. Dr. Vonderlehr followed.
Despite pointed questions regarding ASHA statistics from Dr. Sheldon Glueck, few
answers were forthcoming. This part of the discussion revolved around men with syphilis
and/or gonorrhea who were rejected for military service. Vonderlehr suggested, however,
that "properly handled, through the investigation of each of these selectees and volunteers
with syphilis we will find quite a number of contacts." When asked how this practice
played out, Vonderlehr responded that "we have in a number of instances invoked the
quarantine laws against prostitution." In other words, diseased men were declared
ineligible for military service and allowed back into their communities with, in many cases,
no enforced treatment. But any woman a rejectee named as a contact would be tracked
down. If the women named were prostitutes, the Public Health Service would post
quarantine notices on their houses. Vonderlehr allowed that he had some "misgivings"
regarding the efficacy of quarantine, but that it was a temporary measure pending better
cooperation from law enforcement officials. He concluded by saying that "there is a grave
need throughout the country for isolation centers for women," completely ignoring the
significance of diseased men freely circulating throughout society.

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[66] Ibid. Dr. Sheldon Glueck was a Sociologist. Mr. Hoehler (Army) commented on the failure
to enforce quarantine regulations against males. Taft responded that when it was tried, "the courts in
Kentucky would not make the quarantine stick."
Katherine Lenroot of the Children's Bureau discussed at length investigations carried out by the Bureau to "get some information first hand on the situation surrounding young people in various communities." To aid in the process, the bureau engaged two experts in social protection: Captain Rhoda J. Millikin of the District of Columbia Police Women's Division and Eleanor L. Hutzel, Fourth Deputy Commissioner, Chief of the Women's Division, Detroit Police Department. Millikin and Hutzel, along with members of the Bureau, made "observation visits" to towns and cities experiencing rapidly growing populations and reported back on the problems caused by the ensuing disorganization. Of particular concern were the "undesirable forms of recreation" that emerged in such areas. Reports emphasized "that many young girls are involved in situations, either of grave moral danger, or directly described as situations of prostitution, girls even as young as 13, 14, 15, or 16 years." Lenroot was concerned that, in many communities, "there is no one responsible for keeping young people from participating in undesirable activities or for giving them the various types of special care which their problems demand. Protection for such young women, however, often involved arrest or apprehension (detention without charges).

Charles P. Taft took over the meeting and introduced some specific agenda items for consideration. He raised the issue of local law enforcement, with its necessary corollary, the "backing of public opinion" and "the protection of women and girls who are involved in this difficult situation." Protection, as we have seen and will continue to see, was a term subject to interpretation. That the term "protection" was, indeed, a packed term is evidenced by the first concrete item introduced - the "question of public relations," that is, convincing the public that it must support the fight to control contaminating women and girls. Presenting the war on venereal disease as critical to the war effort and to national health, officials urged all citizens to help defend and protect their country. Since many committee members were civilians, Taft suggested that their advice and reactions,
(ostensibly) coming from outside the state apparatus, would have greater influence on public opinion. He exhorted them to "give great importance to the method of public education so that it secures the widest possible support." Government officials recruited numerous individuals and groups to take into their communities the message that prostitutes and promiscuous women endangered the strength of the nation. Including professional women, club women, physicians, lawyers, police officials, sheriffs, businessmen, and educators, the list of those recruited to lobby for repression was a lengthy one. The breadth of the campaign against "disease spreading" women expanded rapidly. Large numbers of repression supporters advocated policies that increased suspicion regarding wartime women's activities, during the same time that women's visibility in public places had also increased. As this meeting made clear, mere female presence in a dance hall or trailer park constituted a problem. And despite some minor concern about the potential violation of civil liberties, the campaign by and large went ahead under full steam.67

Of Vital Importance to the Defense Effort

As early as 1939, the Armed Services discussed the maintenance of servicemen's morale. The Morale Board of the Army Air Forces considered morale an "almost essential element to success in any military organization." In the early days officers noted the importance of acquiring funds for athletic facilities to enable a concentration on organized sports as a means of both acceptable recreation and a way to develop a competitive spirit.68

Soon members of the Morale Board spoke of the need for places of relaxation separate

67 Document dated November 18, 1942 (incomplete), but referring to letters from Hon. Charles J. Hahn Jr, the Executive Secretary of the National Sheriffs Association, to various local officials (generally in the Attorney General's office) regarding the "power of sheriffs" to arrest prostitutes. The heart of the questions seemed to be: was prostitution treated as a crime, or as a lesser offense and arrest without a warrant with regard to the liability of the arresting officer. Replies varied from the policy in North Carolina where no arrest could be made unless the woman was "caught in the act," to New Mexico where the sheriff had considerable latitude to arrest a "suspected prostitute." NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records). See also note 56 above.
from the barracks areas where young recruits could go to write letters, talk, and seek advice. They decided that such facilities shold be staffed by a (female) social worker or a hostess. The media also took up the subject of "morale in the camps." One article termed morale "very bad in some places" and suggested that towns and cities had a patriotic duty to provide entertainment and recreation for servicemen.69

On the subject of leisure activities for servicemen, organizations such as the ASHA agreed that alternatives were necessary. During this period they discussed appropriations for the USO, noting that such forms of entertainment were necessary alternatives to less desirable forms of recreation because servicemen who became "infected" [with VD] "suffered from discouragement and a sense of debasement." Preventing venereal disease in these groups, then, would "contribute greatly to the maintenance of high morale and a fit fighting force."70 But what did high morale activities mean for the women who participated? Adventure certainly, a chance for more freedom than was usual, as well as patriotic service, but also entry into ambiguous space in terms of their reputations since, as we will see, one's presence in a dance hall was not perceived as a patriotic activity by the authorities.

On rare occasions an official figure exhibited concern about the use of women as hostesses or in other capacities in support of servicemen's morale. For example, the Assistant Dean of Women at the Ohio State University was initially very reluctant to permit "her girls" to travel to dances at Lockborne Air Base.71 Newspaper articles such as "Sweethearts At Ease" written by Ovetta Culp Hobby responded to similar concerns. She thought that wives, in particular, might want to know more about that army innovation:

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69 Stevens, "Morale in the Army Camps."
70 BSH RG III, Box 15.
71 Columbus Ohio YWCA Papers, Box 3. Ohio Historical Society. (Unorganized). See also OSU Archives, RG 9/C-2/19. Dean of Women, "USO Material: 1943-46 (Folder # 1 of 2)." By 1944, the Asst. Dean had been thoroughly drawn into the mobilization campaign. In a letter of May 3, 1944 to Major John M. Gould, Jr., assistant Dean of Women, OSU wrote that she was "delighted to be able to bring a group of
"Hostesses." Speaking of the importance of maintaining morale, Hobby discussed hostesses as part of the "giant housekeeping problems of the rapidly expanding army." She wrote about her public relations job in terms of putting out "personalized news," saying that she intended to keep women - wives, sweethearts, mothers - informed about the kind of news that they were interested in. Representing the public relations arm of the War Department, it became Hobby's charge to convince the female public that hostesses were performing an ordinary domestic task and were not "loose" women who would tempt their men to sexual transgressions.72

It is not surprising that women would have some misgivings regarding the presence of hostesses and other women mobilized to entertain the troops, since warnings about so-called promiscuous women proliferated. Places of public transportation, for example, featured posters cautioning servicemen about loitering women, depicting lone women as most likely soliciting. Exacerbated by the prevailing and widespread notion that prostitution flourished around military camps and bases, many women feared for their men's moral virtue. In light of the public campaign against venereal disease, women who participated in defense related activities became objects of suspicion. Amid a discourse of female sexual deviance, the state called upon women to volunteer for morale service. But, as we have seen, male morale based on female sensuality and sexuality situated women in dangerous spaces, regardless of their reasons for joining the mobilization effort.

The extent of the policies and practices of the state apparatus as they affected women during the period of preparedness and mobilization for the Second World War

72 "Sweethearts At Ease", Army Chooses Woman Editor to Inform You About Soldiers' Behavior in Camps" Cincinnati Enquirer, (August 2, 1943), 2. Hobby headed the Women's Bureau, a section in the War Department's Bureau of Public Relations.
have been overlooked, in large measure, in the existing scholarship. In the years immediately preceding Pearl Harbor, the homefront was not a secure place for women. Government officials called upon women to provide a variety of defense-related support services as the nation prepared for war. But at the same time, government officials and members of social agencies developed plans to prevent and control venereal diseases in the armed services through the repression of prostitution. Once women stepped outside the traditional boundaries of female space, they entered an ambiguous space where a patriotic woman could easily morph into a promiscuous woman. We turn in the next chapter to the development and interaction of government agencies designed to counter the problem of sexualized women as the United States moved deeper into the war.

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73 See Anderson, Wartime Women on the repression campaign in Detroit, Seattle, and Baltimore. See also Meyers, Creating G. I. Jane on the control of service women's sexuality.
Chapter Two
The Long Arm of the State

The venereal disease campaign of the Second World War era expanded the reach of the state apparatus. The campaign involved not only the branches of the federal government, but also state and local governments. Law enforcement groups such as the FBI, local police departments, sheriffs' organizations, and women prison superintendents all participated in the organized effort to protect the nation's health and wartime efficiency through the vigorous repression of prostitution and the eradication of the supposed threat posed by promiscuous women and girls. The Army, the Navy, USPHS, various other government agencies, and social agencies such as the American Social Hygiene Association continued the fight, as did women's groups and concerned public citizens. As the campaign progressed, the activities of the Social Protection Division kept the spotlight on deviant female sexuality, assuring that solutions to the problem of venereal disease remained focused on women. In this chapter, I explore the structure of a complex state apparatus. In typical Rooseveltian fashion, there was considerable overlap of jurisdiction, a factor that not only maintained a certain confusion of purpose but also contributed to continuing disputes within and among the agencies involved in the repression effort.

Federal Agencies: The Social Protection Division

Services. Ultimately Social Protection was transferred to the Office of Community War Services (OCWS) and renamed a division. During the defense and war periods OCWS, the last in a succession of similar agencies, operated to develop and coordinate programs to meet emergency needs in the fields of health, medical care, welfare, recreation, education, and nutrition. The first agency, the Office of the Coordinator of Health, Welfare, and Related Defense Activities, was formed as a consequence of an action taken by the Council of National Defense on November 28, 1940. At that time, the Council appointed the Federal Security Administrator as coordinator of all health, medical, welfare, nutrition, recreation, and related fields of activity affecting the national defense. The Office of the Coordinator was superseded by the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services (ODHWS), which was established within the Office for Emergency Management by an executive order of September 3, 1941. The Federal Security Administrator (formerly the Coordinator) was named Director of the new agency. On April 29, 1943, by an executive order, ODHWS was superseded by the Office of Community War Services (OCWS), established within the Federal Security Agency. The specific responsibility of OCWS and its predecessors was to meet the needs of thousands of communities experiencing large population increases or other difficulties related to defense production and war that rendered local public and private organizations inadequate to the task of providing community services.¹

OCWS served as a coordinating agency by working through and with other federal, state, and local agencies, as well as with private national organizations. The federal agencies included the Army, Navy, Office of Civilian Defense, War Manpower Commission, Federal Works Agency, War Production Board, Federal Housing Authority, Office of Defense Transportation, Public Health Service, Children's Bureau, Office of

¹ This organizational information is based on a five-page document that serves as a preface to the finder's guide for NA Record Group 215 (OCWS). Mr. Tab Lewis, archivist at NAIH, College Park, MD, kindly provided me with a copy. Upon Ness's resignation Michael Morrissey (police), Senior Specialist in Social Protection, became the Acting Director of the SPD; he was followed by Thomas Devine.
Education, and the War Relocation Authority. Some of the private agencies were the United Service Organization (USO), American Red Cross, American Social Hygiene Association, National Recreation Association, National Parent-Teachers Association, Junior Leagues of America, and numerous Community Chests and Councils. As a rule, OCWS asked existing agencies to continue their work, adding OCWS functions where necessary or if no appropriate agencies existed. Paul V. McNutt, the Federal Security Administrator, served as Coordinator of Health, Welfare, and Related Defense Activities, and as Director of OCWS from November 1940 to April 28, 1943. Charles P. Taft served as OCWS director from April 29, 1943 to November 21, 1943. He was succeeded by Mark A. McCloskey, who served until June 30, 1945. Watson Miller then assumed the directorship, serving until the agency was terminated shortly after the end of the war.

OCWS had two responsibilities that were not within the scope of any other federal agency: Recreation and Social Protection. Mark A. McClosky served as the Director of the Recreation Division from its formation in January 1941. The Social Protection Division, instituted in March 1941, came under the leadership of Eliot Ness after the short term of Bascomb Johnson. Ness served as Director until his resignation on September 8, 1944. Social Protection, as we have seen, was the government agency charged with checking the spread of venereal disease through the repression of prostitution.2 Eliot Ness and the Social Protection Division, already hard at work in 1941, became more publicly visible in short order.

The Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services issued the following statement regarding the function of Social Protection:

The broad objectives of the Social Protection Section are the safeguarding of the armed forces and the civilian population from the hazards of prostitution, sex delinquency, and venereal diseases. To accomplish these objectives the Section will gather and evaluate information with respect to pros-

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2 Ibid.
stitution and related conditions in cities and counties adjacent to military establishments, the statutory and administrative measures designed to combat such conditions, the extent to which these measures are enforced, and the results achieved. It will implement community activities directed toward the protection of women from sexual exploitation and the social rehabilitation of prostitutes and other sexually delinquent women. ³

In addition to the major Federal Agencies, numerous committees, some pre-existing the establishment of the Social Protection Division and others that formed after the establishment of the SPD, participated in the campaign to eliminate prostitution. An Interdepartmental Committee, for example, which brought together twenty Federal Agencies (e.g. Federal Security Agency, SPD, Army, Navy, USPHS, FBI, and Children's Bureau) had been established by the council of National Defense in January 1940 to assist the Federal Security Director in relation to health and other defense related problems. ⁴ The Interdepartmental Committee met regularly to discuss emergent problems and to monitor progress in the war on prostitution.

The National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection

Out of other umbrella committees similar to the Interdepartmental Committee, a plethora of sub-committees emerged. Ness acted quickly to pull numerous groups into the SPD's orbit. He called together law enforcement officials from all over the United States to

³ Notes on Eight Point Agreement from a statement that was issued in early 1941. NA RG 215, Box 4 (General Records).
⁴ See for example Interdepartmental Meeting, September 18, 1942, "General Review," NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings). See also Frances Sullivan, M.P.H. and Milton Rose, M.D., Dr. P.H., "Public Health Planning for War Needs: Order or Chaos?" AJPH 32: 8 (August 1942): 831-36. Constituent agencies of FSA included the Office of Education, Public Health Service, Social Security Board, National Youth Administration, and Civilian Conservation Corps. The Interdepartmental Advisory Council of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services advised the Director (Paul V. McNutt) on major policy questions. Each of the twelve geographic regions of the Social Security Board had a regional advisory council corresponding in structure and function to the federal committee. At the federal level there were four main subdivisions. The Division of Health and Welfare, directed by Charles P. Taft included the Social Protection Division. In 1942, Taft chaired the committee. The members included Ness, Turner, Stephenson, Parran, Tamm, Lenroot (affiliations in text), Snow (ASHA), and duBois of the State Department.
discuss wartime problems. Out of this meeting came the National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection (NAPCSP). The Committee, appointed by Paul McNutt, consisted of twenty-one police officers from fifteen states, plus representatives from the Army, Navy, USPHS, FBI, and ODHWS which included the SPD. NAPCSP's statement of purpose said: "the Committee was formed to assist in the enforcement of the Federal government's Social Protection Program and to develop new and effective techniques of police enforcement pertaining to the repression and prevention of prostitution." Shortly after the formation of NAPCSP the Office of War Information released a press statement: "The National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection today called upon police and law enforcement officials throughout the country to stamp out prostitution."

In a report to McNutt, the Police committee acknowledged their "professional obligation" to stamp out prostitution so that the "Army, Navy, and war industries are not to be decimated by casualties due to venereal diseases." This committee became one of the most active groups in the campaign to repress prostitution and to control so-called female sexual delinquency.

NAPCSP had numerous subcommittees including separate committees on Prevention, Repression, Enforcement, and Cooperation. The task of the Cooperation group involved convincing the public, some of whom still favored "varying degrees of regulation or toleration" of prostitution, that repression and law enforcement were not only necessary but that they substantially lowered the venereal disease rate. This subcommittee

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5 For immediate release, July 24, 1942, by the Office of War Information, Office of Defense, Health and Welfare Services. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings). See also a resolution adopted by the National Sheriffs' Association in September 1942 entitled "Condemning the Tolerance of Prostitution in Any County in the United States." The Association urged all sheriffs and law enforcement officers to participate in the repression program. NA RG 215, Box 4 (Publications).

6 Office of War Information Bulletin # 165, July 24, 1942. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).

7 Proceedings NAPCSP, New York, August 7, 1942. The National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection was formed in June 1942 under advisement by McNutt. At this meeting a Special Committee on Repression was formed to make a survey of State Laws for purpose of "unity," i.e. make all prostitution laws the same, as well as more inclusive. The special Committee also aimed to convince the Federal Government to support construction of more detention facilities which would be needed as a result of "vigorous repression program." NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).
planned to issue manuals on social protection especially designed for police officers as well as planning "an information service to all local police officers, giving them the latest developments in the police field of social protection." Ness called a meeting to discuss the proposed manuals, using "Indiana's War-Time Program Against Venereal Disease" as a model since their program seemed successful. Michael Morrisey, who was the Chief of Indianapolis Police, strongly suggested that said manual "tell the story" in a manner understandable to "cops," in other words, to appeal to the policemen's viewpoint. The manual was to be kept simple and brief, aimed directly at police officers and presenting a clear picture of the ravages of venereal disease. It would point out useful laws applicable to morals offenses [by women] and remind policemen that they had a duty to enforce such laws. This strategy appeared necessary since many police believed that a segregated district was the best way to handle prostitution. The manual pointed out that using prostitutes as informants could backfire and cause difficulties for cops. Morrisey said that policemen should be told, without further elaboration, that repression, not segregation must be the wartime policy. In order to give authenticity to the manual, it should be written by a well-known police authority.8

NAPCSP not only put together a manual for policemen, but also produced pamphlets such as "Does Prostitution Breed Crime?" This four-page pamphlet included information on the role of the police in the prevention of juvenile delinquency, using the same techniques used in preventing prostitution and promiscuity. It called for community support and outlined some prevention strategies, stating that "proper discharge of police obligations and responsibilities requires dealing with the individual violator whose conduct menaces public health and safety, and close observation of places and conditions which may be regarded as breeding places for crime and delinquency." Page two took the form of

8 Report of meeting held Aug.27, 1942, called by Ness. NA RG 215, Box I (Committee Meetings). By the spring of 1945 NAPCSP had commenced work on a manual for policewomen. The manual was discussed at a NAPCSP meeting on May 23-24, 1945. NA RG 215, Box I (Committee Meetings).
a response from the Superintendent of Police of Terre Haute, Indiana, who confirmed that
the segregated vice district in Terre Haute's West End constituted just such a place. This
"notorious" district, where at one time 300 to 400 prostitutes operated within an area of
three or four square blocks, had 104 prostitutes operating in 1942. The Superintendent
claimed that "with the closing of the vice district, the effect on crime was noticeable," with
robberies, aggravated assaults, and other crimes decreasing by a third in a two-year period.
The pamphlet concluded with a statement on prostitution by the National Sheriff's
Association as well as a statement of their plans to continue to combat prostitution in the
postwar era. Anyone reading this pamphlet could hardly avoid the message that
prostitution was both a criminal act and a practice that supported the commission of other
serious crimes.9

The Committee on Cooperation ultimately succeeded in enlisting the support of the
American Bar Association and the Interstate Crime Commission in particular to "teach
prosecutors and judges the importance of and need for cooperating with the Federal
Government in repressing prostitution." As a result of police activity toward
"cooperation," the Council of the Criminal Law Section of the Bar Association "voted to
appoint a special Committee on Courts and Social Protection."10 In cooperation with the
ASHA, the council accepted the task of developing a model for a uniform prostitution law.
In addition, the committee determined to endeavor to obtain the cooperation of Military
police, both Army and Navy, "in securing evidence for court cases." i.e. getting soldiers
and sailors to testify, to name female contacts. Military police, they assumed, could exert
more immediate, on-the-spot pressure on individual servicemen to name contacts. In this
manner, servicemen who moved around so much and who were often reluctant to name
names (if they knew them) would come under pressure when they were most vulnerable,

9 "Does Prostitution Breed Crime?" A pamphlet prepared by the SPD and distributed by the
ASHA (no date, c.1944 or 1945). Records of the Ohio War History Commission, Series 1142, Box,
Social Conditions. Ohio Historical Society, Columbus Ohio.
10 Meeting of National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection, June 30, 1942.
"Reports from Special Committees." NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).
e.g., in an encounter with the military police or when making use of prophylaxis facilities. ¹¹

Discussions and debates at a NAPCSP Enforcement Committee Meeting held on November 20, 1942 highlight some of the problems that officials dealt with as they engaged in repression. Representatives of the Army, Navy, State Health Departments, and the SPD joined the law enforcement officers who made up the committee to discuss ways to handle a variety of situations. In speaking of persons "who own local facilities," i.e. taverns and taxicab companies, patronized by prostitutes, Ness (SPD) held that they "should not be thrown into jail." Rather, the local police should first inform such persons that they or their establishments had been identified as involved in questionable activities that jeopardized their licenses. Colonel Turner (Army) spoke about the importance of contact reporting; Mc Cullough (Nany) said that anytime local commanders failed to cooperate, the police should notify Ness. The ensuing discussion revolved around questions such as how long women could be detained pending venereal disease testing, where to hold a woman who was arrested on a morals charge, and what to do about first offenders. Most participants agreed that health officers should detain the women after they had been arrested and jailed. However, the time that such women spent in jail varied greatly, ranging from twenty-four hours to seven days. Several participants objected to this practice, since many of the women detained did not have venereal disease; they suggested a faster release time with the requirement that women be held liable if not "available for examination." Some participants took a harder stance, making statements such as: "I think they should all be held... We are gambling with lives now... If we have to go to extremes it is best to win the war...I suggest not too much consideration."¹² While "go-betweens" deserved a warning, women received no such consideration. While some officials seemed to take a softer

¹¹ ibid.
¹² NAPCSP-Enforcement Committee, November 20, 1942. Remarks made respectively by Sullivan (Police-Mass.), Souter (Sheriff's Assoc), Roff (Police-NJ). NA RG 215, Box I (Committee Meetings).
stance, they did not object to jailing numerous women many of whom, in fact, did not have venereal disease.

The Enforcement Committee (NAPCSP) had a full agenda at this meeting; they also debated the topic of taverns, curfews, and "pick-ups." One committee member wondered if they "weren't advocating prohibition," but the majority favored curfews. Ness then praised Chicago's policies, stating further that "an analysis of the infections shows that many soldiers are being infected by pick up women in beer parlors." Chicago had attempted to solve that problem by prohibiting lone women from sitting at a bar. A policeman from Virginia went even further, saying "eliminate women entirely is the only way." In Indiana women could not sit or stand at a bar, but several women together could get table service. However, if one went to another table "she is not served and must go back to her own table." Not everyone agreed with these practices; even Ness stated that these "curtailments raised the question of liberty."

Ness spoke again to the members of the Enforcement Committee regarding the success of the law enforcement campaign; he said that red-light districts had been closed in 300 cities. Colonel Turner (Army) claimed that the VD rate in the Army was "the lowest in history," allowing Ness to claim credit for a successful repression program. The official use of statistics to support repression programs was particularly necessary in this case since law enforcement officials were not yet fully convinced that repression was the best plan. Moreover, as red-light districts closed and contact with prostitutes became temporarily more difficult, sexual encounters did not cease. Other women and girls, depicted both as available and "clean," became more vulnerable to sexualized encounters. If they were named as contacts by a venereally diseased serviceman, the statistics confirming widespread sexual promiscuity increased.13 The Enforcement Committee ended this meeting with some comments on continuing problems with lawyers who got prostitutes out

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13 Ibid.
on bail and judges who merely fined prostitutes. Keeping in mind that the category - prostitute - did not necessarily apply only in a traditional sense, it seems clear that women's civil liberties did not overly concern the authorities.

NAPCSP held numerous meetings that illuminate the scope of the Social Protection campaign. SPD representatives, who were always in attendance, discussed matters such as a requirement for licensing all places of commercial entertainment, thereby making it easier for the authorities to close down the questionable ones by cancelling their licenses. They also discussed getting laws passed to "regulate wages and hours of employment for females." California, for example, proposed measures to close night work to women. The Social Protection Division vigorously pursued various law enforcement officials, the judiciary, and involved certain "expert" women in its campaign. The dialogue in these meetings is, moreover, revealing of the male officials' distrust of women. When Mrs. Burgoon, who was a Social Protection Regional Supervisor, suggested that a representative of the Department of Public Welfare could be appointed for rehabilitation and prevention work, several male officials commented that there was a great deal of resentment throughout the state against so-called social workers. It was then suggested that a medical social worker or a trained policewoman might be more advisable. But Chief Morrissey chimed in saying that his "experience with policewomen was not encouraging inasmuch as he had inherited all of his women, and they didn't even make good telephone operators." And, in general, male authorities perceived social workers as ineffectual. Despite such attitudes, the SPD would soon approach women's organizations to elicit their support of repression.

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14 Ibid. NAPCSP-Enforcement Committee, November 20, 1942. Remarks by Chief Woods of the Norfolk, Virginia police.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid. Dr. Ferree (State Health Commissioner, IND), Chief Morrissey and Mr. Stewart (IND, State Police Representative).
The National Women's Advisory Committee on Social Protection

On June 9, 1943, the Social Protection Division held a conference to discuss the "woman's role in social protection." Taft, Mc Nutt, and Ness spoke to the representatives of numerous women's groups for the express purpose of enlisting them to support the repression of prostitution. Mc Nutt began by informing the attendees that the "success of the Social Protection Program depends upon you and the support that your organizations can give the work we are trying to do." According to Mc Nutt, a recent Gallup Poll indicated that more than 60 percent of the men and women polled still believed that "medical examinations (of prostitutes) were an effective means of controlling venereal disease." Even more problematic to the SPD's program, "only 24 percent of the men and 34 percent of the women polled had accepted the kind of program which the Social Protection Division is administering today." Clearly the SPD needed help in mobilizing public opinion to conform to its view. Turning to women's groups to explain the SPD program, officials spoke of how confident they were that the women would "feel it [repression] is right." Undoubtedly, these women would listen seriously to the SPD's ideas and agree to help "to obtain the support of public opinion generally and widely throughout the country." Out of this conference emerged the National Women's Advisory Committee on Social Protection. Ness, with barely a pause, continued to speak

17 A Digest of the Minutes of June 9, 1943 Social Protection Conference on The Woman's Role in Social Protection. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Publications). Unfortunately, the SPD records on the NWACSP are limited. The committee makes another appearance in Chapter Six.
18 Ibid. See also JSH 29:8 (November 1943): 541 for a list of members. The Executive Committee consisted of the Chairman, Mrs. Howard B. Ritchie, General Federation of Women's Clubs; Mrs. Bess N. Rosa, National Congress of Parents and Teachers; Mrs. George E. Pariseau, Girls Friendly Society; Dr. Caroline Warc, American Association of University Women; Mrs. Anna M. Strong, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers; Mrs. Gerson Levi, National Council of Jewish Women; and Mrs. DeForest Van Slyck, Association of Junior Leagues of America. The membership included women from the American Legion Auxiliary, American Medical Women's Association, ASHA, Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation, Congress of Women's Auxiliaries of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, National Board of the YWCA, National Council of Catholic Women, National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, National Nursing Council for War Services, National Women's Trade Union League of America, United Council of Church Women, Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Public Assistance, Social Security Board, National Travelers Aid Association, USO Director of Girls and Women's Activities, Nursing Division, USPHS, and the Joint Army and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation. Ultimately the Catholic Women withdrew because they objected to a lack of a moral tone in public pronouncements and publications.
to numerous other groups and organizations about the need for repression. Leaving no proverbial stone unturned, he spoke to and demanded cooperation from Hotel and Restaurant Associations, taxicab companies, individual cabbies, local governments, and groups of concerned citizens. ¹⁹

**Confining the Bad Women and Girls: CCC Camps and Quarantine**

Faced with limited jail space, many law enforcement officials became concerned about the effects of repression on the logistics of detaining so many women. Ness introduced a possibility: either the SPD or the Federal Security Agency had an opportunity to acquire approximately thirty Civilian Conservation Corp Camps. These camps could then be used to warehouse women arrested or apprehended on morals charges as law enforcement ran out of jail space. The problem of lack of facilities had already come up in March 1941 at a meeting of one of the many advisory subcommittees on social protection. The conversation quickly turned to the "problem of young girls" and a lack of quarantine and detention facilities. As a matter of fact, policemen often raised the question: what do you expect us to do with all these women? ²⁰

Ness spoke extensively about the camps. Formerly "owned" by the FSA, they had lost funding and had been turned over to the Army. Ness, Taft, and Turner met with army officials who agreed to give thirty camps to the SPD. To be operated by local or state governments, these camps received funding through the Lanham Account which provided supplementary grants to communities experiencing problems due to increased population. ²¹ Ness stated: "We are working out a closely controlled program with minimum standards" (for the camps). In reference to minimum standards for detention facilities, he "wondered" if there were such standards and whether it was even necessary for the committee to "give

¹⁹ See Special Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection, April 2, 1943 for topics addressed, such as hotels, taxicab companies, and the Council of Alcoholic Beverage Industries and their cooperation in the repression of prostitution. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).

²⁰ Subcommittee meeting, March 7, 1941. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).

²¹ Ibid.
any attention" to the matter. The CCC Camps were, in fact, used more or less as is; they lacked amenities and were often in isolated areas. Stephenson (Navy) suggested using the camps as an alternative to jail in order to save women from having a criminal record. He made a distinction between hardened prostitutes and women who were "infected by accident." But Stephenson's ideas did not meet with wide approval. In June 1942, the subject of CCC Camps came up again, with Vonderlehr discussing a plan to get one or two in each state. Vonderlehr also spoke about funding the camps, saying "it is proposed to start these camps at the federal level, and later attempt to get the various state governments and state health departments to take them over."22

The plan to quarantine "diseased' women received widespread approval. In Georgia, for example, the State Board of Health "declared a quarantine on venereal diseases...and has promulgated rules for its enforcement...provisions are made for the establishment of isolation or detention hospitals for the detention and treatment of these [venereally diseased] persons."23 In a number of cases quarantine laws had been invoked against prostitution. The state of Florida appeared "outstanding" in its use of quarantine, according to Vonderlehr (USPHS), who said that Florida quarantined for syphilis and gonorrhea by placing a "Keep Out" sign with the communicable diseases warning on houses of prostitution. Such a method, as Vonderlehr noted, "breaks up the house."24 As we will see in subsequent chapters, numerous women were, in fact, confined in the CCC Camps.

Repression at Work

During a public lecture in 1942, Eliot Ness stated that "the repression of prostitution can and will be accomplished in one of two ways, first and most desirable is through full co-operation and support of state and local law enforcement officials. However, should

22 Subcommittee meeting, June 30, 1942. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).
voluntary cooperation in any community prove unsuccessful then the second and less desirable method of enforcement will be used. That is the invocation of the May Act."25 The SPD visited any non-cooperative areas, that is, any that failed to adopt repression programs. In January 1942, an SPD Representative made an inspection tour in Columbus, Georgia, and Phenix City, Alabama, both in close proximity to Camp Benning. Columbus had closed its red-light district during the First World War; however, "surreptitious" prostitution still operated. Phenix City was a place with a reputation as a "border town and a law unto itself." As of January 1942, approximately a dozen "establishments were flagrantly operating," and providing prostitutes, gambling, and liquor for the soldiers from Camp Benning. This type of situation is representative of those that galvanized the Social Protection people.

The report on Columbus and Phenix city includes many of the themes that appeared over and over again as the SPD made investigations. Mr. Arthur M. Fink, Associate Director, SPD, informed Director Ness that, in Phenix City, under the guise of waitressing, anywhere between fifteen and twenty-five girls were in reality working for the "purpose of making pick-ups." The women and their customers, according to this report, then repaired to "beds in the rear." Fink contended that there were "well authenticated" reports that each girl had been known to service 50-75 men in a twenty-four hour period. Moreover, the city officials seemed to accept such practices, giving "evident consent." If further evidence were necessary to support the contention that city officials were in collusion with the purveyors of vice, Fink stated that, due to politics, vice crusades did not generally last long in Phenix City. In Columbus, the ongoing investigation determined that a similar problem existed. The investigator stated that local officials, including the police, were not "especially vigilant" and did not interfere with the operations of numerous hotels, tourist courts, and rooming houses that served as sites of prostitution. The conditions in

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Phenix City and Columbus were further exacerbated by a failure of officers at Fort Benning to formulate any anti-prostitution policies. As Fink noted "there has been no understanding on the part of local officials, police officers or military officials as to the reasons for wanting a thoroughgoing repression program."

The SPD went to work. The field representative met extensively with various officials, including the Commanding Officer of Fort Benning. While a Venereal Disease Control Officer was on site, his efforts had been "stymied because of the failure of the camp to take a stand on venereal disease control, and the subsequent failure of the communities to provide adequate control." Meetings were held with editors of the local newspapers, a common SPD tactic intended to whip up public opinion against prostitution. The representative also met with officials such as the Mayor, councilmen, lawyers, judges, health officers, law enforcement officials, private welfare organizations, schools, service clubs, and women's groups.

The next step involved bringing the local and military officials together and formulating and agreeing on a repression program. This accomplished, Phenix City brothels and the hotels and other facilities in Columbus were closed. In Phenix City, the SPD claimed success in mobilizing the Mayor and the city commissioners to support repression. Lacking a separate vice squad, the Chief of Police and the Sheriff spearheaded the campaign of repression. Columbus experienced some difficulties forming a vice squad, but ultimately instituted an "active repression program." A significant factor in many such towns and cities remained a lack of law enforcement personnel; in many cases this led to appointing female officers to handle the arrested girls. Columbus finally authorized such a move; generally the appointment of female police officers was a vigorously contested matter. Detention facilities, always a problem as arrests increased, could have been a problem in these cities. However, since numerous women "disappeared once the heat was on" the lack of jails became moot. Surveillance of dance halls and recreation centers (often
the task related to women) increased, but par for the course, no attempts were made to increase or improve recreational facilities. The lack of adequate recreational facilities disproportionately affected black soldiers, especially in the south where they were denied entry to public facilities.

The SPD had some success with the Phenix City court system, which responded by imposing heavier fines for prostitution although probation officers were not yet integrated into the system of repression. The state legislature also approved a "more specific definition for prostitution." This measure provided weapons necessary to deal with the prostitution problem; in cases where the definition seemed inadequate, city officials "interpreted the statutes broadly." The report concluded by noting that, once military support was forthcoming in placing some establishments off-limits to servicemen, placing military police in both communities, and by providing local courts with information gathered from infected servicemen regarding their experiences and contacts, the military disease rate decreased.26

The Social Protection Division used such reports to claim, in their own words, "proof upon the basis of experience that repression experiences can be effective and sustained." The SPD connected repression and the control of venereal disease with the elimination of prostitution and the incarceration of prostitutes. But the above case suggests that another strategy - declaring some areas "off limits" to servicemen - could have been a salient factor in the war against venereal disease. This was not, however, part of the campaign, and came up against the notion that servicemen required sexual contact with members of the opposite sex.

26 Columbus and Phenix City, Alabama. Five Page report from Arthur S. Fink, Associate Director, SPD to Eliot Ness, Director, SPD, November 2, 1942. The conditions in Alabama were not unusual; military and local officials often disagreed with aspects of repression. NA RG 215, Box 6 (Statistics and Studies). See for example a memo from Captain Stevenson (undated, c.1942) stating "It is the universal opinion of medical officers in the Norfolk area that abolition of the 'red-light' district has resulted in higher venereal incidence." NA RG 52, Box 10.
The SPD went on to visit Fort Knox in Kentucky, although by this time the VD rate there had been considerably lowered. Most likely their interest focused on the venereal disease control officer at the fort; he kept extensive statistics on sites of infection and in particular on the "colored" troops. Captain Jones, the VD control officer, indicated that the VD rate for 1942 showed a rate of only 20/1000 for white men, but 124/1000 for black men. He contended that "60-70 percent of colored soldiers pay professional prostitutes who ply their trade in the colored district near 7th and Walnut." This gave the SPD a clear target, that is, the colored district where presumably the rate of venereal disease was high. In fact such reports, in the words of a senior SPD official, "are devised for the use of the army surgeon and are not in any sense the responsibility of the SPD." Nonetheless the SPD met with various post officials to discuss the venereal disease problem among the black servicemen before continuing on their visits to more problematic areas in Kentucky. 27 

The "Negro Project"

Focusing on an allegedly high rate of venereal disease among black draftees both strengthened the stereotype of African Americans as a "syphilis soaked race" and stimulated venereal disease prevention and control activities by and for African Americans. 28 The ASHA held a conference in 1943 to "consider practical measures whereby Negro voluntary organizations can best join in united action at federal, state and local levels aimed at reducing the venereal diseases as a serious handicap to health and efficiency." 29 While the ASHA wanted to educate the population on the topic of sexually transmitted diseases, African Americans were not uninterested in venereal disease control prior to 1943. Rather, they received little assistance from health services. When health services were offered in Alabama in 1936, black persons responded in large numbers. Unfortunately, the services

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27 See memos From Irving K. Furst (Field Representative, SPD) to Alice Clements, Assistant Director, SPD, April 6, 1942 and David C. Meck, Jr. Field Representative, SPD to Nesx June 14, 1943 NA RG 215, Box I (Regional Files).
28 See Jones, Bad Blood.
29 Klassen and Flaminio, Celebrating 80 Years, 12-13.
had little to do with preventing or curing venereal disease; the infamous Tuskegee Experiment left black male syphilitics untreated.\textsuperscript{30}

In 1942, Paul B. Cornley, Associate Professor of Preventive Medicine and Public Health at Howard University, wrote to Clarke (ASHA) in response to a proposed education project among "Negroes." He reacted favorably to the project, especially educational materials specifically geared toward the black communities. He informed Clarke that the USPHS had already been working along similar lines and suggested that both organizations set up an "advisory committee...of six or seven Negro leaders in education and public health work to give guidance to development of these activities. He also suggested that a "full-time Negro field worker, preferably a doctor, be appointed as liaison between ASHA and USPHS. African Americans supported health education and treatment; they also pointed out, albeit subtly, that such plans and programs would work better if African Americans were involved.\textsuperscript{31}

**The United States Public Health Service**

The medical aspect of the campaign to eradicate venereal disease operated primarily through the United States Public Health Service. Whenever possible, local Public Health Departments responded positively and quickly to the call to prevent or treat venereal disease. They expanded both clinic space and facilities for examinations, although many areas of the South remained lacking in adequate treatment facilities. In several southern states, Public Health nurses had the task of locating women named as contacts who would then be held in local jails and tested for venereal diseases. Committees of concerned citizens did their part to keep the public health campaign active. The attempt to involve persons and organizations such as tavern keepers, hotel managers, and taxicab operators was moderately successful; the Social Protection Division continued to exert pressure on

\textsuperscript{30} Jones, *Bad Blood*.
\textsuperscript{31} Letter from Dr. Paul B. Cornley to Dr. Walter Clarke, April 22, 1942. ASHA Papers, Box 117.
such groups. Welfare Agencies were also mobilized to interview women who were
apprehended and to provide Public Health Officials with the names of local persons served
by the County Welfare Department. The Travelers Aid Society agreed to interview persons
who resided outside the communities where they were apprehended.\textsuperscript{32} The cooperation
between Welfare and Public Health is indicative of the class bias of the campaign;
individuals or families who had received public assistance were automatically suspect.
Since welfare, at this time, served more white persons than black, white lower-class
women made up a large percentage of women taken in for questioning and mandatory
venereal disease testing. Social class served in this case as a marker for deviance.
However, given the years of Depression, one must consider that class membership had
shifted. Thus it is entirely possible that some women, regardless of prior class status, were
marked as lower class based on contact with relief agencies. While individuals and
agencies spoke with genuine concern about the perils of venereal disease, their policies
were, more often than not, influenced by gender, race, and class stereotypes.

\textbf{The May Act Enforced}

On May 21, 1942, the Washington Post reported that the May Act had been
invoked for the first time on May 20. Secretary of War Stimson designated twenty-seven
counties in East Tennessee in the vicinity of Camp Forest as the areas where the act would
be enforced.\textsuperscript{33} In the spring of 1943, Helen Hironimus, Warden of the Federal
Reformatory for Women at Alderson, West Virginia, analyzed the first one hundred
violators of the May Act. These women, sentenced to Alderson, did time for periods
ranging from three to twelve months. Hironimus discussed the type of woman or girl that
the authorities expected to become violators: the 'prostitute', "a flashily dressed, gay and

\textsuperscript{32} Repression Experiences. NA RG 215, Box 6 (Statistics and Studies). As a result of the
depression and war related problems, many women, both white and non-white had contact with social
agencies. For additional information on Traveler's Aid Society see NA RG 215, Box 13 (General Records),
and the \textit{JSH} 2:1 (January 1943): 8-11.

\textsuperscript{33} Prostitution. NA RG 52, Box 10. Files on the enforcement of the May Act are minimal and
devoid of information.
reckless young woman with a certain amount of sophistication...[or] "a homesick, bewildered young girl...expecting to marry her soldier sweetheart," but unable to locate him. This did not, however, turn out to be the case. Rather, as Hironimus stated "the war changed their destinies." The ninety-four women who came from submarginal industrial and agricultural areas would otherwise have remained in poverty and obscurity. They were, moreover, "ill-equipped for the rapid whirl of soldiers, easy money, beer taverns, and freedom from drudgery, drabness, and monotony." The other six women followed their sweethearts or husbands and "resorted to prostitution when their funds were exhausted."

Of the women arrested and sentenced, sixty-eight were white, twenty African Americans, and twelve Croaton Indians. Seventy-three received sentences from ten to twelve months. Their ages ranged from fifteen to sixty-five; only ten were older than thirty-five. Ninety-two women scored between dull-normal and imbecile on the IQ test administered. Some had prior encounters with the law, having been arrested on misdemeanor charges. The authorities could not, however, find actual evidence of involvement in prostitution. Hironimus claimed that the activities of "a large number of the women...who are occasionally sexually promiscuous...would have escaped the attention of law-enforcement agents had their companions not been soldiers." She reported that while these women had many medical needs, they had a "relatively low rate of venereal disease." She mentions only four as having gonorrhea, saying this may be "further evidence of the limited sex experience of some of the girls." 34 This case study casts serious doubt on the claim that prostitution was the cause of venereal disease. The one hundred women arrested and sentenced to Alderson admitted to some sexual relations with servicemen, occasionally for small sums of money, but as Hironimus pointed out, typically a young woman in this

situation felt "bewildered at finding herself...confined for doing something she considered her own personal affair." 35

In less than two months after its enactment, on July 1, 1942, the authorities invoked the May Act in twelve counties near Fort Bragg, North Carolina. 36 One hundred and sixty-one persons were arrested, and according to official sources, the publicity that surrounded enactment resulted in a mass exodus of prostitutes who thereby escaped arrest. Out of 140 "prostitutes" arrested and tested for venereal disease, 53 tested positive. Some of the problems around the use of the May Act emerged in an Interdepartmental meeting in September 1942. Prior to enforcement, officials contended that 600 prostitutes were active around the Fort. When the decision was made to use the Act, local officers and military police decided "that it would be unwise to attempt a cleanup before the 20th because payday was later." 37 Mr. Tamm (FBI) said the Act had been invoked a few days before payday, and once invoked, 448 prostitutes disappeared. The authorities could find only 52, but also arrested several operators of brothels and houses of assignation and juke joints. In all, according to this account, the arrests numbered 75, with 16 convicted. Tamm said most of those were operators of establishments, but he also pointed out the leniency of the federal judges who tried the cases. He related the case of a cab driver who was termed a "key figure" in one of the prostitution operations. Found guilty, the cab driver was "fined one cent for violation of the May Act." 38 A discussion ensued regarding possible legal difficulties around enforcement. The question of "constitutionality arose, as one official pointed out that the 27 counties "embraced an area of 100 miles," saying that "the Act constitutes an illegal power of contress." Another area of concern and a possible "ground

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35 Ibid.
36 Handwritten note, no date (c.1943) by Ness. NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records). Many papers included in the records were rough drafts of speeches or articles (working drafts).
37 General Review at Interdepartmental Meeting September 18, 1942. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).
38 Summary of Minutes of Meeting, NAPCSP, June 30, 1942. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).

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for challenge" concerned the scope of the area: "a hundred miles from the army camp is an unreasonable distance."\(^{39}\)

While the FBI continuously assured police officials that the agency had no intention of "supplanting" local officials or "substituting" federal officers for those of the states, Tamm noted that "when the May Act was invoked, Mr. Hoover sent in a squad of approximately 158 agents who worked with officials in the various communities and with the military police. Prior to the invocation, the FBI had conducted a survey in the area around Camp Forrest, Tennessee which determined that "500 prostitutes were operating in the area."

Subsequent reports indicated that "the activities of Special agents of the FBI in these two areas up to January 31, 1944, brought about 784 convictions (of prostitutes and procurers)." The FBI contended that as soon as they left an area, prostitution returned. They insisted upon "vigorous and continuous law enforcement" as the only way to maintain a successful program. FBI officials made a point of mentioning the inadequacy of "a sob sister or a psychological approach" to "clean out" such areas.\(^{40}\) In other words, they took the criminal approach to prostitution and promiscuity and denigrated the attempts of social agencies to prevent criminal charges in some cases of alleged female sex delinquency.


According to Edward V. Taylor of the SPD, by 1944 the Division had helped "to fuse the activities of law enforcement, health departments and social service agencies in an attempt to meet community needs and to eradicate to the point that it is possible the spread of the (venereal) diseases."\(^{41}\) As noted earlier, the Social Protection Division spread its

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\(^{39}\) General Review at Interdepartmental Meeting September 18, 1942. NA RG 215, Box I (Committee Meetings) Contrain refers to federal interference with states rights.

\(^{40}\) L. R. Pennington, "The Challenge to Law Enforcement," *JSH* 30:9 (December 1944): 530-537. "Sob sisters" is a reference to social workers, a group that law enforcement disdained.

\(^{41}\) From a speech delivered at Venereal Disease Conference-Second Service Command Headquarters, Governor's Island, New York on September 18, 1944. NA RG 215, Box 7 (General Records).
tentacles outside of the continental United States, attempting, for example to influence sexual policies in Mexico. And the SPD even tried to influence British policies in the Caribbean. While the Social Protection Division most assuredly emerged as a notable force in the war on the homefront, it seems clear that its war primarily targeted women. It was naive, at best, to think that venereal disease could be diminished in any significant measure by ignoring men. But, of course, men were not really ignored; they were protected both from disease and from loss of morale. The state apparatus continued to call upon Dr. Moore's "patriotic young women" while simultaneously casting doubt on their patriotism.

In the next chapter, I examine a number of medical and scientific assumptions about race, gender, and disease that help us to understand how wartime policies were formulated. We encounter a conflict among the authorities over both how to think about venereal disease and how to define female deviance.
Chapter Three

"Reservoirs of Infection": Science, Medicine, and Contagious Bodies

Embodied Deviance: Sexual Sin

The wartime definition of contagious bodies was a product of discourses of medicine and science, including the social sciences. These include not only those discourses that circulated during the 1940s, but also those of the preceding decades. Ideologies, theories, stereotypes, attitudes, and perceptions of gender, class, and race that surfaced and resurfaced during the war years both reflected and reinforced preexisting assumptions regarding particular bodies as always prone to deviance and disease. Because the disease in question was venereal, the bodies in question were constituted as dangerous, both morally and medically.

Sexually transmitted diseases have a long and complicated history. Controversies over and interpretations of venereal diseases converge at an intersection where political,

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1 On the social history of venereal disease in the United States during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries see Brandt, No Magic Bullet. On the etiology of syphilis see James H. Jones, Bad Blood. 2. Jones describes syphilis as a "highly contagious disease caused by the Treponema pallidum, a delicate organism that is microscopic in shape and resembles a corkscrew. The disease may be acquired or congenital. In acquired syphilis, the spirochete (as the Treponema pallidum is also called) enters the body through the skin or mucous membrane, usually during sexual intercourse" See also Adora A. Adimara, Holli Hamilton, King K. Holmes, P. Frederick Sparling, Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Companion Handbook 2nd Ed. (New York: Mc Graw-Hill, Inc., 1994): 63. "Treponema Pallidum, the causative organism of syphilis, is one of a small group of treponemes, members of the order Spirochaetales, that are virulent for human beings, T. pallidum is indistinguishable by known morphologies, chemical, or immunologic methods from treponemes which cause yaws, pinta, or endemic syphilis." Robert S.
philosophical, medical, moral, racial, class, and gender dialogues meet. Thus, discourses of venereal disease have often exceeded the boundaries of science and medicine. During the war years, syphilis and gonorrhea represented not only communicable diseases, but also signs of danger and disorder in the social body, particularly in its female aspect. Complex socio-cultural meanings surrounded, and continue to surround, concepts and categories such as disease, sin, women, and prostitutes along with other related terms.

When the physician and experimental scientist Paul Ehrlich discovered an arsenical treatment for syphilis in the early twentieth century, he referred to it as a "magic bullet." At last a new drug, Salvarsan, seemed to offer hope that another serious, communicable disease could be controlled, perhaps even cured. But in spite of this scientific breakthrough, the venereal diseases remained in the realm of the unspoken, emerging only occasionally to be considered as medical rather than moral problems. When Thomas Parran, M.D. was appointed Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service in 1936, his priorities included lifting the silence and removing the moral stigma around venereal diseases. Nonetheless, a connection persisted between venereal disease and sin. In 1940,

Desowitz, Who Gave Pinta to the Santa Maria: Torrid Diseases in a Temperate World (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997); 56-58 also discusses this group” of treponemes. "To be confusingly precise," he writes. "syphilis should be syphilises since what seems to be a single organism with four different names causes four different kinds of disease. Under the microscope or by the usual immunological tests of identity, the spirochetes cannot be distinguished one from another." (The possibility of false positives in tests for syphilis is discussed later in this chapter.) There was its scientific debate regarding other forms of bodily contact as capable of transmitting syphilis and gonorrhea and regarding nonsexual transmission. See for example p. 26 Adimara, et. al. above who contend that transmission through nonsexual contact is rare, but that transmission by other types of sexual contact is less well defined. In the 1940s, as in the current era of AIDS, conflicting opinions circulated regarding modes of transmission, the reliability of tests, and the actual rate of disease. For example, the notion that syphilis or gonorrhea could be contracted from common use of blankets, towels, and glasses appears often in the 1940s and, in fact, can still be found in the 1990s. See, for example Dr. Antonio N. Feliciano and Antonio E. Feliciano, Jr. Sexually Transmitted Diseases: You May Have One But Don’t Know It (New York: Vantage Press, 1992): esp. 38-39 and 130. A medical authority has assured me that the spirochete and gonococcus have a short life outside the body, that this was known in the earlier period. and therefore such statements bear careful examination. In the case of nonsexual transmission of gonorrhea via "dirty" household goods (as mentioned above), I believe it is accurate to say that class stereotypes influenced a belief that the lower classes had lower standards of cleanliness and therefore were more liable to disease. In addition, during the Second World War the campaign to prevent and control venereal disease was complicated by a definite strain of "moral purity" which promoted no sex outside marital reproductive sex. These "purists" fought vigorously against prophylaxis, perversions (i.e. oral sex), and eventually questioned the quick cure afforded by penicillin, finding it an invitation to promiscuity.
for example, when Paul De Kruif discussed Erhlich's discovery, he still referred to the arsenical treatment as "a deliverer from the scourge of that pale corkscrew microbe whose attack is the reward of sin, whose bite is the cause of syphilis, the ill of the loathsome name." And while Parran spoke of treating the venereal diseases just like any other communicable diseases, he, too, could not completely escape from the influences of his time, including the belief that race affected the etiology of disease. With regard to African Americans, the Surgeon General stated that "it is not his fault that the disease is biologically different in him than in the white, that his blood vessels are particularly susceptible so that late syphilis brings with it crippling circulatory diseases, cuts his working usefulness in half, and makes him an unemployable burden upon the community in the last years of his shortened life. It is through no fault of hers that the colored woman remains infectious two and one half times as long as the white woman." Wittingly or unwittingly, such statements contributed to a belief that venereally diseased African Americans posed unique dangers to the larger society. As women, both black and white, became the primary signifiers of venereal disease, white men were fashioned as innocent victims of these diseases. Such discourses, which marked particular bodies, leaving others unmarked, continued, over time, to confound attempts to deal with sexually transmitted diseases in a medical framework. John Duffy notes that while "existing medical knowledge defined the limits of health activity...that alone did not determine what would happen." Nonmedical factors such as politics, economics, religion, and issues of class, race, ethnicity, and gender all influenced perceptions of and policies around venereal disease, and its prevention and control during World War II.

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The competing discourses that circulate around the topic of venereal diseases illuminate the clash between medical and moral perceptions of sexually transmitted diseases. Alan M. Brandt, in his work on the social history of venereal disease in the United States, considers "venereal disease in its social constructions." He analyzed the ways in which three factors, "sex, disease, and medicine," both "engage social fears" and operate to "express these anxieties" around the subject of venereal disease.5 Elizabeth Fee adds that "social, political, religious, and moral conceptions influence our perceptions of disease, just as do scientific and medical theories."6 She also points out that "a fundamental cultural ambivalence" is manifested in a continuing debate regarding studies and treatments of sexually transmitted diseases. "Are venereal diseases infectious diseases just like many others, or do they represent "social, moral, or spiritual afflictions?"7 Even disease is, however, an "elusive entity" according to Charles E. Rosenberg. He contends that "explaining sickness is too significant - socially and emotionally - for it to be a value-free enterprise."8

Constructing Deviant Bodies

The production of the sexually promiscuous and diseased woman of the Second World War becomes somewhat easier to comprehend when considered in light of similar medical, scientific, and socio-cultural manifestations in prior times. Rosi Braidotti has traced the presence of traditional and historically continuous categories of the "other," such as sexual difference (i.e. man/woman), sexual deviance, race, ethnicity, and the non-

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5 Alan M. Brandt, No Magic Bullet, p.6.
human. Braidotti views otherness through the lens of "monstrous" beings who, in her words, "help us understand the paradox of difference as a ubiquitous but perennially negative preoccupation." That state and social authorities were preoccupied, in a negative way, with expectations of an imminent explosion of "monstrously" excess female sexuality in the late 1930s and during the war years cannot be denied.

In his book *Evil Sisters*, Bram Dijkstra follows a similar path. He explores the construction of the dangerous female body in bio-science and popular culture, especially in the early decades of the twentieth century. Dijkstra analyzes the figure of the female vampire who presented a clear and present threat to the virility of the white heterosexual male. Appearing in popular media as the "vamp," such women were both alluring and dangerous. Depicted as sexual predators, vamps were held responsible for destroying manhood. Reading such scholarship in conjunction with the numerous studies of prostitution and promiscuity that proliferated in the progressive era, it is possible to identify continuously negative attitudes toward female sexuality which made possible designations such as "patriotue." In spite of, or perhaps because of, actual change in women's material lives during wartime, these deeply embedded attitudes recurred and adapted to the necessities of war. They continued to exert an influence on perceptions of what constituted appropriate or inappropriate womanhood. In this process, many assumptions about female sexuality acquired a patina of truth.

Recent scholarship looks closely at the relationships between women and science and medicine, particularly in terms of the framing or marking of the female body. *Body Politics: Women and the Discourse of Science* "reminds us that many of the crucial focuses

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for scientific contestation have involved or invoked the feminine body."\textsuperscript{11} And as Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla indicate, the idea of "embodied deviance" has, "since the nineteenth century, been part and parcel of a larger effort to organize social relations according to categories denoting normality versus aberration, health versus pathology, and national security versus social danger."\textsuperscript{12} In the nineteenth century, for example, the criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso wrote on certain troubling social elements among which were delinquents and prostitutes. Lombroso, according to Nancy Harrowitz, grounded his methodology in a repository of commonplace assumptions. He pursued visible, measurable markers of difference that he interpreted according to the standards of his age; he insisted on the "monstrosity" of social deviance.\textsuperscript{13} David Horn contends that the body of Lombroso's "female offender was constituted as a particular kind of social text: an index of present and potential risks to the larger social organism."\textsuperscript{14} Contemporary feminist criminologists pay particular attention to these late nineteenth and early twentieth century theories because they see them as having a continuing influence on sociological and criminological studies. Although Lombroso's work has been discredited, it is still "worth attention," since, as Frances M. Heidensohn shows, "later writers rely on those sexual ideologies based on implicit assumptions about the physiological and psychological nature of women that are explicit in Lombroso."\textsuperscript{15} The concept of a readable or marked body


\textsuperscript{14} David Horn, "This Norm Which Is Not One. Quote on p. 109.
persisted over time and resurfaced in the scientific, medical, and psychiatric discourses around the 1940s prostitute and promiscuous female body. While recognizing that the marking of female bodies (e.g. witches) has a long history, I begin with the turn of the century when a particular misogynist and racist socio-biological discourse gained currency. In fact, science, medicine, and popular culture continue to bear the marks of this era.

**Race, Gender, and Deviant Bodies**

While the campaign to prevent venereal disease from destroying military virility focused, in large measure, on controlling women, they were not the only persons perceived as harboring disease. Gender ideology operated in tandem with race ideology, producing concepts of both "cesspools of infection" and a "syphilis soaked race."16 Over time, then, it is possible to trace the development of multiple discourses "designed to keep an eye on those entities considered suspicious," whether they be germs or the persons who come to embody them.17

Even as one recognizes that categories of "marked bodies" are not new phenomena, it still remains difficult to comprehend the persistence of particular sexist, racist, and classist ideologies. A review of studies in the field of criminology proves useful to this endeavor. Such studies can, for instance, provide additional insight into the ways in which both black and white female bodies and the black male body have been marked, over time, as liable to crime and/or other deviance. This practice is especially evident in, but not limited to, the realm of so-called sexual crimes.18

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16 "Cesspools of infection," see Taft Speeches. RG 215, Box 13 (General Records). Taft referred to a commonly used phrase. See also the equation of prostitution with "a slimy social swamp" in a Federal Security Administration publication entitled "The Social Challenge of Prostitution, ASHA Papers, Box 129. For "Syphilis soaked race," see James H. Jones, *Bad Blood*, Chapter Two.
Current scholarship in the field of criminology extends the exploration of the relationship between gender and deviance. Colin Sumner, for example, turns to Foucault's theory of normalization to develop an interpretation of the relationship between gender and the "censure of deviance." He posits a concept of "master censures" as an integral feature of "hegemonic ideology" and contends that "the censure of femininity is one of them." Since Sumner sees censures as "interconnected by their associated employment in ideological practices," he suggests that "most hegemonic censures of deviance are, at a minimum, coloured at a deep structural level by the master censure of femininity in connection with other master censures."  

This analysis lends insight to the operations of the hegemonically masculine militarist state, especially in terms of its perverse attitudes toward women. At the same time, the notion of multiple censures allows one to rethink the interplay of race, class, and gender. Such analyses assist in uncovering the influence of race and class which are, for the most part, under-reported in the World War II documents.

Early twentieth century prostitution studies as well as more recent studies of prostitution and working-class forms of leisure also assist in identifying censures based on race and class. For example, two studies of prostitution completed in the interwar years and used as references by World War II officials focused on places and persons marked as deviant. Working-class and/or black neighborhoods represented sites of danger, both sexual and criminal; the persons - criminals including prostitutes - who inhabited those sites embodied deviance. During World War II, many sites of surveillance fit the model described in these and other studies. Influenced by racial and class stereotypes, wartime law enforcement authorities assumed that black and working-class neighborhoods were inevitably vice and disease ridden.  

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medical services to non-white persons and to define working women as potentially sexually promiscuous.

**Social Sciences and Deviant Bodies**

During the Progressive era many moral reformers focused on prostitution and prostitutes as the source of venereal infection. In the conservative period following World War I, when public discussions of venereal disease and sexual issues, in general, fell out of favor, parties such as the American Social Hygiene Agency, the Bureau of Social Hygiene, and individual researchers conducted studies of prostitution and searched for a means to ameliorate the ravages of venereal disease. In the late 1930s, as the United States moved closer to military involvement and the issue of venereal disease prevention became of paramount importance to the defense effort, the apparatus of the state had a large body of material to draw from regarding female prostitution, promiscuity and venereal disease.

Abraham Flexner's study on regulated prostitution in Europe is, perhaps, the most well known. Following Flexner's example, Howard B. Woolston authored a major study entitled *Prostitution in the United States*, which focused on prostitution prior to World War I. The final product, published in 1921, became a salient resource for World War II planners, having already served as a reference for interwar reformers such as William F. Snow, the first Director of the Bureau of American Social Hygiene. These early twentieth-century reports serve as sites of a particular discourse of female sexuality that focused, in part, on a notion of an "essential" female propensity to promiscuous sexuality.

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21 Abraham Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe* and George Kneeland, *Commercialized Prostitution in New York*. Regulation refers to government control of prostitution, including registration with the local authorities, regular testing for venereal disease, a requirement to carry a health card, and residence in controlled houses and districts. Prior to 1970, only one city in the United States adopted regulation. Between 1870 and 1874, St. Louis licensed brothels and required medical inspection by public health officials. Pressure from the public ended the experiment.

On the subject of prostitution, Woolston claimed that since prostitutes had a sixty-five to seventy-five percent rate of venereal disease, "the great majority of prostitutes are a constant menace as a source of contamination." In line with other early twentieth century prostitution studies, Woolston opposed regulation by means of segregated districts. "Lewd women," he said, would merely relocate beyond the limits of the vice districts. Sexual vice, in his estimation, could not merely be restricted, but rather must be stopped, preferably by government intervention. In this analysis, women appear as susceptible to border trangressions, both moral and geographic.

Class and race-based stereotypes emerged in Woolston's study with its focus on so-called vice saturated districts, that is, those located in lower-class areas and in neighborhoods peopled by immigrants and "Negroes." Referring to them as "vicious districts," he contended that in such areas "girls," and more specifically "colored women," were not only aggressive in approaching men, but also apt to "suggest perversions." By focusing on the populations of working-class and non-white neighborhoods, Woolston and other early twentieth century social scientists established these areas as sites of sociosexual deviance. By the 1940s demographic changes exacerbated already existing suspicions about black and working-class areas and led ultimately to increased surveillance and to arrests of black women and white women in the workforce.

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23 Woolston, 54.
24 Speeches Taft, 1942, NA RG 215, Box 13. (General Records).
25 Woolston, 153, 54-58, 54, 102-103. Woolston's comments on the extension of the federal government's efforts to control sexuality into the postwar (W.W.I) period foreshadowed increased government intervention into the realm of sexuality in the coming years. Woolston was not alone in favoring federal control of sexuality or in focusing on black and "lower-class" neighborhoods. See also Walter C. Reckless, Vice in Chicago.
26 Woolston, 145. At the time, "perversions" meant anything outside face to face intercourse/missionary style, e.g. fellatio.
27 While class, per se, is invisible in the WWII records regarding sexual control efforts, its presence as a causal factor in deciding which women were termed prostitutes or promiscuous is evident in the choice of where the watching took place, that is at sites of working-class recreation. See Meyerowitz and Peiss and Simmons note 20 above. More recent scholarship on prostitution is helpful in tracing social
Woolston, while calling himself a man of a "new era," recurred to a Lombrosian discourse of the marked body as evidenced in his comments regarding women in prison. He described the "typical" female delinquent as "shorter and heavier than other women of her age...the ordinary prostitute appears to be a short stocky woman...characterized by a high degree of physical defectiveness of all kinds." Such descriptions, which reappeared during the Second World War, can only be read as coded for class and possibly for lesbianism, which was seldom discussed aloud. Lesbianism did become visible in a few instances, for example, female bar patrons were referred to as "having a touch of lavender." And the New York City Health Department published a chart indicating extensive female to female transmission of venereal disease. By the time of the Second World War, then, a plethora of marked bodies had already become objects to be watched.

In the years preceding the war, general concerns regarding the effects of increasing sexual freedom on women reinforced a belief that extensive surveillance of female activities was necessary. Woolston pointed to unchaperoned dates for late night dinners, dance clubs, movies, and amusement parks, which often involved travel by automobile, as "unquestionably dangerous for young girls." He claimed that his study found "the most


28 Woolston, 52-54.
30 "Investigation of a 'Localized Outbreak of Syphilis in New York City.' Chart, c. 1940. ASHA Papers, Box 115. See also appendix."
dangerous period of a girl's life to be during her later adolescence (15-19), because her emotions overruled her judgement. During the Second World War years, the same type of young women seemed to threaten the well-being of the United States and therefore they needed to be watched. For example, as numerous prostitution districts were closed down during the repression campaign, the vice spotlight quickly focused on those young women, referred to as "amateurs," or having "khaki fever." Absent, however, was the notion that they were endangered; rather they became the danger. Their aggressive sexuality demanded new measures of control, especially since they seemed harder to identify. Young girls might after all "look clean," but one could never be quite sure. Questionable statistics attributed approximately 70 percent of venereal disease contracted by World War II servicemen to young women who were not professional prostitutes; the men called them pick-ups.

A decade after Woolston's study, Walter C. Reckless conducted a study of prostitution in Chicago. His conclusions supported prevailing notions regarding prostitution, particularly "Negro prostitution," and the "social maladjustment" which, in his

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31 Woolston, 69 and 153. He claimed that automobiles could serve as mobile dens of iniquity; concerns about mechanized whores pervaded the WWII discussions. In terms of the World War II campaign, Woolston's discussion of "place of encounter" is also enlightening; he mentions drinking and/or dancing establishments, and other typical working-class forms of leisure. Such places of public leisure would become the objects of "undercover" surveillance operations during the 1940s.

32 See Preventing Prostitution, Promiscuity, and Disease: Denver Preliminary Report. NA RG 215, Box 3 (Publications). The report called for surveillance of girls at public amusement places.

33 A Study of 210 "Disorderly" Girls, January 18, 1943-April 18, 1943. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Recreation). This report noted that "nearly all the girls were picked up because of disorderly behavior, usually in the company of men in the armed services, or because they had been observed frequented undesirable places also frequented by servicemen." The authorities frequently mentioned "unconventional" behavior as a precipitating factor in the arrests or apprehensions of young women.

34 As discussed in the Introduction, World War II statistics were problematic, in general. Statistics were further complicated by the unstable and arbitrary categories of prostitution and promiscuity. And, the 70 percent figure was based on servicemen's reporting their female contacts, that is the women who infected them, a questionable practice at best. Many servicemen classified their sexual partners as pick-ups with the implication that they did not pay for sex. While the authorities took the men's designation of pick-up at face value, I think it is necessary to recognize that many men were either reluctant to admit that they paid for sex, or were "confessing" in a manner that would get the authorities off their backs. See also an interoffice communication from Marie Duffin (Senior Specialist, FSA) to Acting Director Morrissey, SPD of August 28, 1944. She and a Miss March (Welfare Council, New York City) had been carrying on discussions regarding the term pick-up. They felt the categories prostitute and pick-up overlapped. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Regional).
view, characterized Chicago's undesirable and disorganized neighborhoods. He, too, focused on working-class sites of leisure, referring to "a notable increase of cabarets and roadhouses"...and other "developments in commercialized recreation and changes in life and habits of city dwellers." According to Reckless, such problems had grown steadily worse as a result of the influx of southern blacks over the preceding twenty years.\textsuperscript{35} He pointed out that "Negro" women, while only seven percent of the population, represented seventy percent of the cases brought before the Morals court in 1929. "The police," he said, "prepared cases mainly against the obvious, cheap Negro resorts...located in the poorest Negro neighborhoods." Reckless admitted, however, that blacks were more liable to arrest than whites since police officers shared in the general public opinion that Negroes were more criminal than whites. Law enforcement officials also agreed that there was less chance of repercussions for arresting "Negroes," while greater care had to be exercised in arresting whites. FBI Uniform Crime Reports for 1941-1945 indicate that such attitudes continued to adversely affect African Americans during the war years. Black women remaine susceptible to more frequent arrests for morals offences, and black men were more often arrested as third party offenders, that is, as pimps or procurers.\textsuperscript{36}

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, then, we can see that some white women, and black women and black men had been closely examined and found liable to promiscuous and diseased sex. And a connection had been made between such persons and particular areas, including places of commercial entertainment. By the 1940s, however, commercial entertainment was certainly not the exclusive bailiwick of the "lower orders." Moreover, the population of the cities had undergone dramatic change as wartime migration escalated. Nonetheless, during World War II, government and social agencies

\textsuperscript{35} Walter C. Reckless, \textit{Vice in Chicago}, viii, 15-16. Reckless, like Woolston, favored more state control of the sexual arena. During W.W.II, Reckless was a professor of Sociology in the School of Social Administration at Ohio State University; he continued to address prostitution. See for example Walter C. Reckless, "A Sociologist Looks at Prostitution," \textit{Federal Probation} 7:2 (April-June 1942), 12-16.

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Uniform Crime Reports}, 1941-1945.
found easy targets for repression by accepting pre-existing stereotypes about sexuality with regard to non-white persons, including African Americans, Mexicans, Native Americans, and Asians, as well as to members of the working-class and women. In citing the influence of prior discourses on the policies and practices regarding those classified as deviant during the war years, I am in no way suggesting conspiracy. As David Noble observes, "consciousness is not conspiracy." 37

The United States Public Health Service

As the United States Public Health Service undertook the tremendous task of maintaining the nation's health during wartime, prevention and control of the venereal diseases, as we have seen, occupied a prominent place on the agenda. 38 USPHS trained additional personnel and placed them in state and local health departments. Assistant Surgeon General Vonderlehr proclaimed that it would no longer be the case that a large increase in the venereal disease rate had to be a "wartime inevitability." He pointed out that "stringent civilian control measures and the vigorous control program of the armed services" had already been instrumental in avoiding a "sharp increase in syphilis and gonorrhea among soldiers, sailors, and war workers." In addition, he pointed to practices such as finding servicemen's sources of infection, treating them, and confining them until "permanently noninfectious" as salient factors in the success of the program. Vonderlehr reiterated the importance of gathering information on "persons (women) who had presumably infected members of the armed forces," and reporting such information to

health officers who would then find these "suspected persons" and bring them in for examination.39

Who were these suspects? During 1940 and 1941, numerous red-light districts and houses of prostitution had been closed down. But the venereal disease rate in the military had not diminished as a result of the lack of access to prostitutes. Vonderlehr explained this puzzle by calling attention to a report by the National Advisory Police Commission on Social Protection regarding the spread of venereal disease. The Committee's report supported the idea that "promiscuous girls" had become a more serious problem. This report was based on a study of 4,641 women, of whom only one-fifth were named as paid prostitutes. The noncommercial pick-up to whom no fee was paid "accounted for 64 percent of the white and 45 percent of the colored sources of infection....with streets and taverns replacing houses of prostitution."40 The USPHS wanted to control and prevent the spread of communicable diseases, but the representation of women as not only responsible for contagion, but also for initiating sexual contacts, flawed the process of venereal disease control from the start. The concept of diseased and aggressive women seemed to exceed the problem of venereal disease per se and problematized just what was meant by the term venereal disease control.

**Embodied deviance and disease**

Gender ideology has affected perceptions of diseases in females over time; "gender stereotyping continues to significantly affect the formation and implementation of public policy."41 Cultural prescriptions regarding proper behaviour for women resulted in

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39 Assistant Surgeon General Raymond A. Vonderlehr, "The Venereal Disease Control Act," *Annual Reports of the Public Health Service* (1941-1942 and 1942-1943): 123-145 passim. Dr. Vonderlehr was in charge of the Division of Venereal Diseases, USPHS.

40 Vonderlehr, "The Venereal Disease Control Act," *Annual Reports of the Public Health Service* (1943). The focus on promiscuous girls, taverns, and certain areas resonates with the themes of the earlier studies by Woolston and Reckless.

numerous diagnoses of female deviance during the 19th and 20th centuries. And one of the most salient examples of the connection between gender and science and medicine occurred in the early twentieth century in the case of Mary Mallon (Typhoid Mary). In 1940, the *Journal of Social Hygiene* compared "Typhoid Mary" to the wartime problem of "Spirochete Annie." In the Mallon had been identified as a "healthy" carrier of typhoid; during World War II, some officials described prostitutes as healthy carriers. As Bascomb Johnson put it, prostitutes "even though they are not infected...are mechanical conveyors of the germs of these diseases from some of their customers to others." In Mallon's case one can see the construction not only of medical danger and deviance, but also social danger and deviance. Mary Mallon was described by the authorities as doubly deviant. Invisible disease lurked within her body, but her visible body also suggested deviance. Medical authorities questioned Mallon's femininity by describing her appearance and actions as masculine. What purpose did such depictions of Mary Mallon serve? Judith Walzer Leavitt suggests that the experts "needed to see in her an aberrant 'other' in order to justify their actions against her." Her visible abberance also served to establish a "principle of healthy carriers as dangerous to the public health." In effect, the authorities claimed

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42 See Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*. Walkowitz discusses the British Contagious Diseases Acts which in fact have remarkable resonances with the policies of World War II regarding women and disease. On mentally ill women, see for example Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (New York: Penguin, 1985.)


46 Judith Walzer Leavitt, "Gendered Expectations." Mallon has been described as overly large for a woman and as apt to fight and swear. In fact she was neither large nor unattractive. George Soper, a sanitary engineer and expert epidemiologist, described Mallon as having a "determined mouth and jaw, walking like a man, and as having a mind with a distinctly masculine character." Soper was not alone in questioning Mallon's femininity; a medical publication characterized her as "a perfect Amazon, weighing over 200 pounds." And Dr. S. Josephine Baker (NYC Health Department) focused on Mallon's "fierceness - she was like an angry lion, she was maniacal, she fought and swore." Mallon, a cook, was first incarcerated in 1907 and briefly released. She returned to food service and was apprehended again. Healthy male carriers, including those in the business of handling food, were not treated in the same manner. Mallon was
that they could identify hidden corruption by reading the visible body. In Mallon's case we can identify a precedent for the wartime practice of naming particular bodies (a mannish woman, for one) as contagious.

The *Ohio Tavern News*, in a particularly egregious piece of journalism, picked up on this point and claimed that "a prostitute can transmit gonorrhea, syphilis, and other venereal diseases without becoming self-infected." This article not only presented prostitutes as mechanical carriers of disease, but also depicted them as particularly disgusting individuals. It began by asserting that a prostitute does not know how to take care of herself, that is to keep herself free of disease. Recognizing that prostitutes do have ways of cleaning up/out (douching), the article asks and answers the question: "does a prostitute ever take that much time (20 minutes) between customers", and then answers its own question with a resounding - "NO." Continuing in the same style, it was then suggested that the reader "visualize 20 to 40 men bathing in the same tub of water in one evening. The risk of disease would be less in this loathsome comparison than the risk of venereal disease to 20 to 40 men employing the same prostitute in one evening." The article concluded: "We won't use someone else's toothbrush. We would despise anyone for offering us a cud of tobacco out of someone else's mouth. But truthfully, there is far less danger and hazard involved in such detestable practices than in sexual intercourse with a prostitute or promiscuous woman." Entitled "She Looked Clean - But ...Tells Tavern Men Why Venereal Disease Control Is Important," the article did not confine itself to damning only prostitutes, but once again suggested that any women could be harboring disease. Such attitudes, as we have seen and will see again, resulted both in health card requirements for women food-handlers and the marking of waitress and hostess bodies, among others, as at best suspicious, but more likely as dangerous and diseased.

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47 "She Looked Clean - But ...Tells Tavern Men Why Venereal Disease Control Is Important," *The Ohio Tavern News* (July 25, 1945): 8. NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records). See also Taft speeches, 1942, NA RG 215, Box 13 (General Records). Taft also speaks of the possibility of a mechanical carrier.
Psychological deviance

In many cases, once a woman came under the control of the authorities, she also became an object to be studied by the psychologists. Numerous women became multiply stigmatized; in addition to embodying sexual deviance and disease, many were also classified as mentally deficient. One official defined some prostitutes as constitutionally or congenitally handicapped and therefore unable to control their sexual behavior. He also diagnosed many of these women as mentally defective, some as morons and imbeciles, with a significant number of psychopaths.48 In a similar vein, the Mid-western Center for Venereal Disease Treatment conducted a study of five-hundred venereally diseased women who had been apprehended by community health authorities and directed to the center. Test scores of "mental ability" of both white and "negro" patients "was found to be well below normal." The median intelligence for 340 white women was measured as 84 with 24 percent of the full group falling in the category labelled "defective intelligence." For the 160 black women median intelligence was measured as 70; "defective intelligence" was ascribed to 51 percent.49 As discussed in the introduction, wartime statistics often cause cognitive dissonance. These two examples were not unusual; apparently sexual activity by women signified, in part, mental dullness. The authorities continued to analyze women, hoping to find some explanation for their seemingly sudden turn to sex.

Over a period of seven years, the California medico-scientific establishment conducted a major psychiatric study of promiscuity. Originally limited to women, men were not added to the study until July 1945.50 The researchers' stated goal was "to

49 "The Mental Ability and Educational Attainment of 500 Venereally Infected Females," reprinted from the JSH (May 1945). NA RG 215, Box 4 (Publications). A median equals the exact middle and indicates that half of the subjects had a score above 84, and half scored below 84. The significance of such statistics is unclear because, in part, we do not have a definition of "defective."
50 See Benno Saffier, M. D., Hazle G. Corrigan, Eleanor J. Fein, Katherine P. Bradway, Ph.D., A Psychiatric Approach to the Treatment of Promiscuity (New York: ASHA, 1949). This is an amended report of a psychiatric study made under the auspices of the Venereal Disease Division, USPHS, the California State Department of Public Health, and the San Francisco Department of Public Health that began in 1941. This part of the study was conducted between January 1943 and July 1947. For information
investigate the causative factors in promiscuity" in order to "prevent the promiscuity leading to [venereal] infection and reinfection." When the study began on January 1, 1943, its subjects included both promiscuous and potentially promiscuous women. Most patients were between the ages of 18 and 25 (actual range: 14-39) both black and white, and not all of them had a venereal disease. Most of the women (90 percent of 365 women) had been referred by physicians or public health nurses and 10 percent by other sources such as social agencies, hospitals, and courts. An early problem arose as the experts attempted to define promiscuity. The definition differed for men when they were finally included. "Married women who had engaged in any extramarital sexual relations within the six months prior to registration with the service" were diagnosed as promiscuous. (Men had some leeway; if they had been separated or had only one partner, they were not promiscuous.) The study produced two more categories for female promiscuity: "single women who had engaged in sexual relations with more than one man within the six months preceding registration and single women who had engaged in sexual relations with one man more than twice in the same period." (Multiple partners were required before single or divorced men would be deemed promiscuous.) "Patients who did not fit the definition of promiscuity but who were considered likely to become promiscuous during a year's period following their registration were considered potentially promiscuous." How the authorities were able to diagnose this potential was, unfortunately, not explained. Promiscuity was, however, seen as "only one expression of the non-adaptability characteristic since early childhood."\(^{51}\)

The director of the project, Dr. Benno Safier, and his associates read the female body in relation to other factors including occupation. "Many promiscuous women," they contended, "used their employment as a situation in which to make the acquaintance of men

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on the early years of the study see "An Experiment in the Psychiatric Treatment of Promiscuous Girls." RG 215, Box 1 (Publications).

easily and quickly." This was especially true, they said, "of those who were waitresses and of the few who were usherettes, 'photo girls' in concessions, and taxi dancers."

While we know that wartime women, especially black women, experienced difficulties accessing industrial jobs or had child-care problems that precluded such work, and often took more casual labor for these and other reasons, this study claimed, nonetheless, that the "availability of war work" gave lie to the necessity for taking such jobs.

The experts had not yet finished their litany; they also made "neuropsychiatric" diagnoses and studied "personality characteristics." They noted certain common characteristics such as "uneven development in the areas of physical (e. g. overweight - "fat" - women), intellectual, emotional and social maturity." In sum, the women studied appeared to these researchers as "immature, impulsive, irresponsible, impetuous", with a tendency to blame others for any problems they might have had. Admitting that it was more difficult to find "marked deviations from the normal" with "potentially promiscuous patients," the researchers reported that while they identified only one woman as a homosexual, there were several others who "had strong emotional attachments to other women in excess of those found in normal adolescent psychosexual development."52

In most cases female promiscuity was seen as resulting from "personality difficulties, intrapsychic conflict, dependency and immaturity, and as part of the maladapted behavior characteristic of the unstable patient who lacked social responsibility and self-restraint." (Some women fit in more than one category.) According to the researchers, women who fell into the first four categories of promiscuity seemed to use sex as "a neurotic equivalent," that is they tried to solve their problems through sexual

52 Safier, et. al. This study claimed a significant incidence of "mental deficiency," while simultaneously stating (in a footnote) that the incidence of women with IQs lower than 80 was statistically insignificant. (p. 19) Once again, there are many problems with the meaning such statistics. For example, we do not know what type of IQ test was administered, a factor that would affect our reading of the results. The researchers also noted that "the sex instruction which patients had received was for the most part inadequate and unscientific." (p. 23). Women's lack of sexual knowledge is a theme that threads throughout the records.

53 Safier, et. al., 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 20-21, 27.
encounters or relationships. More specifically "some patients used promiscuity to attempt to overcome anxiety regarding sexual normalcy or feelings of inadequacy as women." Those women who experienced inner conflict over their promiscuity were diagnosed as suffering from "masculinity-femininity conflict," which in a broad sense included those patients who "had difficulties in fulfilling a feminine role." The eight patients who fell outside the four categories and "who utilized promiscuity to satisfy sexual desires without apparent conflict" were denied their desire. The researchers contended that "if these patients had been known for a longer period of time, more specific motivations would have appeared." And to complete the denial they claimed that none of the eight could be considered "truly psychosexually mature individuals.\textsuperscript{54}

Another study, "The Female Psychopath," also denied female desire, concluding, in part, that "hedonism" presented as an "outstanding abnormal personality characteristic." While the psychopathic personality appeared more frequently among white than black women, "in both negro and white psychopaths approximately one half manifested their psychopathy in some form of abnormal libidinous activities." Even if women had been convicted of another crime (child neglect or a crime against property), it was "almost invariably linked" to sex. "A hedonistic attitude" was, according to this study, "the most characteristic attitude of the female psychopath whether white or black.\textsuperscript{55} The apparatus of the state was either unwilling or unable to accept deviations from prescribed gender norms.

As an official network of doctors, scientists, social workers, and law enforcers apprehended or arrested more and more women, the pool of subjects to be studied increased. The \textit{American Journal of Public Health} announced the establishment of a  

\textsuperscript{54} Saffier, et. al., 29, 30, 35, 37. The study also noted that "The sex instruction which patients had received was for the most part inadequate and unscientific." (p. 23) On women's lack of sexual knowledge, see also Eleanor L. Hutzel, "The Policewoman's Role in Social Protection," a copy of a 1944 article in the \textit{JSZ.} NA RG 215, Box 4 (Publications).

\textsuperscript{55} J. G. Wilson, M.D., "The Female Psychopath," in \textit{Proceedings of the Seventy-Second Annual Congress of the American Prison Association} (New York: American Prison Association, 1942): 153-159. This study was conducted at the Reformatory for Women in Clifton, New Jersey.
Psychiatric Service at the San Francisco City Venereal Disease Clinic. It was a "one-of-a-kind" special field study project based on individualized case studies. The aims and goals of the project as stated were "to provide a reeducation and readjustment program for girls and women who offer a promiscuous sex history and who may spread or are spreading venereal disease." Confirmed prostitutes were excluded from the study.56

Two studies that discussed a similar group of 2,063 "girls" arrested in Seattle, Washington, during an eight-month period illustrate the varied interpretations placed on female sexuality. A medical social worker at the Seattle Treatment Center noted that only 17.3 percent of the 2,063 women had venereal disease. She also discovered that more than two hundred of the women in this group were married to soldiers or sailors (109 were Navy wives; the exact number of Army wives had not been tabulated, but the number was felt to be much larger.) This is the only study I have encountered that allows that several of these women acquired venereal disease from their husbands. This female social worker noted that the Navy provided services for wives, and that the Army was in the process of establishing such services. In contrast, Captain Irene Durham of the Seattle Police Department, who developed the material on this group for a longer report, stated "that the impression of the Women's Division is that there is a large proportion of prostitutes, alcoholics, feeble-minded, and extremely unstable persons among the repeaters...[and] only nine patients (4 percent) gave evidence of essentially normal personalities." Many of the repeaters (those who had been arrested more than once) had appeared, according to Durham, at one time or another before the Sanity commission.57 In sum, many women who became entrapped in the psychiatric medical system were diagnosed as intellectually, emotionally, or socially defective or deficient. The officials who gathered data seemed to be more interested in these psychological factors than they were in the presence or absence

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56 "Psychiatric Service In Venereal Disease Clinic," News From the Field, AJP 33:2 (February, 1943): 195.
57 Arrested girls, Seattle Washington, a report on services offered contained in the minutes of a meeting on Jan. 5, 1945. The report discussed both studies. NA RG 215, Box 4 (Publications). 99
of venereal disease. Thus, we find women, some with and some without venereal disease, being confined and quarantined.

**Quarantine and Confinement**

At the beginning of the repression campaign many official discussions took place regarding ways to confine venereally diseased women. In addition to quarantine, numerous women served time in institutional homes, jails, prisons, reformatories, and in mental institutions. Some women received short sentences, others indeterminate sentences, and the numerous others judged mentally incompetent were most likely incarcerated for extensive periods.88

Quarantine camps and hospitals were set up and used specifically for women. As mentioned earlier, the Federal Security Agency acquired several Civilian Conservation Corps Camps that they ultimately used to warehouse venereally diseased women. In South Carolina, quarantine and CCC camps came together. Two quarantine hospitals, located in former CCC Camps, housed only women and were racially segregated. While neither facility provided much in the way of amenities, the camp for black women was both "more dilapidated" and "less convenient as to facilities for care of patients." The white camp, which had two hundred beds, was located about fourteen miles from the city of Columbia; the black camp was located sixty miles from Columbia and two miles off the highway. South Carolina, having received Lanham Act funds, opened one new venereal disease hospital in December 1942. A modern two-story brick building with eighty-five beds, the

88 indeterminate sentences were supported by female law enforcement officials. An indeterminate sentence did not involve a fixed or standard time period; it allowed a woman to be held until the authorities determined that she had been rehabilitated, that is, she would accept an appropriate female role. See for example *The Prison World* (November-December 1943): 22; Elizabeth Mungen, Superintendent of the Connecticut State Prison and Farm for Women, Niantic, in the *Proceedings of the Seventy-Third Annual Congress of Correction of the American Prison Association* (New York: American Prison Association, 1943): 149-150; and Paul W. Tappan, *Delinquent Girls in Court: A Study of the Wayward Minor Court of New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947): 57.
hospital served the general population. The hospitals were administered by the State Board of Health.  

In 1941, a journalist wrote of seven women in another area who, as a result of the federal government's policies regarding prostitution, were in the process of being transferred to a camp. Repeating, as he said, "the official line," the author referred to these women as the "first batch." A local official said that at least thirty more women would soon arrive at the camp. Other women were detained at the Venereal Disease Hospital in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and the Lindberg estate in New Jersey became a center for venereally infected women. Quarantine camps and the twentieth-century equivalent of "lock" hospitals confined numerous other women. Women neither went willingly to, nor remained quietly in, such confinement, a topic that will be examined in Chapter Six. Official records, which refer almost entirely to quarantine for women, also indicate that venereally diseased men who were rejected by the draft were neither incarcerated nor forced to undergo treatment. For example, the USPHS reported that "in twenty-two states and the District of Columbia...only 31% of the cases [of rejected men] were brought under treatment or were already under treatment." Men in the armed services who contracted a venereal disease received treatment and were returned to duty. Women, however, at least in the Navy, were immediately discharged.

The official medical-scientific network described wartime women as deviant for reasons including, but not limited to, where they worked, where they played, in what circumstances they grew up, if they dared to desire, how closely they complied with prescriptive femininity, for engaging in prostitution, and for promiscuous sexual activity,

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59 Miss Gertrude M. Smith, Supervisor, Medical Social Work, USO, "Digest of Report, USO Travelers Aid Service in the Three Quarantine Hospitals of South Carolina, August 1943-July 1944." NA RG 215, Box 13 (General Records).
60 Jonathan Daniels, "Disease and Punishment," Nation (August 1941): 162.
61 "Lindberg Home to Be V.D. Treatment Center," News From the Field, AJPL 33:2 (February 1943): 195.
63 Memo from the Chief of BUMED to All Commanding Officers, November 30, 1942. NA RG 52, Box 2.
as well as for having, or being suspected of having, a venereal disease. Just as class and
gender stereotyping supported official policies in the beginning of the decade, and
continued to do so during the war years, so also did race stereotyping. These factors
continued to confound the efficacy of the venereal disease campaign.

**Race, Science, Medicine, and Marked Bodies**

In 1944, Gunnar Myrdal stated that "there is a 'Negro problem' in the United
States...it assumes varying forms and intensity..." During the Second World War, racist
policies plagued African Americans in the military, as well as in the larger society. They
experienced discrimination in industry, housing, and opportunities for recreation. The
"race" problem in the United States became, in fact, grist for the mill of Axis propaganda.
These subjects have been written about at length, but the racial element of the venereal
disease campaign has not been much explored.

In 1942, Henry H. Hazen (President of the D.C. Social Hygiene Society) wrote
that "a casual observer might be inclined to identify the syphilis problem in the United
States with the negro race." Hazen allowed that this "casual observer" could find
considerable statistical evidence that would agree with Surgeon General Parran's recent
statement that "syphilis occurs six times more frequently among negroes than among
whites." He suggested that if one looked more carefully it would become evident that "the
problem transcends racial boundaries." Hazen pointed to areas with inadequate,
inaccessible, or absent medical facilities, as well as a lack of information disseminated to
the public, as primary factors in a high venereal disease rate; areas with high prevalence
were invariably low economic status areas, home to both blacks and whites.

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64 Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New

65 Henry H. Hazen, *Syphilis in the Negro: a handbook for the general practitioner* (Washington,
33:9 (September 1943): 1137. A section on books and reports referred to an article in the June issue of the
*Journal of the American Medical Association* entitled "Syphilis in the U. S. Primarily a Negro Problem" as
an example of popular commentaries around venereal disease which were interfering with a comprehensive
program of venereal disease prevention and control. On lack of or inadequate health care see Dr. Paul B.
Corley, "Trends in Public Health Activities Among Negroes in 96 Southern Counties During the Period
example, black migratory workers who came to New Jersey from the south were plagued with a variety of diseases. Answering the question of "why so many untreated illnesses," the author of this article said "the answer is obvious." He had heard "tale after tale of complete lack of physicians, many-mile walks to small clinics, exhorbitant fees charged by private physicians for 'shots to clean up the blood,' thorough-going mismanagement...due more often to medical indifference than ignorance." But even in New Jersey, the medical system did not welcome African Americans; "it was impossible to find a hospital bed for a young woman with a "florid eruption of secondary syphilis." A southern health official, while commenting on the "comparative apathy" regarding the use of the Public Health Service by a "typical Negro family" in Bienvile Parish, Louisiana, also noted that the health office was forty miles away from the black district. And although there had been a sub-office in the nearest town (six miles distant), most families were not aware of its existence. 67

Another factor that gave more visibility to the venereal disease rate among African Americans stemmed from the fact that many blacks used public clinics, while whites, especially those with venereal diseases, had more access to private doctors. And private practice physicians often did not report venereal disease cases to the Public Health Service. 68 Even within the military, medical care for African Americans was not always adequate. An article in The Crisis spoke of the "meagre facilities" that were provided to

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1930-1939, which discusses the lack of venereal disease clinics in rural areas populated by blacks. AJPH 32:10 (October 1942): 1117-1124 and Joseph W. Moutin, M.D., Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS, "Responsibility of Local Health Authorities in the War Emergency," AJPH 33:1 (January 1943): 35-38. Moutin wrote of the extreme inadequacy of public health facilities in many areas, some of which had only "paper" services, and others that lacked medical personnel and were headed by political appointees.


68 See Howard Whipple Green, Cases of Syphilis Under Treatment in Cuyahoga County During March 1943 (Cleveland Health Council, 1943) for confirmation of this point. See also William A. Brumfield, Jr., M.D., James H. Lade, M.D., and Louis L. Feldman, N.Y. State Dept. of Health, "The Epidemiology of Syphilis Based Upon Five years Experience in an Intensive Program in New York State" AJPH 32:8 (August 1942): 793-802.
treat "Negro" soldiers afflicted with venereal disease. In addition, white civilian nurses in a camp hospital refused to handle black patients.69 The black venereal disease rate was simultaneously excessively visible and invisible when it came to providing treatment. Dr. Hazen advised African Americans to use the official statistics to their advantage by highlighting the need for services.70

**Will the Real Spirochete Please Stand Up?**

Hazen emphasized that the reliability of testing was another critical point often left out of discussions regarding venereal disease, especially syphilis. Referring to syphilis as a "great imitator," Hazen said that not only can syphilis be mistaken for other diseases and vice versa, but also that "some conditions even have the temerity to give serologic reactions that are identical to syphilis."71 The medical etiology of syphilis is far more complicated than is generally known.

Both within and without the realms of science and medicine, much has been written about the syphilis "germ." Medical authorities have pointed out that syphilis should really be referred to in the plural since what seems to be a single organism is actually composed of four spirochetes that are difficult to identify and that cause four different kinds of disease. Yaws, for example, is caused by a spirochete named Treponema pertenue which is "nonvenereal;" this disease is common in warm climates.72 During the 1940s, yaws was common among the southern black population. A story that concerns a young white man bears telling in order to illustrate a particular problem that followed in the wake of a case of a mis-identified spirochete.

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69 "Along the NAACP Battlefront," *The Crisis* (July 1943): 211-216. On cuts to minority services see the *AIPPH* 32:9 (Sept. 1942): 1078. "News From the Field" which noted that the U.S. Indian Medical service had been curtailed due to reductions in appropriations. The cut in funds resulted in closing of two hospitals in New Mexico and Arizona. The position of medical director of Navajo area who had supervised 9 hospitals and 3 T.B. sanitariums, and oversaw the Public Health program for 53,000 Navajos was abolished. "The reason for the present retrenchment is given as a war necessity." 70 Hazen, see note 65 above.
71 Ibid.
Diagnosed as having syphilis when his Kahn blood test "went off the charts," this serviceman was not, in fact, suffering from a venereal disease. When the chief pharmacist's mate, out of curiosity, investigated possible "causes for false seriological positives in the Kahn tests," he found two main causes: leprosy and yaws, and one not so common - "Vincent's disease" - more commonly known as trench mouth. Further investigation turned up a probable cause; the patient recalled that at a prior base he and several other marines had "complained about inflammation in the mouth and bleeding." They had come to the conclusion that their problem stemmed from a practice of using the same water to wash numerous trays in the mess hall.  

Here we can plainly see a few of the difficulties that resulted from a reliance both on statistics and tests. The first resulted in maintaining African Americans as excessively sexually deviant and diseased; the second, which was a medical problem - tests commonly result in false positives and negatives - was complicated by pre-existing attitudes particularly toward blacks who were far more often assumed to be diseased. Recognizing the complexity of the spirochete, it seems logical to raise some questions about the reported statistics regarding the venereal disease rate among African Americans.

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73 William Styron, "A Case of the Great Pox," The New Yorker (September 18, 1995): 62-75. On the Kahn test see also Navy Department Bulletin, June 1942 that discussed the test's high sensitivity and cautioned that it should be used as a "screen test...and must never be used for the final report on positive reactions." The Kahn test was used in mass blood testings because it was "fast and easy." APH 33:9 (September 1943): 1130 reported on a book: Serology in Syphilis Control: Principles in Sensitivity and Specificity that also spoke to a widespread problem with false positives and the Kahn test.

74 See for example G.E. Thomas and R.W. Garrity, "Report of 10,000 tests made on naval recruits, San Diego, California, January 1941. ASHA Papers, Box 130. This report discussed 26 strongly positive Kahn tests which were false positives and 16 doubtful tests that subsequently tested negative. The investigators found a possible connection in relation to cowpox vaccinations and the false positives. See also C.B. Bonne and Edgar F. Kiser, "Incidence of syphilis in private practice" reprint from the Journal of American Medicine, ASHA Papers, Box 115. Connie M. Guina, Elizabeth Adams, and A. Parks McCombs, "The blood Wassermann reaction in 300 private patients," New York, February 1941. ASHA Papers, Box 115. John A. Kolmer, "The Problem of Falsely Doubtful and Positive Reactions in the Serology of Syphilis," APH 34:5 (May 1944): 510-514. L.E. Burney, M.D., J.R.S. Mays, M.D., Albert P. Iskram, M.D., "Results of Serologic Tests For Syphilis in Non-syphilitic Persons Innoculated with the Malaria," APH 52:1 (January 1942): 39-47. The authors make several points including the influence of malaria in producing positive serological tests for syphilis in persons not infected with syphilis; the extensive malarial region in the United States; the large black population in that area; and the high prevalence of syphilis diagnoses based on serologic tests among blacks in the malarial region.
With few exceptions, however, the apparatus of the state continued to report on a high venereal disease rate among "Negroes." The statistics presented, often in popular media, were always significantly higher for blacks; for example, one study conducted in the southwest showed a black rate of 460 per thousand and a white rate of 180 per thousand.\textsuperscript{75}

**The Black Response to the VD Campaign**

When Dr. Parran became Surgeon General, the African American media responded favorably to his call for plain speaking and education about venereal diseases as well as to his recognition of a need for expanded treatment facilities. In May 1936, Dr. A. W. Dumas wrote an editorial saying that both poverty and ignorance in sexual and medical matters were responsible for a "high morbidity and mortality" rate among blacks. He reiterated the call for sex education, especially "in view of the alarming spread of venereal diseases among all classes."\textsuperscript{76} A lack of information regarding sexual matters was widespread; African Americans (and women) did not have, and in some cases were prevented from acquiring, the medical and scientific knowledge necessary for good health, including sexual health. While gender ideology kept many women of all races in a state of ignorance regarding not only sexually transmitted diseases, but also about sexual intercourse, racial ideology influenced the dissemination of misinformation regarding health matters, in general, to African Americans. Scientific and medical authorities used the term "bad blood" to explain a multitude of ills in the black population.

It is impossible, indeed, to discuss the wartime venereal disease campaign and African Americans without mentioning the Tuskegee experiment.\textsuperscript{77} This study, which began in 1932, involved 399 black men who were unaware that they had syphilis; they were told that they were being treated for bad blood. In *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis*

\textsuperscript{75} Memorandum for Admiral McIntire from Mr. Osborne, Committee on Recreation and Morale, March 16, 1941. NA RG 52, Box 2.


\textsuperscript{77} See James H. Jones, *Bad Blood*, 15, 103, 105
Experiment, James H. Jones explores, in part, the persistence of a nineteenth-century scientific notion that contended that disease manifested differently in blacks than in whites. This belief, as has been pointed out, was alive and well during the war years. Dr. James E. Moore, an active player in the World War II campaign and a respected syphilologist, had been involved in the Tuskegee experiment. At that time (1932), Dr. Moore made a statement that had a profound effect on the study, and I might add on more general attitudes toward venereal disease in the black population. His assertion that "Syphilis in the negro is in many respects almost a different disease from syphilis in the white" lent "scientific respectability" to the proposed experiment. Dr. Taliaferro Clark (USPHS) called on Dr. Moore for advice on the planned experiment. Moore, in an advisory capacity, offered numerous suggestions and exhibited preconceived ideas regarding African Americans. He continuously de-humanized the men who would be used in the experiment by referring to them as "clinical material." In formulating protocols for examination, testing, and related procedures of the intended subjects, his attitude toward black men became evident once again. Offering advice for taking case histories, he wrote that "when dealing with blacks... the mere history of a penile sore only would not be adequate [in making a diagnosis of syphilis], inasmuch as the average negro has had as many penile sores as rabbits have offspring." Raymond A. Vonderlehr, who we have also previously heard from, was appointed in October 1932 to head the Alabama study. Men of their times, surely, but still unique in that two of the major wartime figures involved in the venereal disease campaign had a prior history with regard to African Americans and venereal disease.

78 Ibid. UPHS officers "denied any racial overtones to the experiment," but the Baltimore Afro-American wrote: "How condescending and void of credibility are the claims that racial considerations had nothing to do with the fact that 600 [all] of the subjects were black." p.12. Many newspaper editors (in 1972, when the experiment became known to the public) used the term "moral insensitivity" to describe the PHS officials. The National Negro Health News reported frequently on the problem of venereal disease, as did the Baltimore African American newspaper.
Long before the Social Protection Division or any other government agencies became involved in the process, African Americans had actively pursued better medical treatment and facilities for themselves. (This interest partially explains their willingness to participate in the experiment.) As an editorial in the Journal of the National Medical Association pointed out, "National Negro Health Week, inaugurated by the late Booker T. Washington many years ago has become a permanent institution. This movement has done more to arouse interest in health matters, and has made the negro more health conscious than any other agency for the promotion of the general welfare of the negro race in America." When this editorial appeared in 1936, it also mentioned that "Health Week observance was now being advocated and encouraged by the National Government" for all people since venereal disease affected "all classes."79 And in 1936, African Americans had set up the Commission on the Eradication of Syphilis under the auspices of the National Medical Association.80 Even before wartime government agencies became involved in matters of defense-related health, African Americans had responded to defense needs; in 1941 Negro Health Week was entitled "Personal Hygiene and First Aid Preparedness."81 In 1943, African Americans in Pensacola, Florida, organized a "Negro War-time Health Committee." Their education efforts were so successful that not only was a delegate invited to attend a state-wide conference, but the organizers also reported that "a spirit of friendly competition has been created so that the hitherto unorganized white population is starting to climb on the venereal disease control bandwagon."82

80 Ibid.
81 See Annual Report, Surgeon General USPHS (1944): 103-104.
But when white officials did the reporting, the long history of black self-help was often minimized. For example, in 1944, Mr. Jackson of the SPD, speaking of the increased activity by African Americans and the office of Negro Health Work as "due in large measure to the growing health consciousness of the Negro people, the interest of many persons and agencies, colored and white, and to the efforts of many professional Negro men and women," implied that it took official pressure to get the black communities mobilized. Moreover, ignoring both black health initiatives and the denial of equal or adequate medical care to African Americans, the Social Protection Division continued to rely on racial stereotypes to explain a supposed lack of interest in health matters and to claim credit for prompting health awareness in black communities. Along the same lines, the Division also felt free to interpret the black community. While nominally agreeing with those who cited low economic status, inferior education systems, and minimal access to medical services as factors in a high rate of disease and a high rate of crime in the black population, the SPD also claimed that "yet Negroes as a group are apathetic and to a large degree uninterested regarding the venereal disease problems." The Division also claimed to understand "Negro psychology," especially their "apprehension regarding statistical data pertaining to high prevalence rates." Edward V. Taylor (SPD) contended that "Negroes" considered such data as part of "attempts to discredit them." Claiming that this body of statistics was reliable, he stated: "a discussion of the arguments that are used by many Negro leaders to refute existing data would be worthless at this time." The white experts read the bodies and minds of African Americans just as they read white women's bodies.

Along these lines, Mr. Jackson even went so far as to say that "prostitution has seldom been a problem among Negroes...instead it is largely one of promiscuity...[with] the

85 Jackson, "Community Organization Activities Among Negroes."
86 Edward V. Taylor, SPD, "The Negro Community's Share in Prevention," (September 18, 1944): 1-5. Quotes on 1,2. NA RG 215, Box 7 (General Records).
teenage girl furnishing much of the activity. In tandem with more general racialized discourse, such assertions reinforced a stereotype of excessive sexuality as characteristic of black persons, especially for black women, and contributed to their overrepresentation among the women who were arrested for morals offenses.

The facts remain that African Americans were very much interested in health issues, but that lack of support and lack of interest from the larger society retarded progress. A committee formed by African Americans following a conference of black and white leaders to discuss social problems, including venereal disease, agreed that, in addition to economics, several other factors contributed to the high venereal disease rates among African Americans. Included were the following: "the low level of educational advantages available to the Negro population, with resulting widespread illiteracy and near illiteracy; and an attitude of defeatism toward the problems of venereal disease on the part of many white community leaders and of frustration among leaders in the Negro community." And, I would add, as several black leaders had pointed out on many occasions, it would have made better sense to consult with African Americans on black issues and to send them into the field to facilitate entry into black communities. In some instances white officials accepted this advice. For example, Mr. Ragland, whom I believe to have been the only African American SPD representative, traveled extensively throughout the country serving as a liaison between local authorities, generally health authorities, and the black neighborhoods. Nonetheless, education and access to health care continued to be limited not only for black civilians, but even for blacks in the armed forces whose venereal disease control programs were adversely affected by a lack of venereal disease officers and by

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89 Letter from Dr. M. Davis Elkind (USPHS) to Dr. Weiss (April 12, 1944). ASHA Papers, Box 118.
materials that were both condescending to everyone and incomprehensible to the functionally illiterate.\(^{90}\)

Racial and gender stereotypes, with deep roots in the past, continued to exert a powerful influence during the war years. Marking both black and female bodies as inherently diseased, disordered, depraved, and sexually deviant, the apparatus of the state waged only a limited war against venereal disease. Affected also by the ambiguity that surrounded the venereal diseases, scientific, medical, and other authorities could not find a single answer for the question: "Are venereal diseases infectious diseases just like many others, or do they represent social, moral, or spiritual afflictions?"\(^{91}\) Even as scientists engaged in research to discover the means to eradicate syphilis, they had misgivings about the effects of a quick and relatively painless cure on moral behavior.\(^{92}\)

Medical and scientific authorities, like military officers and agents of the Social Protection Division, based their policies and conclusions on existing assumptions about disease, race, and gender. Not only did official definitions of prostitution expand to include non-commercial sexual transactions, but promiscuity became a blanket term used to describe the behaviors and appearances of numerous women. A promiscuous woman could be too feminine or not feminine enough, too attractive or careless about her appearance, a waitress or a welder, white or non-white, lower or upper class. As the authorities continued to propose programs that furthered their own special interests, their actions often

\(^{90}\) Letter to Mr. Cabot, Acting Director Public Information Service, ASHA from Paul B. Corley, M.D., Head, Department of Bacteriology, Preventive Medicine and Public Health, Howard University, December 1, 1943. ASHA Papers, Box 119. Corley wrote in response to a draft of a VD pamphlet for African American serviceman, pointing out that its language was not accessible to a "low literacy group," and that prophylactic information was missing. He also noted that the "appeal to patriotism, sense of duty, etc." was not an effective line to take in terms of avoiding venereal disease. "This is particularly true of the Negro soldier, whose morale, Corley said, "is at present quite low because of the many injustices he faces in the southern area, such as lack of recreational facilities and a decent place to eat and sleep when he is on furlough."

\(^{91}\) See footnote 7.

seemed contradictory and ambivalent. We can see this ambivalence quite clearly in turning our gaze to military policies.
Chapter Four

"She May Look Clean ... But ... ":
Military Ambivalence, Sex, & Gender

Shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor, a government official exuberantly exclaimed that America had become "magnificently male again", suggesting how strongly the process of militarization was linked to gender.\(^1\) As socio-political concerns over wartime women's new roles mushroomed, the official military line regarding women both reinforced those concerns and confused the issue further. The military said that efficiency demanded that the armed services be protected from potentially promiscuous women and prostitutes who could destroy military power by spreading venereal diseases. The same officials, however, claimed that masculine morale depended on access to good women. Wartime women did volunteer to provide respectable companionship for servicemen; they wrote letters, played cards with them, and danced with them, to name a few activities. But while the pressures of wartime allowed a woman to work like a man in the factory without becoming masculinized, it was far more difficult for a woman working in a dance hall to escape censure. Women's wartime contributions, which constituted noticable departures from existing social norms, were on the one hand perceived as necessary to the war effort and on the other hand as disruptive to an orderly pursuit of war. Volunteer service in

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\(^1\) Joe Dubbert, *A Man's Place*, Chapter 8. Dubbert quoted Jonathan Daniels, soon to become President Roosevelt's administrative assistant.

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morale-maintaining capacities received no medals; instead women often got labeled as Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies, and Good-Time Charlottes.²

I explore here the assumptions, ambiguities, tensions, and debates revealed in military discussions about wartime sexuality. By first focusing on discussions of meeting men's needs, and then shifting to concerns about controlling women, we can see that dealing with sexuality raised serious problems both ideologically and practically. Military policies, in particular, illuminate both the paradoxes inherent in the dual campaigns to mobilize and contain female sexuality and in attitudes toward male and female sexuality. People, in general, had differing opinions on such matters; however, paradox and ambivalence regarding the role of women in wartime was particularly intense within the military. Officials of the armed forces debated the ways that they could use good girls to keep morale high among the troops. At the same time they discussed ways to keep the boys away from bad, venereally diseased women and girls. Most official discussions revealed an assumption that men required sex. Servicemen, as the "manliest" of men, would not only actively seek sex, but would suffer a serious loss of morale and fighting spirit if women were unavailable.

Meeting Men's Needs

Testifying before the Joint Army and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation, one official's statement epitomized military attitudes and assumptions. Dr. Joseph Earle Moore spoke first about men's, especially servicemen's, "normal desire for feminine companionship." He challenged a recent article in Life magazine concerning the type of companionship made available to the men through service clubs. He was most concerned with Life's description of the choice of hostesses: "these hostesses will be mature women who are 'womanly but not too female'." Dr. Moore forcefully stated his opinion that if the

² On Victory Girls see Karen Anderson, Wartime Women and Alan M. Brandt, No Magic Bullet.
men were not supplied with appropriately sexual, young, and attractive girls, they would find the necessary feminine companionship elsewhere. The doctor reiterated the theme of men's desire as normal, insisting on action to assure that their needs be met.

The venereal disease problem could not, of course, be ignored. Dr. Moore offered his opinions on these matters, saying, "It is not enough to reduce the opportunity for potentially infectious contacts between the sexes." He contended that the repression of prostitution was a negative achievement. "The positive requirement," then, "is to furnish the soldier, sailor, and industrial worker with more normal opportunities for social contact with the opposite sex - the natural desire of young men for the companionship of young women must be recognized and met." Moore's testimony regarding the prevention and control of venereal diseases focused on the provision of adequate recreational facilities for servicemen as a way to minimize inevitable sexual contacts, particularly those of an undesirable nature. He had the answer: "It is perfectly possible," he said, "to utilize the patriotic spirit of the nation's young women, thousands of whom are anxious to do their part for the national defense, in order to recruit a splendid corps of volunteer hostesses." 3 Moore, as officials before and after him, felt no compunction regarding the use of women for militaristic purposes. He also implicitly accepted the notion that servicemen would engage in sex with any available woman. By commodifying good women to replace bad women to service men in the military, Moore and the authorities avoided addressing sexual promiscuity for either gender. Many women did volunteer to serve as hostesses, but in doing so they entered a sexual minefield. Were such women patriots or potentially promiscuous women? Posters such as "She May Look Clean ... But ..." made an answer even more complicated by suggesting that appearances could be deceiving. Even the iconic

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3 Statement of Joseph Earle Moore, M.D., Chairman, Subcommittee on Venereal Diseases, National Research Council before the Joint Army and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation, Washington, D.C., February 28, 1941. NA RG 52, Box 10. Moore was connected with Johns Hopkins University.
girl-next-door could be dangerous. Was the woman volunteering at the servicemen's club, then, good or bad, clean or diseased? And if a serviceman was seeking sex, which woman would he choose - the volunteer hostess or a prostitute?

Within the military, servicemen dwelt in an eroticized milieu where sexuality was both suppressed and talked about constantly. Since a basic commandment in military life was "be a man," and since manly virtues equalled courage, endurance, toughness, and (hetero)sexual prowess, servicemen, in a sense, received encouragement to see sexual adventures as proof of manhood. During one of the official discussions regarding military appropriation of female sexuality and men's sexual needs, Dr. Sheldon Glueck posed a few difficult, but illuminating, questions. "Here are the practical issues. In the first place you prevent prostitution; in the next place you allow boys to obtain contraceptives at army stations," he pointed out. "Therefore where will they get their sexual gratification? Are you proposing that they shall invade the non-professional classes for this sort of thing? How will you answer that very practical problem?" While Dr. Glueck did not receive any direct answers, some clues to their attitudes were evident in policy debates and in everyday practices.

**Militarized Prostitution Considered**

While the armed services supported policies such as the Eight Point Agreement and the May Act in public forums and in print media, their proposed policies, as well as their actual practices, reveal only equivocal support for the repression of prostitution.

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4 See Dubbert, *A Man's Place*, especially Chapter 8. Dubbert suggests that military training aimed to standardize men, and that part of this process was the elimination of a "sissified boy-scout" mentality because it "bordered on being effeminate." Dubbert also cites studies of the time that blame a lack of manliness on mothers and which then suggest that men's sexual activity was a reaction to (s)mothering. Either way, women shouldered the blame for male promiscuity. See also Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) for insights into male behaviors and attitudes as influenced by the military.

5 Office of Coordinator of Health, Welfare, and Related Defense Activities, Division of Social Protection: Discussion of Problems and Program. June 14, 1941-9:00 a.m. NA, RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings). Dr. Glueck, a sociologist, is listed under Education.
Moreover, militaristic attitudes toward "woman's place" emerged clearly as the military met and discussed topics, including prostitution, morale, and safe sex for servicemen. In the fall of 1940, for example, a subcommittee on venereal disease control deliberated the viability of regulation, or as they termed it - "militarised prostitution." Dr. J. E. Moore pointed the committee toward a document concerning French policies for regulation during the First World War, thinking it might facilitate their deliberations. The question of the "desirability of organizing militarised houses of prostitution" came under serious consideration. Opinions were varied with, for example, a Major in the Medical Corps endorsing regulation and a colonel of Infantry speaking against it. A lively discussion followed. The participants asked questions: "In what numerical ratio to the strength of the command should prostitutes be provided? Where would they be quartered? What arrangements for price ... flat rate or according to grade? Will officers and enlisted men have different places and different types of women? Will race distinctions be made among applicants for service, or will Jim Crow be held, applied and receive official recognition?" The discussion regarding regulated prostitution did not end here; it re-emerged from time to time and was, in fact, practiced in various locales throughout the war years.

**Ambivalent Policies**

The ambivalence of the military emerges in a number of instances that came to the attention of state and local agencies concerned with prostitution and venereal disease. In 1941, the SPD visited the naval station at Bremerton in response to a prior report regarding the resident medical officer who was out of step with the repression program. As a result of an interview with this Captain Garrison, the interviewer reported that the captain "made

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6 Dr. Moore to the Committee on Venereal Disease Control. August 8, 1940, unmarked page. NA, RG 52, Box 16. Part of the document he referred to may be found in Army/Navy, RG 215, General Records.
no bones about subscribing to the inevitability of prostitution and sexual exposure and the preferability of regulation over repression. Dr. Garrison also spoke of his efforts to "secure adequate prophylaxis station set-ups." Several health officials contended that the "prostitutes in Bremerton are the pets of the local health officer." The interviewer concluded that in order to achieve repression in this locale it would be necessary to secure the help of "a hobnailed pair of boots from the outside ... [from] the Admiral's office, or Washington." When the ASHA conducted a survey in Monterey, California, they reported that soldiers quickly determined the location of the brothels and went there often. The soldiers contended that the "girls are clean ... an Army doctor does exams." The soldiers spoke favorably of Monterey for another reason. It seems that many of the joints where they hung out were located in the cannery district, and "hundreds of young girls employed in the canneries are compelled to pass by the resorts going and coming from work." If women and girls congregated in areas full of servicemen they immediately became suspect.

In late 1941, "a soldier's mother" wrote to General H.H. Arnold about her sons who had enlisted in the air corps. One son stationed at Moffett Field while home on leave had told her that "just outside the gate of Moffett Field there is a dive that everyone says is 50% owned by the commanding officer." The soldier's mother also wrote about gambling, drinking, and soldiers consorting with underage girls. Her son also alleged that "police protection" was a factor in this milieu. The other son reported that officers and nurses on his ship got drunk while on a brief shore leave and returned to the ship and engaged in a "petting" party in the officers' stateroom. She implored General Arnold to crack-down on such conditions. An investigation of the shipboard incident ensued, with a decision made

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7 Memorandum for Admiral McClayre, September 16, 1941. NA RG 52, Box 2.
8 Ibid.
9 Memorandum from Dr. Walter Clarke (ASHA) to Paul V. McNutt (FSA), January 21, 1941. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).
on December 9, 1941 that "In view of the serious emergency conditions now existing, it is recommended that no action be taken with reference to this matter at this time."\(^{10}\)

In the summer of 1942, a Connecticut law firm corresponded with the War Department. Attorney Kennedy had written repeatedly in search of information on two servicemen previously stationed at Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Kennedy's clients, sisters 17 and 19 years old, had become pregnant by these men. He wrote: "we have been endeavoring to locate these soldiers for some months but all our letters have gone unanswered." The lawyer made no threats, but merely asked for assistance in locating the two men so that the young women could communicate with them. Attached to the letter is a brief memo that identified the men as noncommissioned officers currently serving outside the continental United States and recommending that "appropriate action be taken." Mr. Kennedy had not been advised of this reference; it seems doubtful that either the lawyers or the young women received the desired response.\(^{11}\)

As the SPD continued to exert pressure on the armed services to support fully the federal mandate on repression, some officers jumped on the task. A Colonel at Lockbourne Air Base in Ohio became so enthusiastic about cleaning up the area that locals started to complain to Washington. One tavern owner even went so far as to write to President Roosevelt. The tavern owner assured the president that he operated "one of the finest places in the state," but the Colonel thought differently. "The colonel insists," he wrote, "that all city and state officials follow his orders ... otherwise he threatens to invoke the May Act. "As an instance of the Colonel's unreasonableness, please note the remarks

\(^{10}\) Letter to General H. H. Arnold from A Soldier's Mother, November 27, 1941 and War Department Memo of December 9, 1941. The ship was stationed in the Philippines; apparently the attack on Pearl Harbor influenced the decision to take no action. There are no documents addressing the alleged situation at Moffett Field. Army Air Force, Central Decimal Files, National Archives, Washington, DC. (NA). NA RG 18 (Morals and Conduct).

\(^{11}\) Letter from the Law Firm of Birmingham and Kennedy, July 6, 1942. and a memo dated July 9, 1942 from Headquarters of the Army Air Forces, Washington, DC to the Adjutant General. NA RG 18 (Morals and Conduct).
about booths (he had enclosed a newspaper clipping). The colonel does not like booths. Therefore, all grills and places serving liquor apparently must take out their booths." The Colonel had also proposed "a ban on dancing, earlier closing hours, and a clean-up drive against prostitution." The letter writer primarily objected to the Colonel's failure to meet and discuss matters with the local tavern owners, his complicity in getting several businesses closed down, and his arbitrariness in choosing whom to harass. The Colonel was reprimanded for exceeding his authority and told in "no uncertain terms [to] limit his activities to those pertaining to the immediate needs and functions of his station [and to] refrain from any political activity of any nature." Colonel Baldinger was not the only official in Columbus censured for excessive policies; a local judge dismissed the charges against persons who were "rounded-up in the vice clean-up." The judge objected to the arresting officers' "widespread use of suspicious person" charges.\footnote{Correspondence pertaining to the Stone Grill and other taverns in Columbus, Ohio, including a copy of a newspaper article (untitled). The letter to president roosevelt was written by Samuel Stone, President, Stone Grill Company, August 13, 1942. Na RG 18. (Morals and Conduct).} Such diverse reactions to sexual and sexualized issues are representative of the contradictions, confusions, and concerns that existed in tandem with the repression campaign.

**Media and the Military**

Widespread official use of posters, pamphlets, movies, and related materials that displayed prostitutes and promiscuous women (the girl next door?) as dangerous and diseased, provoked unnecessary ambiguity over wartime women's temporary departures from traditional female roles. Suggesting that a girl or woman might not be as virtuous as she appeared obscured the line between the good girl and the bad girl. As official debates and discussions continued to focus on the ways in which women could be useful to the military, the military used print media to sexualize women in problematic ways. Posters such as "She May Look Clean ... But ... " and "Booby Trap," which pictured a sexier
woman, as well as those that depicted prostitutes as death in a fancy dress, served to frame women as sexually available but potentially deadly. The "Booby Trap" message, emblazoned on the cover of a pamphlet given to servicemen going on leave, foregrounded a woman with the words "Booby Trap" written in large letters across the middle of her body. In the background several servicemen sit or stand, and in the corner two others are hovering around another woman. The text said, in part:

Girls who make a habit of hanging around railroad and bus stations and juke joints, waiting to be picked up, are to be avoided—just as you would avoid any other booby trap. You are badly mistaken if you think that you can tell whether or not a girl has a Venereal Disease by her looks or her clothes or by listening to her story.

Not only did such representations cast sexual suspicion on women waiting for public transportation (and given the times, many were), but it also reinforced the link between sex and danger, providing a continual incitement to sex.

At the same time, servicemen going on leave frequently heard or read "If you can't say no, use a pro." Such double messages not only seemed to encourage sex, but to point out women who were probably available. Servicemen could protect themselves by using condoms during a sexual encounter or by visiting a prophylactic station for treatment afterwards. A cavalier attitude regarding servicemen who caught a venereal disease is well represented in Newsweek magazine. Depicting a group of servicemen with V.D. clad in pajamas, sitting casually in a circle, the text described "... an oddly mixed group ... talking

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13 See Brandt, No Magic Bullet, Chapter Five. See also Higgonet, et. al. eds. Behind the Lines, 244, 245 for reprints of posters.

14 Pamphlet: "So long boys...take care of yourselves." NA RG 215, Box 4, (Publications).

15 See Brandt.
with the ease of males in the same fix."¹⁶ Newsweek also carried a series of articles regarding military leaves in Calcutta, which ended with a joke about receiving a service ribbon. The DSM (Distinguished Service Medal) was adapted to mean "did or did not see Margot," a famous prostitute.¹⁷ Militarized sexuality had entered the mainstream, suggesting that it was no big deal that men used prostitutes and caught venereal diseases.

While military authorities claimed, in public, to attend to the morals of the troops, in everyday life they acted in ways that may be seen as an incitement to sex. The constant attention paid to sex, including safe sex, through lectures, films, pamphlets, and posters, along with the military practice of providing instruction in prophylaxis, created dissonance between any notion of male continence or sexual reserve and a virile, aggressive military male figure. Even women within the military structure were mocked and vilified by cartoons and in post papers. In fact, the WAC encountered serious problems as the result of a slander campaign that originated in the male military sector, characterizing military women as exceedingly promiscuous.¹⁸ Sex even intruded in technological lessons: soldiers in training camp learned how to read a map by means of a grid placed on top of a pin-up picture of Betty Grable. The positioning of the grid targeted areas of the female anatomy associated with sexuality.¹⁹ While this practice may seem harmless, it is representative of the pervasive subtextual linkages between military violence and sex. One socio-political defense of controlled prostitution, in fact, claimed that it would prevent rape. Men, then, came under the influence of a "masculine mystique" that prescribed certain

¹⁸ Mattie Treadwell, United States Army in World War II, Chapter Eleven. In fact, the mobilization of female sexuality backfired in terms of recruitment of women for military service and for military nurses. The armed services got such a bad reputation with parents, husbands, boyfriends, and brothers that forbade their relatives to join up.
"manly" behaviors. One can only suppose that, given the focus on sex, many men felt compelled to prove their manhood by sexual derring-do.

**Prophylaxis**

The deeply ingrained notion that (service)men needed sex is nowhere more apparent than in the discussions regarding prophylaxis. The prevention of venereal disease among servicemen through the use of condoms and chemical prophylaxis was not, however, an issue free of controversy. Church groups and mothers, among others, protested against the discussion of such ideas and practices.\(^{20}\) The American Social Hygiene Association, in particular, included in their booklets and pamphlets an appeal to men's better nature, his "ideals, religion, or sense of duty and decency," as an alternative to prophylaxis. While debate also ensued within official groups, the authorities reached a conclusion, based on the current venereal disease statistics, that sex was indeed happening. The overriding theme in their discussions became, then, that since boys will be men, they needed to arrange for their sexual encounters to be as clean as possible. Thus, the ASHA pamphlet also included advice for men "who go with prostitutes or other loose women," including the warning to "use a protective sheath, to wash the sex organs and the body near them with soap and water immediately after sex contact, and to go to the nearest prophylactic station within one hour."\(^{21}\)

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\(^{20}\) See for example a letter to Eliot Ness from Margaret T. Lynch, Executive Secretary, National Council of Catholic Women, requesting that the organization's name be removed from the pamphlet, "Meet Your Enemy," May 31, 1944. Miss Lynch informed Ness that the [VD] pamphlet had certain critical deficiencies, including "a lack of stress on the moral law and the formation of character." Repeated attempts to convince the council to change its mind failed. NA RG 215, Box 2, (General Records). See also letters from Miss and Mrs. Barnett to General Arnold, October 15, 1940. The women asked the general to "do everything in his power to have governmental measures passed whereby no intoxicating beverages will be allowed in or near our soldier's encampments." They said many of their friends supported their stance. The Women's Society of Christian Service, of a Methodist church in Florida, wrote a similar letter on November 4, 1940. NA RG 18, Central Decimal Files (Morals and Conduct). These women and others objected to a general lack of a moral tone in the military.

\(^{21}\) Pamphlet: "So long boys...take care of yourselves." NA RG 215, Box 4, (Publications).
In January 1941, a committee on prophylaxis met in Washington, D.C. Various representatives of local and national health services attended, along with Dr. W. F. Snow, at this time chairman of the Executive Committee of the ASHA. The group asked Dr. Snow to make a preliminary statement, and he began by speaking of the immediate need for prophylactic stations in Washington, D.C. He felt that this had to be accomplished "before we could get very far in the prevention of venereal disease in this city." In the past, the ASHA had resisted publicizing prophylaxis as a preventive measure. Dr. Leidy, the Venereal Disease Control Officer in D.C., gave his "unofficial" views on the subject. He reported that he had looked into the possibility of placing a prophylactic station in the railroad and bus terminals of the city, and that "the management of both organizations state that they are willing to cooperate," but first had to get approval from headquarters. Considerable discussion followed regarding use of "pro stations" by civilians, with no one quite sure what official policy would be. No one really knew what to expect in terms of the "prophylactic load;" an army officer said that in nearby Virginia 359 men reported for prophylaxis in a five-day period. Throughout the war, in tacit acceptance of male sexual activity, servicemen were encouraged to use prophylaxis, and prophylactic stations became plentiful, at least for white soldiers.

Ironically, given the widespread assumption of white officials that black men were promiscuous by nature, fewer facilities served the need of black troops. The possibility of increased levels of venereal disease in the black population probably worried officials relatively little, however, as a result of such attitudes. Segregation remained in force in the area of venereal disease control, once again diminishing actual prevention. Dr. Hazen, chair of the committee, stated the need to make sure that several "negro" prophylactic stations be set up in order to avoid problems with the "race question". Dr. Zeigler of the U.S. Public Health Service announced that the city of Alexandria had offered a
prophylactic station free of charge for the "colored troops." Black facilities in this area, as in all others, remained inferior. For black men race discrimination overshadowed gender privilege.

The topic of prophylaxis even made it into print in Reader's Digest. The same article that pointed a finger at trainloads of girls arriving in army towns to earn money by sex work suggested that "moral suasion" was generally sufficient to dissuade the men from sexual entrapment by aggressive women. Just in case moral suasion did not work, however, the men were encouraged to purchase condoms "which the canteens sell at cost." In 1943 in San Francisco, in order to publicize three new prophylactic stations, military and public health officers distributed 5,000 lavatory placards and half a million leaflets advertising the locations. In the same year, Good Housekeeping reported that one thousand soldiers, preparing to go on leave, were given a "dosage of sulfathiazole" as a preventive measure in expectation of sexual activity. Enlisted men received instruction in prophylactic use at monthly lectures and films. In Port Clinton, Ohio, a pro station located near the gate house reminded the men to take their "protection" with them; prophylactic materials were distributed free to men going on liberty. Admiral Ross T. McIntire, the Chief of the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, sent a bulletin to "All Ships and Stations." He was concerned that Navy men were not making use of prophylaxis. Therefore, McIntire urged that officers investigate the following: "whether prophylactic heads, prophylactic packets, and condoms were available, easy to access or obtain and whether off base prophylactic stations were "conveniently available' and their locations matters of common knowledge. The Admiral instructed his officers to make sure

22 Memorandum for Admiral Mc Intire, January 31, 1941. Subject: Venereal disease control. NA RG 52, Box 2. (Snow was the former Director of the ASHA).
23 Wickware, "Army Fights VD."
26 Headquarters Records, Correspondence. NA RG 52, Box 32.
that "efforts have been made and are being made to inculcate into each individual a knowledge of venereal infections, and of the urgent necessity of taking prophylaxis promptly and correctly."27 The authorities, fully expecting male sexual activity, made it possible for servicemen to indulge themselves with as little risk as possible.

**Containing and Controlling Women**

Prostitutes and promiscuous women and girls, viewed in a much harsher light, received very different treatment. Men who indulged in sexual activity could, in a sense, wash away or otherwise eliminate the germs. In the case of women, not only did they transmit germs, but disease was embedded in the body, internal and hidden. In spite of the constant sexualization of women, they received no sex education comparable to what men in the military encountered. Many women and girls entered public spaces quite ignorant about the mechanics of sex.28 Nonetheless, numerous women and girls were arrested, often merely for "suspicious" behavior, held without criminal charges but still subjected to forced venereal disease testing, and in many cases quarantined in a variety of punitive institutions. This is not to deny that prostitution existed during the Second World War, but rather to indicate a double standard that disproportionally penalized women. Prostitutes went to jail; servicemen received sympathy and a ride back to base.29 During the war years, numerous women were arrested or apprehended by the authorities, often simply for suspicious behaviors. Men, however, were rarely charged with morals offenses.

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27 Form Letter from: the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery to: All Ships and Stations, Subject: Venereal Disease Prophylaxis. August 10, 1942. NA RG 52, Box 2.

28 See Venereal Disease Information, January 1944. NA RG 215, Box 8 (General Records). This file contains excerpts from a journal on the topic "Polls and Public Opinion," and refers to a poll of high-school girls. 94% of the girls polled "suggested that sex information be incorporated in 'some related course' in school."

29 J. Blair van Urk, "Norfolk - Our Worst War Town," *American Mercury*, February 1943, 144-151. In this article, the prostitute was identified as a black woman. Black women were arrested in disproportionate numbers. The article is discussed in Chapter 2.
Estelle Freedman points out, moreover, that male sexual offenses were under-prosecuted and under-reported during the war years.\(^{30}\)

Moreover, military policies privileged servicemen in ways that did not apply to civilians, especially females. A Navy bulletin, for example, stated that "periodic routine testing for syphilis of all personnel engaged in food-handling is an unnecessary and unduly discriminatory procedure, since the risk of male personnel acquiring syphilis from masculine food-handlers is negligible. It is therefore recommended that the periodic serologic testing of food-handlers in the Armed services be forthwith discontinued."\(^{31}\) This policy change was not intended to apply to "epidemiological testing" for women, whether prostitutes, promiscuous, or those named as contacts. In fact, waitresses could be required to provide health cards to the authorities. While many employers did not require venereal disease testing as a prerequisite for employment, the authorities could arrest a woman who failed to present a card on demand.\(^{32}\) Another change in previous policy removed the onus from officers for a high venereal disease rate among their troops. "The incidence of venereal disease in a given unit of the U.S. Army or Navy," the order said, "is not necessarily an index of lax discipline in this command, but may instead depend much  

\(^{30}\) Estelle Freedman, "Uncontrolled Desires." See also Banay, "Emotional Factors in Wartime." Susan Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape (New York: Penguin Books, 1975): 64. She points out that the U.S. military did not keep rape statistics during W.W. II. However, correspondence between the SPD and various officials indicate that rape did increase during the war years. FBI statistics support this claim. The exception to charges of rape concerns black men, in the military, who were accused of rape. See The Crisis (March, June, July 1943).

\(^{31}\) Memo from the National Research Council to the Committee on Health and Medicine, FSA, January 28, 1941. The document was signed by Dr. J.E. Moore, Chairman, Subcommittee on Venereal Diseases, National Research Council. NA RG 52, Box 10.

\(^{32}\) On women and Health Cards see for example JSH 27: 1 (January 1943): 10. See also Gertrude M. Smith, Supervisor of Medical Social Work, USO Travelers Aid Service, Digest of Report covering the period from August 1943 to July 1944. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings). The report refers, in part, to women who were apprehended because they did not have a health card. Routine examinations were required for civilian food handlers, especially waitresses and if found free of venereal disease, they received health cards. While many employers ignored the requirement, they were not penalized for hiring women without health cards. However, If a waitress was "found to be employed without one, action was taken against her, such as arrest and forced examination."
upon local conditions beyond the control of the unit commander." By 1942, the Navy removed restrictions on promotion; enlisted men could reach warrant or commissioned rank in spite of a history of venereal disease if he "exhibits no evidence for five years and his current tests are negative." Women, in the military, were immediately discharged if they tested positive for venereal disease. And civilian women, as we have seen, were jailed or held in quarantine camps and hospitals.

The Military Position on VD, Prostitutes, & Promiscuous Women

Captain Stevenson, Navy, claimed that "venereal disease is the most dangerous single problem his office has to cope with ... and ... 50% of the venereal disease in the Navy comes from prostitution." Lt. Colonel Thomas B. Turner discussed the Army's program, firmly stating that regulated prostitution would not work. His rationale: "Medical men know that a prostitute can be examined today and found to be free of infection, and yet within an hour she may become infected." He then goes on to say that she could then infect "20 or 30 in an evening." Turner's argument is interesting, if incomplete, for he fails to indicate who infected the prostitute. The Lt. Colonel made another common charge, that is, that a prostitute could infect large numbers of men in one night. His estimate of twenty to thirty is rather low in comparison to some of the numbers banded about in other meetings. Dr. Moore, heard from earlier, contended that "it is a not unusual record for prostitutes to service 50-75 men in a night."Prostitutes and

33 See note 30 above.
34 Form letter from: Chief of Navy Department Bumed, To: Various Commanding Officers, Navy and Commandant, Marine corps. (March 17, 1942) regarding a change in the Manual approved by the Secretary of the Navy. NA RG 52, Box 9. Withholding pay from venereally diseased servicemen was also discontinued.
35 SPD records discuss immediate discharge, Leisa D. Meyers, Creating G.I. Jane, indicates that this matter was more complex and that practices varied.
36 National Advisory Police Committee On Social Protection, June 30, 1942. NA, RG 215, Box 4, (Committee Meetings).
37 "Statement of James E. Moore. M.D., Chairman Subcommittee on Venereal Disease, National Research Council before the Joint Army Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation (February 28, 1941) NA, RG 52, Box 10. Sce Bailey and Farber, The First Strange Place, Chapter 3. In Hawaii, where there were numerous regulated brothels, some houses operated on a schedule of three minutes per
promiscuous women, perceived as not only sexually insatiable and aggressive in their pursuit of partners but also as disease carriers, had to be contained and controlled or they could seriously impair the defence capabilities of the nation. There were, in contrast, several instances of military officials contending that suppression had the effect of making the venereal disease rate worse. A doctor in Hawaii wrote "we're just in the early stages of another free-for-all on venereal disease control. ... the two "stuffed shirts" in charge seemed to be ready to "inflict Parran's insane notion that prostitution can be abolished in this community. Heaven help us if they make the grade! They've already done it on Maui with disastrous results ... Seattle did it nearly a year ago, and their v.d. situation is appalling now. Our own, up to now, has been down right admirable for the last fifteen years." Many officials in Hawaii, concerned with the possibility of rape, contended that a "buffer of whores" was needed to protect "respectable white women."38 Such conflicting opinions contributed to the arbitrary nature of the repression campaign.

As the campaign against loose women gained momentum, many segments of the military remained in a state of non-compliance. In fact, as noted earlier, non-compliance with repression was evident from the beginning of the campaign. In October of 1941, a memo from the War Department went out to the Commanding Generals of All Armies, Air Corps, Air Force Combat Commdand, Departments and Corps Areas, The Chiefs of the Armored Forces and the Army Air Forces, and The Commanding Officers of Exempted Stations. The subject of the memo was the prohibition of prostitution within reasonable distances of military establishments. "It has been evident," the memo read, "that in some cases local commanders have not taken advantage of the provisions of War Department

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38 "Health and Social Welfare," two pages with no other headings, dated November 1942. NA RG 52, Box 10. See also page 99 fn 10 in Bailey and Farber, The First Strange Place. Such attitudes explain, in part, why officials often ignored the presence of non-white red-light districts, especially in the early years of the campaign.
Circular No. 170." The recipients of the memo were "enjoined to make appropriate use of the procedure" referred to in the Circular Act.\footnote{Circular was not available. NA, RG 18.} The circular referred to the section of the May Act that allowed military officials to invoke the Act if local conditions became dangerous to the health of their men. However, since prostitution was maintained in some areas, often with active military support, the word "exempted" suggests that regulation was tacitly accepted military policy at least in some locales. In Hawaii, for example, regulated prostitution lasted until late in 1944. The extent of the failure to comply with repression became evident in the wording of a general memo issued in 1943. "By order of the Secretary of War," it stated, "reports reaching the War Department indicate a lack of understanding of War Department policies concerning moral conditions in the vicinity of camps and stations." The memo directed the recipients to "cooperate with other authorities in enforcing laws and regulations to suppress prostitution and eliminate red-light districts."\footnote{Memo from the Adjutant General's Office, War Department to Commanding Generals and Commanding Officers, October 10, 1941. NA RG 18. See also Memo from Major General J. A. Ulio, to Commanding Generals Army Airforce, Defense Commands, Service Commands, July 31, 1943. ASHA Papers, Box 131.} Public support for repression depended, in part, on the appearance of success in eliminating the most visible forms of sexual vice and thus protecting the health and well-being of the armed forces.

A memorandum from the Interdepartmental Committee on Venereal Disease Control of November 17, 1942 said, in part: "The committee respectfully requests the Commandant of the Marine Corps (at Kingston, North Carolina) to make personal investigations as to the toleration of houses of prostitution in the area ... this toleration of open and organized prostitution constitutes an open and arrogant flaunting of U.S. policy and authority." The Committee urged the commandant to take immediate action. This officer must have been particularly resistant to repression since the May Act had already been invoked in this
area.\textsuperscript{41} The Committee also made some interesting comments about the situation in Panama and the Caribbean area. The venereal disease rate in these locales was extremely high. The committee stated: "According to recent studies by the Office of Defense Health and Welfare ... the extensive patronage (in Panama) by white soldiers of elderly professional prostitutes, often black, and lacking in attractiveness, is one evidence of deterioration of morale."\textsuperscript{42} The committee apparently was more concerned with whom the servicemen had sex with than with the fact that they were engaging in sex. Their comments on "morale" then, suggest that sex was all right if it occurred with an "appropriate" morale builder, i. e. a "non-professional" white woman who was, in their opinion, less likely to be venereally diseased, at least prior to contact. The Commanding Officer at the Presidio in California and officials in other areas received similar memos.

While the Social Protection Division maintained pressure in areas of resistance, they did not always succeed in convincing either local or military officials that repression was in their best interests. The SPD made several field trips to areas where prostitution was not, in their opinion, being adequately suppressed. Included with these records is a copy of a letter from an ex-serviceman who wrote that he hoped the military was not totally prohibiting the men from getting the relaxation that they needed by eliminating prostitution.\textsuperscript{43} Depending, as we have seen, on where he was stationed, a serviceman could find many opportunities for such "relaxation."

In the spring of 1942, the Army Air Force conducted a survey of the commercialized prostitution conditions in Deadwood, South Dakota. The brief summary states: "All of Deadwood's commercialized prostitution was found centered in six openly conducted brothels which together harbor eight inmates. Persons connected with the racket

\textsuperscript{41} Memo from Interdepartmental Committee on Venereal Disease Control, November 16, 1942. NA, Rg 215, Box 1.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. The letter had been initialed several times suggesting that it was passed around.
claim that soldiers from Fort Mead are constant patrons of the resorts." The report indicated not only that the citizens of Deadwood had no problem with their town's reputation, but rather that they were proud of it. One man said "This is a real western town ... just like the old days ... Never have to worry about doing anything wrong here ... " One of the "oldtime madams" agreed, speaking in "glowing" terms of Deadwood City. She could not understand, in fact, why organized prostitution did not take advantage of Deadwood's status as "one of the few remaining wide-open communities." Several of the eight prostitutes spoke freely about their lives to the interviewer. They mentioned repression in the towns and cities where they had lived previously. A woman who ran a hotel in San Pedro, California, said that she left when the vice squad began to make frequent raids and arrests. The only complaint that the working women and their "landlady" (madam to the authorities) had was that they needed more help. One woman, in particular, really wished that "there was another girl" working with her. In spite of the fact that her landlady helped out on occasion by "turning a few tricks," she said she "worked 'till she was worn out." A woman from another house talked about having to send fifty soldiers back "down those stairs" last weekend because she just could not handle them. The first women agreed that paydays could become "tiresome." It could be "awful," she said, "The boys all stand around here and keep sayin' come on I am ready ... I just say well wait a while I am not ... "

The report concluded with a prostitute's words on why the Army had no problem with Deadwood's women.

This is a wonderful place ... Never have to worry about getting caught

... No mug or fingerprints in town ... Just check in at the police
station and get a smear and blood test ... All the girls are examined by

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44 Survey of commercialized prostitution conditions, Deadwood, South Dakota, May 1942. NA RG 18.

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Dr. D. ... He is an Army doctor.... We get a smear every seven days
... Blood test every thirty days ... (and) we have to have a smear just
before every payday ... D. charges $3.00 for each examination.45

This woman went on to say that all the soldiers know that the women are regularly
examined and therefore they are not afraid to patronize them. She said that the procedure
was "one thing that's mighty strict around here." If a girl was found to be diseased, she
"couldn't even live in the joint until she is cured by the Doc," and this required her to visit
the "Doc" regularly. The clear evidence of cooperation by the citizens of Deadwood, the
military, medical, police, and prostitutes, shows how erratic the "war" on prostitution
could be.46 In Hawaii, for example, regulated brothels had a long history.

The May Act was "assiduously avoided" in Hawaii both by the police and the
military. Honolulu's vice district served about 250,000 men per month during the early
1940s. The men paid three dollars for three minutes with a prostitute. The military, as well
as many citizens, approved of the brothels for the simple reason that given "unstoppable
urges and acts," regulated prostitution kept venereal disease rates down. In addition, a
newspaper article that suggested that "if the sexual desires of men are going to be satisfied"
it would be much better if they did so in regulated brothels rather than turn their attention to
"our young girls and women - whether by rape, seduction or the encouraging of natural
tendencies."47 For most of the war period, then, regulated prostitution was the rule in
Hawaii. If this made Hawaii unique, the general consensus of opinion that men had
"urges" that must be fulfilled one way or another did not. Military officials gave lip-service
to government directives regarding repression, while tolerating servicemen's patronizing of
regulated prostitutes.

45 Ibid. Deadwood
46 Ibid.
47 On prostitution and sex and race relations in W.W. II Hawaii, see Beth Bailey and David
Farber, The First Strange Place.
One Navy official's statement typified prevailing attitudes. "If we bear in mind," he said, "that our armed forces are sexually aggressive, that they must be if they are going to be good soldiers and sailors, an important part of our problem is solved." The remainder of the solution called for the examination of prostitutes and a requirement that the diseased ones undergo treatment. With regard to other women, military officials decided that they could not stop the amateur competition, so they encouraged their men to use condoms. The Navy Captain asked a question: what happens, if in spite of all the education, good advice, and easily obtained protective measures, a serviceman does get "an infection?" He answered: "He is not punished for having sexual desire, any more than we would punish him for having hunger or thirst." The lack of a monolithic position among the various individuals and agencies that made up the apparatus of the state maintained the contradictions that were characteristic of the campaign to reduce the incidence of venereal disease through the repression of prostitution. In the next chapter, I explore the paradoxes of mobilization and control in print media. We will examine in more depth the ways that popular literature participated in the campaign both to enlist and restrain wartime women's sexuality.

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49 Ibid.
Chapter Five

"Sell It To the Marines":
The Contradictory Messages of Popular Culture

During the war years, print media functioned as a site both of mobilization and control, where the tangled themes of sexualized morale maintenance and transgressive sexuality played out in all their complexities. Popular magazines, in particular, served as dispensers of wartime propaganda, including propaganda aimed specifically at women. As the media joined in the mobilization effort, magazine publishers and authors responded favorably to government encouragement to disseminate the kinds of messages that would strengthen and solidify homefront support of and participation in the war effort.¹

Magazines refrained from running photos of death in combat, using instead drawn figures to depict dead soldiers in order to reinforce the seriousness of wartime policies.²

Suggesting that death and destruction would result if too many women shirked their responsibilities, articles and advertisements asked female magazine readers if they were

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² See George H. Roeder, Jr., The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War II (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993): esp. Chapter One. See also page 292 in The American Newsreel. In "early newsreel footage...the dead and maimed were rarely shown."
"doing their part." The **Ladies Home Journal**, for example, informed women that if they failed to take necessary jobs in, for instance, ammunition factories, then their "menfolk fighting on distant atolls are likely to get slaughtered."³

While magazine literature operated, in general, to militarize the citizenry and more specifically to call upon women to meet their national obligations as wartime citizens, it simultaneously maintained and enlarged an ideology of traditional femininity. As more and more women appeared in public and entered spaces formerly defined as male, this phenomenon became a topic of frequent discussion by the media. The enlistment of women, while necessary to the success of the war effort, produced concerns about challenges to and changes in normative behaviors and practices. Not only did women move into previously male jobs, they wore pants in public, frequented places of commercial entertainment unaccompanied by men, and challenged, in a variety of ways, both gender relations and standards of sexual morality.⁴ As we have seen, in meeting their wartime obligations to labor both in the factory and in the dance hall, women came to be viewed as dangerous individuals. In the first case too masculine, and in the second too sexual, wartime women's services were both domesticated and demonized in popular culture.

My analysis here is based on mass circulation magazines, magazines aimed more specifically at women, and professional journals. I explore two strands of sexual discourses that appeared in a variety of publications during World War II. I focus first on the condemnation of prostitutes, "promiscuous" women, and "female-generated venereal disease" in a wide range of periodicals, from mass circulation popular magazines such as

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⁴ On this topic, see Karen Anderson, **Wartime Women**; Alan Berube, **Coming Out Under Fire**; D'Ann Campbell, **Women at War with America**; John Costello, **Love Sex and War**; Elaine Tyler May, **Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era** (New York: Basic Books, 1988); and Leisa D. Meyer, **Creating G.I. Jane**.
Look, Life, Reader's Digest, and American Mercury, to professional journals such as Probation, Federal Probation, and the American Journal of Public Health. These sources provide rich detail regarding a wartime campaign in the United States, supported by the government, military, and medical institutions, to eliminate venereal disease through the suppression of so-called sexually deviant women. A discourse of deviance emerges clearly in this literature. Prostitutes and promiscuous women become metaphors for dangerous sexuality and venereal disease.

The second strand of wartime sexual discourse that I analyze consists of general portrayals of women's sexuality. For this, I systematically examined the varied content of three different types of magazines that targeted specific groups of the population. During the war years, women of different classes and races read magazines and accepted them as a source both of up-to-date news and of female-specific advice. Phyllis Palmer suggests that magazines served a text-book like function: busy wartime women could consult them for time and labor saving advice as well as basic instruction in womanhood. Woman's Home Companion, with a wartime circulation of three million, aimed to attract white middle-class women, while romance magazines such as True Confessions were intended to appeal to working-class women. I used the Negro Digest and The Crisis, periodicals published by African-Americans, in order to attend to race given the limitations of the sources, since widely distributed magazines specifically aimed at black women did not appear until after the war. These two publications had high rates of circulation in the wartime black population, and both contained articles that featured black women. These different magazines, read by middle-class and working-class white women (and men) and

5 I reviewed all issues of Woman's Home Companion, True Confessions, Negro Digest, and The Crisis (the official magazine of the NAACP) from 1942-1945, and a small collection of romance magazines held at the Popular Culture Library at Bowling Green State University. It consisted of Love Short Stories, (August 1944); Modern Romances, (December 1943); Popular Love, (November 1943); Ranch Romances, (December 31 1943); Secrets, (December 1943); Street and Smith's Love Story, (January 2, 1943); True Romances, (December 1943); and True Story, (December 1943) and (October 1944).
by female and male African-Americans, contain multiple perspectives on sexuality. In contrast to the emphasis on deviance which appeared more often in the first set of publications, however, this sample presented a comprehensive notion of patriotic sexuality as a female wartime obligation.6

I view these magazines - in their totality, including articles, stories, photographs, and advertisements - as sites of multi-vocal discourses that complement, contradict, converge, and interact in a variety of ways and that produce patterns that resonate with the readers' conscious and unconscious notions of male and female "nature."7 The traditional and familiar cultural images of women embedded in the texts served to mystify the intertwined discourses of "patriotic" and "promiscuous" sexuality. I am suggesting that by reading from a position that allows a "totality of viewing" it becomes apparent that these wartime publications struggled to draw and redraw the boundary between the good girl (patriot) and the bad girl (prostitute). Sexual display in and of itself, of course, was not unique to wartime periodicals. Successful magazines that sold well traditionally displayed women in alluring poses and included either overt or covert sexual themes.8 During the war years, however, a new element came into play. The wartime media focus that equated sexual allure with patriotism represented any women as sexually available. The wartime

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6 Frank Yerby, "Health Card," Negro Digest (July 1944): 69-76. My analysis of obligation fits with that of Robert B. Westbrook, "I Want a Girl, Just Like the Girl That Married Harry Jaines: American Women and the Problem of Political Obligation in World War II," American Quarterly 42:4 (December 1990): 587-64. Westbrook uses the W.W.II "pin-ups" to develop a sophisticated analysis of liberal theory and political obligation. According to Westbrook, it is "difficult" for the liberal state "to call upon citizens as citizens to defend their nation in time of war." Thus, the fulfillment of "mutual obligations" in a liberal state (during wartime) can manifest in "unexpected places." Westbrook offers an analysis of the "pin-up" as the "living theory" supporting a notion of "(male) protector and (female) protected and of subsequent "mutual obligations."

7 Here I follow Erving Goffman, Gender Advertisements (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976). Goffman contends that print media, particularly advertisements, "depict social situations that are familiar to the reader and that affirm social arrangements and announce ultimate doctrine." See also Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benet, eds. Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) for an in depth analysis of media messages aimed at women. Tuchman contends that "Americans learn basic lessons about social life from the mass media."

"campaign" against prostitutes and promiscuous women also sexualized the normative middle-class woman, moving her into a category previously dependent on race and class, and denying her the privilege and protection connected to those categories. Through this generalized sexualization of woman, the wartime media problematized the potential impact, either positive or negative, of women's sexuality on the armed forces. Tensions mounted as women responded to the nation's call to "do their part" as good citizens. As women acted, in ever growing numbers, on their prescribed national obligations, the question increasingly loomed: what would these women be like by the time the war was over?

The Campaign Against Prostitutes and Promiscuous Women

Perceived as a serious problem during mobilization, promiscuous female sexuality would become a prime target during wartime. Social and political concerns regarding female prostitution and promiscuity are not, as we have seen, without historical precedent. The commercialized prostitute and organized vice, targeted by reformers since the late nineteenth century, had remained the primary focus of the World War I campaign. While (non-professional) "girls" caused concern that led to the appointment of female protective officers and to harsher treatment during World War I, this campaign did not reach the same level of repression that occurred in World War II. The errant woman of the earlier war, still viewed by some authorities as a victim, as one acted upon rather than as aggressively sexual, had a better chance of being treated as misguided rather than as deviant.

During the twenties, several emerging factors contributed to changes in social perceptions of women. The flapper and the "new woman" appeared in a public discourse that depended, in part, on an ethic of consumption. Following hard on the heels of female enfranchisement, such women exacerbated social concerns regarding changes in the larger society. Scholars contend that these new women, now armed not only with the vote but also with a new degree of sexual freedom, prompted general social concerns, and, more
specifically, masculine anxiety. An older ethic of Christian morality, challenged by shifts from production to consumption, community to individualism, and also by relaxed sexual mores, diminished in importance under the assault of "modernity." Anxiety and concern mushroomed as the Depression enveloped the nation. By the eve of World War II, enormous pressures had produced significant cultural changes in the United States.

Although the 1920s are often referred to as a period of moral revolution and secularization, characterized by changes in the social relations between the sexes, a strong strain of moralism remained in the public consciousness. As women, especially flappers, seemed to acquire sexual freedom, numerous women accused of moral turpitude found themselves criminalized and incarcerated in the new female penal institutions. Even while sexual mores appeared to be more liberal, the emergence of sexual experts, including psychiatrists and psychologists, served to medicalize sexuality, particularly deviance. Prostitutes, promiscuous women, and lesbians, among others, became deviant

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subjects to be studied and categorized. During the Depression years, an idealization of the
woman at home, in charge of maintaining a haven in a heartless world, reemerged.

As a world war loomed on the horizon, then, the American woman stood on
contested terrain regarding her role and place in society. During the late 1930s, when
government, medical, military, and social work authorities came together to plan strategies
to meet the expected woman problem, they relied on past experiences and brought
preconceived notions with them. In contrast to earlier morality campaigns, however, male
continence did not emerge as an issue during WWII.\textsuperscript{12} And while gender relations had
been increasingly eroticized, especially during the 1920s, a new prescription for female
sexuality that obligated wartime women to be sexually alluring and enticing appeared on the
scene.

The focus on sexual allure that occurred during the Second World War positioned
women at the magnified end of a sex-saturated lens. Enveloped in a discourse of sexual
obligation, the wartime woman had a reciprocal duty to wartime men, especially
servicemen. She must construct herself in the prescribed manner in order to provide
servicemen with both motivation and morale. In a sense, her body would repay him for
risking his life in her defense.

Print media joined the battle on the homefront. Magazine articles, stories, and
advertisements offered all kinds of normative advice to wartime women: how to dress, how
to remain feminine while working, how to act in public (especially without a male escort),

\textsuperscript{12} Burnham, \textit{Bad Habits}, contends that WW I officers advocated continence among the troops, but
in WW II military leaders were "indifferent to morals" and focused on making sexual activity risk-free of
disease. Brandt, \textit{No Magic Bullet}, points to World War I as a time when "The U.S. War Department
undertook a major campaign to make the military camps in the United States safe for the soldiers - safe
from the twin threats of immorality and venereal disease." The U.S. forces would be composed of "morally
apart from the twin threats of immorality and venereal disease." The U.S. forces would be composed of "morally
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how to meet their obligations to the war effort in a variety of ways. More explicitly, a series of articles on the perils and evils of venereal disease identified women as the prime offenders, dangerous, diseased, and even treasonous if their contagion reached the armed forces. "Prostitution Major Wartime Threat," proclaimed American City in 1942. Or as Survey Graphic put it the next year, "Sick Men Can't Fight." Journals such as Public Health called prostitutes "Axis partners," and Federal Probation referred to promiscuous women as "fifth columnists." Magazines and journals suggested diverse ways - from curfews to "camps" and federal quarantine areas - to eliminate the widespread problems of prostitutes, promiscuous women, and the danger of associating with them, i.e., venereal disease.

One could, for example, pick up almost any magazine and find a common ad for Listerine, which presently serves as a mouthwash but had wider use in the 1940s, including for "feminine hygiene." While such ads appeared most often in romance magazines intended to appeal to the working-class, the woman/disease connection extended into all segments of the female population. In many ads (middle-class) wartime women were positioned at the margins of male/female activities because of some "lack of cleanliness." "Barbara" sat alone, outside the door of the party room, and "Karen" sat in a corner wearing a "Do Not Disturb" sign while a party (with servicemen) went on around her. "She May Look Clean ... ... But ... ...," presented a likeness of the proverbial "girl next door" with a clear warning that even the nicest girl could be harboring disease.

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15 "Prostitution is an Axis Partner," AJPH 38 (January 1942), 85. Federal Probation 7 (April-June 1943): 19, quotes Major General Charles P. Reynolds: "Prostitution must be recognized as a Fifth Columnist (traitor) within our midst to be dealt with accordingly."
"The New War Against Venereal Disease," a headline article in Look, featured five pictures of women in a hospital setting, one picture covering an entire page. The text read, in part, "One urgent task ... has been to treat the numerous infected women. Most new infections today can be attributed to non-professional pick-ups."17 Some women, e.g. those already known to the police or the social welfare system, waitresses, non-white women, transients, and women identified as belonging to the "lower orders," quickly attracted the attention of the authorities.18

Mental incompetence soon joined disease, danger, and (sexual) deviance as a charge leveled against promiscuous women. A public official wrote of those "prostitutes who because of constitutional or congenital handicaps, mental deficiency or mental disorder, have little choice except to engage in repeated prostitution and other forbidden behavior." He further contended that his study, although incomplete, "already shows a large percentage of definitely diagnosed defectives and borderzone cases ... among a fair sampling of adjudicated prostitutes ... The number of psychopaths is also large." He claimed that of one hundred women arrested for prostitution, "76% were defective or borderline; 65% were rated as morons or imbeciles."19 The solution was still incarceration,
just in a different kind of institution. Other instances of describing promiscuous women as having less than average intelligence or as psychologically disturbed appeared in *Probation*, *Federal Probation*, and *The American Journal of Public Health*. These articles, which added to the impression of rampant female sexual deviance, had echoes in popular literature. For example, a *Harper's* article mentioned the need for psychiatric assessment of some prostitutes. Headlines extolled new and better treatment facilities such as the City Venereal Disease Control Clinic in San Francisco, which provided a program of re-education and re-adjustment "for girls and women who offer a promiscuous sex history."

The characterization of some prostitutes and promiscuous women as "mentally defective" allowed a discussion of additional solutions.

At the same time that the government, the military, and medicine waged a war against prostitution and promiscuity, other voices clamored to assert men's right to sex with women. One soldier, who spoke "realistically" for many, wrote a letter to *American Mercury's* "Open Forum," addressing the subject: "Do you welfarers wish to eliminate prostitution or sexual intercourse?" He felt that the current discussions of sex and the army followed "the conventional social-worker line," and he derided such naivete. In his opinion, the "social ostrich" should remove its head from the sand. He wondered what would happen if the "squelching" of prostitution succeeded. According to him, there was no substitute for sex, and anyone who thought that millions of men were likely to take a "vow" of abstinence for the duration was sadly deluded. That soldier asked several

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20 Helen J. Tooker, "Venereal Disease, Far From Beaten," *Harper's*. See Alan Berube, *Coming Out* for a discussion of how psychiatry gained professional prominence during WWII. Psychiatric and psychological theories also began to influence interpretations of deviance in women. As social workers adopted such theories, their attitudes toward female prostitution and promiscuity changed/hardened considerably. Gordon, *Heroes*, points out that during crisis periods, social services revived the (hetero) "family unit."

21 "News from the Field," *JPH* 33 (February 1943).

questions that the military answered in everyday policies and procedures despite the campaign
to suppress promiscuity and prostitution. An article in Reader's Digest typified the mixed message.
Within a few lines of reading that "moral suasion" was usually sufficient to deter men from unbridled sex, we then read that, just in case, the men could purchase prophylactics "which canteens sell at cost."23 In the American Journal of Public Health, the headline proclaimed: "San Francisco Opens Three Prophylactic Stations." To draw attention to these stations, the authorities distributed five thousand lavatory placards and half a million leaflets advertising the locations.24 Even Good Housekeeping, in a brief and uncharacteristic piece, assured its readers that one thousand soldiers preparing to go on leave were given a "dosage of sulfathiazole" as a preventive measure.25

In the same year, 1944, Woman's Home Companion printed a message from the U.S. Surgeon General. He spoke of the "haunting specter of venereal disease" and stated, "The United States Army is proving that it is preventable." The article then pointed a finger at the enemy in the home-front battle: "The noncommercial girl who is supplanting the prostitute as the main source of venereal infection." Such girls (supposedly large in number) were doubly threatening because they were "active not only around military centers where control methods are strict, but in war boom towns, trailer towns, cities and villages where control measures are less efficient. She is driving our national standards of morality down."26 In New York City, the Social Hygiene Association reported a sizeable increase in "social diseases among high school boys and girls." They recommended a "midnight curfew for girls of 16 or younger."27 The military spoke of moral suasion in the same breath with prophylactics, soldiers insisted sex was here to stay, and sexualized

24 "San Francisco Opens Three Prophylactic Stations," AJPH 33 (February 1943): 195. I consider it noteworthy that these prophylactic stations were identifiable by their green lights.
26 P. Lochridge, "V.D., Menace and Challenge," WHC. (March 1944):
women appeared as responsible both for maintaining morale and for spreading venereal diseases.

Numerous articles presented a connection between deviant female sexuality, that is, sexual women, and danger and disease. The titles alone indicated that there was, indeed, a domestic battle against visible women. "Prostitution Blamed: Suppression Near Army Camps Held Essential to the Control of Venereal Disease" and "Public's Health: Program to Prevent Young Girls and Women From Involvement in Prostitution and Promiscuity" represented the media's treatment of "problematic" female sexuality. A recurrent military metaphor that focused on women as the culprits in the spread of venereal disease emerged regularly in articles such as "National Defense vs Venereal Disease," "War on Venereal Ills," "V.D., Menace and Challenge," "Fighting Prostitution," "Prostitution as an Axis Partner," and "V.D. in London: Battle of Piccadilly Circus Among Our Army's Worst." Many of these articles appeared in popular magazines. This military metaphor reinforced the notion of dangerous and deviant women as saboteurs close to committing treason and, thus, supported the use of forcible means to remove them from society.

Medical and government officials suggested a variety of measures including: "A chain of small institutions -- schools, hostels, farms, training centers -- where these women offenders, graded according to their prospect for rehabilitation may be committed." One of the purported virtues of this plan, which was proposed by a public official, was that "it offers the prospect of release when - and only when - the girl is rehabilitated ... Maximum

sentences would yield to truly indeterminate sentences ... It would be a dynamic and flexible correctional system for the simple, realistic reason that people conform at varying pace to the effort of society to render them less troublesome."29 Wartime women, particularly the troublesome ones, emerged as a suspicious group, and wartime anxiety as reflected in media discourse reinforced societal un-ease regarding these (sexually) visible women.

Popular magazines and professional journals also offered advice to eliminate the problem. One solution suggested that, in order to suppress prostitution wherever found, there must be adequate supervision of public places. "Someone must observe conditions day after day so as to be able to know which girls are causing trouble ... some must be arrested ... others may just be wandering about in quest of excitement." For the latter, since they are not criminals, it would be appropriate to contain them in shelters, "overnight or until individual situations can be explored."30 Rhoda Milliken (Police Department, District of Columbia) felt that women in law enforcement positions could be responsible for this type of surveillance.

The police chief of Norfolk, Virginia, offered a suggestion that, he felt, would solve the problem. He said: "In peacetime, I believe in a segregated district for prostitution ... in wartime we are committed to suppression ... I think I could come close to suppressing prostitution ... if only I had adequate prison facilities for the women. I have asked the government to give me a concentration camp ... large enough for two or three

thousand women. If we had such a camp, we could throw every prostitute who dares enter
town into it for the duration."31 The techniques and attitudes that characterized the
homefront battle against prostitutes and promiscuous women are well illustrated in
"Norfolk - Our Worst War Town." Before the war the "red-light" area of Norfolk was
maintained, controlled, and tacitly accepted. The Navy then ordered the town to "close the
district ... suppression for the duration." When the journalist and a local police officer
toured the entertainment district their conversation suggested the acceptability of male
activities such as drinking, gambling, fighting, and picking up girls. In stark contrast are
the harsh words used to describe women. Those who had venereal disease were referred
to as "rotten apples," and the officer agreed with the reporter that most of the girls in the
area were "sluts." The reporter viewed a place frequented by those girls who "did it"
cheaply, describing the spot as "a quilt spread on the brick pavement between two garbage
pails ... an old coca-cola sign providing the only privacy." The police officer commented:
"I feel sorry for the boys every time I catch one of them in a spot like that." The "boy" was
then returned to his base via the shore patrol wagon. "The wench [identified as "a Negro
woman"] was taken to jail."32

On the West Coast, too, the media reported on the repression effort. The American
Journal of Public Health stated: "Prostitution has been vigorously repressed by the law
enforcement agencies and an arrangement has been worked out so that all women arrested
on morals charges and who are brought to the Los Angeles County Jail are placed under
legal quarantine. These suspects are held ... until tests may be made."33 From sea to

31 J. Blan van Urk, "Norfolk - Our Worst War Town," American Mercury. (February 1943): 144-
51.
32 Ibid.
apprehended for a variety of reasons had to submit to venereal disease testing.
shining sea, the media focused on surveillance, arrest, detention, forced venereal disease testing, and other invasive procedures to deal with the problem of sexual women.

**Patriotic Sexuality**

The media campaign to suppress prostitution and to control "promiscuous" female sexuality was complicated, however, by a simultaneous effort to mobilize female sexuality in support of the war effort. Print media, especially popular magazines, did their part by presenting female bodies engaged in and available for "morale" maintenance. Female sexuality, simultaneously prohibited and exploited, could appear, then, as "good" or morale maintaining sexuality in contrast to "bad," promiscuous or diseased sexuality. Many publications seemed to valorize women who met their patriotic obligation to be sexually alluring by providing entertainment for servicemen. "Be the Thrill in His Furlough" and "She Makes The Wounded Wiggle" represent common media offerings. The language of such articles, however, which also described these women as "provocative," "sensuous," "hot," and "sizzling," pushed these patriotically sexual women closer to an invisible border between patriotism and promiscuity.34

Magazines such as the *Negro Digest*, *The Crisis*, and *American Mercury* often featured women as entertainers and morale builders for the troops.35 Howard Whitman of *American Mercury*, for example, wrote "Johnny Get Your Fun," which featured female entertainers. He described: "The gal with the G-string, the taxi-dancer, and the chorine in the nightclub with black net stockings up to her mezzanine; in their own way they're ali doing war jobs."36 In the *Negro Digest*, articles about women most often featured

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36 Howard Whitman, "Johnny Get Your Fun," *Coronet*, (March 1943): 169-73. Those women "doing (these kinds of) war jobs" were, however, marked by those jobs as 'suspicious," or at best "potentially promiscuous," individuals.
entertainers, and the terms used to describe them were generally sexual. Phrases such as "moved in an insinuating manner" and "gave the impression of a hot lick" reinforced the notion that many patriotic women were potentially promiscuous.\(^{37}\) At a time when statistics magnified a problem with delinquent girls, even organizations such as the YWCA recruited girls as young as sixteen to serve as hostesses at USOs. Magazine covers regularly featured diverse women as canteen hostesses and as recreation center volunteers.\(^{38}\) Such textual ambiguity illuminates the ease with which the categories - patriot or prostitute, could collapse into "patriot." Many women who did their part by working as waitresses and hostesses in roadhouses, bars, and in the mushrooming dine and dance tents did not receive commendations for their patriotism. Rather, they came under surveillance by law enforcement and social service personnel who claimed that many of the girls who ultimately became involved as prostitutes started out this way.\(^{39}\)

Popular literature expanded the campaign with magazines featuring behavioral advice to women without men. *Good Housekeeping* featured "How To Behave in Public Without an Escort," a hard-hitting piece of advice on the limits of acceptable public behavior. "Drinking and dancing with girlfriends" was suspect behavior at best. Conspicuous attire - "fancy duds" - could send out a clear message that one "hoped to spend the evening with a M-A-N." This article lays out "the rules" for holding on to a "good reputation." Generally this advice focused on the necessity of maintaining a

\(^{37}\) See notes 35 and 36 above. Katherine Dunham, an African-American performer, challenged the sexualization and objectification of female performers by the media.


"ladylike" demeanor. An advertisement for an advice pamphlet accompanying a feature on socializing at home focused on how NOT to act in the company of men. The author particularly warns against "piling up dates that lead to entangling alliances." Women who socialized in public while unattached to a specific male risked the loss of a good reputation. Women who socialized in public (or private) with too many men also transgressed acceptable boundaries. The symbolic import of such threats (loss of a good reputation) wielded great power in the 40's. Walter Lamb Newton, in Coronet, claimed that "... a woman almost never gets into trouble with a man unless she contributes in some degree to the process." By drawing attention to the boundaries of respectable behavior, the media implicitly called attention to women at or beyond the margins.

But at the same time, fictive wartime women repeatedly appeared as involved in some task to improve their appearance in order to attract a man, particularly a serviceman. In an outstanding and repeated example of both sexual objectification and the blurred boundaries between prostitute and patriot, ads for "Evening in Paris" perfume featured a woman in provocative dress, supine, with the caption: "SELL IT TO THE MARINES." The same perfume was advertised repeatedly as a product used by women who love "... a soldier ... a sailor ... a marine." Given the campaign against promiscuous women, this type of ad illuminates the conflicting messages that not only wartime women, but also the larger society, received regarding sexuality. In many ads, articles, and stories, sexualized and militarized women appeared as patriotic in terms of their relationships with servicemen.

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40 Florence Howitt, "How To Behave In Public Without an Escort," Good Housekeeping (September 1943): 30. "Ladylike" behavior is a component of the 'mythical norm.'
42 Gorham, "Lonely Wife."
44 For example, WHC, (October 1943): 131 and (December 1943): 61 and True Romance, (December 1943): 81, also inside front cover for "one girl loves a soldier ... sailor ... marine."
At the same time, "Victory Girls" were considered "too" patriotic when they appeared to be sexually available, that is, promiscuous.

Articles, stories, and advertisements, particularly in women's magazines, continued to link female sexuality and the war effort via sexual congress with servicemen. Advertisements, in particular, valorized servicemen and portrayed women as not quite up to the standards for sexual allure. While providing specific prescriptions for improvement, ads also spoke a less obvious message. By depicting women as subject to a variety of offensive odors that would prevent them from attracting a male (serviceman), media continued to circulate a connection between females and disease and dirt. Men avoided, whispered about, or gazed with disgust upon the female figure. Halitosis, scalp odor, B.O., menstrual odor, and "feminine hygiene" were just some of the problems. Scarcely a body part escaped notice. 45 Other typical ads promoted a variety of beauty products as well as general advice to help attract a man, preferably a serviceman.46 Cashmere Bouquet featured a series of ads that suggested a military/woman connection, with captions such as "6 million soldiers and here I sit," and the puzzled woman who asked: "Think 50c is Too Much?" as she tried to sell her kisses to servicemen at a bazaar.47 The salient message told women to do whatever was necessary to disguise their defects and thereby capture the male gaze. In professional journals and periodicals with a more general readership numerous

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46 For appearance improvement, see The Crisis, (December 1942): 393, for Palmer's Skin Success Ointment. WHC, (January 1944): 1, True Confessions, (December 1943): 12, and True Romances, (December 1943): 7 contain examples of the popular ad for Toshay, later called Trushay, for soft hands. (Toshay ads are also illustrative of the practice of fragmenting women's bodies). In addition, see any Ponds ad (She's Lovely...She's Engaged...She Uses Ponds). They appear in most magazines; she is always soft, smooth, and "ultra-feminine," he is often a serviceman. These types of ads proliferated in white magazines. Negro Digest did not carry ads; ads began to appear in The Crisis in 1942. While they only featured African-American companies and products, they also delivered a message that attractiveness was important and that most women generally needed help to achieve it.

articles continued to warn of the ease with which venereal disease could be contracted from seemingly innocent women—perhaps like those in the ads. Even if wartime women took this fictive advice and painted their nails, dyed their hair, used skin softeners, perfume, and deodorants, they might still harbor hidden dangers. Such innocent-looking women were the same wives, girlfriends, and casual pick-ups that popular and social work literature blamed for more than 80-90 percent of the venereal disease transmissions.48

Married women also continued to receive a variety of messages that reinforced their obligation to maintain sexual allure by remaining the same women they were when their husbands went to war. No matter what ensued during the period of separation, they would remain as "youthful" and attractive as they were when he left. Wives could meet their obligation by entering a "cheesecake" picture in contests such as the one for the "Sweetheart of the AEF," or by heeding Betty Grable's advice and sending a pin-up picture of themselves to their husbands. (Single women could and should send a pin-up picture to any serviceman.)49 For the duration, socializing together in the home, preferably engaged in domestic tasks (knitting or doing some other type of wartime service) would be acceptable wartime recreation. These women, presented as keepers of the mythical norm, served as controlling images - the good women who theoretically maintained the boundaries.50

49 Westbrook, "I Want a Girl."
50 Eleanor Early, "A Soldier's Wife" True Confessions, (December 1943): 26-27+ and E. Gorham, "Lonely Wife," Life, 21 (December 1942): 75-77. Married women epitomize sexual mobilization and exploitation of control and containment. Perceived in prior times as the moral guardians of the homefront, they were now simultaneously sexualized and forbidden sex, and moreover they were subtly urged to be "understanding" toward their husbands' need for relaxation and recreation which included female companionship. For example, see "Tell Her The Score," WHS, (July 1943): 20-21+. The Second World War was characterized by an unusual number of married women (many were middle-class) in the workforce, many more volunteered to be hostesses or worked in dance halls. Wives, too, were arrested on suspicion, some having been listed by their husbands as contacts, i.e. the source of his venereal infection.
An excellent example of race-dependent advice to women is evident in two articles on "camp-following" wives, one in a romance magazine, the other in the African-American magazine The Crisis. Although material on African-American women is scanty, appearing only in the magazines aimed at the black community, the contrasting tone in these articles suggests the problematic result of applying a single, general standard to women of different races. Modern Romances criticized the wife who wanted to follow her husband both for her "jealous and mistrustful" nature and for her failure to understand her mission to "keep the home fires burning."\(^{51}\) This article suggested: "Ask your soldier what he thinks of them," the implication being that he thought that camp-following wives were not only unpatriotic, but probably overly sexual. A completely opposite view was presented in "Negro Army Wives" in The Crisis. Here women who followed their husbands to camps and bases appeared as the ultimate good women. "Wives ... are trying to maintain the morale of their soldier husbands by accompanying them wherever they are sent this side of 'over-there'."\(^{52}\) African-American troops were segregated during W.W.II, so this advice and approval comes from an entirely different perspective. It does, however, raise questions regarding the resultant public perception of "negro army wives" during the war years. Frank Yerby dealt with racist attitudes toward black soldiers and black women in a story entitled "Health Card." In this story, women on the streets needed "health cards" that stated that they were free of venereal disease. It did not seem to matter that they might have just been out for a walk. The tale continues with the military police accosting the wife of a young black soldier and accusing her of prostitution, although she was walking, at the time, in the company of her husband.\(^{53}\) Apparently it was not always necessary for a


woman to be unescorted or to be displaying blatant sexual availability in order to be called "promiscuous."

The girls who "flocked to public parks and places where they met and socialized with soldiers and sailors" also came under attack. "The Girl and the Man in Uniform," an article in the journal Probation, firmly stated that "we can be sure that many of these girls became promiscuous sooner or later."54 "Sleeping Beauty," in Woman's Home Companion, contained a clear warning to young women who behaved in such a fashion. Beth, a "naive" young school-girl, was intrigued by the local park which had a "wooded path" that soldiers, sailors, and girls frequented. She spoke with the red-headed soldier who sat down next to her, hoping that the boys from school would notice her conquest. When Red became sexually threatening, she ran away, but immediately felt guilty for treating a serviceman unkindly. Beth solved her dilemma by inviting the soldier to her home to meet her family. He then told her that he thought she was one of "those girls" when he saw her at the park. Naive Beth had learned a serious lesson regarding appearances.55 She could not freely go to a park where servicemen apparently flocked. As reparation for deceiving Red, she could, however, bring him home. Prior to the war, respectable women and girls would not have thought it was acceptable to bring a strange male into their parents' home. Women in parks or public spaces, then, walked the tightrope of patriot/prostitute or promiscuous woman. Beth, who came dangerously close to slipping, moved herself back to safe ground by containing her serviceman within the domestic realm.

Those women who refused to be contained and who continued to enter into public spaces both challenged the social order and opened themselves to challenge. Reader's Digest, for example, informed its readers that, on paydays, many army towns were

inundated with trainloads of girls. These were the women referred to as "Victory Girls," and many were arrested on suspicion of soliciting. At the same time fiction and non-fiction articles in women's magazines continued to advocate the "entertainment" of the troops as women's patriotic duty. "Parties Unlimited," for example, told of an organization formed by California women that held fortnightly parties, entertaining one hundred fifty boys. In order to provide female companionship for the boys, "Sorority girls from near-by colleges have been enrolled as dates and pay six dollars yearly dues." "Trainloads" of girls, then, could just as easily have been the college girls who became USO hostesses and who traveled to military bases to help keep the boys' morale high.

Meantime, stories and articles in Woman's Home Companion often depicted, without disapproval, young girls who engaged in recreational activities with servicemen and frequented places that were formerly taboo. Several stories featured women on vacation (alone or with another woman) at places where servicemen abounded. Romantic involvement was always a component of these plots. As mid-twentieth century versions of "women adrift" some wartime women could avoid social stigma through marriage, and "quickie" marriages became a wartime phenomenon. The young women who invited servicemen into their homes to meet their approving families came closest to achieving patriotic status. One popular column advised young women on "How to Treat a Soldier."

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57 "Parties Unlimited," in "Keeping Up With Hollywood," WHC, (March 1942): 33-35. The campaign to mobilize women to entertain the troops was extensive enough that even the Daily Worker, a newspaper that generally had nothing positive to say about the war (e.g. "War Production Board was headed by a dictator"), featured an ad from the American Labor Party on January 29, 1942 that issued a call for women to act as "hostesses."
58 For example Harttet Ripperger, "A Date With New York," WHC, (February 1943): 17+;
"When Love Catches Up With You," True Story, (December 1943): 36-37; F. Hugh Herbert, and Hazel Rawson Cades, "OK With The Boys," WHC, (July 1944): 32-33, on "junior hostesses" (16 yr. olds) to entertain servicemen.
It urged: "... treat him like a man ... do what he wants to do ... bring him into your family life ..." These stories, and many similar ones, suggested a patriotic homefront exchange of female (hetero)sexuality for military defense.

As women helped maintain male morale, the diverse and often contradictory media images of wartime women reflected societal ambivalence regarding sexuality. Women were sexualized in support of the war effort, but also subject to negative portrayals if they appeared to exceed the always nebulous standards of acceptability and respectability. The difficult situations that women must have found themselves in, given wartime pro-military and sexualized discourse, stood out in an article by a serviceman who was extremely annoyed by the behavior of a woman on a train. She became "insulted" when a strange man spoke to her. This army private responded that "he'd ridden 400 miles sitting opposite this type of prissy sourpuss [emphasis mine]." He expected her to respond favorably; she had most likely been warned against talking to or seeming friendly toward strange men. (Remember naive Beth.)

A wartime prescription for female sexual allure circulated throughout popular magazines. Well before Pearl Harbor the apparatus of the state had anticipated a problem with women. Media representations of "sexy" women both supported a notion of female sexual obligation and exacerbated fears regarding overly sexual women. The state's ostensible concern, about the very real problem of venereal disease quickly mutated into a conflation of female sexuality with excess, disease and danger. But what about the women, the inhabitants of those alluring but dangerous bodies? In the following chapter we will finally meet some of the women who were charged with morals offenses during the Second World War.

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62 See note 61 above "Keep Up With Your Soldier."
Chapter Six

Behind the Lines: The War Against Women

"One of the great battles being fought today is the homefront battle for the health of the nation. One of the greatest enemies in that battle is venereal disease. But, a new problem, reported from all over America by the Army's venereal disease control officers, is making the fight harder - the problem of the noncommercial girl who is supplanting the prostitute as the main source of venereal infection in the armed services. It is she who is in large part responsible for the increase of venereal disease in this country."¹

Throughout the previous chapters women have appeared through an official and primarily male gaze. This chapter focuses on wartime women and their resistance, not only to widespread repression, but also their resistance to prescribed gender boundaries. While wartime women were perceived as excessively sexual and therefore unable to perform as responsible citizens, women's participation in the war effort, including their embrace of the sexual freedoms of the war years, both strengthened and challenged sociopolitical constructions of appropriate womanhood. Wartime women were everywhere, doing everything; that was the problem. As the officials of the state became more and more aware that female labor was necessary for victory, and as women successfully filled those male-defined jobs and participated in other war-related activities the authorities suffered a cognitive crisis. Women rose to the occasion; their response was both pleasing and confusing.

As we have seen in the preceding chapters, as women joined in the war effort by supplying labor and sexual services, their own voices were silenced, their individuality was hidden. Women were redefined, in a sense, as war materiel. Whether they were situated in the mainstream or at the margins of respectability, their sex/gender was requisitioned in service to militarized ends. The professional women who supported the campaign, the women who used Ponds Cold Cream and therefore were engaged to be married, the attractive (feminine) welders and WACS wearing lipstick and frilly lingerie under their "mannish uniforms," the USO volunteers, as well as the waitresses of "questionable morals" along with their sisters - other "promiscuous" women - and, of course, prostitutes, all were absorbed into the military machine in some way. But most of these women received no recognition from their country for their conscripted services. Not only did wartime women come under intense scrutiny, but as we have seen, they also incurred serious penalties, both material and psychological.

As both popular and official discourses essentialized women as biological creatures, reinforcing a concept of women as a monolithic group, not only was difference covered over, but any woman became vulnerable to charges of inappropriate female sexuality. That women continued to cross the sex/gender boundaries served as notice that they did not accept the prescribed roles. As the larger society and state and social institutions grappled with the complexities of wartime on the homefront, women continued to act in ways intended to meet their wartime obligations. Whether they chose how to respond, or were, in some sense, influenced by propaganda, numerous wartime women did answer their nation's call. Sometimes deliberately, perhaps less consciously at times, they engaged in an ever active challenge to the traditional boundaries that circumscribed women's role and her social space. The battle on the homefront had opposing, if unmatched, sides.
Reinterpreting Women

One strategy of control employed during wartime emerged in official language. The records of the Social Protection Division contain a litany of pejorative terms used to describe and label wartime women. Included in the terms were: "lewd," "sex offenders," "disorderly girls," "vagrants," "pre-delinquent," "suspected prostitute," "chippies," "possibly foolish and immoral," "disease carriers," "infected persons," "non-adaptable," "mentally deficient," as well as the previously mentioned "promiscuous women," "grass grabbers," "hordes of harlots," "victory girls," "good time charlottes," and "patriotutes." Labeling not only served to position numerous wartime women well outside the boundaries of respectability, but also to raise questions and reinforce suspicions regarding female sexuality. Such terminology, which characterized women as potential deviants by continually focusing on sexuality, created certain associations in the public mind.

At the same time, wartime women were under intense pressure, not only from the government, but from individual men, to conform to their traditionally prescribed roles. "Many a teenage girl was told that having intercourse with a soldier before he was shipped out, perhaps never to return, was a way to contribute to the war effort." One wartime woman recalled that when the hometown National Guard was called-up "immediately all the young men started to pressure the girls to have sex." This woman noted that "in those days pre-marital sex was such a taboo thing" that many women got married rather than

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2 Many of these terms come from an undated, rough draft by a Mr. Cooley of the SPD. NA RG 215, Box 3 (Publications). See also remarks of Thomas Devine (SPD) on Nov. 16, 1945 at a meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Social Protection and Venereal Disease. NA RG 215, Box 3 (Committee Meetings). See also NA RG 215, Boxes 1-4 (Publications) passim.

3 Many scholars agree with this point. See for example Schur, Labeling Women Deviant. See also Shannon Bell, Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). Bell analyzes, in part, the discursive construction of the prostitute body over time. She traces a process that resulted (in modernity) of the conflation of prostitute and woman. Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment, eds., The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture (Seattle: The Real Comet Press, 1989):2. The editors refer to mechanisms (in popular culture) by which women's experience is "subordinated to the categories and codes through which it is articulated." Christine Overall, What's Wrong With Prostitution: Evaluating Sex Work," Signs 17:4 (Summer 1992). 705-24, esp. 719.

4 D'Ann Campbell, Women at War with America, 208.
break the taboo. Nonetheless, an impression had been created regarding female potential for sexual promiscuity that continued to color perceptions of wartime women. As a sociologist explained it: "Girls react to the uniform. Desiring to do everything possible to please the servicemen they have been called comfort girls." This was not, however, intended as a compliment.

"A Second Front Against Prostitution"

In 1943 the Journal of Social Hygiene published an article based on a report of the Police Committee on Enforcement (NAPCSP). The report touted the success of the repression campaign in terms of closing down "red-light" districts and houses of prostitution by pointing to a reduction in military venereal disease rates. Claiming success on the prostitution front allowed official groups to decided that they were "now in a position to open a second front on the next important source of venereal disease...prostitution as practiced outside of the houses of prostitution." Social Protection officials, while taking credit for closing 675 red-light districts, agreed to the necessity of expanding the repression campaign. "There is," they stated, "hardly a community in the country, near or far from military establishments, which does not contribute to the venereal disease problem and which, therefore, can be removed from the Division's interest." The authorities, while still repressing prostitution, then proceeded to direct an extraordinary amount of their attention to so-called promiscuous young girls, girls who, in their opinion, "live and give lightly." The promiscuous girl, as defined by the SPD was a health menace, but not "criminally motivated." She was "more likely to be a casual, fun-seeking girl, wanting male companionship; a young experimenter; someone

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5 Mark Jonathan Harris, et. al., The Homefront. 58.
lonely, easing her conscience for defying the social and moral codes by quixotic references to patriotism; unripe in her judgement, and disassociated from stabilizing forces such as the family and the church."

While the teenage or "pick-up girl" was described as an amateur, the authorities said that she was "crowding out her stepsister, the professional prostitute," and becoming a "public menace, particularly in communities near military camps or war plants." A USPHS consultant who visited one hundred and sixty-two problem areas reported that the average age of girls "being picked up by vice squads had dropped to 16 from 18-20." Implying that the problem was diseased teenagers, whose sexual aggressiveness could and was decimating the ranks of fighting men, the authorities failed to note that sexual congress with underage girls was a criminal offense.

Official investigators noted with some consternation that "this pick-up girl is frequently of good family." She was, they said, "less interested in money than excitement;" she frequently had "uniform hysteria". The lure of the uniform impelled her to go where soldiers and sailors congregated. In the official analysis, she met them, talked to them, and before long she began to pick them up. Constantly under surveillance that was predisposed to see sexual intent, the police then picked her up, and she entered the official records as a sex delinquent.

At the same time that the amateur, but fast learning, sex delinquent joined the prostitute as a danger on the homefront, the YWCA/USO was revamping plans for

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8 "Sex Delinquency as a Social Hazard." Marked "not to be released," this five NA page undated document was based on a speech delivered in Cleveland, Ohio in May 1944. RG 215, Box 4 (Publications). 
9 "Report on Juvenile Delinquency," Office of War Information. NA RG 215, Box 2 (Committee Meetings). Parts of this report were scheduled for release to Sunday newspapers on October 10, 1943. The statistics on female juvenile delinquency came from several agencies, including those of the Children's Bureau which reported that 10,865 girls were brought to court in 1941, and 14,991 in 1942, with the vast majority charged with sexual offenses. On the media and juvenile delinquency, see also Paul W. Tappan, Delinquent Girls in Court, 3, fn 2. Tappan points out "for the increase in delinquency during the war, particularly in the sex offenses of girls, see the New York Times for March 21, 1943, September 17, 1943, October 7, 1943, October 10, 1943, April 12, 1944, May 15, 1944, July 9, 1944, and December 11, 1945. The newspapers reported that there had been an apparent increase of nearly 200 percent in female delinquency and an increase of more than 100 percent in venereal disease."
hostesses. "The original blueprint for action by the USO Division of the National YWCA did not include a specific plan for work with the young girls, 16-18. But the original plan had to be modified; as 18-year-old boys were drafted, admitting younger women to the ranks of hostesses seemed to be a viable option. Accordingly, in many communities, particularly those in which there were very young soldiers, the younger girls entered training as 'debutante hostesses'." 10 Were the authorities able or willing to distinguish between the teenage USO hostesses and fledgling sex delinquents? Young hostesses, after all, fit the model of "she meets them, she talks to them, and...?"

As the war progressed, and the USO and other organizations drew more women into contact with servicemen, the opening of the second front destabilized the category - "good girl." The contradictions that arose illuminate the problematic and questionable patterns in the venereal disease campaign. The authorities allowed that phase one, the repression of prostitution, involved fairly simple procedures since a segregated district "either existed or it did not." However, the next phase would be far more difficult as prosecuting the new front required, in their own words, "search, inquiry, and cooperation." "Prostitutes," the authorities claimed, "may be practiced in many different ways, few of which are outwardly apparent." In other words, official agencies and individuals were going to have to work together diligently to find promiscuous girls. Fortunately, for them, there was a long list of identifying marks available to assist in their interpretations. Descriptors such as those listed above (and there were many more) maintained the idea that excessively sexual and most likely diseased women lurked in varied social spaces, even in those spaces they had been urged to inhabit. In these (official) interpretations, no place, no woman could be considered free of contamination.

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10 See note 9 above "Report on Juvenile Delinquency." OWI. See also Florence Williams, 'A New Kind of Army,' The Woman's Press (June 1943): 248-49. YWCA Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio. The Woman's Press is the National Magazine of the YWCA. This article discusses the rules and regulations of hosting.
The Enforcement Committee turned its attention to the streetwalker, the call-girl, the resident of upstairs side street hotels, the hostess in the cheap saloon, the woman at a tourist camp, and the trailer girl. What did a streetwalker or a trailer girl look like; how did the authorities decide? During wartime, people roamed wherever they could; women often took certain jobs, even in "saloons," to be near husbands, or while waiting for a factory position to open up. People, in general, were on the move; women moved to be near husbands and sons before they shipped out; sometimes they even went for a walk. Recall when officials stopped a black woman walking with her husband and demanded to see her health card. While race, as we have seen, was certainly a significant factor in who got stopped and questioned by the authorities, the widespread classification of women, regardless of age, as both sexually aggressive and potentially diseased allowed suspicion to fall on any woman, especially but definitely not limited to, those in the company of a serviceman or those in the vicinity of military establishments. What we see here is a "hardening of the category" - woman, as essentially promiscuous.11

Men, especially servicemen, were not censured for their activities. "Whenever a soldier, sailor, or marine is found infected with a venereal disease, he is required to report the source of his infection to his VD control officer." As (innocent?) victim, if he named his "contact," he incurred no penalty. And if a (male) patron was discovered in a room with a "prostitute," he could make a statement and go on his way. It was not necessary for a man to testify in court in order for a woman to be charged with practicing prostitution. The benefit of the doubt extended to men, in general. For example, the authorities claimed that business men such as hotel and tavern owners may have been unaware of what took place on their premises, but once informed, "a sense of pride and a spirit of patriotism" would motivate them to intervene. A woman, however, could be identified as suspicious by

any law enforcement official as well as by an anonymous citizen making a complaint. And, according to the authorities, any woman named twice as a venereal disease contact "must be stopped" for "she is more dangerous to the community than a mad dog."\(^{12}\)

"A National Scandal"

Problem girls seemed to be everywhere. J. Edgar Hoover (FBI) stated: "As a nation we have failed to realize the seriousness of the increase in youthful crime since the outbreak of the war. Here is a problem that is approaching a national scandal." When the FBI released arrest statistics for 1942, Hoover announced that "the number of arrests of girls under 21 had increased 55.7% over 1941." This figure was reported in numerous national and local newspapers adding fuel to the fires of suspicion around wartime women. The FBI further revealed that the percentage of girls under 21 arrested for certain specific offenses showed the following increases in 1942 compared with 1941: prostitution and commercialized vice, 65 percent; other sex offenses, 105 percent; drunkenness, 40 percent; disorderly conduct, 70 percent; and vagrancy, 125 percent.\(^{13}\) FBI statistics included only those women who had been arrested and fingerprinted; numerous others had been caught in the official net but were not part of these records.

In 1944, Mr. Pennington of the FBI, writing about female sexual promiscuity, reported that arrests, in 1943, for girls under twenty-one for offenses against common decency had increased 57 percent; for those under nineteen, the rate rose 53 percent; and an increase of 54 percent was recorded for girls under eighteen years of age. Also during 1943, arrests of girls under twenty-one for prostitution and commercialized vice increased

\(^{12}\) "A Second Front Against Prostitution," see note 7 above.

\(^{13}\) Uniform Crime Reports for the United States and Its Possessions, NA RG 287, Box J. Statistics for 1942 were reported on February 18, 1943. See also NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records). Some of the same statistics were included in report entitled "Study on Youth Problems in Wartime." See also NA RG 215, Box 4 (Publications) which included parts of the same report. Charles L. Chute, "Juvenile Delinquency in Wartime," Probation 21:5 (June 1943): 129-134, provides a somewhat more balanced view of these statistics. While not denying female sexual delinquency, he does point out that print media sensationalized the topic.
75 percent. Additional statistics indicated increases of 52 percent for other sex offenses; 67 percent for disorderly conduct; 30 percent for drunkenness; and 60 percent for vagrancy.\textsuperscript{14}

Between 1940 and 1942, according to statistics released by the Children's Bureau, 25,856 girls appeared in court charged with juvenile delinquency, approximately a 38 percent increase. While the number of white girls was two times greater than black girls, "Negro children" appeared more frequently in relation to their number in the population. Race, as we have seen and will continue to see, automatically implied suspicion.\textsuperscript{15} The Children's Division of the Domestic Relations Court in New York City reported a 65 percent increase in charges of female juvenile delinquency in the first five months of 1943.\textsuperscript{16} The Office of War Information noted that while statistics could be misleading, the incidences of juvenile delinquency could be higher as well as lower than the reported numbers noted. "Expert analysts therefore caution the layman against relying altogether on statistics. But policemen on the beat and judges on the bench also warn the layman against dismissing statistics as of no importance."\textsuperscript{17} Regardless of whether these reported numbers were higher or lower than the actual rate of arrests and court appearances, the numbers still indicate that unusually large numbers of girls and women were being drawn into legal and law enforcement systems.

**Repression and Wartime Women**

In 1942, the Social Protection Division, with the cooperation of welfare and police officials, engaged in a repression campaign in Corpus Christi, Texas. Corpus Christi, along with Leesville, Louisiana, and other towns and cities, served as sites of surveillance, places where the SPD conducted studies of the problems of promiscuity and prostitution.

\textsuperscript{14} L. R. Pennington, "The Challenge to Law Enforcement," *JSH* 30:9 (December 1944): 530-537.
\textsuperscript{16} "Examples of Published Statements on the Extent of Juvenile Delinquency, 1943. NA RG215, Box 4 (Publications).
\textsuperscript{17} OWI Report on Juvenile Delinquency. See note 9 above.
In Corpus Christi and Leesville, the authorities kept relatively detailed records, including (in some cases) occupations of women arrested. In one Corpus Christi group, comprised of fourteen, their occupations were listed as: five prostitutes, one typist-riveter, three cafe workers, one domestic, one bookkeeper, and three with no occupation. While most of the existing records do not give a racial breakdown, the fourteen women in the Corpus Christi study were categorized by race. The group included ten white, two Mexican, and two Spanish-American women. The ten white women came from seven other states, while the Hispanic women had been residing in Texas. The white women had the highest level of schooling; the Mexican women had the lowest. Ages of the women studied ranged from 14 years 10 months to 25, with more than half (8) between the ages of 15 and 19. Seven women were charged with prostitution, four were white, one Mexican, and two Spanish American. The investigators categorized four white women and one other, not identified, as recent prostitutes, and the other two as having been prostitutes for a longer period. The study also gathered statistics on marital status, age at marriage, marital status of parents, place of residence, reasons and date for leaving home (if applicable), age of "first sex experience," and "circumstances of" the first sex experience.

Women apprehended for, or charged with morals offenses had to submit to venereal disease testing; the fourteen in this study were tested. Seven white women, one Mexican, and one Spanish American woman tested positive for gonorrhea, one white woman for syphilis, one Mexican woman for both syphilis and gonorrhea. One white woman tested negative, and for one white woman the results were not available. In the category "Sex Activity," in addition to seven "prostitutes," two white women were

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18 "Corpus Christi Study," July 1942. NA RG 215, Box 6 (Statistics and Studies).
19 The authorities were particularly interested in "transients." Despite general population mobility, women who moved around came under suspicion as probable prostitutes. The white women came (one each) from Maine, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Indiana, Kansas, and Louisiana.
20 The fourteen year old was white. Of the women between 15-19, 4 were white, 2 were Mexican, and 2 were South American.
21 Typically, social workers asked these types of questions. Broken homes, or more specifically, single or working mothers, loomed large in their concerns.
classified as "promiscuous," one white under "casual," one each, white and Mexican, under "limited," one white under "none," and one white under "not classified." The women studied by Corpus Christi authorities had been residing in or were held in places such as the Corpus Christi Girl's Club, city and county jails, and the Children's Shelter.

Under what circumstances were these young women picked-up by the authorities? Unnamed officials apprehended two of the youngest women (14 and 16) at a hotel while in the company of two sailors. Perhaps the sixteen-year-old who had been arrested and jailed earlier in the summer was recognized. At that time she had run away from the Home of Good Shepherd in San Antonio, and came to Corpus Christi in order to distance herself from her family. When welfare case workers arranged to send her back to Good Shepherd, she ran away again and returned to Corpus Christie. She quickly married a civilian in order to prevent the authorities from returning her to her hometown. This young woman informed the social worker that she came to Texas to get away from unwelcome sexual advances on the part of her father. The younger woman had a similar history, including sexual abuse by a family member which was her motivation for running away from Michigan to Texas. Both of these young women tested positive for gonorrhea. The younger one, who had informed the welfare interviewer that she had been sexually abused at age eight and more recently (also by a family member), was described in the following manner by the case worker. (Client) "Denies prostitution...claims no sex experiences during period she was travelling to Texas... says she was not in Princess Louise Hotel long enough to be involved in intercourse." The interviewer stated that the young woman's story was "not true as she has recently contracted gonorrhea."

Even given the climate of the times, the social worker's assessment of the young women seems harsh. Moreover, the girls' allegations of sexual abuse by family members seems worthy of, if not sympathy, at least some investigation. Was it not possible that the young woman contracted gonorrhea at home? Surely these girls seemed to need some
protection. As usual, there was no information secured regarding the venereal disease status of the Navy men in whose company they were apprehended, nor were any questions raised regarding their association with such young girls. Only in rare instances did an official figure speak to the issue of underage girls. Mr. Morrissey, president of the International Police Chiefs' Association and a traveling delegate for the SPD, reported that during his recent travels he found that "it is a general opinion of the police throughout the country that something should be done from the Army standpoint in controlling the companionship of their personnel with that of teen-age girls." Morrissey had recommended a joint community-military effort to establish policies for detaining servicemen who consort ed with under-age girls. Personally, Morrissey felt that it should not be "so easy for members of the military personnel to come into a community and have contacts with the teen-age girls and then be free to go their way unmolested." He felt that they should be prosecuted.22 As noted previously, servicemen were consistently sent on their way, were not forced to undergo venereal disease testing which indeed might have raised question of who gave what to whom. Two opposite issues characterized the sexual knowledge of many of the girls and young women arrested or apprehended. While some were totally lacking in knowledge about sex, others were all too knowledgeable having been sexually abused at an early age.

Leesville, Louisiana

Suspect women could also be arrested on varied charges, including vagrancy, loitering, lewdness, public nuisance, disturbing the peace, and on suspicion. One suspect, Mrs. B., was picked up while eating lunch alone; what, we might ask, marked her as suspicious? A twenty-nine year old white woman who worked as a waitress, she did not

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22 Special Meeting of the NAPCSP on November 19, 1943 to review and discuss a proposed police record system. NA RG 215, Box I (Committee Meetings). Discussion revolved around subjects such as how to treat first offenders, problems involved in holding persons (female) under guard in prison wards, and other problems arising from the extensive apprehensions and arrests of prostitutes and other 'suspicious' women.
lunch at her place of employment, but stopped to eat on her way home from work. Mrs.
B. said that she "only had sex with her husband." Charged with vagrancy, she remained in
jail for seven days until the local Health Department convinced her to commit herself
voluntarily to the isolation hospital. Mrs. B. had, however, tested negative for venereal
disease. As we have already seen, waitressing was "marked" employment and may have
sparked suspicion regarding Mrs. B. In one southwestern area, for example, out of seven
hundred and nine women arrested in a two month period, more than six hundred were
waitresses.\footnote{23}

Mrs. B was not the only venereal-disease-free woman whom the authorities deemed
suspicious. They also apprehended an 18-year-old white woman, L.M., charged her with
prostitution, and confined her to the Leesville jail. She, too, signed a form requesting
"voluntary" admission to the Isolation Hospital, but the tests indicated that she was not
infected. At the time of her encounter with the law she was, with her parents' approval,
working for and boarding with a friend of the family. Contrary to most official
assessments of family structure, L.M.'s family was deemed stable; this did not, however,
free them from expert diagnosis. Although the social worker said that L.M. and her mother
related well and that her mother was tender and protective toward her, the family's attitude
toward sex was called "prudish." "If competent psychiatric service were available," the
social worker said, "the client and her parents could profit by treatment for a period of a
year or so." L.M., uninformed regarding sexual matters, was not an anomaly, but rather
exactly like many other women of the era. When she was picked up by the police and
"questioned," she signed a confession and admitted to "acts of perversion." The
interviewer stated that while L.M. admitted promiscuity, "it is evident that she is ignorant of
the nature of the acts to which she 'confessed'." Since this young woman did not have

\footnote{23 "Special Study-Miscellaneous Data." NA RG 215, Box 7 (Statistics and Studies). This file is composed of numerous loose pages on lined ledger sheets, and is clearly a rough draft. There are no markings regarding date, but San Antonio is mentioned frequently.}
venereal disease, she was released from the hospital. However, her case was turned back to the police because of the confession, and she still had to appear in court. The mother then met with the Social Protection Representative who advised her to "get competent assistance to follow up on the matter of the daughter's confession and to get it off the record if it proves to be false." [emphasis mine]

P., a twenty-six-year-old black woman diagnosed as syphilitic, admitted to a previous bout with the disease. She contended that she had gotten it from her first husband and this dose from her second husband, a soldier, whereabouts unknown to her. It is evident that the interviewers suspected her veracity. For example, they ended many comments with "she says...," and then proceeded to ignore her contentions and make their "expert" diagnosis. On the intake form, which contained no information to support this claim, P. was termed a chronic alcoholic who had been emotionally disturbed since her admission to the hospital. Under the circumstances, being upset seems reasonable. The interviewer wrote that she believed that "the client entered into promiscuity much earlier than she admits." Nowhere on the form did P. admit to promiscuity. The social worker suggested that rehabilitation would be a lengthy process and require extensive supervision.

F. entered the hospital voluntarily, having discovered that she had gonorrhea when she applied for a food handlers' card. She was divorced and had one child and was very resistant to the charges of promiscuity. While admitting that she had sexual relations with two men, F. refused to discuss her sex history to the extent that the social workers demanded. Described as well-dressed, well-groomed and self-assured, F.'s resistance to becoming a subject for study did not sit well with the authorities. Even though F. had acted responsibly when she discovered her infection and came to get treatment, she was, nonetheless, subject to control; the social worker still claimed that she needed further treatment. F. was most concerned that if she were to become caught in the system, her relationship with her child would be jeopardized.
M., picked up by State Troopers on a charge of drunkenness, listed no regular occupation on the social agency intake form. "Prostitute" was typed by the social worker in the blank space. M., who lived locally, was known to the authorities since her family belonged to a commune (in the Utopian tradition) formed at the beginning of the century. According to the authorities, "free love was an accepted pattern in the early days of the colony and sex relations are still easy." The colony had fallen on hard times economically and the residents, who mostly received relief, were perceived as problems by the police. The social worker wrote that M.'s mother "worked at a disreputable place" and that therefore she and her daughters "are probably delinquent."

At a meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on September 18, 1942, Charles P. Taft summarized the Leesville Study in a few words. He reported that out of 35 subjects there were five or six professional prostitutes, eight or ten Army wives who were "subnormal mentally," with most of the others being "quite eligible for defense jobs."24 There had been talk about job training for some of the women apprehended by the morals squad, but, in practice, not many women got this opportunity. In any case, as we have seen, defense work did not necessarily preclude an encounter with the morals squads.

**New Orleans**

New Orleans had two detention centers for women, Parish Prison primarily for white women, and the House of Detention for black women. At the time of this study, a small group held at each facility came under consideration for "redirection," that is, rehabilitation. At Parish Prison, out of 29 women, including twenty-four whites, four "Negroes" and one "Indian," the Travelers Aid Society, the agency in charge of redirection, chose 13 women, all white, to participate in the group slated for redirection. Thirty-four black women were held at the House of Detention, which was served by the Family

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24 "General Review, Interdepartmental Committee Meeting, September 18, 1942." NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).
Service Society; fourteen were accepted for redirection. While the study focused on sixty-three women, a larger number had been detained. A sizable percentage of the women held at the House of Detention were employed as domestics, more white women than black women were listed as prostitutes, and seven white women were identified as hostesses or "B" girls. Other occupations included barmaids, waitresses, cooks, laundresses, dish washers, and six factory workers and three farm workers. Discussing an increase in women admitted for venereal disease treatment between 1942 and 1943 in New Orleans, the report noted that "though no particular reason can be stated for this trend line, intensity of police pick-ups and greater efficiency in case holding and case finding should be mentioned as possible causative factors." In 1942, 157 white women and 725 Negro women had been admitted for venereal disease treatment. The following year, 298 white women and 845 black women were admitted. A venereal disease examination was required for all women apprehended by the New Orleans police. Those found infected were detained for treatment in a temporary isolation facility at either Parish Prison or the House of Detention. Depending upon the charge placed against the women, they stood trial after their release from quarantine; court penalties varied.25

These cases illuminate some of the preconceived notions regarding class and race that provided rationale for apprehending lower-class women and women of color, as well as a more general rationale that rested on gender stereotypes.26 Any woman who worked as a waitress was automatically suspected of immorality; many other women who were arrested in Leesville (and elsewhere) worked in some type of establishment that served food. Wartime women who lived outside the normative nuclear family were also suspicious, but normativity did not necessarily provide protection. Regardless of their own explanations, there was a significant lack of consideration for women and girls who tested

26 "Leesville Study." NA RG 215, Box 6 (Statistics and Studies).
positive for venereal disease. Wartime women were, indeed, perceived as reservoirs of disease. The arrests of non-white women in occupations such as nursing, industry, and carpentry strongly suggest suspicion based on race since these jobs were not included in the highly suspect categories. In fact, it is difficult to determine just what made a woman suspicious beyond her gender, although suspicion was intensified by race, ethnic, and class distinctions. All across the United States, as women continued to do their part, the authorities continued to monitor their activities. The numbers mounted as more and more women ran afoul of the law.

**Repression in the Midwest**

Several cities in Ohio came to the attention of the authorities. While a certain military official in Columbus had become over-zealous, several other cities, including Cleveland and Cincinnati, presented other problems. The traffic back and forth between Cincinnati and the riverfront areas in Kentucky kept the authorities busy. In 1943, the Cincinnati police recorded four hundred and eighty-three women arrested for prostitution. Three hundred and ninety-eight were white and eighty-five were black. Their ages ranged from under eighteen (2) to over 45. Only twenty-five were between eighteen and twenty; all of the younger women were white. The largest age group consisted of women between the ages of thirty and thirty-four.

Cincinnati police arrested only those women who engaged in sex for money, and who, in most cases, had a prior conviction for commercial prostitution. Moreover, they neither apprehended nor required venereal disease testing for women who did not fit this category.\(^27\) Between January and March 1944, two hundred and nine women were arrested and charged with prostitution in Cincinnati.\(^28\)

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\(^{27}\) *Records of the Police Department, Cincinnati, Ohio for January-December 1943.* NA RG 215, Box 2 (General Records).

\(^{28}\) *Women Charged With Prostitution and Allied Offenses in Cincinnati Municipal Court, January-March 1944, Interim Report.* NA RG 215, Box 1 (Regional Files).
In June 1944 in Cuyahoga County, near Cleveland, Ohio, two-hundred and seventy-seven women under the age of twenty-one were apprehended and held for venereal disease testing; thirty-six tested positive for venereal disease. 29 The SPD conducted a study of interracial prostitution in Cleveland, Ohio, that focused on the "transmittal [of venereal disease] effects across racial lines." 30 Investigators claimed that ninety percent of the houses of prostitution and "other anti-social institutions" were located in the African American part of the city. Fifty percent of the women working in the houses were black; thirty-five percent, white; and fifteen percent of mixed ethnicity. Ninety percent of "the Johns" were white. Most of the suspected prostitutes who were apprehended by the police came from interracial houses. In 1941, 259 white women and 322 black women were picked-up by the police department; in 1942, 897 women "suspected of prostitution" had been lodged in the Women's Detention Home. The report noted that "proportionally more young colored women" were picked-up by the authorities. As was noted in an earlier chapter, white men consorting with non-white women seemed particularly troublesome to both military and government officials. That white soldiers and sailors would consort with non-white women was considered to be both cause and effect of low morale.

Across the United States

Several areas in Kentucky that received visits from the SPD, closed down their houses of prostitution, and Army officials agreed to enforce the rule of contact reporting more vigorously. Data were tabulated regarding "where prostitutes were congregating for purposes of soliciting soldiers...and for the places that the sexual act took place." Civilian officials then issued a warning to the proprietors of hotels, taverns, rooming houses and other places so identified. At Fort Knox, the SPD representative claimed that five percent

29 "Army Contacts," NA RG 215, Box 1 (Statistics and Studies). See also "Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court," NA RG 215, Box 1 (Statistics and Studies).
30 "Negro Community Studies," Field trip to Cleveland, Ohio, November-December 1942. Mr. Ragland was involved in this project. NA RG 215, Box 2 (General Records). See also NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records), the SPD made a return visit to Cleveland in July 1944.
of the venereal infections were acquired "on the post, including wives, waitresses, etc." A "Victory Club" frequented by "colored" troops was closed, as were two clubs in the vicinity of Camp Breckenridge. A visit to Bowling Green in March 1943 resulted in the closing of a local "institution." Pauline Tabor, who had been operating two houses for almost twenty years, was put out of business. Estimates suggested that of the five hundred soldiers coming to Bowling Green on the weekends, about fifty or sixty were accommodated at Tabor's. As an additional measure, the local police used an existing law to pick-up "girls under 16 found on the streets after 8:00p.m."

Police in Newport, Rhode Island, were empowered by law to "hold out-of-town girls for five days as vagrants" and to require blood tests. By state law diseased girls were hospitalized, and the others were sent home, not just "railroaded out of town," a common practice in many areas. In Newport, women were frequently charged with disorderly conduct, and at least seventeen women, so charged at various periods during 1942 and 1943, were sentenced to the Women's Reformatory. "Wayward" girls were committed to the Oaklawn School for Girls.

Between August and November 1942, 400 women were arrested in Hartford, Connecticut. One hundred and six girls under twenty-one had been arrested in Portland, Maine, during the period from April to September 1942. The authorities in Fall River, Massachusetts, sent forty girls to corrective institutions in September 1942. And between January and June 1943, 49 women under twenty-one years of age had been sent to the Reformatory. Eighty percent of them had been charged with morals offenses involving servicemen.

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31 Letter from Irving K. Furst (Field Representative, SPD) to Mrs. Alice S. Clements (Assistant Director, SPD), April 6, 1942. Letters from David C. Meck. Jr. (Regional Supervisor, SPD) to Eliot Ness (Director, SPD) June 14 and June 16, 1943.
NA RG 215, Box 1 (Regional Files).
32 Letter from Eliot Ness to Robert F. Ott (Regional Representative, SPD), 1943. this letter reported briefly on a meeting of the Boston Police and the SPD Advisory Committee regarding "the teenage girl problem." Dr. Miriam Van Waters, superintendent of the Reformatory for Women in Framingham, Massachusetts supplied the numbers. NA RG 215, Box 2 (General Records).
Girls in Rapid City, South Dakota, who were "continually on the streets and whose conduct for any reason seems questionable were approached by the VD nurse or the policewoman and asked to come into the clinic for examination." The County Health Director who interviewed the girls stated that he was "appalled by their ignorance of sex matters." Plans were underway in Rapid City for an isolation and detention home for girls. It was the Health Director's intention to "isolate all infectious cases, including even the girl who might be able to stay in her own home."

Several cities in Arkansas reported, through the SPD, on their girl problem. In Blytheville, teenage girls had been caught in raids on honkeytonks and retained in the county jail. One hundred and twenty-five women and girls in the Fort Smith area had been treated for venereal disease during the first five months of 1942. Police in Hot Springs detained four hundred women in a ten-month period. In Little Rock, 161 young women were brought to juvenile court, and 338 women arrested by the vice squad were ultimately convicted.

Arizona, reporting a definite increase in female juvenile delinquency, had inadequate social services and therefore put their juvenile offenders in jail. Phoenix passed local ordinances for the control of juvenile delinquency and consequently had a large number of girls in jail in 1942. A child welfare worker in Arizona reported that young girls were picked-up nightly and charged with drinking and soliciting.

And in Florida, too, numerous young women, especially in military areas, had been arrested and jailed. One county reported that they had "178 girls in jail at one time; another reported as many as 218." In December 1942, two hundred and twelve girls and women

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33 "U. S. Children's Bureau, Department of Labor." NA RG 215, Box 2 (Statistics and Studies). The Health Director, "because of the ignorance he has discovered among his young patients, would like to give talks on sex hygiene at the high school, but the school board is reluctant to give permission." See also Harriet S. Cory, M.D., "The Relation of the National Defense Program to Social Hygiene," JSH 26:8 (November 1940): 358-361. Dr. Cory pointed out that schools were generally reluctant to begin social hygiene instruction due to "prejudice and lack of understanding."

34 "Pepper Committee," no date, probably 1945. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Recreation Division).
charged with prostitution in Jacksonville, Florida were held in a jail space intended for seventy-five. The jail was inadequately heated and had been enlarged by adding space constructed with canvas walls. Up until June 1942, all girls identified as transients had been held in jail in Pensacola until exam results were received. Non-prostitutes objected vigorously to this practice.

One hundred and thirty-one girls under twenty-one years of age were arrested in San Diego during October and November 1942; 248 juveniles wound up in court in San Francisco in the first seven months of 1942. Denver, Colorado, officials decided to regulate and watch places of public amusement, since "promiscuous girls are harder to find." And a detention ward for sexually promiscuous girls was established in Denver, where fines for prostitution reached as high as three hundred dollars.

Of the twenty young women picked-up in a raid in Columbus, Indiana, only three had venereal disease. In Sioux City, Iowa, about 100 prostitutes were undergoing treatment at a local hospital that was old, unsanitary, and poorly equipped. In Omaha, Nebraska, several hundred girls had been arrested in 1941 and 1942 on morals charges. From November 1941 to October 1942, seven hundred and sixty-three girls and women were apprehended by the police in San Antonio, Texas. And Norfolk, Virginia reported on "flagrant activities in prostitution in all forms." Norfolk's jails were "full to over-flowing with prostitutes," one thousand, one hundred and twenty-nine women having been arrested on morals charges in the first six months of 1942. Nine hundred and ninety of these women were convicted. Nine hundred girls and women were arrested on morals charges in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in the first six months of 1942. What began as a somewhat nebulous request that local authorities "do something" about female promiscuity,

35 "Preventing Prostitution, Promiscuity, and Disease," Preliminary Report, Denver. NA RG 215, Box 3 (Publications).
36 See note 33 above. Unless noted separately, reports from cities discussed above have been drawn directly from this file. I have not included all of the cities reported on in the interests of space; they tell similar stories.
took on a life of its own. What began as a campaign to repress prostitution evolved into a widespread effort to control women.

An officer of the court summed up the kind of attitude that circulated around women who were trapped in the regulatory regime. "Certainly," he said, "one who is charged with soliciting to prostitution and one of lewd and lascivious character is one who may first be suspected of carrying such a dreadful affliction. It is most reasonable to suspect that [such persons] if carrying on the practice of prostitution are indiscriminate and promiscuous in their bodily contacts and are natural subjects and carriers of venereal disease."37

Such attitudes and policies kept the spotlight of suspicion on women and girls who were represented as sex delinquents and who therefore had to be kept under surveillance. As a result, law enforcement officials could and did take women off the streets at night, "kept an eye on" women and girls at dance halls, and defined many women in restaurants, cafes, taverns, and cocktail lounges as promiscuous girls, i.e. those seeking servicemen, the so called - "wrong type of girl." An unaccompanied girl getting on a hotel elevator could be questioned by the police. And any teen-age girl whom the police decided was "in danger of falling into vice" could be apprehended. In Providence, Rhode Island, the SPD convinced hotel owners to use house detectives to watch for suspicious women. In Boise, Idaho, the police made periodic checks on places of commercial entertainment, and "any girl seen out with a number of different soldiers in the same night is watched and if the appearances is in any way suspicious she is booked on a vagrancy charge and detained for a physical exam." Women charged with vagrancy, in Boise, received sentences of thirty days in jail whether or not they had venereal disease. By 1944, suspicion had reached such a point that a South Carolina Police Chief decided to institute a program of "close supervision of high-school dances" to prevent female sexual delinquency. The campaign had escaped the bounds of searching out prostitutes and promiscuous women. At this

37 Supreme Court File. NA RG 215, Box 3 (Publications).
point surveillance was being directed at young women who were already contained. All this and more happened to wartime women during the repression crusade.\textsuperscript{38}

**Some Consequences of Repression**

When Eliot Ness and Katherine Lenroot communicated about the "girl problem" in Rapid City, South Dakota, they discussed the response of local officials. Local law enforcement authorities had appointed two more policewomen to patrol streets, taverns and places of commercial entertainment. In one month the police apprehended or arrested 30 girls. At the same time, the local army base dealt with the venereal disease problem by opening a 24-hour prophylactic station.\textsuperscript{39}

The idea that women were a potential threat to the war effort led the authorities to expand categories of deviance, creating, for example, the so-called unpaid prostitute. In this manner, women referred to as pick-ups, good time girls, amateurs, and so on, who were, in the words of the authorities, "giving us so much trouble at present," became subject to arrest and other legalistic interventions. As one commentator put it: "a much more difficult problem than the cut and out professional prostitute is that of the promiscuous girl, the khaki-wacky and the girl who has become unbalanced by wartime wages and freedom. This type of girl has become as dangerous a carrier of venereal disease as the professional."\textsuperscript{40}

"Following them," the authorities claimed, "is a public health function." Such women, when named as venereal disease contacts, received a visit from a male health investigator. This investigator, working on the assumption that "the less force the better the compliance," called on the girls "with a story." The story neglected to tell them that

\textsuperscript{38} Repression Experience, Region One, NA RG 215, Box 6 (Statistics and Studies).

\textsuperscript{39} Letter K. Lentroot to E. Ness, late 1942, NA RG 215, Box 2 (Statistics and Studies).

\textsuperscript{40} "Address by Alan James Lowe, President of the Cleveland Hotel Association," October 30, 1944, NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records). See also Lawrence M. Friedman and Stewart Macaulay, *Law and the Behavioral Sciences* (Indianapolis: the Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1969): 99-121 for factors influencing the basis (charges) for arrest, including decisions to arrest for purposes other than prosecution and strategies for arresting prostitutes.
they had been named as contacts, i.e. the source of the disease, but rather implied that they had been "in contact with a case of infectious disease."\textsuperscript{41} This approach, intended to assure that the women reported for an examination, was problematic on several levels. Public health officers wore uniforms, they contacted women at work, and they misrepresented their intent. Imagine, if you will, the effects of such visitations on the young women of the war years. Moreover, official investigations of women named as contacts were based on a premise that the women did transmit the venereal disease. Once women had been identified as vectors of transmission by the authorities, little or no attention was given to women's risk of infection from diseased or promiscuous men. Based on scant information, official investigators frequently attempted to locate a specific woman; for example, one soldier gave a vague description of a girl named "Betty" he met in a bar. The authorities claimed to be successful in tracking down women identified in this manner.\textsuperscript{42} Numerous women were stigmatized by such procedures. But if women were always already unclean, then protecting their reputations had no place in the wartime plan.

Transgressing women and girls, as we have seen, were punished in numerous ways. They were diagnosed as mentally incompetent, jailed, quarantined, hospitalized, held for testing, turned over to social workers, and in general kept under surveillance.

Many women incarcerated at the Quarantine Camps in South Carolina had been arrested on charges of loitering, disorderly conduct, drunkenness, and prostitution. A camp social worker stated that "many times such charges were placed in order to apprehend and hold girls for a health examination." The women were held in jail until the test results were

\textsuperscript{41} One page of a disorganized and incomplete file stamped "Report for Social Security Board," 1943. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings). See also "Address by Alan James Lowe, President of the Cleveland Hotel Association, October 30, 1942. RG 215, Box 2 (General Records) on cooperation of the Sanitary Unit of the Cleveland Police, the PHS, and military officers to track down women reported as venereal disease contacts.

\textsuperscript{42} Cleveland Visit, 1944. NA RG 215, Box 1 (General Records). See also Kathryn Close, "Sick Men Can't Fight, Survey Graphic (March 1943): 6. She discussed special investigators and an ingenious cross file system developed by an Army officer to facilitate contact tracing. If all else failed, servicemen were escorted into the city to try and identify their contact,
received; those requiring treatment for venereal diseases were sent to the Quarantine Hospitals. As an "economy gesture," many women who were awaiting treatment remained in a central jail until there were enough of them "to make a load" to transport to the hospital.

Upon arrival, the women were required to supply medical and other pertinent data to a record analyst and then be examined by a medical doctor. "Only a few rules applied," according to the social worker. But, in fact, numerous rules existed regarding matters such as bedtime and wake-up time, as well as restrictions on how far one could go about the grounds. The authorities censored incoming and outgoing phone calls; calls required permission. They opened all mail, removed money or checks, and credited them to the patients' account. Visitors were only allowed on Sundays, and then for only ten minutes.

As discussed in a prior chapter, where women were segregated by race, the camp for white women was more conveniently located and in much better condition than the one for the black women. White women had a recreational program; black women did not. Women were punished for bad behavior which included quarreling, cursing, rejecting medical treatment, or refusing to accept work assignments by confinement in the guard house. Leaving the hospital without permission generally resulted in indefinite detention in the county jail. Some women received industrial training; they were pressured to complete the training and accept jobs as a patriotic duty.43

The idea of holding women in some type of official establishment was not restricted to those who could be charged with a crime or held for venereal disease treatment. Shortly after it was established, the SPD applied to the FSA for funds to "operate so-called 'service centers,' that would offer wholesome living conditions" to young women. Theoretically not places of legal detention, they nonetheless provided a place to detain young women "innocently involved in a vice drive" and "pending return to their homes or other solutions

43 Digest of a Report prepared by Miss Gertrude M. Smith, Supervisor of Medical Social Work, USO Travelers Aid Service. (August 1943-July 1944): 2, 3, 4. NA RG 215, Box 13 (General Records).
to their problems." Innocent, but clearly not free to choose, such women, if diagnosed as having problems, would also become subjects to be studied.

One can see this mind-set at work in the formation of a Social Hygiene Woman's Court in San Francisco, California, in 1943. The Court, located in the Health Center Building, had been established "to meet the problem of the professional prostitute, streetwalker and other sexually promiscuous women." One of the objectives of the Court was to "render an entirely individualized case study plan...with every effort made to refer first offenders who present a potentiality of reeducation and readjustment." In El Paso, Texas, women arrested on morals charges were first held in the city jail. Due to inadequate facilities they were transferred to the county jail for diagnosis and treatment; convicted prostitutes received maximum sentences and served their time in the county jail. The Little Rock, Arkansas, Civilian Military Council conducted a study of local laws to reinforce their repression program. They found two laws, "one which made it possible to send delinquent girls under eighteen to an Industrial School," and another by which "women over eighteen...convicted of prostitution may be given a sentence of up to three years at the State Farm."

"We all know," one official noted, "that too many girls who are more in need of help than of punishment are being arrested and placed in jail pending hearing. Too many girls who would benefit by sympathetic and understanding cooperation on the part of the local social agencies in working out plans with them are being sent to correctional institutions or sentenced to county jails and to the State Prison system." While such

45 "San Francisco Opens Social Hygiene Woman's Court," News From The Field, AJPH 33: 7 (July 1943): 921.
46 Health Department Classifications, May 16, 1944. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Regional Files)
47 Report on Repression Program in El Paso, NA RG 215, Box 6 (Statistics and Studies).
paternalistic attitudes questioned the practice of sentencing women to jail or prison, they did not question the widespread use of morals charges against wartime women. With few exceptions, the authorities accepted the idea that wartime women and girls were sexually promiscuous; they differed on where they should be incarcerated and who should be in charge.

In mid-1943, Marjorie Bell, a law enforcement official, addressed the National Probation Association, discussing the problem of the young girl camp follower. Many of these young women, she said, were "inexperienced, provincial youngsters rapidly drawn into a life of prostitution, beginning in careless and casual yielding to the glamour of the uniform." She then pointed out that many of these "children" were being "indiscriminately held in many city and county jails with older women, chiefly prostitutes, a practice universally condemned, but widely practiced." Bell concluded her presentation by noting that a jail inspector for the Federal Bureau of Prisons had said that "their number runs into the tens of thousands annually."50

A more common official attitude toward prostitution emerged clearly in an article by a Los Angeles judge. "In these days all thinking begins and ends with the war. "Few people," he stated, "are aware of the many subjects over which the Federal Security Agency has assumed jurisdiction, or that the elimination of prostitution is one of them." He said that, during the national emergency, redemption, rehabilitation, and probation were no longer options when dealing with prostitutes. Contending, moreover, that "the war has brought new and serious implications to the problem of prostitution," he noted that at meetings of judges, prosecutors, and police officials, sponsored by federal officials it had been suggested "that unless vice-law offenders are vigorously prosecuted and punished by local authorities, an alternative may be found in the establishment of martial law." The Federal Government asked State judges to impose maximum sentences in prostitution

50 Marjorie Bell, "In Times Like These," Probation (June 1943): 140-142.
cases, harsh punishment being seen as a deterrent to crime. The judge quoted part of a letter he had received from Edwin James Cooley (SPD). Cooley had written that it was not enough to confine only infected prostitutes, since all prostitutes become infected. Releasing them, Cooley said, would produce "a future and certain disease menace to the community." In practice, however, such penalties were not limited to prostitutes but were applied to a much broader segment of the female population. Social Protection statistics indicated that during a six-month period approximately 7,500 women and girls had been arrested in fifteen states on charges of prostitution or on more general morals charges. Although we will probably never know just how many women were arrested, apprehended, incarcerated, or unjustly accused, these partial numbers do give us some clues to the enormity of the repression effort.

**Resistance and Rebellion**

Wartime women resisted, in a variety of ways, the imposition of prejorative labels as well as constraints placed on their sexual and geographic mobility. As Peter Filene has pointed out, more than seven million women changed their county of residence between 1942 and 1945. And while government statistics regarding female promiscuity were based on arbitrary interpretations, sexual mores did loosen during the war years. For lesbians, according to Alan Berube, patriotism as well as the lure of an all-woman society outweighed fears of discovery and led many gay women to join the armed services. Millions of women entered war work of various sorts, black women left domestic work in droves, prostitutes refused to give up their trade, and numeros other women joined the USO and other organizations that provided leisure-time activities for servicemen. The

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52 Letter from Ness to Lenroot, December 1942. The statistics were drawn from reports of SPD representatives. NA RG 215, Box 2 (Statistics and Studies).
54 Alan Berube, *Coming Out Under Fire*.
apparatus of the state urged women to do their part; women responded. But while
 obrigated to participate in the war effort, these women also had continuously to defend their
right to do so.

Some women caught in the net of repression protested though the legal system. In
1943, a woman arrested and convicted for prostitution and found to have a venereal disease
was quarantined in the health center maintained by the U. S. Government at Hot Springs,
Arkansas. "She filed a petition for a writ of habeus corpus, contending that the ordinances
authorizing her detention were unconstitutional and void." The trial court granted the writ,
but the defendants, the city of Little Rock, the city health officer, and the county sheriff
appealed to the Supreme Court of Arkansas. The Supreme Court reversed the judgement
and remanded the plaintiff to the custody of the sheriff for isolation and quarantine.\footnote{Polls and Public Opinions, NA RG 215, Box 8 (General Records).}

In November 1943, a case concerning two women who had filed a petition for a
writ of habeus corpus reached the Supreme Court of Illinois. The women had been
arrested on charges of prostitution and jailed in East St. Louis on March 8, 1943. The
following day the authorities filed complaints "charging that each wilfully and unlawfully
invited to prostitution and wilfully and unlawfully was a lewd and lascivious person in
speech and character." The women were held for examination at the clinic, without bail
since the judge said "it appeared that each of the petitioners may be suffering from a
communicable venereal disease." While the women did not challenge the charge of
prostitution, they refused to be examined..."on the grounds that it was an invasion of their
rights and contrary to the constitutions and statutes of the United States and the State of
Illinois."

On March 9, the women filed a writ of habeus corpus in the City Court, but since
the court held that the offense was not bailable, they were returned to the custody of the
chief of police. The following day the petition was filed in the Circuit Court, but the
petition was denied. The court decreed that the women had to remain in custody until they submitted to an examination for venereal disease. If found free from disease, bail would be set. On March 14, however, the petition was again filed and accepted in the Supreme Court of Illinois. Bail was set at one thousand dollars each; the women paid and were released.

When the case was heard, the Supreme Court based its decision, in part, on public health precedents. "It has almost universally been held in this country that constitutional guarantees must yield to the enforcement of the statutes and ordinances designed to promote the public health as part of the police powers of the State. That the statute in question is a measure enacted within the police power of the State of Illinois is unquestioned." Drawing on numerous legal arguments and on similar cases "the petition for discharge under the writ of habeus corpus will be denied and the petitioners remanded to the custody of the chief of police of the city of East St. Louis until they submit to an examination under the provisions of section 4."56 Similar decisions had been made by the Supreme Courts of the States of Washington and Ohio.57

In other instances prostitutes protested against the repression campaign. As Eliot Ness traveled throughout the United States speaking about the necessity to stamp out prostitution, he met with resistance from many quarters. In Peoria, Illinois, a group of

56 Opinion Supreme Court of Illinois, March 13, 1944. NA RG 215, Box 4 (Publications). The statute in question: An act entitled: An act to enable counties or cities to segregate and treat persons suffering from certain communicable diseases, was approved June 28, 1919. "Section 4 states: "When it appears to any judge or justice of the peace from the evidence or otherwise that any person coming before him on any criminal charge may be suffering from any communicable venereal disease, it shall be the duty of such judge or justice of the peace to refer such person to the director of such hospital, sanitarium, or clinic, or to such officer as shall be selected or appointed for the purpose of examining the accused person, and if such person is found to be suffering from any communicable venereal disease he or she may by order of the court, be sent for treatment to a hospital, sanitarium or clinic if any be available and if necessary to be segregated for such term as the court may impose at such hospital, sanitarium or clinic."

57 Ibid. While the records offer no insight into how or where these women got the expertise and money to pursue their case, they do mention that the women did not challenge the charge of prostitution. Two possibilities emerge: they were prostitutes with an organization behind them or their case was argued as a test case.
prostitute picked a Ness speaking engagement. Prostitutes in Waikiki, Hawaii, went on strike in the summer of 1942 to protest police interference with their right to do business in the city. The women received tacit support from the military, who supported Hawaii's system of regulated prostitution because their troops had a very low rate of venereal disease.

The SPD was active in Puerto Rico, where many women escaped from extreme poverty by filling the demand for sexual services from soldiers and sailors. In May 1944, a group of women, quarantined for venereal disease, escaped from Troche Venereal Disease Hospital. A memo regarding this incident reads: "this must have been quite a sight - 105 pajama-clad women being chased through the rain by quagas and taxicabs. Dr. Quintero tells me however, that 75 women returned of their own accord afoot." A clipping from the Puerto Rico World Journal, Tuesday May 30, 1944 entitled "Alleged VD Escapees Are Rounded Up," claimed that the police succeeded in rounding up 96 women of the 105 who broke out of the Troche Venereal disease Hospital two kilometers from here (Caguas) during torrential rains this afternoon (May 29). Nine wearing the hospital uniform are still at large. Police and hospital employees gave chase in buses and private automobiles.

A Venereal Disease Hospital in the Virgin Islands claimed to have suffered similar difficulties. The Department of Health reported that not only were most of the patients uncooperative, but also that "ten patients tried at one time or another to escape and we had to have the whole hospital wired like a hen house." Dr. Knudsen, Health Commissioner,

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59 See Bailey and Farber, The First Strange Place, Chapter Three.
60 Office Memorandum, United States Government, June 15, 1944. NA RG215, Box 1 (Records Relating to Caribbean Area, 1943-1945),
noted that the closing of the hospital had been "a happy event to all...for the strain of keeping tabs on all those lusty fleas was almost more than human endurance can bear."  

While most women in positions of authority supported the repression campaign and all its ramifications, Eleanor Roosevelt spoke to the situation in a different vein. She classified venereal disease as an ever present problem, not just a wartime problem, saying that "the real roots of the problem lie in the fact that we do not face our community conditions." Mrs. Roosevelt called for increased community services and for "information." "I think it is a woman's business," she said, "to see that from age sixteen on there are no people who really are lacking in knowledge about sexual matters." Knowledge, according to Eleanor Roosevelt, was critical, "getting caught in something because she doesn't know the facts" would be most devastating to a young woman. She may not be able to see a way out and then a bad situation would only get worse. Mrs. Roosevelt concluded by saying that "it is a real indictment of our intelligence when we let ignorance bring about an increase in venereal disease." Eleanor Roosevelt represented one voice in the campaign that tried to turn the discussion in a direction that was not completely focused on repression of female sexuality. During the war years, women and girls were drawn into the public sphere; they arrived lacking the kind of knowledge that they needed to protect themselves in places already fraught with sex.  

Although the records provide scant information on overt instances of resistance, it is clear that women did protest against repressive policies. Since they were fighting against the entire state apparatus it is entirely possible that overt protests were minimal. However, as numerous women continued to claim their right to varied public spaces, they implicitly challenged the status quo.

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61 "Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States, Department of health," June 19, 1944. NA RG 215, Box1 (Caribbean Records).
62 A Digest of the Minutes of the June 9, 1943, Social Protection Conference on The Woman's Role In Social Protection. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Publications).
Imaginary Offenses

In 1947, Paul W. Tappan published a study of the New York Wayward Minor Court; he examined, in particular, the years 1938 and 1942. Referring to Jeremy Bentham, he stated: "The sexual offenses now adjudicated in the Wayward Minor Court would seem to fall rather neatly into what Bentham called 'imaginary offenses.'" Such offenses, in this analysis, were defined as "acts which produce no real evil," but which were, nonetheless, regarded as offenses due to prejudice and other sociocultural factors. Tappan used Eliot Ness's definition of the sexually promiscuous girl "not criminally motivated...fun-seeking...immature" but from a disfunctional family," as an illustration of Bentham's thesis.

Tappan discussed, among other things, the difficulty of interpreting "moral depravity" and "impending moral depravity," the great disparity in treatment by judges, a lack of clearly defined standards (for the thing one is accused of) and a lack of standard legal processing procedures. Pointing out some of the reasons for ambiguous attitudes and practices, he suggested that "sexual offenses are more liable to be misjudged by prejudice and ignorance than most other forms of criminal behavior, and bias is almost inevitable if conduct is reviewed solely in the light of narrow personal experiences and the tastes and distastes of the assessor. ... and sexual behavior is often assessed by persons who regard any sexual activity as perverse unless it conforms to their accustomed patterns of behavior." He asserted that such factors hold true even when sociocultural norms have undergone change. Moreover he contended that many law enforcement officials were not only "motivated by the desire to set fallen women straight," but also that "the attitudes of the institutional personnel appear to be chiefly religo-moralistic and punitive-correctional." Tappan concluded that lesser offenders were often subjected to "considerably more rigorous (punitive) treatment." His analysis of women charged with sex offenses in New York is applicable to the broader repression campaign; during wartime, unknown numbers
of women were charged with imaginary offenses, often based on arbitrary and ambiguous interpretations of their activities. The partial statistics that have been uncovered in this study certainly point to excessively punitive treatment of large numbers of so-called wayward girls and promiscuous women.63

**The Paradox of Protection**

Throughout the campaign there was much rhetoric devoted to protecting women. It was never clear, however, exactly what the authorities meant by the term. While both male and female authorities claimed to include women and men under the rubric of protection, as the campaign progressed it became clear that protection had a specific connotation when applied to women. In the wartime construction, protection meant that women required supervision, since female nature implied disorderly conduct. Talk of protection was always accompanied by talk of detaining women, rehabilitating them, or confining and controlling them in some manner. And while the authorities freely admitted that the country’s jails were in deplorable condition and that only hardened prostitutes should be sent to reformatories and prisons, that was not the way the repression campaign played out.64

Most of the professional women who participated in the campaign came from a generation whose training, practice, and associations shaped their idea of protection.65 It is important

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63 Paul W. Tappen, *Delinquent Girls in Court*, 103, 48, 86, 87, 32, 13, 14, 69-70, 35, 36, 72, 81, 90, 91. See also Nicole Hahn Rafter, "Cruel and Unusual: Women and the U.S. Prison System," *Women's Review of Books* (July 1997): 3-4. This special issue on women in jails and prisons discussed attitudes toward women prisoners, e.g. that women were deemed harder to reform than men because they were more childlike and therefore needed more help. Thus, "in the name of helping them, women were put in state prisons for quite minor crimes, like promiscuity, that men never went to state prison for." On page 5, Meda Chesney Lind in "Equity with a Vengeance" pointed out that in general "women were much less likely than men to be imprisoned unless the female offender did not fit the stereotypical female role, for example, if she was a bad mother."

64 See Eliot Ness, "Rehabilitation in the Social Protection Program." NA RG 215, Box 4 (Publications) for a 1942 summary of the Division’s position on protecting women. See also Meeting of a Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Social Protection. March 7, 1942. Many professional women attended this meeting and the discussion revolved around the lack of detention facilities. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).

to note that their belief in the incompatibility of marriage and career influenced their attitudes toward those wartime women who entered the non-professional workforce. In addition, many professional women brought definite strains of progressivism to their dealings with wartime women, which were further influenced by classism and ethnocentrism. These and other factors allowed social workers, women in law enforcement and government agencies, and those active in other sectors of the state apparatus to classify numerous women across line of race, class, and ethnicity as real or potential deviants.

As women from both the public and private sectors served the state apparatus in varied ways, their notions of protection were consistent with positions that involved policing other women. For example, as one authority noted, "where public health nurses have been permitted to participate in the venereal disease case finding program, they have been successful assets." Public health nurses, probably less threatening to women named as venereal disease contacts, were able to convince more women to report for examinations. Policewomen's roles centered on surveillance of other women, along with providing "clearance services (interview and investigation from both social and legal angles, medical examinations, and referral services) for all girls and women coming to the attention of or detained by, police or other law-enforcement agencies." Police women, while still talking about preventing arrests and protecting women and girls, did not challenge the notion of females as potentially promiscuous. In New York, a squad of

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66 M. A. Burke, "Improvement of Present Methods for Extramural Contact Tracing" American Journal of Public Health 34:5 (May 1944): 548. From "A Selected Public Health Bibliography with Annotations" by Raymond S. Patterson, Ph.D.

twenty policewomen and thirty-eight detectives "inspected midtown bars, dance halls and shabby hotels...tracked down runaways....and tried to get young girls out of shady places." Divided into groups of three, two detectives and one policewoman, they looked for a "girl drinking with, or in the company of, a man in a place where she should not be." The detectives interviewed the man, "the policewoman took aside the girl and questioned her." If they told different stories, the girl was taken to the nearest police station.\(^{68}\) While professional women undoubtedly acted with sincere motives, they nonetheless, reinforced a notion that women, in general, presented a danger to the body politic.

Club women, many of whom had supported the fight against syphilis which began in the late 1930s, were also recruited into the wartime repression campaign.\(^{69}\) "While our boys are fighting on the battlefields in all parts of the world, disease and prostitution are depleting the strength of our army at home," wrote President Whitehurst of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1943.\(^{70}\) She discussed letters that the federation received both from women (mothers and wives) and other persons supporting the "organization's intention to develop public opinion against existing conditions" with regard to prostitution.

As we have seen, prostitution soon applied to a broad range of female behaviors.

In the spring of 1943, when Eliot Ness called for a meeting of women's groups, Charles P. Taft extended the invitation for a meeting to be held in Washington D.C. on June 9, 1943. The Conference aimed "to enlist the support and participation of women's groups in the national program for the control of venereal disease. The National Women's

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\(^{68}\) "Police Hunting Runaway Girls After 41% Rise," *Herald Tribune* (February 15, 1944). the girls did not have to be reported as "missing persons" in order to be classified as runaways. Copy of article in NA RG 215, Box 8 (General Records).

\(^{69}\) On involvement of women's organizations in the social hygiene movement see Eleanor Shenehon, Director, Community Services, ASHA, "Fourth National Social Hygiene Day-February 1, 1940." *ISH* 26:4 (April 1940): 176-183. Mentioned in the article are: the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the League of Women Voters, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. (Prior to the war emergency, the focus of social hygiene was not limited to prostitution.)

Advisory Committee on Social Protection (NWACSP) grew out of this meeting. Paul McNutt addressed the women, telling them that the success of the Social Protection Program depended on their support. Taft then spoke about the assistance that women could provide to marshall public opinion on the side of the repression program (recent polls indicated lack of public support). Taft told the women that they had to speak out in order to combat attitudes such as those recently voiced by the National Association of Broadcasters. They were, Taft claimed, "scared to death of anything regarding venereal disease and prostitution" in terms of national broadcasting. When Mr. Ness asked the reason for this, the broadcasters replied: "because the women of this country won't stand for it." Taft informed the women that the Social Protection Division needed to be assured of their support so that they could overcome such mistaken beliefs. The group was also informed regarding the perils of regulated prostitution and the need to restrict prostitutes from their ability to service from 25 to 70 men in a day; Taft referred to the current prostitution problem as an "epidemic." The importance of police cooperation and cooperation with the police was also stressed.

With the exception of the usual charges made against prostitutes, the language used to describe the women was less harsh than usual. Taft appealed to the notion of protection and used an example of a group of girls at one of the quarantine hospitals to "give some kind of idea" regarding the problem of promiscuous women. He described about half of the thirty-five women who had been interviewed while under quarantine as "young and completely inexperienced - girls who found themselves caught in this kind of thing" and anxious to get out. The state apparatus needed all the support it could get to justify the campaign against not only prostitution, but also female promiscuity. Since many club

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women, along with policewomen such as Captain Millikin, had been involved in various reform endeavors since the 1920s, he had a receptive audience.

Eleanor Roosevelt then addressed the gathering speaking, as we have seen, in resistance to the dominant position on venereal disease and women. But voices such as Eleanor Roosevelt's were seldom heeded as is evident in the topic discussed by the next speaker. Miss Castendyck of the Children's Bureau immediately returned to the problem of the "promiscuous girl." She spoke of the increase in female delinquency among teenage girls, suggesting that the problem was exacerbated by working mothers, and calling for a community effort to provide a supplement for the attention, affection, and security absent from such homes. Castendyck contended that while "one does not want to exploit the war," it did provide an "opportunity to bring home to the country that the basis of juvenile delinquency lies in our family life, and in the quality of our community housekeeping and standards." The contrast between Eleanor Roosevelt's position and that of Castendyck is, I think, quite representative of a persistent tendency on the part of many to ignore some very good advice as well as to overlook the exigencies of wartime. Women as we know were urged to take war work, without their participation war production would not have been adequate to the task at hand. In fact, if enough women did not respond, the United States considered drafting women for war work. Yet Castendyck and other professional women continued to lay the alleged rise in juvenile delinquency at the doors of working mothers. At the same time female sexual delinquency continued to be spoken of as a massive problem. Once again, however, many of the young women so charged were also responding to the nation's call. Far better seems Mrs. Roosevelt's suggestion that young people be knowledgable about sexual matters in order to keep themselves out of situations that they could not handle.

While the women present just about unanimously agreed that they were interested in supporting the program of Social Protection, including education for young women, the
resolution that they drew up did not really stress education. Ness and his colleagues were, of course, delighted that so many women representing major organizations agreed to join the fight; he officially appointed the group as the National Women's Advisory Committee on Social Protection.\(^72\)

Six months after Pearl Harbor, Surgeon General, USPHS, Thomas Parran made the following statement. "The repression of prostitution is obviously one of the most necessary steps in reducing the opportunity for contact. [But] first attention should be given to third party interests who organize and profit by commercialized prostitution. Too often the average person thinks of prostitution as a woman's business. Actually the woman is only the pawn in the game. It is a business organized by men, and operated for men. In my view, unless we can get at the organizers of the business, our efforts are doomed to fail."\(^73\) Judged in terms of Dr. Parran's analysis, the campaign was, then, a resounding failure. Toward the end of the war, other officials spoke about the end results of the campaign to control venereal disease in the armed services. On December 29, 1944, Dr. George E. Parkhurst, Venereal disease Division, USPHS, wrote to Dr. Clarke of the ASHA regarding the military venereal disease rate. The data, he said, "would not indicate that during the war period venereal disease rates had declined." In part, the rate appeared lower because of pre-induction testing; but according to Dr. Parkhurst, the venereal disease rate was higher in the civilian population.\(^74\) Along the same lines, Lt. Col. Thomas B.

\(^72\) A Digest of the Minutes of the June 9, 1943, Social Protection Conference on The Woman's Role In Social Protection. NA RG 215, Box 1 (Publications). On young and inexperienced girls see also Eleanor L. Hutzel, "The Policewoman's Role in Social Protection," NA RG 215, Box 4 (Publications) Hutzel referred to young girls as lacking experience and therefore unable to protect themselves.

\(^73\) "Summary of Minutes of Meeting," June 30, 1941. National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection. RG 215, Box 1 (Committee Meetings).

\(^74\) Letter from Dr. George E. Parkhurst (USPHS) to Dr. Clarke (ASHA), December 29, 1944. ASHA Papers, Box 114. See also (from the same file) Letter from Dr. Richard A. Koch (San Francisco Department of Health) to Dr. Clarke (ASHA), December 4, 1944 that better contact reporting, rather than a significant increase accounts for apparent rise of syphilis cases. The State PHS Venereal Disease Control officer from Ohio, Dr. Harold M. Gordon, also claimed that better reporting was a factor and in terms of a real increase that the statistics available were "relatively unreliable." Dr. Glenn S. Usher, Chief, Bureau of Venereal Disease Control, State of New Jersey, Department of Health, stated that while "sex contacts"
Turner said that the venereal disease rates in the Army "appear to be no higher than the attack rates for comparable groups of civilians during the past decade. In other words, there is no evidence that a young man in the Army today stationed in the Continental United States is subjected to a higher risk of venereal infection than he would be as a civilian." He remained adamant that the fight against "true" prostitution, especially third parties, should continue, while seriously questioning the equation of sexually delinquent young girls and prostitution. Turner made a strong plea for education saying that "we must expand our education efforts particularly as directed to the young women of the community. Progress has been made in teaching the soldier to understand and avoid the hazards of venereal disease...the responsible citizens, too, are much better informed than they used to be. But this process is not reaching down to the young girls who are the companions of our soldiers. They give the impression of being sophisticated and knowledgeable in these matters, but actually they are sadly lacking in useful information."  

At the start of mobilization, much was made of the high rate of venereal disease in the general population. But as we have seen throughout this study, the campaign to prevent and control venereal disease focused almost entirely on controlling and containing women, while teaching servicemen how to protect themselves from venereal disease during their expected sexual encounters. Nonetheless, the authorities, particularly the SPD, continued to try and make a case that repression both worked and was necessary. They did this, in part, through presenting statistics to support their case. But in their own words, they found it "necessary to develop statements, on several occasions, showing specifically as possible the direct relationship between repression... and a decrease in rate of venereal disease infections." In order to accomplish this the Division attempted to piece together bits

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(e especially in industrial areas) appeared to have increased, he "could not demonstrate a rise in the venereal disease rate which can definitely be considered a reflection of this fact." All from ASHA, Box 114.

75 Lt. Col. Thomas B. Turner, Chief, Venereal disease Control Branch, Preventive Medicine Division, Office of the Surgeon General U.S. Army, "Immediate Wartime Outlook and Indicated Post-War Conditions with Respect to the Control of the Venereal Diseases," AIPM 33:11 (November 1943): 1309-1313. Quotes on 1309, and 1310. Turner noted that the vd rate was high in some areas outside the U.S.
of information from field reports, few of which actually proved their point. Recognizing that such a procedure could provoke questions regarding their statistics, Eliot Ness sent his Representatives an outline for turning their data into a statement that would justify the policy of repression. He also suggested that his representatives concentrate on communities in the vicinity of large military establishments where such data might be most profitably gathered made." Ness reminded his representatives that it would soon be necessary to present this type of information at budget and appropriation hearings.\(^76\) If the SPD was not exaggerating the problem in prior years, it certainly was at this point.

One commentator summed up the wartime campaign by noting that "apparently the crusaders against venereal disease suffer from a peculiar form of one-eyed sight." He marvelled at their accuracy in tracing infection to women and girls and was astounded that they ignored the male half of the equation. Referring the crusaders as "blind vice reformers" who were incited to action by the idea of irresponsible, diseased girls, he chastised them for failing to apply the same standards to men. "Girls," he said, "have to be chased, arrested, sentenced, reformed. Men simply have to be cured, warned, handed a prophylactic kit or a sermon."\(^77\) He summed up the campaign quite well.

Even as the war neared conclusion, the SPD and the ASHA maintained a focus on sexually dangerous women. Once again thousands of copies of the booklet "She Looked Clean...But" were distributed to taxi cab companies, individual drivers, and hotel managers.\(^78\) The constant repetition of sexualized terms, as well as the message that female

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\(^{76}\) *Interoffice Communication,* no date, From Eliot Ness to Regional Social Protection Representatives. RG 215, Box 6 (Statistics and Studies).

\(^{77}\) Dyson Carter. *Sin and Science.* (Hec-Cattell Publishing Company, Inc., 1947): 9. Mr. Carter also noted that since the Army's objective was to control venereal disease among the troops during the period of hostilities, then the were successful. He points out that the "measure of the Army's success" could be determined by "counting how many of its freely supplied prophylactics were taken by the men." The figure, he said, was enormous and unbelievable...fifty million prophylactics each month in 1945." (104, 105). Alan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet* (164) reports the same figure.

\(^{78}\) Letter, June 14, 1945, Signed by Thomas E. Connelly (SPD Representative). The letter stated, in part, "She Looked Clean...But has already been placed in the hands of thousands of workers in restaurants, bars, and bowling alleys." ASHA Papers, Box 128.
appearance could be deceiving, reinforced a particular and perverse attitude toward wartime women. As more and more women continued to move beyond their traditionally assigned roles and spaces, such departures from the norm invariably caused cognitive dissonance. The question lingered on; were they patriots or patriotutes?
Chapter Seven

Conclusion

It took courage to face being misunderstood.

Shelly Saywell, 1985

Much has been written regarding men and war, generally about battles, heroism, and other "manly" subjects. In the past twenty-five years, scholars have expanded the study of war through analyses of women in wartime, particularly their participation in the workforce. Many scholars agree that the gender order remained intact despite a series of challenges, such as the one posed by the utilization of hundreds of thousands of women for war work, including work in heavy industry.¹ By focusing on the complex socio-political campaign that operated simultaneously to mobilize and contain female sexuality, while privileging hegemonic masculinity, it becomes clear that war is both a gendered and a gendering activity.²

While numerous women agreed to do their part to support the war effort, both in the factory and by providing support services for the military, the ensuing deviations from normative gender roles seemed to threaten the socio-sexual system. As we have seen, this threat was mitigated by a gendered process of re-definition that contained female labor power within a language of domesticity.³ And while the media repeatedly pointed out that

¹ See for example Susan M. Hartmann, The Homefront and Beyond and Leila J. Rupp, Mobilizing Women for War.
² Higgonet, et. al., eds., Behind the Lines and Jean Bethke Elshtain, Women and War.
³ Leila J. Rupp, Mobilizing Women For War. On domestication of women's war work, see also Ruth Milkman, Gender at Work. Propaganda efforts, based on suggestions from the Office of War Information, a variety of publications claimed, for example, that "women took to factory machines as easily as to electric cake-mixers and vacuum cleaners."
working women's attire, such as overalls and uniforms, did not adversely affect normative femininity, at the same time, text and visual representations operated to sexualize wartime women. Factory workers, as well as military women, were pictured in make-up ads and in traditionally feminine clothing in a variety of after-work locales. Newsreels, for example, often focused on "the more frivolous aspects of servicewomen's experience, such as their underwear and their patronage of beauty shops. Such practices trivialized women's participation in the war effort and kept the focus on the female body. And as Leila Rupp points out, as public images were adapted to resonate with the demands of wartime, basic ideas about women's place were not challenged. Moreover, the concerns that circulated around women wearing trousers soon paled in comparison to fears that arose at thoughts of unleashed female sexuality. A suggestion of underlying feminine attire may have quieted some concerns, but the sex that remained hidden beneath the layers could not be explained away so easily. As the apparatus of the state initiated the repression campaign, employing tactics such as distributing posters and pamphlets that depicted women, even women who "looked clean," as venereal disease carriers, the defense spotlight focused on the threatening aspects of female sexuality. Both excessively visible and invisible, female sexuality became a symbol for danger and disease.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, perceptions of the new woman's increasing independence and potential opportunity for sexual experience escalated already mounting concerns regarding social, political, and economic changes. Literature and motion pictures featured the "vamp" as a symbol for sexual danger. Psychiatry and medicine "grouped all sexualized women together: nymphomaniacs, lesbians, and prostitutes;" the prostitute, the potential prostitute, and other sexually deviant women

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4 Susan M. Hartmann, *The Homefront and Beyond*, 41. See also Virginia Bennett Moore and George de Zayas, "Begrimed, Bewitching or Both," *WHC* (October 1943): 80-81. Doris Fleeson, "Within Sound of the Guns," *WHC* (January 1944): 4, 94. She describes, on page 4, nurses on the Italian front as wearing makeup and perfume and having curled hair.

5 Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women*.
became objects to be studied. Carol Groneman contends that in these decades
"commentators feared the proletarianization of sexuality," i.e. that middle- and upper- class
women who left the confines of the home would become like working-class women, "who were perceived as inordinately lustful and sexual opportunists." It was, in part, precisely this concern - that the middle-class keepers of the prescribed male/female ideology would indeed become sexually independent - that re-emerged during the Second World War and supported the campaign against women who were sexualized in support of the war effort. Expert "knowledge" regarding female sexuality which had accumulated over time, produced a framework that supported the World War II campaign to repress, control, and use women's sexual bodies. The mobilization of women's sexuality, seen as a necessity of war, unleashed deeply embedded fears regarding women's "essential nature." By re-inventing the (potential) female citizen as patriotute, women's political contributions to the war effort were re-cast in terms of sexual excess and pathology.

Through a process that I have referred to as anticipatory stigmatization, American women were cast in the mold of "potential promiscuity" well before the start of actual war. The potential prostitute and promiscuous woman, then, pre-existed the potential patriot. It is not difficult to see that trouble would follow the mobilization of patriotic sexuality, given the powerful but still subterranean discourses of the sexually dangerous, potentially promiscuous and probably diseased female individual. During the Second World War, to borrow a phrase from Susan Gubar, not only were war and whore conflated, but whore and woman were also merged in the person of the patriotute. These terms became "code words" used indiscriminately to describe wartime women. Their use escalated in step with women's participation in the war effort. Labels, particularly of a sexual nature, as a means

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7 Susan Gubar, "This is My Rifle, This is My Gun" in Behind the Lines, eds. Higgonet, et. al., 227-259.

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of repression are, of course, nothing new; representing particular women as sexually deviant has served many times as a controlling image. What was different about World War II was the construction of the sexualized female patriot who was simultaneously a potential sexual deviant.

This study has examined the paradoxes inherent in an attempt to enlist women's sexuality in support of the war effort while simultaneously trying to keep women's sexuality under control. During the Second World War the campaign to repress prostitution and to control and contain "promiscuous" female sexuality conflicted with the process of mobilizing female sexuality in order to fulfill male desires. This dual effort created myriad problems both of an institutional and an individual nature. By blurring the line between the good woman and the bad woman at a time when their separation was perceived, particularly by the military establishment, as critical to morale, the state in a sense recruited the good bad woman to provide sexual service to the armed forces. But as the boundary line between acceptable and transgressive female sexuality fluctuated, it also became permeable. Thus, women could and did escape from prescribed confines, but they also became vulnerable to attacks from behind the lines. Pre-existing tensions in the sexual realm, exacerbated by the necessities of mobilization and ultimately of war, both added to and confused questions regarding women's "proper" place.

Within the World War II militarized state, such factors not only gave rise to contradictory policies, but also amplified ambiguous social attitudes toward women at a time when servicemen were surrounded by a "male mystique" that valorized aggressive (hetero)sexuality. The debates that occurred within the military and in the larger society regarding appropriate male and female sexual behavior, sex education, contraception, and related matters not only were shaped by established conceptions of gender and sexuality, but would also linger on and influence the postwar sex/gender system. In the end, possibilities for change were retarded both by continuity in, and militarised re-
interpretations of, traditional sex/gender definitions. Sexuality, once unleashed, had repercussions both in wartime and in the postwar decades. And the confusions about and anxieties over sexuality that arose during the Second World War created a climate that encouraged the socio-sexual conservatism of the 1950s. This is not to say that no benefits accrued to women as a result of their wartime services; many changes did occur. But tensions between repression and exploitation continued to shape the postwar sexual discourse. The figure of the "patriotute" - in her white-middle class persona - had to be recuperated before the nation could return to "normalcy."

Building on the work of scholars who have debated the impact of the war on women, I contend that the dual discourses of female sexual mobilization and control not only operated to mitigate women's wartime gains, but also had long term, adverse consequences that emerged, in part, from a wartime reification of symbolic female roles. This study adds the sexuality factor to the debates over the effects of war on women's status, contending that the constructed figure of the patriotute who supposedly hid under Rosie's overalls was a concept that not only devalued women's wartime service, but also left behind a persistent trace of suspicion regarding female sexuality. In the postwar era, tensions between sexuality and sexual control and containment continued to bedevil women and other so-called dangerous individuals and groups, and critical factors such as class, race, and sexual orientation, often eclipsed by the wartime construct of the "dangerous woman," reemerged in full force. The processes employed by the apparatus of the state to define acceptable and deviant sexual behavior for women during the Second World War

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8 For analyses of the wartime effects on the status of women see note 1 and William H. Chafe, The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles; Susan M. Hartmann, The Homefront and Beyond; and Leila J. Rupp, Mobilizing Women for War.

9 I do not mean to imply that race and class were absent as factors in the treatment of women during the war years; race in particular, resulted in a disproportionate number of arrests of African-American women. Lower socio-economic class made women vulnerable to charges of feebblemindedness and hereditary degeneracy. Rather, I wish to point out that during this period one can identify a broad use of a category - "woman" - to represent the danger/enemy on the homefront.

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enlarged the body of accumulated knowledge regarding female "nature" that continued to interrupt and disrupt women's right to self definition.

I want to make it clear that I do not intend to deny women's agency, but am rather pointing out the paradoxes inherent in female wartime service that were based on the centrality of her sexualized body to her wartime role. Recognizing that ideological and stereotypical depictions of wartime women bear little relation to "real" life, I nonetheless maintain that such discourses exert an influence on societal perceptions regarding women. A critical strategy of the Social Protection Division, in particular, plus the more general apparatus of the state, was to mobilize public opinion in support of repression and control of dangerous female sexuality. In the course of this campaign, wartime women became visible as supporters of the war effort, but were simultaneously tainted with suspicion. One cannot ignore the powerful discourses that constructed patriotic females as potentially dangerous individuals and resulted in mass arrests and incarcerations. Nonetheless, wartime women negotiated their spaces in the socio-political arena, albeit within these structures of power. They took what was available and made it work - both for themselves as individuals and as members of the polity.

Despite the interests of various parties in mobilizing and controlling women's sexuality, women both worked within and simultaneously pushed at socially and politically imposed boundaries. We know that as a result of wartime changes many women, including married women, remained in the workforce. More women entered law enforcement professions; some made careers in the military. Others formed same-sex communities, and in general, women gained freedoms, including sexual freedoms. During wartime, numerous women breached the boundary lines and claimed space, in many cases only for the duration, in no woman's land.

But tensions, especially those of a sexual nature, that proliferated during the war years had a down side. Lesbians challenged the status quo and found community and
support, but visibility produced new difficulties, such as the construction of a "postwar lesbian threat" and the re-fusion of lesbian and prostitute as symbol of sexual excess.\textsuperscript{10} And while a postwar discourse of illegitimate pregnancy recuperated white middle-class girls and women by medicalizing their transgression, excessive sexuality devolved on non-white women, particularly African American women. Psychiatry desexualized white women's "excess" sex by renaming it neurosis, while black women, especially unmarried mothers, inherited the mantle of pathological sexuality.\textsuperscript{11} The postwar and Cold War periods were characterized by a reassertion of male authority that required dependent (contained) women.\textsuperscript{12} Print media featured articles that prescribed women's postwar obligations, including deference to men, especially returning servicemen.\textsuperscript{13} Popular and professional literature supported women's return to the home by featuring many articles linking burgeoning juvenile delinquency with absentee mothers. And in 1947 Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham, M.D. wrote \textit{Modern Woman: The Lost Sex}, a book that placed full responsibility for social discord on "neurotic" women.\textsuperscript{14} Neurotic, in this case, referred to any woman who resisted her prescribed gendered role. Joanne Meyerowitz takes a more positive view of the popular culture treatment of women and states that while postwar popular culture contained "contradictions between domestic ideals and individual achievement," achievement was not overshadowed by the domestic. But Meyerowitz also points out a "bifocal vision of women" - domestic and public - indicating that women's


\textsuperscript{13} Susan Hartmann, "Prescriptions for Penelope."

\textsuperscript{14} Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham, M.D., \textit{"Modern Woman: The Lost Sex} (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1947)
postwar roles were not tension free. Many scholars contend that the tensions that erupted during the war years, followed by the postwar clash between real life and prescribed and stereotypical roles (female and racial, to name two), came to a head in the movements of the 1960s. The conflict between wartime representations of female sexuality and women's own interpretations of their wartime service must have influenced the ensuing protest.

Postscript to War

By 1945 many state legislatures had enacted stricter laws for controlling prostitution and venereal disease, as well as requirements for prenatal and premarital testing. As concerns about juvenile delinquency mounted, state and local governments called for legislation to deal with the problem. On April 16, 1945, for example, the Congress of New York passed and Governor Dewey approved a new Wayward Minor statute. The new statute did not incorporate any of the reforms suggested by those who objected to practices such as arbitrary judicial decisions, lack of uniformity in charges and legal interpretations of vice and crime, and sentences that exceeded the seriousness of the charges. Rather, it institutionalized some informal practices and extended the court's power. For example, the court could now hold a young woman for a longer period of time before sentencing, and could do this without her or her parents consent. Also sanctioned was "the pre-adjudication social inquiry into the defendant's "habits, surroundings, circumstances and tendencies," thus continuing the approach of "adjudicating and treating on the basis of personality and social problems." This information was not supposed to be "used against her" but it was intended to inform "treatment after adjudication."

Continuing a trend that gained purchase during the war years of defining women through

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16 Tappan, Delinquent Girls, 62, 63.
expert interpretations of their past history, medical and psychiatric diagnoses would exert a profound influence on postwar women's lives.\(^{17}\)

Neurotic, pathological, socially and personally disordered, and without doubt potentially promiscuous, the wartime woman carried excess baggage into the postwar years. As one official noted, "it is not news that there are promiscuous women;" in his opinion there always had been promiscuous women. He based his argument for continuing the fight to eliminate female promiscuity by citing other experts, in particular British and American officials, Police Departments, and the ASHA, who "dated the development to the last war and attributed it partially to the increasing freedom of women." Using Social Protection data to "prove" that promiscuity proliferated during the war years, he claimed that despite the early statistics on prostitutes as the primary transmitters of disease, "promiscuous women as well as prostitutes have been our problem from the start."

Therefore, he thought it would behoove postwar officials to recognize female promiscuity as a "long time problem and not just a war problem."\(^{18}\) He was not alone in his thinking.

In October of 1945 Charles P. Taft, then Chairman of the National Venereal Disease Council, asked Eliot Ness, former Director of the SPD, to attend a November meeting of the Council.\(^{19}\) The preceding months had been consumed with discussions on ways to keep the Social Protection Division alive. In September 1945, Thomas Devine, the new director of the Social Protection Division, had spoken regarding a change in SPD policy. He said "formerly the general program of the Division had been to attack prostitution and promiscuity because the spread of VD threatened the health of the armed forces. The present approach is to point out to communities that prostitution and


\(^{18}\) "We Always Had Two Problems Prostitution and Promiscuity." No other markings, date was probably late 1944. NA RG 215, Box 4 (Statistics And Studies).

\(^{19}\) Letter from Charles P. Taft to Eliot Ness, October 15, 1945. The meeting took place on November 16, 1945. NA RG 215, Box 3 (Committee Meetings).
promiscuity are evils per se, and that the Federal government is concerned because such conditions affect the welfare of all citizens."20 The November group, which included Taft, Ness, Snow, Parran, Devine, and others, decided to "make a prompt effort to obtain legislation establishing the Social Protection Program on a permanent basis in the Federal Security Agency."21 An earlier suggestion that the Division be incorporated into the USPHS had been rejected because many officials contended that the UPHS viewed social protection as a limited concept.

On January 24, 1946, the Honorable Frances P. Bolton, House of Representatives, introduced H.R. 5234, a bill providing for the continuation of the Social Protection Division. Representative Bolton said, in part, that an "effective national and local effort will be required to check increasing prostitution, sex delinquency, and venereal disease. The Federal Security Agency should be able to provide communities, as it did during the war, with the impetus, the technical knowledge and guidance in combatting these conditions. Their correction is necessary to our national welfare. That is the purpose of my bill."22 At the same time, a similar bill, #1779, was introduced in the Senate by Senators Claude Pepper, Walter F. George, Robert M. LaFollette, and Robert A. Taft. On March 18, 1946, hearings were held by subcommittees of both congressional houses, with many individuals and organizations testifying in favor of passage. The day before the hearings, Representative Bolton addressed the National Women's Advisory Committee on Social Protection; members of the committee attended both hearings and testified in favor of retention of the SPD.23 In July 1946, the Senate unanimously approved the bill, but it was defeated in the House.

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20 Minutes of the National Venereal Disease Committee. September 13, 1945. NA RG 215, Box 2 (Committee Meetings).
21 See note 3 above.
Two months later, on May 3, 1946, Congressman Andrew J. May, introducer of the original May Act, introduced a new bill to make the Act a permanent measure. The Act had already been extended from May 1945 to May 1946. The bill was quickly approved by the House and Senate.\(^{24}\) And on Wednesday May 15, 1946, President Harry S. Truman signed HR 6305 making the May Act part of the "permanent body of the law of the land." The text of the new Public Law 381 left the substance the same as the original, except for the deletion of the Act's termination date. In 1946 the Eight Point Agreement of 1940 was also revised to "meet postwar conditions threatening health and welfare of United States armed services." And the International Association of Chiefs of Police meeting in Mexico City in 1946 passed a resolution favoring "the adoption by national, state and local governments of a broad and comprehensive policy of social protection, including the suppression of commercialized prostitution and promiscuity."\(^{25}\)

Moreover, in the postwar years the conflict between the venereal diseases as a moral versus medical problem had not been resolved. The response to penicillin, which quickly cured venereal diseases, was mixed at best. A public health official noted that "some medical and sociological authorities hold that the promise of a quick cure for syphilis is to be regretted because it opens the way to promiscuity without fear of venereal infection and the necessity of painful treatment over a long period of time." This official, Dr. G.F. Matthews, said that such sentiments caused him to wonder what century he lived in. It seemed to him more like the Middle Ages when sinners were punished in barbaric ways. He stated that "any suggestion that the treatment of syphilis should be prolonged in order to perpetuate the fear of contracting such diseases, and by doing so create a barrier to promiscuity, is un-Christian, exceedingly unethical from the medical standpoint," and

\(^{24}\) *JSH* 32:5 (May 1946): 228.

\(^{25}\) See note 21 above.
could be considered as a sop to the moralists. Matthews was responding to persons such as Dr. John Stokes of the University of Pennsylvania who wrote that "mere treatment of venereal disease is certainly not the answer. And were it the answer, and were venereal diseases wiped out, it is now clear that the accomplishment would have heavy costs in the social, moral, and material life of man. A world of accepted, universalized, safeguarded promiscuity is something to look at searchingly before it is accepted." For women in the United States, the battle on the homefront had not yet ended.

During the Second World War the apparatus of the state took an increasing interest in the moral character of the female population of the United States. Propelled by deeply embedded assumptions regarding the nature of women, government, medical, and military officials aided and abetted by social agencies and the media, launched a widespread and well publicized campaign to control and contain so-called dangerous women. While these individuals and institutions both cooperated and worked at cross-purposes, together they left behind a legacy that continues to have an impact on women's lives.

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26 Dr. G. F. Matthews, Commissioner, Venereal Disease Control Division, Oklahoma State Health Department, "News Letter," February 1945. ASHA Papers, Box 114.
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APPENDIX

THE EIGHT POINT AGREEMENT

AN AGREEMENT BY THE WAR AND NAVY DEPARTMENTS, THE FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY, AND STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENTS ON MEASURES FOR THE CONTROL OF THE VENEREAL DISEASES IN AREAS WHERE ARMED FORCES OR NATIONAL DEFENSE EMPLOYEES ARE CONCENTRATED.\(^1\)

It is recognized that the following services should be developed by State and local health and police authorities in cooperation with the Medical Corps of the United States Army, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery of the United States Navy, the United States Public Health Service, and interested voluntary organizations:

1. Early diagnosis and adequate treatment by the Army and the Navy of enlisted personnel infected with the venereal diseases.

2. Early diagnosis and adequate treatment of the civilian population by the local health department.

3. When authentic information can be obtained as to the probable source of venereal disease infection of military or naval personnel,\(^2\) the facts will be reported by medical officers of the Army or Navy to the State or local health authorities as may be required. If additional authentic information is available as to extramarital contacts with diseased military or naval personnel during the communicable stage, this should also be reported.

4. All contacts of enlisted men with infected civilians to be reported to the medical officers in charge of the Army and Navy by the local or State health authorities.

5. Recalcitrant infected persons with communicable syphilis or gonorrhea to be forcibly isolated during the period of communicability. In civilian populations, it is the duty of the local health authorities to obtain the assistance of the local police authorities in enforcing such isolation.

6. Decrease as far as possible the opportunity for contacts with infected persons. The local police department is responsible for the repression of commercialized and clandestine prostitution. The local health departments, the State Health Department, the Public Health Service, the Army, and the Navy will cooperate with the local police authorities in repressing prostitution.

7. An aggressive program of education both among enlisted personnel and the civilian population regarding the dangers of the venereal diseases, the methods for preventing these infections, and the steps which should be taken if a person suspects that he is infected.

8. The local police and health authorities, the State Department of Health, the Public Health Service, the Army, and the Navy desire the assistance of representatives of the American Social Hygiene Association or affiliated social hygiene societies or other voluntary welfare organizations or groups in developing and stimulating public support for the above measures.

\(^1\)Adopted by the conference of State and Territorial Health officers, May 7-12, 1940.

\(^2\)Familial contacts with naval patients will not be reported.
MILITARY AND NAVAL ESTABLISHMENTS—
PROSTITUTION PROHIBITED NEAR

CHAPTER 287—1ST SESSION

[PUBLIC LAW 163—77TH CONGRESS]

[H. R. 2475]

An Act to prohibit prostitution within such reasonable distance of military and/or naval establishments as the Secretaries of War and/or Navy shall determine to be needful to the efficiency, health, and welfare of the Army and/or Navy.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That:

Until May 15, 1945, it shall be unlawful, within such reasonable distance of any military or naval camp, station, fort, post, yard, base, cantonment, training or mobilization place as the Secretaries of War and/or Navy shall determine to be needful to the efficiency, health, and welfare of the Army and/or Navy, and shall designate and publish in general orders or bulletins, to engage in prostitution or to aid or abet prostitution or to procure or solicit for the purposes of prostitution, or to keep or set up a house of ill fame, brothel, or bawdy house, or to receive any person for purposes of lewdness, assignation, or prostitution into any vehicle, conveyance, place, structure, or building, or to permit any person to remain for the purpose of lewdness, assignation, or prostitution in any vehicle, conveyance, place, structure, or building, or part thereof, knowing or with good reason to know that it is intended to be used for any of the purposes herein prohibited; and any person, corporation, partnership, or association violating the provisions of this Act shall, unless otherwise punishable under the Articles of War or the Articles for the Government of the Navy, be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and be punished by a fine of not more than $1,000, or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment, and any person subject to military or naval law violating this Act shall be punished as provided by the Articles of War or the Articles for the Government of the Navy, and the Secretaries of War and of the Navy and the Federal Security Administrator are each hereby authorized and directed to take such steps as they deem necessary to suppress and prevent the violation thereof, and to accept the cooperation of the authorities of States and their counties, districts, and other political subdivisions in carrying out the purposes of this Act: Provided, That nothing in this Act shall be construed as conferring on the personnel of the War or Navy Department or the Federal Security Agency any authority to make criminal investigations, searches, seizures, or arrests of civilians charged with violations of this Act.

Approved, July 11, 1941.

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INVESTIGATION OF A LOCALIZED OUTBREAK OF SYPHILIS IN NEW YORK CITY

Investigation of a Localized Outbreak of Syphilis in New York City

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