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"IT'S A WOMAN'S WAR TOO":
GENDER, RACE, AND THE DISSEMINATION OF GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA THROUGH THE WHITE PRESS AND THE BLACK PRESS IN WORLD WAR II

by

Mei-ling Yang

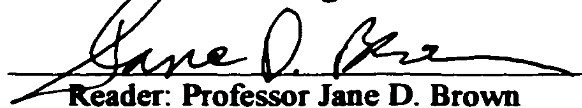
A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Chapel Hill

2000

Approved by

Adviser: Professor Margaret A. Blanchard



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ABSTRACT

MEI-LING YANG: "It's a Woman's War Too": Gender, Race, and the Dissemination of Government Propaganda through the White Press and the Black Press in World War II (under the direction of Professor Margaret A. Blanchard)

This dissertation explores the interplay between media representations and social changes in the process of national mobilization through an analysis of the circulation of war information for women in the American press during World War II. The study offers a critical perspective on news reports of women's wartime activities as cultural products conditioned by the imperative of national mobilization, the momentum of government propaganda, the journalistic tradition of women's pages, the profit orientation of mass media as well as the polarized positions on race and gender embraced by the majority of Americans in the war decade.

The first part of the dissertation underscores the significance of journalism in home front mobilization. Chapter one proposes a reconceptualization of the relationship between women and war to compare how the white press and the black press prioritized women's war activities. Chapter two examines the relationship between the newspaper industry and the government in the dissemination of domestic propaganda. The second part of the dissertation focuses on the cooperation between the press and the government to integrate women's work in the consumer household with the nation's war effort. Chapter three analyzes the distribution of consumer information in the effort to restructure women's buying behaviors

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for the stability of the wartime economy. Chapter four addresses the role of women's pages in raising women's awareness of the military ramifications of their homemaking routines.

The third part of the dissertation examines the renegotiation of the terms of female employment prompted by the war-induced manpower shortage. Chapter five analyzes the definition of womanpower by the government to fulfill changing demands of the labor market. Chapter six compares the approaches of the selected white dailies and black weeklies to the womanpower program. The concluding chapter compares how these newspapers distributed their editorial resources in the mobilization of women. The black press encouraged war work for minority women in the pursuit of racial equality. In contrast, the white press emphasized women's war effort in the domestic realm. The analysis challenges the popular image of Rosie the Riveter as the preeminent icon of female patriotism in World War II.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I feel fortunate for having the opportunity to come to know many excellent role models of scholar-teachers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It was their great advice and support that made the process of writing a dissertation a rewarding learning experience for me. Dr. Margaret Blanchard has been the most supportive adviser any doctoral student could hope for. She set an inspiring example in pedagogy by allowing me just the right degree of autonomy to explore my intellectual curiosities as she carefully guided me through my academic career. Her encouragement and dedication as the director of this dissertation is much appreciated. The collective intellect of my dissertation committee was instrumental in the development of the project. Dr. Jane Brown's advice on methodology strengthened the historical study with a quantitative perspective. Dr. Anne Johnston provided insights on the gender dynamics of mass communication. Dr. Peter Filene shared his expertise in American women's history. Dr. Catherine Lutz helped me sharpen my skills in analyzing cultural products. Many thanks are due for their vital contribution, which made it possible for me to draw the interdisciplinary connections in the dissertation.

I am grateful for receiving the Eli A. and Minnie S. Rubinstein Research Scholarship for dissertation research awarded by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The scholarship funded my trip to the National Archives, which yielded critical information on the operation of domestic

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propaganda in World War II. I would also like to thank Dr. Kenneth Blake, who coached me on a software program for the content analysis while he was a fellow doctoral student here. I want to extend my appreciation to Dr. Glen Martin for his work with the dissertation group that I turned to weekly for a sense of camaraderie.

I would like to thank Dr. Maurine Beasley, Dr. Linda Lumsden, Emily Chung, Rich Dalton, Mei-suey Ding, Chin-jean Fan, Annetta Fortune, and Pei-zhu Liu for enriching my life as a lone researcher with great friendships. I hope that I reciprocate their kindness and support every time we are together. I thank my family in Taiwan for the gift of love and I would like to dedicate this dissertation in memory of my mother, Ming-quey Chen.

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PART I

"MISS VICTORY": SELLING PATRIOTISM ON THE HOME FRONT

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INTRODUCTION

PATRIOTIC IMAGES OF AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE WARTIME PRESS

"It's a Woman's War, Too," the *New York Times* proclaimed on September 27, 1942, in a new feature created to step up the war effort of American women. [1] The title of the column underscored the significance of gender as a social category in wartime society. The appearance of special forums of war information for women in the *Times* and many other newspapers as well challenged the conventional assumption that war was a men's enterprise because of the categorical exclusion of women from combat. As insulated as the American home front was from the battlefields of World War II, women might seem even more removed from the war. Yet the scale and length of the overseas military engagement of the United States required an extraordinary level of support from women. To accommodate the nation's military priorities, a host of war programs such as Victory gardens, conservation of vital materials, and rationing of consumer goods introduced tremendous lifestyle changes in American homes. By virtue of their domestic responsibility, women constituted the key sector of the civilian population to be mobilized to participate in these home front campaigns. Recruitment drives in response to the shift of manpower to military needs also targeted

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[1] See "It's a Woman's War, Too," *New York Times*, 27 September 1942, 4 (D). Appearing at times under a slightly different title, "It's a Woman's War," the column ran in the Sunday women's section of the *Times* till November 28, 1943.

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women, who were considered by officials and employers as a flexible source of labor subject to the changing demands of society.

The cooperation of women was thus central to the redistribution of both human and material resources prompted by the exigencies of war. Although scarcely noticed by journalism historians, newspapers, with a tradition of emphasizing female readership, provided the government with a powerful channel of communication to enlist American women in the nation's war effort. A twelve-page supplement titled "Women Meet the Challenge of War" in the *San Francisco Examiner* in March 1943, illustrated the all-out effort by the press in persuading women to help Uncle Sam win the war. Stories with headlines such as "Women are needed now in war jobs" and "If you want to join up, here's where to enlist" urged women with patriotic resolve to take up the jobs men left behind. Other headlines such as "Many channels open for women in volunteer work" and "American woman now rations her luxuries," challenged homemakers to go to war in their own communities and homes.[2]

Blurring the line between persuasive propaganda and objective reportage, journalistic narratives contended with the ambiguity of female citizenship to establish for their readers socially acceptable ways through which American women were to relate to the war.[3] In the

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[2] "12-page Supplement on Women in War," *Editor & Publisher*, 17 April 1943, 30.

[3] A feminist perspective has enabled scholars to draw the connections between gender, citizenship, and militarism. As Donald MacKenzie noted, militarism is closely related to the creation of modern nation states and their gendered definition of citizenship. For men, the primary characteristic of citizenship is soldiering. The civil identity of women on the other hand is not grounded in military commitment to the state as they are officially separated from the war front. In the absence of the obligation as well as privilege of military service, female citizenship is defined by the more ambiguous terms of women's relationships with the men who supposedly fight to protect them. See, for example, Donald MacKenzie,

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absence of female conscription for either military or civilian services in the United States. cultural resources such as news was instrumental in specifying the civic responsibilities of women in wartime society. Through an intimate liaison with the Office of War Information, the press joined forces with the government to define appropriate roles and outline proper behaviors for women in the wartime civic culture. Shrewd publishers and articulate journalists turned the forum of news into an indispensable link in the nation's extensive propaganda network to promote the ideology of female patriotism underlying the nation's mobilization for war.

In tandem with the government's initiative to encourage women's employment as a solution to manpower shortages, the Hearst newspaper chain, for instance, launched a nationwide contest for "Miss Victory--the Typical American Girl War Worker" in the fall of 1942.[4] With much fanfare that boosted morale as well as circulation during the two-month search, the Hearst newspapers crowned Barbara Ann Clark, 21, of Flint, Michigan, on December 7 to mark the first anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack.[5] Unlike the traditional beauty queen, Clark was selected from 1,500,000 women war workers all over the country for her patriotic contribution. Newly wed to a radio technician in the Navy, she operated a milling machine at the local General Motors plant. As the publicity of the contest stressed, she helped turn out machine guns there for American men who, just like her husband, were

---

"Militarism and Socialist Theory," *Capital and Class* 19 (Spring 1983): 33-73; and Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias, ed., *Women, Militarism and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory* (Savage, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1990).

[4] "Seek Typical War Girl," *Editor & Publisher*, 17 October 1942, 28.

[5] "'Miss Victory' Crowned," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 December 1942, 24.

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risking their lives to serve the country. Honored as a wartime role model for American women, Clark was received by government and military officials in the nation's capital. Afterwards, she went on a tour on behalf of the Treasury Department to promote the sale of war bonds.

Over the course of the war, newspapers across the country staged many similar contests to raise the war consciousness of civilians. In the carnival atmosphere of war preparation, almost every community rallied around its own Miss Victory. The *Gary Post-Tribune* in Indiana, for example, held a beauty contest in June 1944 to support servicemen abroad. In response to the "Smokes for Yanks" campaign, readers bought five-cent votes to select their "favorite paper doll" as "Miss Gary Cigarette."[6] These paragons of female patriotism kept war enthusiasm high on the home front particularly by consolidating the political interest of women in the archetypal female identity as helpmates to the heroes fighting to protect home and country. The popular representation of women in the wartime media cast them as home front soldiers standing behind their men to provide civilian support essential to the nation's military success.

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[6] The contests and shows held by newspapers showcased a variety of feminine images to rally civilian support for the war. Ranging from the wholesome all-American woman war worker, the stoic war mother to the titillating pin-up girl, these images highlighted the implications of gender for the war effort. In response to the sexual overtones of many morale boosters, a Catholic newspaper in San Francisco criticized the "cheap and suggestive" beauty contests in the name of patriotism for implying "that servicemen at home have gone hog-wide for sex, and that American womanhood had adopted promiscuousness as a patriotic aid to victory." See "War Effort Award," *Editor & Publisher* 4 July 1942, 12; "Beauty Contest," *Editor & Publisher*, 17 June 1944, 26; and "Catholic Paper Hits 'Pin-Up' Contests," *Editor & Publisher*, 29 April 1944, 50.

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The implications of the patriotic appeals circulating in the mainstream press went beyond the construction of gender roles. The presumably homogeneous form of political consciousness proposed for American women by the dominant ideology of female patriotism also displaced racial tension and class conflicts to promote the ideal of national unity. The approach of the black press to civilian mobilization, however, revealed significant social divisions in the war effort. "Race girl vies to be Miss Victory," the *Chicago Defender* announced when Gwendolyn Norman, described as "a comely colored girl," entered the Hearst contest.[7] The presence of Norman in the widely publicized contest challenged the ideal of female patriotism represented in the daily press mostly by middle-class white women.

The gendered appeal to patriotism in the white press, with no apparent references to other hierarchical foundations of social relations, nonetheless reinforced race and class privileges. In the mobilization of women for war work, the exclusion of non-white women, who were also more likely to belong to the working class, not only barred them from the greater social mobility afforded to middle-class white women by increasing employment opportunities; it also marginalized minorities in the political culture of wartime society, relegating them as "others" to a lesser civic status. Keenly aware of the politics of representation, black newspapers and civil rights organizations sponsored separate morale boosters for black communities throughout the war to bring public attention to black women as patriotic citizens. Hailed at freedom rallies as a symbol of the achievement of blacks and a mark of their contribution to the war effort, "Miss Negro Victory Worker" underscored black

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[7] "Race Girl Vies To Be Miss Victory," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 21 November 1942, 15.

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resistance against racial prejudice that precluded consideration of minorities as role models in the dissemination of mobilization propaganda.[8]

Seemingly mundane media events such as the Hearst contest revealed the complexity of the historical context examined in this study to shed light on how journalistic discourses functioned as institutionalized expressions of the relationship between American women and World War II.[9] Focusing on the interface between news and propaganda, the study analyzes the reconstruction of the meaning of women's work in wartime society. By comparing the responses of black and white newspapers to propaganda goals on the home front, the study also seeks to explore the intersection of race and gender in the war effort. The rise of a more critical perspective offered by minority women on feminist theories and research has in recent years brought attention to the fallacies in earlier scholarship with an exclusive focus on gender as the category of analysis.[10] Black feminists in particular argued that when scholars

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[8] See, for example, "Jamaica War Worker Is Honored at Rally," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 19 June 1943, 19; and "Miss Negro Victory Worker Will Be Chosen in Contest," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 3 June 1944, 8 (A).

[9] The concept of discourse is based on a key insight of Ferdinand de Saussure, who argues that language, rather than reflecting a pre-existing social reality, constitutes social reality for those who speak it. Further enriched by Michel Foucault's theory of social power, the analytical perspective has enabled scholars in diverse fields to approach discourses not only as competing ways of giving meaning to the world through which subjectivity is constituted but also as principles of organizing social institutions and practices that are implicated in the unequal distribution of power in society. In particular, feminist scholars have used the understanding of discourse to analyze how written and oral forms of communication as well as social practices of everyday life operate in specific institutional and historical contexts to govern individual consciousness and produce social relations of gender, race, and class. See Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1992).

[10] For critiques on the racial bias in women's history and responses on how to address the issue of differences, see Barkley Elsa Brown, "Polyrhythms and Improvisation: Lessons

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presumed women to be a monolithic group, they reproduced unequal relations of power among women by representing the experience of white women as the norm.[11] To avoid making false generalizations that privileged the socially dominant perspective, it is imperative to address the interplay of multiple factors in the articulation of female patriotism. The chronicles of women's war activities in the white and black newspapers offered contemporary records of wartime life observed from polarized vantage points grounded in the politics of racial differences. More significantly, they also preserved for historical inquiries overlapping and yet divergent systems of social values attached to women's work to structure public reconsideration of how women were to fulfill their civic responsibility. Critical attention to

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for Women's History," *History Workshop* 31 (Spring 1991): 85-90, and "'What Has Happened Here': The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics," *Feminist Studies* 18:2 (Summer 1992): 295-312; Linda Gorden, "On 'Difference,'" *Genders* 10 (Spring 1991): 91-111; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17:2 (Winter 1992): 251-274; Darlene Clark Hine, *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-construction of American History* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1994); Gerda Lerner, "Reconceptualizing Differences Among Women," *Journal of Women's History* 1: 3 (Winter 1990): 106-22; and Tessie Liu, "Teaching the Differences Among Women From a Historical Perspective: Rethinking Race and Gender as Social Categories," *Women's Studies International Forum* 14: 4 (1991): 265-76.

[11] For the cultural and political implications of critical practices that suppressed the perspectives of minority women, see Deborah K. King, "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology," *Signs* 14: 1 (Autumn 1988): 42-72; Jane Rhodes, "'Falling through the Cracks': Studying Women of Color in Mass Communication," in *Women in Mass Communication*, ed. Pamela J. Creedon (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1993), 24-31; Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, ed., *Gender, Race and Class in Media* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1995); Sandra Harding, "'...and Race'? Toward the Science Question in Global Feminisms," and "Reinventing Ourselves as Other: More New Agents of History and Knowledge," chaps. in *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 191-217 and 268-95; Teresa de Lauretis, *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University: 1986); and Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (London: The Women's Press, 1990).

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their shared and different rhetorical positions in the appeals to women's political interest enhances our understanding of the cultural significance of wartime news beyond the coverage of battles: it also implicated a large readership in hierarchical relations of racial and gender differences through the process of national mobilization.

The demands of the wartime economy compelled greater use of womanpower. The Selective Service drained the supply of manpower at a time when high industrial production also became critical in the drive toward final victory. To raise women's interest in war work, the War Manpower Commission popularized Rosie the Riveter as the quintessential American woman inspired by patriotism to step out of her domain in the home to the production front. Sporting a confident "victory smile" in her trademark overalls, goggles, and bright bandanna, she also served to encourage public approval of outside employment for married women, who had been excluded form the labor market to protect male employment in the Depression era.[12] Defying sexual prejudices, many women took on "men's" jobs, working in shipyards, aircraft factories, and munitions plants. More than six million women entered the labor force during the war, representing a 50 percent increase in female employment.[13]

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[12] For the cultural and legal constraints on female employment in the Depression, see, for example, Mary Martha Thomas, *Riveting and Rationing in Dixie: Alabama Women and the Second World War* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: the University of Alabama Press, 1987), 5; and Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1984), 231-32.

[13] See Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 21, 77, 85, and 210; and Glenda Riley, *Inventing the American Women: A Perspective on Women's History* (Arlington, Ill.: Harland Davidson, 1987), 230.

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The drastic changes in the pattern of female employment led some scholars to perceive World War II as a turning point in the history of American women. Most notably. William Chafe in his path-breaking work showed that the opportunities created by the war offered women a taste of freedom and equality, foreshadowing the women's movement two decades later.[14] Others found, however, in their investigations of the war decade little evidence to support the war's progressive implications for social change.[15] The exclusive focus on middle-class white women in the promotion of female employment in particular brought into question the positive influence of the war on women from less privileged social groups.[16] Underlying the different conclusions drawn by these historians was a common concern with the impact of wartime employment on the status of American women. Without a more inclusive conceptualization of women's relation to the war to take into account other aspects of their involvement, both interpretations tended to portray the war years as a period of relaxed gender norms, which were inexplicably constricted just as quickly as the war

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[14] William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, And Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972). More specifically, for Chafe's evaluation of the influence of World War II on American women, see "The War Decade," part iii in *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 121-72.

[15] See, for example, Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981); D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); and Thomas, *Riveting and Rationing in Dixie*.

[16] For the persistent prejudice against black women, see, for example, Thomas; Giddings, "A Second World War and After," chap. in *When and Where I Enter*, 231-58; Karen Tucker Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired: Black Women Workers during World War II," *Journal of American History* 69:1 (June 1982): 82-97; and Jacqueline Jones, "The Roots of Two Revolutions," chap. in *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 232-274.

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ended. Neither was able to explain the cultural mechanisms and ideological momentum underlying such a radical disjuncture. Even for women who did benefit from the expanding employment options created by the defense build-up, the temporary disruption of gender roles during the war seemed to result only in their retreat to a stifling isolated domestic existence after the war. In the sprawling suburbs of the 1950s, the veneer of consumer happiness hardly masked "the problem that has no name" identified by Betty Friedan as the oppressive "feminine mystique," which defined the experiences of American women in the postwar world.[17]

In recent years, historians have increasingly turned their attention to the cultural and social underpinnings of war to break the impasse in the debate on the influence of World War II.[18] The problem with the conflicting interpretations, as Joan Scott noted, is that "both sides

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[17] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1963).

[18] For a summary of the debate on the impact of World War II, see Cynthia H. Enloe, "Was It 'The Good War' for Women?" *American Quarterly* 37 (Fall 1985): 627-31. For examples of the cultural approach that seeks to understand war as a gendering activity, see Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," *Journal of American History* 76: 4 (March 1990): 1200-1228; Barbara M. Freeman, "Gender, Class, and War Propaganda in Canada, 1939-1945," *American Journalism* 12: 3 (Summer 1995): 260-275; James William Gibson, "Paramilitary Culture," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (Spring 1989): 90-93; Susan Jeffords, "Women, Gender, and the War," *Critical Studies of Mass Communication* 6 (March 1989): 83-89; Jacqueline E. Lawson, "'She's a Pretty Woman . . . for a Gook': The Misogyny of the Vietnam War," *Journal of American Culture* 12 (Fall 1989) 55-66; Robert B. Westbrook, "'I Want a Girl, Just Like the Girl That Married Harry James': American Women and the Problem of Political Obligation in World War II," *American Quarterly* 42: 4 (December 1990): 587-614; Margaret Randolph Higonnet and others, eds., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); and Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989).

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in this debate see ideology as a powerful explanatory factor, yet neither sees as problematic its creation, change, or effects on behavior."[19] Instead of taking experience for granted as historical evidence, Scott urged historians to examine "the workings of the ideological system itself, its categories of representation, its premises about what these categories mean and how they operate."[20] Also stressing the importance of the ideological dimension of war, Margaret R. Higonnet and others argued that, "It is insufficient to examine only the objective situation of women before, during, and after the war. The analyst must also explain the social meanings attached to these activities through discourse."[21]

The new historiographic impetus enhanced the significance of cultural representations in negotiating the paradox of change and continuity in wartime. Yet historians have not addressed the critical role of news media in reconciling changing demands on women's labor introduced by the war with existing racial assumptions and gender expectations. Despite the need for women's participation in the labor market, two-thirds of American women remained full-time homemakers in the war years.[22] To draw them into the war effort, domestic propaganda created the image of the kitchen patriot who served the country in a "combination front-line bunker and rear-echelon miniature war plant."[23] The concern of most

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[19] Joan Scott, "Rewriting History," in *Behind the Lines*, 23.

[20] Joan Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (Summer 1991): 778.

[21] Higonnet , 4-5.

[22] Hartmann, 21-24.

[23] Quoted in Thomas, 99.

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historians with paid employment as the primary index of the impact of the war, however, obscured the significance of appeals to women's domestic interest in the war effort. Ironically, this approach to women and war tend to reinforce a more male-centered perspective on history that often privileged the public over the private sphere without questioning how the boundaries were renegotiated and reaffirmed under specific circumstances.

News coverage of women's wartime activities, defying the narrow conceptualization of war mobilization, offered a productive entry point to explore the dynamics of war and social change. Competing for public attention and legitimacy with the famed Rosie the Riveter, diverse images of female patriotism ranging from the conscientious shopper who observed ration rules to send premium foodstuff to servicemen abroad, the kitchen patriot who saved grease for the government to the grieving war mother who sustained the ultimate sacrifice of her son for the preservation of American democracy paraded through the wartime press to energize civilian support for war objectives. Amidst this narrative variety, a clear editorial direction, particularly in the daily press, promoted the domestic commitment of women as an integral part of national defense. Urging the American housewife to "join in the fight with her frying pan," the *San Francisco Chronicle* asserted in a tone echoing the "Uncle Sam Wants You" plea that "the government is depending on grease saved in millions of American homes to keep our war effort going. It may be your cupful that will save the lives of some of our boys at the front."[24] To a lesser extent, the black press also encouraged

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[24] The war industry needed used fats and oils collected from households to obtain glycerol, which was used in making explosives. "In the Districts: A Letter about Kitchen Patriots," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 March 1943, 22.

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women to relate to the war through their role as homemakers. The collective emphasis on women's war effort at home reinforced sexual division of labor by assuming that all women, regardless of their economic status and lifestyle differences share the same domestic responsibility. The popularity of the appeal of patriotic domesticity underscored the broad attraction of the vision of an ideal household--consisting of a nuclear family headed by a male breadwinner and sustained by a female care-taker--imbedded in the wartime consumer culture as one of the most compelling reasons for "what we are fighting for."

As an industry, newspapers had a vested interest in addressing propaganda messages to women as housewives not only to maintain readership for their women's pages but more importantly to attract advertisers with products for household consumption. Driven largely by revenue concerns, the editorial bias toward more traditional roles for women in the war effort underlined frequent tributes to the American housewife. In September 1942, the *Los Angeles Times* touted her war contribution: "She's not knocking down any Jap Zeros. She's not drawing a bead on any Panzer troops, and she's not dropping any bombs on Berlin. There's no glory in what she's doing--*yet she's fighting a great war* [emphasis included]."[25] These popular narratives of female militancy, loyalty, and sacrifice engaged the attention of newspaper readers on new responsibilities for women in wartime society that were nonetheless compatible with widely accepted gender norms. A systematic examination of the development of editorial tendencies in response to the war's increasing emphasis on the productivity of women both in and outside the home will enable us to see beyond the glamour of Rosie the Riveter to opposition against radical changes in the boundaries of women's place

[25] T.S. Irvin, "Says Newspapers Can Use Public Relations Men," *Editor & Publisher*, 5 September 1942, 30.

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in society. The first chapter of this part of the dissertation will explain the conceptualization and methodology of the study. The second chapter will address the relationship between the newspaper industry and the government in home front mobilization to establish the institutional context within which conflicting demands of female labor driven by defense priorities were mediated in the circulation of domestic propaganda in the press.

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CHAPTER I

WOMEN, MEDIA, AND WORLD WAR II IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The strategic function of news in the process of mobilization presented a challenge to historians who customarily relied on journalistic accounts as primary sources of evidence in the reconstruction of the past. As journalism historian David P. Nord pointed out, general historians have tended in the past to cite information in the media uncritically as historical truth.[1] The assumption that news provided an unproblematic mirror of reality was further challenged by scholars who theorized that news institutions constituted an important part of the "ideological apparatuses," actively constructing perceptions and engineering responses to incorporate individuals in a hierarchical structure of social relations.[2] This study contests the assumption of journalistic authenticity to analyze news reports of women's war effort as

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[1] David P. Nord, "What We Can Do for Them: Journalism History and the History Profession," *Journalism History* 9 (1982): 56.

[2] For critical perspectives on news in theories of culture and mass communication, see Stuart Hall, "Culture, Media and the Ideological Effect," in *Mass Communication and Society*, ed., James Curran, Michael Gurevitch, and Janet Woollacott (Beverley Hills: Sage, 1976), 315-348, "Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 2: 2 (June 1985): 91-114; Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43: 4 (Autumn 1993): 51-58; Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," chap. in *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 141-57; Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, ed., *The Manufacture of News: A Reader* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1973); Rodger Fowler, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* (New York: Routledge, 1991); and John Hartley, *Understanding News* (London: Methuen, 1982).

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products of a cultural practice conditioned by the imperative of national mobilization, the momentum of government propaganda, the narrative tradition of women's pages, the profit orientation of mass media as well as the polarized positions on race and gender embraced by the majority of Americans in the war era. Synthesizing the study of women's history with the approaches of communication research and cultural studies, the dissertation makes important interdisciplinary connections by examining the institutional context within which the gendered terms of patriotic appeals were articulated in the form of news reports.

Literature Review

Literature consulted for the dissertation spans various fields of scholarship including history of journalism in World War II, mass media and the dissemination of propaganda, the evolution of women's news in both the white press and the black press, and the wartime experience of American women. The purpose of this review is to synthesize empirical findings that inform the dissertation as well as theoretical concerns that underlie its conceptualization. Enriched by feminist perspectives on history and cultural approaches to war, the critique of historiographic issues raised by existing research serves to highlight the significance of the cross-disciplinary orientation of the study.

Journalism in World War II

Except for a few studies on black newspapers in the 1940s, the role of the press in national mobilization remains a research gap yet to be filled in journalism history. Offering only brief discussions of World War II, standard texts in the field dealt mostly with the challenges of reporting the war with its daunting scope. In general, journalism historians

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have been concerned mainly with the competition for breaking news about the war and the conflict between freedom of the press and national security.[3] Frank Luther Mott provided a relatively more comprehensive account of the press in World War II with information about the business aspects of American newspapers in the war decade. He found that the newspaper industry, despite problems with various unions, shortage of labor and material, profited from rising advertising expenditures in the 1940s. Wartime patriotism proved profitable to American publishers, who printed $50 million worth of advertising annually at the height of national mobilization to promote the war effort.[4] The financial picture suggested that material factors, usually neglected by scholars taking a cultural approach to mass media, were as important as ideological impetuses in shaping the relationship between media and society. Overall, journalism historians dealing with the press in World War II tended to emphasize the bravery and ingenuity of journalists, who were dedicated to the free

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[3] See, for example, Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, *The Press and America: An Interpretive History of the Mass Media* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1984), 473-86; Sidney Kobre, *Development of American Journalism* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1969), 684-90; Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism, A History: 1690-1960* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), 741-802; Richard W. Steele, "News of the 'Good War': World War II News Management," *Journalism Quarterly* 62: 4 (Winter 1985): 707-16, 783; Robert W. Desmond, *Tides of War: World News Reporting, 1940-1945* (Iowa: Iowa University Press, 1984); Patrick S. Washburn, "FDR Versus His Own Attorney General: The Struggle over Sedition, 1941-42," *Journalism Quarterly* 62:4 (Winter 1985): 717-24; Theodore F. Koop, *Weapon of Silence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946); and Robert L. Bishop and LaMar S. Mackay, "Mysterious Silence, Lyrical Scream," *Journalism Monographs* 11 (May 1971): 1-39.

[4] See Mott, 785. Through the war decade, newspapers, enjoying a tremendous lead over other media, claimed a steady share of approximately one-third of the total advertising expenditure, which rose from nearly $2 billion in 1942 to over $4 billion in 1948.

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flow of news despite the difficult circumstances of war correspondence.[5] Frank Luther Mott, Edwin Emery, and Michael Emery, for instance, hailed the coverage of World War II in American newspapers as the best ever seen in journalism history.

Reflecting a bias toward the white press, the general history of journalism failed to address the role of black newspapers in World War II. In response, some scholars have uncovered additional information on the wartime black press. The compensatory research, along the lines of the dominant themes in traditional journalism history, examined the work of black war correspondents and the threat of sedition charges against black publications that were critical of the government.[6] Other studies reached beyond the established framework, offering a more analytical perspective on the social function of the black press in the turbulent war years marked by increasing racial tension and conflict. In *Forum for Protest*, Lee Finkle provided the most extensive analysis of the wartime policy of the black press.[7] In a

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[5] In addition to Emery and Emery, Kobre, and Mott, see, for example, Mary Mander, "American Correspondents During World War II," *American Journalism* 1:1 (Summer 1987): 17-30; Alf Pratte, "The Honolulu Star-Bulletin and the 'Day of Infamy,'" *American Journalism* 5: 1 (Spring 1988): 5-13; and Philip Knightley, *The First Casualty--From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1975).

[6] See John D. Stevens, "From the Back of the Foxhole: Black Correspondents in World War II," *Journalism Monographs* 27 (1987): 1-61; Tonya Smith, "Through Different Colored Glasses: African-American Correspondents in World War II," unpublished paper presented at the convention of American Journalism Historians Association, Salt Lake City, Utah, 8 October 1993; and Patrick S. Washburn, "J. Edgar Hoover and the Black Press in World War II," *Journalism History* 13: 1 (Spring 1986): 26-33, and *A Question of Sedition: The Federal Government's Investigation of the Black Press during World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[7] Lee Finkle, *Forum for Protest: The Black Press during World War II* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Press, 1975).

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unanimous stance rarely found in the struggle for racial equality, the black press adopted the goal of the "Double V" campaign initiated by the *Pittsburgh Courier*, which promoted the importance of victory over the Axis abroad as well as over Jim Crow at home. Wrongly accused of instigating a racial revolution and hindering the country's war effort, the black press, as Finkle argued, aimed to raise the morale of black Americans. Linking the fight for racial equality with the outcome of the war, the militant rhetoric of the press intended to encourage blacks to support the nation's war program. Embracing a conservative assimilationist position, the black newspapers emphasized in particular the need to establish a superb record of military service in gaining the appreciation of the white majority, which the black leaders hoped would lead to improvement in the status of minorities in postwar society.

Finkle's examination showed that the black press was most influential on the issue of military integration. At its best, the black press fulfilled a watchdog function. The ample coverage on blacks in the armed forces helped protect them from physical violence and judicial discrimination in the military system. In addition, the black press defended the reputation of black combat troops against slanders that discredited their performance. As an editorial strategy, the Double V slogan to "fight for the right to fight" allowed the black press to appeal to its readers by continuing the struggle against racism and to exercise its leadership role by channeling the discontent of blacks into full participation in the war effort as the way to achieve future equality despite immediate discrimination, prejudice, and violence. Finkle noted that contrary to the charge of sensationalism and lack of social responsibility, the black press acted as a "safety valve" to prevent the growing discontent of blacks from erupting into mass violence.

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In a brief sketch, John D. Stevens offered a similar description of the black press during the war, which echoed Finkle's emphasis on the issue of military integration in the Double V campaign.[8] Taking a different approach that incorporated quantitative evidence from a content analysis, Patrick S. Washburn documented the life span of the Double V campaign as seen in the pages of the *Pittsburgh Courier*.[9] His case study complemented Finkle's broad discussion of the origin, aims, and underlying philosophy of the Double V campaign in the black press in general. The two scholars reached different conclusions, however, regarding the influence of the black press in the war decade. While Finkle stressed the limits of its conservative position in fostering social change, Washburn maintained that its protests helped improve the status of blacks during the war and provided long-lasting momentum for the civil rights movement after the war. The scholarship offered much needed insights into the racial dimension of the war effort. With a sole focus on race in their research, however, these historians were not able to shed light on the gender aspect of the Double V stance. Questions regarding its influence on the mobilization of black women for the political agenda of the black press and the war effort as well remained to be addressed.

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[8] John D. Stevens, " World War II and the Black Press," chap. in *Perspectives of the Black Press: 1974*, ed. Henry G. La Brie, III, (Kennebunkport, Maine: Mercer House Press, 1974): 27-37.

[9] Washburn found that the campaign peaked in April and started to decline in July. By October, the flow of material on the campaign had diminished to a trickle of information that continued only until 1943. He attributed the decline of news attention to the threat of government surveillance, the influence of advertising as a new source of revenue, and the gains of blacks in the armed forces and defense industries as the war progressed. Patrick S. Washburn, "The Pittsburgh *Courier's* Double V Campaign in 1942," *American Journalism* 3:2 (1986): 73-86.

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The collection of literature on both the white press and the black press during the war reflected crucial historiographical problems of the field in general. As Catherine Covert noted, the conceptualization of journalism history has been characterized by the male perspective. Espousing value assumptions more compatible with the experience of men, historians tend to emphasize themes such as conflict, autonomy, and progressive changes in a linear direction.[10] The bias underlined existing research on the press in World War II, which has focused on the war front and the conflict between journalists and censors. Whether approaching journalism from the mainstream or the minority viewpoint, scholars have ignored women as readers and their wartime experience as subjects of news. Except for occasional attention to the few women war correspondents,[11] issues of gender were largely invisible in the history of the mainstream press because scholars tended to eschew analytical consideration of any social category in their descriptive approach. In research on the black press, race, although engaged as an explicit category of analysis, appeared to have no relevance to gender. Focusing on the role of black men in the armed forces, analysis of the wartime policy of the black press gauged its impact on the military sector but not the civilian world where most of women's wartime activities occurred. Without specifying the distinctive relationship between the black press and black women in the Double V campaign,

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[10] Catherine L. Covert, "Journalism History and Women's Experience: A Problem in Conceptual Change," *Journalism History* 8:1 (Spring 1981): 2-6.

[11] See Julia Edward, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1988); and Lilya Wagner, *Women War Correspondents of World War II* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989).

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journalism historians have not fully explored the social significance of the black press in the war years.

In addition to the male bias implied in the framing of research focus, the interpretation of the significance of the press in World War II was further limited by the much criticized Progressive paradigm. Dubbed by James Carey as "the marriage of the doctrine of progress with the idea of history,"[12] the paradigm predisposed scholars to view the development of the nation and the press in terms of the triumph of good over evil. In the face of repression and authoritarianism, the American press was seen as a champion for freedom and democracy. Advocating the New Left approach as an alternative to the dominant paradigm, Joseph McKerns argued that "what has been missing in journalism history is an understanding of the way in which the press has fostered and/or conveyed to society the dominant conservative ideas."[13] In the case of World War II, the hegemony of the Progressive interpretation has led to a rather heroic picture of the press struggling against wartime restrictions to inform the public. The black press in particular was perceived as a militant institution preaching radical ideas of racial equality.

Finkle's interpretation of the role of the black press in wartime society presented the most notable departure from the dominant paradigm. Although black newspapers, in the face

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[12] James W. Carey, "The Problem of Journalism History," *Journalism History* 1:1 (Spring 1974), 4. Following the provocative critique of Carey, other critics also blamed the hegemony of the Progressive paradigm for seriously curtailing the prospects of fresh perspectives on the history of American journalism. See, for example, Joseph P. McKerns, "The Limits of Progressive Journalism History," *Journalism History* 4: 3 (Autumn 1977): 88-92; and John D. Stevens and Hazel Dicken Garcia, "History and Historiography," chap. in *Communication History* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1980), 40-47.

[13] McKerns, 91.

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of criticism and threats from a variety of quarters, did continue the tradition of protest against racism, the Double V campaign promoted a moderate political agenda of assimilationist aims that affirmed rather than challenged the values of mainstream American culture. A major role of the black press, Finkle noted, was to foster a positive attitude among blacks toward the war effort.[14] Likewise, Richard Steele's study of President Roosevelt's news management in World War II suggested an alternative perspective. He argued that journalistic patriotism and more importantly the administration's manipulation resulted in distorted press coverage of the war to sustain public morale.[15] Focusing on censorship of military news, Steele's study did not address how other types of news affected the home front. As a central forum of war information, the press was instrumental in the distribution of propaganda for civilian mobilization. The government relied greatly on the editorial and advertising resources of the newspaper industry to forge home front support for its war measures. By promoting the war effort, the press in turn hoped to strengthen its institutional prestige and financial advantage in the competition with other media. Journalism historians have paid little attention to the role of the press in mobilizing Americans for war partly because the cooperative aspect of the interaction between the press and the government contradicted the prevailing assumption that they acted as two independent entities in an adversarial relationship.

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[14] Finkle, 89-127.

[15] Steele, 707.

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Domestic Propaganda and Mass Media

In June 1942, the Roosevelt administration established the Office of War Information to coordinate the government's overseas and domestic "information campaigns," a less controversial term for its propaganda effort. Overseeing the interactions between the government and the media, the agency provided centralized control of the flow of war information in the country through the operation of its domestic branch. With its Radio Bureau, News Bureau, Bureau of Motion Pictures, Book and Magazine Bureau, Bureau of Graphics, and Bureau of Field Operations, the domestic branch maintained liaisons to all forms of mass media. The Bureau of Campaigns was added in August 1942. During the 39 months of its existence, the domestic branch commanded a budget of $12 million.[16] The activities of the OWI's domestic operation peaked in the fall of 1943 when more than fifty drives were under way to encourage civilian support of the war effort.[17] Budget cuts and a congressional restriction against direct distribution of OWI publications to the public seriously curtailed its operation later in the war. Without direct access to the public, the OWI nevertheless continued its home front propaganda, relying on voluntary media cooperation. "OWI could no longer print pamphlets or produce films," Charles Lloyd noted in his study of

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[16] LaMar Seal Mackay, "Domestic Operations of the Office of War Information World War II" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1966), 446.

[17] Palmer Hoyt, "OWI in 1943--Coordinator and Service Agency," *Journalism Quarterly* 20:4 (December 1943), 322.

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OWI publications, "but its ideas found their way to the public through the medium of private newspapers, Hollywood produced films and commercial radio shows."[18]

Several studies have examined the operation of the OWI, providing information on its formation, administrative organization, internal struggles, and relations with the Congress, the President, the military, and other government agencies.[19] Concerned with the contradiction of propaganda distribution in a democratic system, this line of research tended to isolate the OWI as a political institution apart from the larger social context. Other studies, however, underscored a broader interest in the cultural implications of the OWI's operation. For example, Eric Hanin, in " War on Our Minds: The American Mass Media in World War II," examined the political significance of wartime films and radio shows. Responding to government propaganda goals, Hollywood promoted the world view of liberal internationalists in mass entertainment. Hanin contended that the wartime propaganda steered the public away from an isolationist inclination to support the interventionist foreign policies of the American government, which defined the role of the United States in the postwar world.[20]

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[18] Charles David Lloyd, "American Society and Values in World War II from the Publications of the Office of War Information" (Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 1975), 18.

[19] In addition to Mackay, Lloyd, Bishop and Mackay, see Brett Joseph Gary, "American Liberalism and the Problem of Propaganda: Scholars, Lawyers, and the War on Words, 1919-1945" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1992); and Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1978).

[20] Eric Michael Hanin, "War on Our Minds: The American Mass Media in World War II" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Rochester, 1977).

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In "American Society and Values in World War II from the Publications of the Office of War Information," Charles Lloyd found that the OWI presented an idealized version of American society as the model for worldwide postwar reconstruction. Emphasizing unity, dedication to freedom, and grassroots democracy in American society, the widely distributed publications suppressed negative aspects such as racial and ethnic conflicts and minimized class differences.[21] On the home front, the agency addressed its propaganda effort to the diversity of the population, emphasizing the full participation of every demographic segment in a melting pot scenario. For example, in the treatment of blacks, the agency's moderate and spare policy designed to avoid controversy highlighted their contribution and progress, but glossed over the reality of segregation and the history of slavery. Lloyd also noted that the abundant OWI material on women portrayed them mainly as wives and mothers. In sum, scholars taking the cultural approach brought attention to the social significance of the OWI but did not relate its vision of American society to the content of wartime media.

The influence of propaganda on media was explored in a third line of inquiries, which has touched on most forms of mass communication including movies,[22] magazines,[23] and

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[21] Lloyd, 261-303.

[22] The connection between Hollywood and war propaganda has received the most attention from media scholars. See Melva Joyce Baker, *Images of Women in Film: The War Years, 1941-1945* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1980); Ralph R. Donald, "Hollywood and World War II: Enlisting Feature Films as Propaganda" (Ph.D. diss., University of Massachusetts, 1987); Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, "What to Show the World: The Office of War Information and Hollywood, 1942-1945," *Journal of American History* 64 (1977): 87-105, "Blacks, Loyalty, and Motion-Picture Propaganda in World War II," *Journal of American History* 73 (September 1986): 383-406, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits, and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (New York: The Free Press, 1987); and Michael Renov, *Hollywood's Wartime Woman: Representation and Ideology* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988).

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advertising.[24] Virtually no research, however, has been done on news as illustrated by a recent study on mass media and World War II. In *To Hasten the Homecoming*, Jordan Braverman examined how Americans fought the war through the media, including the radio, the theater, music, movies, books, cartoons, and advertising. In regards to newspapers, he noted only briefly in an overview of the home front that the press bolstered the country's war effort.[25] Although gathered mostly in the context of entertainment rather than news media, insights from these studies served to illuminate the racial and sexual politics in domestic propaganda.

In their research on the movie industry, Clayton Koppes and Gregory Black, for instance, offered an interesting case study of the struggle among the OWI, Hollywood, and black leaders over the representation of blacks in wartime cinema. Awareness of film as a propaganda tool to mobilize blacks brought them higher visibility in movies. Hollywood, however, turned out black characters based on racial stereotypes despite the interference of the OWI and the lobbying of black leaders for a more positive portrayal. The film images of women in the war years also attracted considerable attention from scholars. Melva Baker found that Hollywood showcased the image of the wonder woman who met the challenges of the war in every aspect of her life without confronting the boundaries of traditional gender

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[23] Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).

[24] Frank W. Fox, *Madison Avenue Goes to War: The Strange Military Career of American Advertising, 1941-1945* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975).

[25] Jordan Braverman, *To Hasten the Homecoming: How Americans Fought World War II Through the Media* (New York: Madison Books, 1996), 38.

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roles. Overall, the lack of scholarly attention to black women in existing research on mass media and World War II showed that their complexity as a research subject defied the construction of mutually exclusive analytical categories of race and gender. As Jane Rhodes commented in her critique of mass communication research, studies on women and minorities tended to subsume women of color under either group as if "gender has no color, and race has no sex."[26] To understand the intersection of multiple social categories in cultural representations, she urged scholars to specifically address women of color as a distinct group in their research.

History of Women's News

As the existence of black newspapers represented the reality of racial segregation in American society, so the presentation of women's news implied the principle of sexual segregation. For nearly a century, gender constituted a fundamental aspect of daily newspapers, underlying news value, gathering, style, and content.[27] Instead of being integrated into appropriate sections, news for and about women, regardless of its significance, clustered in the back section of the newspaper called women's pages. The practice rested on the professional distinction between hard news and soft news, which was

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[26] Jane Rhodes, "'Falling through the Cracks': Studying Women of Color in Mass Communication," in *Women in Mass Communication*, ed. Pamela J. Creedon (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1993), 24.

[27] The premise of a separate section for women, as columnist Nicholas von Hoffman pointed out, assumed that "women do one set of things in this world and men do another, that the base line for judging every topic is the value of the idealized American family as it mythically existed in a smallish-sized city, circa 1927." See Nicholas von Hoffman, "Women's Pages: An Irreverent View," *Columbia Journalism Review* 10 (July-August 1971): 53.

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predicated on a binary conceptualization of gender that also distinguished the masculine from the feminine and the public from the private spheres.

Newspapers thus defined women's concerns as limited to their major role as caretakers who belonged to the private sphere of home. Topics such as the so-called four F's--family, food, fashion, and furnishing--were considered feminine and therefore soft news.[28] On the other hand, men's concerns were defined by their role as breadwinners. Topics related to "power, politics, and stratification" were categorized as masculine and hard news.[29] The gendered definition of news also justified the sexual division of labor in the newsroom.[30] Men covered the front-page stories and women the back page. In short, as Gay Tuchman observed, "Historically, they [newspapers] have sought to attract female readers by treating them as a specialized audience, given attention in a segregated women's page, an autonomous or semi-autonomous department whose mandate precludes coverage of the 'hard news' of the day." [31]

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[28] Kay Mills, *A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Page* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1988), 100.

[29] Gay Tuchman, "The Newspaper as a Social Movement's Resource," chap. in *Hearth and Home: Image of Women in the Mass Media*, ed. Gay Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 192.

[30] Marion Marzolf noted that when the pages were created in the late nineteenth century, they quickly became "a haven for young women seeking journalistic careers," since men did not consider the subject of women's news worthy of their professional talent and status. Although the pages opened the door for women in a male-dominated profession, they also became the only place where women were assigned regardless of their aspirations. Even as late as 1972, the majority of women in journalism still congregated in the women's department according to a report in *Time*. See Mills, 112-28; "Flight from Fluff," *Time*, 20 March 1972, 53; Marion Marzolf, *Up from the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists* (New York: Hastings House, 1977), 205.

[31] Tuchman, in *Hearth and Home*, 25.

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Designed in the 1880s to cater to the reading interests of women, women's pages existed in mainstream American newspapers until the 1970s when they were replaced by today's unisex lifestyle sections.[32] Scholars generally agreed that the rise of women's pages in the press resulted not so much from changes in the social status of women but from the demands of an emerging capitalist economy.[33] The industrialization of American society in the late nineteenth century transformed women's economic role from that of home workers to consumers. Many goods formerly produced by women for home use were now manufactured through mass production and sold at department stores and chain stores, which relied on advertising to build a city-wide clientele. In the new economic order, women became supervisors of the increasing consumption of their families. Because of their role as

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[32] The women's movement in the 1960s raised general concerns with media images of women, which led to evaluation of women's pages. Considered dull, trivial, and out of touch with women's lives, the pages were criticized for perpetuating the sexist stereotype of women as home-bound housewives. Moreover, feminists maintained that the segregation of all news about women marginalized and trivialized their concerns. Critics therefore urged newspapers to replace the traditional women's angle with a general interest section that would inform both women and men about important issues such as social trends, family life, child care, consumer affairs, etc. The *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* were pioneers in developing a new approach to revamp traditional women's pages. In 1969, the *Post* replaced its "For and About Women" with a unisex section called "Style." Emphasizing coverage of lifestyles, entertainment, arts, cultural and social trends, private lives of celebrities, the "Style" section was widely emulated by other newspapers. In the 1970s, traditional women's pages, especially those in large metropolitan newspapers, were replaced by lifestyle sections such as "View" of the *Los Angeles Times*, "Day" of *St. Petersburg Times*, "Living Today" of *Miami Herald*, and "Scene" of the *Seattle Times*. See Marzolf, "Peopling the Women's Pages," chap. in *Up from the Footnote*, 199-218; Mills, "Stylizing the News," chap. in *A Place in the News*, 110-25.

[33] See Marzolf, 207; and Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 99-100.

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primary purchasing agents of consumer goods, women also became the target of advertisers, whose patronage provided an increasingly crucial source of revenues to newspapers.

One of the first publishers to respond to these social changes was Joseph Pulitzer. He popularized women's pages as a means to attract advertisers by offering them a concentrated female readership in a separate section.[34] In developing a special news forum for women, Pulitzer was confronted with the conflict between the progressive trend toward the emancipation of women and the conservatism of the majority of his working class readership.[35] He compromised by giving attention to women's concerns with an emphasis on their domestic life. Echoing the Victorian idea that women belonged in the home, the women's page of Pulitzer's *New York World* featured fashion, etiquette, recipes, beauty tips, club activities, social gatherings, etc. Columns and articles about notable women supplemented these features to acknowledge women's growing interests and accomplishments outside the domestic sphere without alienating the more traditional readers.

The innovations of Pulitzer became the convention of a feminine genre in the daily newspaper as the pages evolved in the twentieth century.[36] Service features such as

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[34] In 1886, Pulitzer's *New York World* started to carry columns devoted to women. By 1891, a page for women had become a steady feature in his Sunday *World*. After 1894, the "For and About Women" section was a daily feature in the *World*. For the origin of women's pages, see Marzolf, 205-7.

[35] George Juergens, *Joseph Pulitzer and the New York World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), 133-51.

[36] For a case study of how narrative traditions affected the evolution of women's pages, see Mei-ling Yang, "Women's Pages or People's Pages: The Production of News for Women in the *Washington Post* in the 1950s," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 73: 2 (Summer 1996): 364-378.

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announcements of weddings and engagements, news about women's clubs, society news, advice columns, food and fashion coverage, tips on beauty and homemaking, and expert advice on child care constituted the backbone of the pages. Created not so much for women but for advertisers, women's pages remained captive throughout their history to a salient commercial nature that undercut their journalistic integrity.[37] Despite their importance to the finances of newspapers, women's pages were marginalized as "the stepchild of the profession."[38] Dealing with women's concerns, the pages were often perceived as frivolous, dull, and insubstantial.[39] Their staff, mostly women, suffered from low pay and status in the newsroom.[40] The tension between feminism and conservatism that characterized Pulitzer's

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[37] Lamenting the lack of autonomy in the women's department, journalist Genevieve Jackson Boughner advised women's editors in 1926 to "face the 'brute' fact that the women's page is a bid for the advertiser's patronage." Five decades later, columnist Nicholas von Hoffman also noted that "the advertising director of the city's largest department store has more power on the paper than its women's page editor has." See Genevieve Jackson Boughner, *Women in Journalism* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1926), 282; von Hoffman, 54.

[38] Ishbel Ross, *Ladies of the Press* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1936), 427.

[39] The negative image of women's pages prevailed not only in the news profession but also in the wave of feminist criticism that contributed to the demise of the pages in the 1970s. See, for example, "Flight from Fluff," *Time*, 20 March 1972, 52-53; and Lindsy Van Gelder, "Women's Pages: You Can't Make News Out of a Silk Purse," *Ms.* 3 (November 1974): 112-16.

[40] Sharyne Merritt and Harriet Gross found that women's section had "low status within the newspaper hierarchy." See Merritt and Gross, "Women's Page/Lifestyle Editors: Does Sex Make a Difference?" *Journalism Quarterly* 55: 3 (Autumn, 1978): 508. The complaints filed by the Newspaper Guild against several newspapers showed that women's page editors and reporters consistently received less pay than the staff members of other sections. See The Newspaper Guild, "Collective Bargaining Manual 1: Equal Pay Summary," (Silver Spring, Md.: The Newspaper Guild, Human Rights Department, 1966), 4-9. For pay inequity suffered by women in journalism see also Matilda Butler and William Paisley, *Women and the Mass Media* (New York: Human Science Press, 1980), 212-14; and

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approach also became inherent in the evolution of the pages in the twentieth century. Against the backdrop of a constant emphasis on women's roles as wives and mothers, the pages changed in parallel to the ebb and flow of women's history in American society.[41]

In the black press, women's pages emerged from a different historical context. Almost fifty years earlier than Joseph Pulitzer, editor David Ruggles started the first women's section in *The Mirror of Liberty* in 1838. As evidenced in its introductory poem titled "Women's Rights," the *Ladies Mirror of Liberty*, according to Frankie Hutton, displayed a sensitivity to the particular concerns of black women that characterized women's news in the antebellum black press.[42] To counter the pervasive assumption that black women were immoral and promiscuous, editors presented a respectable, lady-like image, emphasizing black women's achievements in education, employment, and community service. In addition to reporting their struggle to overcome racial and sexual barriers, the newspapers, in line with their middle-class orientation, also published occasional advice on issues such as courtship, marriage, and fashion. Hutton argued that the news about women, reflecting the progressive

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Won H. Chang, "Characteristics and Self-Perceptions of Women's Page Editors," *Journalism Quarterly* 52: 1 (Spring 1975): 61-65.

[41] For example, after women won the right to vote, many newspapers stopped labeling their women's pages as sections exclusively for women. In the mid-1920s, newspapers started to abandon the seven or eight column line across the top of the women's pages, known as the "streamer" or "banner." The attempt to downplay the women's angle at least in appearance was hailed by Boughner as "a greater tribute to their [women's] intelligence and a more definite recognition of their equality with men in such intellectual pursuits as reading the newspaper, than was the dedication of a page to them in the first place." See Boughner, 287; and Marzolf's brief observation on the connection between women's pages and the gender climate of American society in Marzolf, 208-9.

[42] Frankie Hutton, *The Early Black Press in America, 1827 to 1860* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1993), 57-80.

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attitude of the early black press, served as a forum for women's radical ideas and a chronicle of the various dimensions of their life.

Hutton's research suggested significant divergence in the development of the genre of women's news from the early women's pages in the black press and the white press. Distinguished by a sense of social responsibility, black newspapers enjoyed an alliance with women readers in their effort to advocate the interests of the race. Underlined by a commercial nature, white newspapers, on the other hand, aligned their coverage of women more with the interest of advertisers than that of women. "The attitude of the white press is conditioned very largely upon the advertising revenues," W. E. B. Du Bois observed in 1943 in a commentary on the difference between the black press and the white press. "The great newspapers of the United States are no longer free expressions of opinion but rather express business which has such a large stake in the newspapers through advertising."[43]

Black newspapers were, however, no less profit oriented than white newspapers. The idiosyncrasies of newspaper economy provided a more reasonable explanation for the difference in their approaches to women's news. Black newspapers were more attuned to the sentiments of their women readers than the demands of advertisers because historically they relied on readership, not advertising, as the main source of revenues. In general, advertising agencies felt that they did not need to place duplicate ads in black newspapers because they assumed that blacks read white dailies in addition to their own weeklies. Prominent national advertisers therefore did not start buying space in black newspapers until World War II tax

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[43] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The American Negro Press," Part II, *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 27 February 1943, 15.

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breaks arrived for advertising and substantial support from local department stores and grocery chains did not occur until the 1960s.[44] The similarity between the black press and the white press in the layout of women's news suggested that they both upheld the line of division along presumed sexual differences. Their differences in the content of women's news showed that the black press highlighted the presence of women in the public sphere, emphasizing their work in the community through churches, associations, and charities. The white press, in contrast, accentuated the role of women in the private sphere, focusing on their responsibility in the family. In addition to the tradition of women's news established in the antebellum period, marketing concerns later in the competition with white newspapers also might make black newspapers less inclined to feature women's domestic life. Coverage of black women's social life, ignored by white newspapers, provided a niche for the weekly black newspapers under pressure to attract women with information they could not find in the daily.

Except for Hutton's study, journalism historians have gathered little information on women's pages in black newspapers. Both professional and academic critiques have focused on the pages' transition into today's lifestyle sections in the mainstream press and as a result, neither has explored the rich history of the genre.[45] Content analyses provided statistical

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[44] Henry G. La Brie, "The Black Press: Where to? What Next?" in *Perspectives of the Black Press*, 195; and John D. Stevens, "World War II and the Black Press," in *Perspectives of the Black Press*, 34.

[45] See, for example, Rose Mary Lentz, "What's This 'Women's Editor' to Do?" *The Quill* 63 (February 1975): 29; Joanne Zerkel, "From Milady to Ms.--Changing Tastes and Techniques," *Press Woman* (April 1986): 9-10; Anne Geracimos, "Restyling the News: The Hard Question at Newspapers Today," *Avenue* (October 1988): 106-18; Zena Beth Guenin, "Women's Pages in American Newspapers: Missing out on Contemporary Content,"

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information of women's sections in white newspapers but little interpretation of their social and cultural significance.[46] Two qualitative studies covering women's pages of various newspapers from the 1940s to the 1970s examined feminist expressions in the pages. Judith Paterson and Agnes Hooper Gottlieb found that the pages contained a significant amount of feminist information, which was merged with traditional content and disguised by a highly flowery style that was mistakenly condemned as sexist.[47] Although both studies included the war decade, the textual analyses did not address the historical context. In her account of the history of women's pages, Marion Marzolf mentioned in passing that World War II brought changes in women's lives as well as women's pages. Special columns were devoted to the contribution of women to the nation's war effort.[48] The limitations of existing scholarship on women's pages highlighted the need for further research on news coverage of women in the war both in the dailies catering more to white readers and the black weeklies. A comparative approach not only has the advantage of enriching the general history of journalism with a more analytical perspective on the press as an institution anchored in the

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Journalism Quarterly 52:1 (Spring 1975): 66-69; and Susan H. Miller, "Changes in Women's/Lifestyle Sections," *Journalism Quarterly* 53:4 (Winter 1976): 641-47.

[46] The quantitative studies of Guenin and Miller showed that except for increased entertainment coverage, lifestyle sections in the 1970s were not that different from traditional women's pages.

[47] Judith Paterson, "Among the Hats and Gloves: The Double Message on the Women's Pages," Unpublished paper presented at the annual convention of American Journalism Historians Association, St. Louis, Mo., 4 October 1986; Agnes Hooper Gottlieb, "Feminism and Femininity: An Analysis of *The Washington Post*'s Women's Pages, 1940-1970," Unpublished paper presented at the annual convention of Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Minneapolis, Minn., 8 August 1990.

[48] Marzolf, 209.

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complex social relations of wartime society. It also has the potential of shedding new light on the history of American women in World War II.

American Women in World War II

Studies of American women in World War II have been characterized by a general concern with the impact of the war on the social status of women. Positing a strong link between women's wartime experience and postwar feminist consciousness and activism, historians have investigated the central question of whether World War II was a "good" war for women--a war that helped women achieve equality with men in American society. As Joan Scott noted, the two world wars have acquired an image in history as watersheds marking women's strides toward sexual equality in the twentieth century.[49] The work of William Chafe represented one of the most notable examples of this progressive interpretation of World War II. He argued that radical shifts in the traditional sexual division of labor during the war resulted in fundamental and irreversible social changes culminating in the rise of the women's movement two decades later.[50] The war had a particularly positive

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[49] Joan Scott, "Rewriting History," in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, eds. Margaret Randolph Higonnet and others (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); 23-25.

[50] See William Chafe, "The War Decade," part iii in *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 121-72. Maurine Greenwald offered a similar interpretation of the influence of World War I on American women. Her study showed that the war opened access to higher-paying jobs in heavy industries for women, who were previously confined to clerical and service industries. Although women were encouraged to take on traditionally male jobs in fields such as the railroad, streetcar, and telephone industries, they were nevertheless subject to the hostility of trade unionists and the manipulation of corporate employers. Despite continuing wartime discrimination and a quick postwar demobilization, Greenwald argued that the temporary changes in the employment patterns of women raised their feminist consciousness. See

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influence on black women, who benefited from increasing social mobility more than any other group of women workers. Chafe noted that "for them the war represented in some ways a second emancipation."[51]

If not for his perspective on war and social change, Chafe's work proved to be influential for the inspiration it gave to other scholars who have subsequently broadened the investigation of the war decade in more detailed studies. In *The Home Front and Beyond*, Susan Hartmann, cautioning historians against making sweeping generalizations, showed that wartime changes such as economic growth, the absence of men, and the emphasis on egalitarian ideals had no universal effects on women. Factors such as age, race, class, education, and marital status determined a woman's wartime experience. Overall, the war did bring significant changes in the lives of individual women who, enjoying a greater access to the public realm, increased their participation in the military, the labor force, higher education, political organizations, and civil affairs. On the structural level, the war's potential for change was compromised by a host of forces such as the conservative appeals of mobilization, the anti-feminist backlash in the media, and a desire for normalcy shared by both men and women. Hartmann concluded that "while recognizing the overall continuities in

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Maurine Weiner Greenwald, *Women, War and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980).

[51] Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, And Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 142. Perhaps influenced by more recent studies that challenged the progressive interpretation, Chafe later toned down the emphasis in his earlier work on the positive meaning of wartime changes to black women, noting that "the experience of black women underlined the extent to which the war brought significant change yet also demonstrated the continuation of prejudice. . . . For them the war represented a moment of substantial opportunity." See *The Paradox of Change*, 127-28.

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women's lives between 1940 and 1950, it is also possible to identify in that decade seeds of change which worked a deeper transformation in women's consciousness, aspirations, and opportunities a generation or so later."[52]

Other inquiries into the experiences of American women in World War II emphasized the significance of continuity over change. Skeptical about the positive influence of the war, a number of historians contended that the limited progress women made in World War II was seriously curtailed by deeply entrenched beliefs in traditional gender arrangements. The entry of women into the armed forces, in particular, highlighted the tenacity of sexual stereotypes. In her study of the induction of American women in World War II, D'Ann Campbell found that the success of women's military participation did not change civilian attitudes toward gender roles nor the military's view of itself as the bastion of masculinity. She concluded that "paradoxically, then, military service was often a rewarding and broadening experience for individual women, but a disaster for women as a gender."[53] To black servicewomen, however, even the promise of individual gains appeared tenuous at best. Although the Women's Army Corps followed the tenet of proportional representation and admitted four thousand black women, it reinforced the practice of racial segregation. As a result, black women rarely received overseas assignments and were often relegated to menial tasks such as kitchen and custodial duties. And until October 1944, they were completely barred from the

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[52] Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 215.

[53] D'Ann Campbell, "The Regimented Women of World War II," in *Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias (Savage, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1990), 118.

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Women's Reserve of the U. S. Navy.[54] In general, as Hartmann noted, women's military contribution in World War II had little effect on their status.[55]

In the civilian sector, the conservative forces of the war also prevailed. In *Wartime Women*, Karen Anderson focused on three defense industry communities--Baltimore, Detroit, and Seattle--to examine women's social and economic status. She found that economic gains for women did not translate into improvements in their social status. Although the war brought a 47 percent increase in female employment, it did not result in appreciable permanent changes to eliminate prejudice against working women. Resistance from male workers and employers underlined the transitory nature of wartime changes in the work force, which quickly returned to a predominantly male basis after the war. "Despite the temporary gains of the war years," Anderson observed, "women's status within the labor force was not much better than it had been before the war."[56] In regards to the debate on the war's long-term impact, Anderson commented that "the war generated no ideological or institutional legacy" to fuel the struggle for sexual equality.[57] In the end, the war seemed to have reinforced conventional attitudes regarding the role of women within the family.

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[54] For the treatment of black servicewomen, see Hartmann, 40-41; and Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 253.

[55] Hartmann, 31-48, and 212.

[56] Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 173.

[57] Ibid., 178.

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Also de-emphasizing the influence of wartime employment on women's experience in the 1940s, D'Ann Campbell argued in *Women at War with America* that the appeal of domesticity persisted through the propaganda blitz luring women into the labor market. Despite the temporary increase in female employment outside the home, the housewife-mother role remained the central identity embraced by the majority of American women. Campbell offered two explanations for why gender norms hardly changed in the war decade. First, people did not respond to World War II as an isolated event but as part of a historical and economic continuity from the Depression. After the disruption and uncertainty in the Depression era and the war years, American women and men longed for a state of normalcy characterized by familiar roles. Second, wartime changes in the sexual division of labor were never intended to last because policy makers in the government and businesses saw themselves as maximizing the war effort rather than restructuring the American society. Ultimately though the lack of social change in the war years underscored the individual choices women made as Campbell concluded that "women themselves indisputably placed their highest priority on a family life that could only be sustained by their own special efforts. It would take more than the war for them even to begin to think of their own independence and full equality."[58] As further evidence of the conservative impetus of the war, she noted that in addition to sexism, racism was sustained by the social dynamics of war.

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[58] D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 237.

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Mary Martha Thomas came to a similar conclusion in *Riveting and Rationing in Dixie*, a comparison between local and national trends in wartime female employment.[59] She found the wartime experience of white women in Alabama to be consistent with the national pattern. The increase in economic opportunities, however, did not benefit black women, who continued to face discrimination and remained mostly in service jobs with lower pay. Mobile, a major war production center, had the highest proportion of black women workers in the United States. Surprisingly, in 1944 not one black woman was employed as an operative in a defense plant in Alabama. The war improved the economic status of white women in Alabama but had little impact on that of black women. Thomas observed that overall, the war did not affect the long-term position of Alabama women.

Studies focusing on the experience of black women also showed that the war alleviated little of the double bind of pervasive racial discrimination compounded by persistent sexual prejudice. In "Last Hired, First Fired," Karen Anderson found that despite the challenges posed by a national manpower shortage, black women consistently occupied the lowest position in a complex hierarchy of hiring preferences based on the demand and supply in a particular labor market. Her examination of the wartime employment pattern of black women demonstrated that restrictive hiring, workplace segregation, and co-worker prejudice severely limited their access to higher-paying defense jobs, which were increasingly open to black men and white women. The wartime increase in the proportion of black women in industries from 6.5 to 18 percent occurred primarily in the area of unskilled labor.

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[59] Mary Martha Thomas, *Riveting and Rationing in Dixie: Alabama Women and the Second World War* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1987).

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Domestic service remained the main source of work for black women despite the temporary expansion of employment opportunities. Although many black women experienced some degree of prosperity that seemed remarkable compared to the hardship endured in the Depression era, Anderson concluded that "their relative position within the American economy remained the same."[60]

If some black women managed to improve their economic status during the war, they did so in a process characterized by Paula Giddings as "two steps forward and one step back."[61] In *When and Where I Enter*, Giddings noted that the great employment opportunities for women in general provided only a slight benefit to black women. Breakthroughs in industrial, clerical, and professional fields were circumscribed by unfair wages, segregation of work arrangements, and relegation to undesirable shifts and job categories. Most of their advancement, which raised the median income of black women in the war decade from 39 percent of white women's to 57 percent, occurred during the most critical stage of the manpower crisis from 1942 to 1945. The narrow window of opportunities hardly translated into long-term improvement as indicated by white monopoly of employment opportunities in the postwar expansion of sales and management positions for women.

In *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, Jacqueline Jones offered similar observations on the status of black women in the war decade with an emphasis on the distinction between the

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[60] Karen Tucker Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired: Black Women Workers during World War II," *Journal of American History* 69: 1 (June 1982): 97.

[61] Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1984), 238.

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individual and the structural point of view in her interpretation. The national defense program brought blacks women and men a brief period of material prosperity, which was sustained as long as the impetus of war production compelled the use of alternative sources of labor. Many black women recalled substantial increases in wages that provided dramatic, if only relative, improvement in the living standard of their families. Their employment pattern, however, continued to be defined by a structure of racial and sexual divisions of labor that inhibited changes in the social hierarchy. Except for a decline in the proportion of black women in farm work and an increase in manufacturing, the majority of them remained in household and institutional service jobs both during and after the war. Revealing a touch of optimism in her assessment of the overall impact of the war, Jones commented, "If black women did not achieve any long-lasting economic gains as a result of the war, they did begin to test the limits of their collective strength in ways that would reverberate into the future."[62] In her view, the paradox of economic growth and racial discrimination experienced by blacks in World War II fostered a militant spirit that energized the mass protest movement after the war.

In sum, challenging the perception of war as a vehicle for social change, these historians found that the process of making war, at least in the context of American society, reiterated social divisions along sexual as well as racial lines.[63] As much as scholars who

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[62] Jones, 235.

[63] Penny Summerfield's study of British women in World War II echoed the findings of American historians who stressed continuity. Approaching the war as a moment of conflict between the capitalist and patriarchal modes of production, Summerfield examined how government policies mobilized British women for war work and at the same time preserved traditional domestic arrangements. She argued that such policies reinforced rather than altered women's position in society. See Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the*

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emphasized social continuities illuminated the complexity of war-induced changes in women's lives, they have, however, failed to provide systematic explanations of how the changes were contained by the operation of specific political and cultural mechanisms. Occasionally, the determination of culture was invoked as a condition for the postwar reconstruction of social order but never fully explored in these studies. The need for a more analytical approach toward the subject of women and war in general has led to an ongoing paradigm shift in the field. Instead of focusing on women's wartime experiences, scholars are seeking to understand the dynamics between gender and war.[64] In other words, the emphasis is shifted from the reconstruction of historical experience to the investigation of how the process of making war and the gender system of a society are interrelated. The approach insists that war must be understood as "a gendering activity, one that ritually marks the gender of all members of a society."[65]

The significance of this theoretical stance lies in its potential to lead feminist scholarship of war toward the final goal of women's history, which, using gender as a category of analysis, seeks to reconstruct traditional history to better account for the experiences of both women and men.[66] Joan Scott thus urged historians of the two world

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Second World War: Production and Patriarchy in Conflict (Dover, N.H.: Croom Helm, 1984).

[64] Susan Jeffords, "Women, Gender, and the War," *Critical Studies of Mass Communication* 6 (March 1989): 83-89.

[65] Higonnet and others, eds., *Behind the Lines*, 4.

[66] Gerda Lerner divided the evolution of women's history into three stages, which can be applied to the historiography of women and war. The first stage involved scholarship that aimed to rectify the omission of women from traditional accounts of war through the approach of "compensatory history," and scholarship that focused on the contribution of

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wars to embrace the theoretical reformulation by changing the focus of their inquiries from "what was the impact of war on women?" to "what does the history of women reveal about the politics of war?"[67] The paradigm being advocated by feminist scholars theorized the significance of the interplay between war and gender--how the specific structure of gender relations in a society informed its war effort and how waging war redefined and/or reaffirmed the boundaries of gender roles. On an empirical level, the approach has been explored by researchers who investigated how the reconstruction of gender through culture representations facilitated the administration of war in different historical contexts. Analyzing feminine identities and roles as part of a binary system that also defines notions of masculinity, they not only illuminated the social dimension of war but also offered insights to help reconceptualize mainstream accounts of war.[68]

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individual women to societies at war through the approach of "contributory history." Most current research of women and war belonged to the stage of "transitional history," in which scholars described the collective experience of women in war. Scholars focusing on the connection between war and gender are attempting to achieve "synthesis history," which, based on the insights of women's history, offers a fuller understanding of war. See Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 145-60.

[67] Scott, "Rewriting History," 30.

[68] For empirical research and theoretical perspectives informed by the concern with war and gender, see, for example, the collection of essays in *Behind the Lines*; Cynthia H Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?: The Militarisation of Women's Lives* (London: Pluto Press, 1983); "Bananas, Bases, and Patriarchy," in *Women, Militarism, and War*, 189-206; and *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993); James William Gibson, "Paramilitary Culture," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (Spring 1989): 90-93; Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Jacqueline E. Lawson, "'She's a Pretty Woman . . . for a Gook': The Misogyny of the Vietnam War," *Journal of American Culture* 12 (Fall 1989): 55-66; Barbara J Steinson, "'The Mother Half of Humanity': American Women in the Peace and Preparedness Movements in World War I,"

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In *Mobilizing Women for War*, Leila Rupp examined the politics of mobilizing women for war production in World War II. Her comparison of German and American propaganda was enriched by attention to race and class as additional variables.[69] She found that German women responded to wartime mobilization as their social class rather than their sex dictated. For fear of alienating middle-class men, the Nazi state, despite its rejection of class distinctions, did not enforce universal mobilization laws. Middle-class women were thus protected by their gender and class privileges from the punitive mobilization program, which emphasized sacrifices rather than material incentives. While middle-class women were exempt from patriotic service, working class women, denied the material advantages usually associated with women's wartime employment, shouldered the responsibility for war production in Germany. The American mobilization of women on the other hand relied on promises of material gains to draw women into factory work. The propaganda for war work raised the postwar expectation of minority and working-class women, but after the war it was their middle-class white sisters who found employment in the shift from war industries to service industries. Rupp's analysis of magazine portrayal of American women showed that their public image adapted to changing demands of wartime economy and at the same time reinforced the assumption that women's place was in the home.[70] She concluded that the war

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in *Women, War, and Revolution*, ed. Carol R. Berkin and Clara M. Lovett (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 259-84; and Judith Hicks Stiehm, "The Protected, the Protector, the Defender," *Women's Studies International Forum* 5 (No. 3/4 1982): 367-76.

[69] Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[70] Rupp, "'Occupation: Housewife': The Image of Women in the United States," chap. in *Mobilizing Women for War*, 51-73.

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did not change women's social status in either country because war propaganda appealed to sexual stereotypes as strategies for mobilization.

In *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, Maureen Honey examined the impact of government propaganda on the images of American women in fiction and advertising in the *Saturday Evening Post* and *True Story*.[71] The content analysis showed that although writers, responding to government propaganda, created new images of women as competent workers, they upheld traditional assumptions about femininity, the family, as well as sexual and racial divisions of labor. For example, the centrality of romantic love in the narratives about working women perpetuated the belief that no matter how independent and successful a woman was, her ultimate reward came from male approval. In addition, the emphasis on patriotism rather than self-actualization as the motive for women working outside the home reinforced traditional notions about women's self-sacrificing nature. Prompted by the OWI's nominal commitment to eliminate racial prejudice, the magazines attempted to show blacks in a more positive light. Instead of highlighting their achievement, writers depicted blacks as loyal and content domestic help to their white employers. The portrayal resorted to racial stereotypes to reassure whites of the patriotism of blacks.

In addition to racial implications, Honey addressed class issues in her comparison of the two publications with distinctive readerships. Egalitarian images were found more often in the *Saturday Evening Post*, which carried stories and ads for middle-class women, but the positive effect of propaganda on the images of white women did little to improve the representation of blacks. In the literature of *True Story*, which catered to working-class

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[71] Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*.

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women, the heroine identified with the achievements of the working class as a whole rather than with those of women. While propaganda designed to mobilize middle-class women reinforced the stereotype of black women, propaganda for the working class largely ignored them. Honey concluded that the progressive aspects of government propaganda were mediated by the use of narrative forms and conventions in magazine fiction to portray women's war work as a temporary extension of domesticity rather than an alternative. The images of women workers not only had little lasting effect in expanding restrictive gender norms but also increased the cultural appeal of the traditional family in postwar society.

Both Rupp and Honey indicated that progressive potential of mobilizing women for war work was curtailed by cultural responses to propaganda that reinforced rather than challenged traditional notions of gender roles. Defining mobilization in a narrow sense, however, they focused on paid employment without taking into account the significance of other aspects of women's war effort, which revolved around their traditional identity as mothers and housewives. Their evaluation of the social influence of national mobilization did not address the contradiction among different propaganda goals. As shown by Melva Joyce Baker's analysis of movies in World War II, the strategic deployment of images of gender in war propaganda can not be fully understood without a more comprehensive notion of mobilization. In her study of top-grossing films in the war years, Baker found that "the nation's commitment to the war effort was defined partially in terms of the importance of women's position in the home and family."[72] The most exalted heroine was not Rosie the

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[72] Melva Joyce Baker, *Images of Women in Film: The War Years, 1941-1945* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1980).

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Riveter but women who, like Mrs. Miniver, defended their traditional domains. She concluded that as the films indicated, the war strengthened rather than undermined traditional gender beliefs among Americans.

Feminist analyses of popular culture demonstrated the importance of analyzing the social implications of wartime discourses. As Margaret Higonnet and others noted "for many women the war years were perceived and remembered, both individually and collectively, through discourses that revived rather conventional gender relations."[73] Critical attention to the connections between propaganda goals and cultural products such as journalistic narratives can generate valuable insights into how gender norms were preserved through popular discourses that systematically designated unequal value to the roles and activities of women and men in wartime society.

Research Design

Research for the dissertation incorporated an analysis of selected news stories with an inquiry into the distribution of domestic propaganda by the Office of War Information to address three main questions: 1) How were the war activities of American women prioritized in the white press and the black press? 2) How were the terms of patriotic appeal articulated in news to coordinate the war effort of women at home and in the labor market with the imperative of national mobilization? 3) What did news representation of women as patriotic homemakers and war workers reveal about the social dynamics in the war years?

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[73] Higonnet and others, 12.

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News Analysis

The analysis of wartime news about women combined a quantitative approach to account for the diversity of women's war activities with a qualitative study to examine the rhetorical strategies, ideological references, and social implications of the patriotic appeals targeting women. The combination of methods, as Earl Babbie commented in his work on research methodology, provided the best way to ensure reliability and validity by examining both the manifest content and the latent content of communication.[74] Through a content analysis, the study sought to provide specific measures of editorial attitudes about women in the war by evaluating the manifest content--the visible, surface characteristics--of news reports. At the same time, the study also aimed to achieve depth through a textual analysis of journalistic narratives, which examined their latent content--the imbedded patterns of editorial bias and structures of meaning.

Sampling Procedure

To compare how the white press and the black press covered women's war effort, the study examined two metropolitan daily newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and two prominent black weekly newspapers, the *New York Amsterdam News* and the *Chicago Defender*. The match in circulation areas provided control over regional differences to achieve a more accurate comparison between the white newspapers and the black newspapers. The selection of individual newspapers was based on an evaluation of their overall significance indicated by factors such as commercial success, professional

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[74] Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, 5th ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1989), 298-99.

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newspapers had the highest circulation of all newspapers in their respective markets. The *Tribune*, for example, dominated the morning field of Chicago in 1942 with a daily circulation of more than one million.[75] The *Chicago Defender* and the *New York Amsterdam News* were among the "Big Five" that wielded tremendous influence during the war and continued to build their circulation to new heights after the war.[76] In addition to their high visibility, they were selected because only two daily black newspapers existed in the war years.[77] Since the majority of black newspapers were weeklies, the *Defender* and the *Amsterdam News* were considered more representative of the black press. Although during the war, the *New York Times* trailed behind several New York newspapers such as the *Mirror* and the *Daily News* in circulation,[78] it was chosen because of its status as an opinion leader

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[75] The *Tribune* had a daily circulation of 1,005,992 and a Sunday circulation of 1,186,410. Moreover, its significance as a news institution was bolstered by strong links in a chain, which extended to New York and Washington. See *Editor & Publisher International Year Book* 76:5 (January 30, 1943), 34.

[76] With a combined total average weekly circulation of 740,282 in 1944, the five leading black newspapers--the *Chicago Defender*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *Norfork Journal and Guide*, the *New York Amsterdam News*, and the *Baltimore Afro-American*--represented more than 46 percent of the total circulation of black newspapers. See Finkle, 51-52. At the beginning of the war in 1942, the *Defender* had a circulation of 100,000 and the *Amsterdam News*, 33,748. By the late 1940s, the *Defender*'s circulation had grown to 185,646, and the *Amsterdam News* had increased its circulation to 83,143 with two issues a week. See *Editor & Publisher International Year Book* 76:5 (January 30, 1943), 182, and 82: 6 (January 31, 1949), 238-240.

[77] The *Atlanta World* and the *Dayton Ohio Express* were the only two dailies in the black press. See Mott, 794-95.

[78] The *Times* had a daily circulation of 440,086 and a Sunday circulation of 790,334, which were low compared to the circulation of tabloids that relied on sensationalism to attract readers. For example, the *Mirror* sold 804, 684 copies on weekdays and 1,629,813 on Sunday. The *Daily News* boasted a daily circulation of more than two million and a Sunday circulation close to four million. See *Editor & Publisher International Year Book* 76:5 (January 30, 1943), 68.

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and important institution in American history. As journalism historian Sidney Kobre noted, "Many considered the *Times* the one United States national newspaper that has exerted a profound and deep influence on American journalism."[79]

Based on the time frame of the OWI's domestic operation, the analysis covered the period from June 1942 to December 1944. The focus on the mobilization period and hence the exclusion of the beginning and the later stages of the war served the purpose of the study, which was to examine the interplay between news coverage and government propaganda in the mobilization of women. From this period, 21 weeks were chosen randomly to determine what issues of the four newspapers to include in the content analysis. The sample of the black newspapers, which were weeklies published on Saturday, consisted of every issue of the *Chicago Defender* and the *New York Amsterdam News* in the selected weeks. Since the white newspapers were dailies, one day out of each of the 21 weeks was then selected to create a sample equal to that of the black weeklies in terms of the number of issues included. The particular day chosen from each week of the white newspapers was systematically sampled, starting with Monday and proceeding through the week with a sampling interval of one day. For example, for the second week selected for the sample of black newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Daily Tribune* published on that Tuesday were sampled. The purpose was to create a sample of the dailies with minimum biases resulting from features that appeared only on particular days of the week. The sampling scheme yielded a

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Sunday circulation close to four million. See *Editor & Publisher International Year Book* 76:5 (January 30, 1943), 68.

[79] Kobre, 587.

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total of eighty-four issues of newspapers for the content analysis, forty-two from the black newspapers and forty-two from the white newspapers. Appendix one provides a complete list of the dates of the newspapers included in the study.

Unit of Analysis

All non-combat news stories concerning the nation's war effort in the selected issues were examined to gain a broad understanding of the strategic positioning of images of female patriotism in relation to civilian mobilization in general. These included news reports and bulletins, feature stories, editorials, and columns on various topics such as gas rationing, war loan drives, draft deferments, and price ceilings. There were 940 articles on home front mobilization found in the white newspapers, and 964 in the black newspapers. Only stories specifically related to women, as indicated by the layout, the mode of address, the use of interviewing subjects, and the focus of photographic illustrations, were included in the content analysis. For example, in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on December 13, 1943, the report on new tokens for food points in the news section was considered a general interest story. The advice to housewives on how to budget ration points in the women's page was categorized as a story of special interest to women--the unit of analysis in the study.[80] Thus, for the white newspapers, 356 stories focusing on women (the margin of error was 5.2 percent) were analyzed, and for the black newspapers, 427 stories (the margin of error was 4.7 percent).

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[80] "New Food Point Tokens Will Go Into Use Feb. 27," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 December 1943, 8; and Mary Meade, "Ration Budget Menus to Feed Two for a Week," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 December 1943, 17.

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Coding Categories

To gather data on the distribution of editorial emphasis on different aspects of women's war effort, the stories about women were coded by the types of work that were related to the war including housework, paid work, military service, and volunteer work. The housework category included, for example, stories on the ramifications of women patronizing black markets, the nutritional value of ration alternatives, the virtue of Victory gardening, and the importance of conserving fuel and salvaging waste paper. The category of paid work covered stories on employment opportunities for women in various industries, accomplishments of women in traditionally male jobs, the establishment of day care centers for women war workers, postwar prospects for women in the work force, and hiring discrimination against black women. All stories about women in various branches of the armed forces such as the WAC (Women's Army Corps), the WAVES (the Women's Reserve, U. S. Navy), the SPARS (the Women's Reserve, U. S. Coast Guard Reserve), and the Marine Corps Women's Reserve belonged to the category of military service. Stories about women offering unpaid services, for example, filling Christmas stockings for servicemen, entertaining soldiers at the local U. S. O. (United Service Organizations), sewing garments and raising funds for the war relief programs of the Red Cross, and engaging in civilian defense effort such as the Aircraft Warning Service and the Women's Motor Corps, fell into the category of volunteer work. When a story mentioned more than one war activity, the most prominent one based on the emphasis of the lead, the slanting of the headline, and the visual accent of photographs was coded. Although the stories varied in length and size, each represented an editorial judgment in terms of inclusion and exclusion.

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The coding scheme thus offered a productive way to obtain quantitative data on how the newspapers prioritized various roles of women in wartime society.

To identify peaks and declines of emphasis on different types of work in the process of mobilization, the study was further divided into five six-month periods. In addition to the category of work portrayed, the stories were coded in terms of their placement in either the regular news section of the paper or the women's/society pages. In light of the professional and social connotations of a separate section for female readership discussed earlier in the literature review, the information on layout served to indicate whether the split between public and private spheres was invoked in news to construct the boundaries of women's war work. As Cynthia Enloe noted, the American mobilization for World War II required the willingness of women to use their limited private resources to resolve the gender contradictions in public policies.[81] By determining the forum where women's war effort was represented, the study explored how the construction of separate and gendered spheres functioned in news as a key strategy in home front mobilization.[82]

Textual Analysis

The content analysis achieved a comprehensive perspective on the role of the press in the mobilization of women by tracing all four venues of war activities presented in the news.

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[81] Cynthia H Enloe, "Was It 'The Good War' for Women?" *American Quarterly* 37 (Fall 1985): 629.

[82] Arguing that the distinction between pubic and private spheres is historically constructed, Linda K. Kerber urged historians to analyze the politics of such a separation. See Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75: 1 (June 1988): 9-39.

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The quantitative approach provided a topography of news about women's war effort to anchor the critique of news stories about women's role in civilian defense as consumers, homemakers, and war workers presented in the second and third parts of the dissertation. The results from the content analysis also informed the comparison of how white and black newspapers approached their wartime female readerships in the conclusion. The textual analysis focused on how the press addressed conflicting demands on women's war effort at home and in the labor market under wartime conditions. To illuminate the more discrete attributes of these story such their tone, angle, and use of analogies and frame of references, the study relied on a qualitative thematic approach informed by a broad range of primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources consulted for the study consisted mainly of theoretical explications on the social and cultural aspects of war by feminist scholars, which provided the analytical resources for the critique, and research on women in World War II by general historians, which offered background information on wartime life. Primary sources included general interest stories on the home front found in the newspapers sampled for the content analysis and evidence gathered from archival research on the interface between journalism and propaganda.

Archival Research

The study examined the relationship between the press and the government in the dissemination of domestic propaganda to place wartime news coverage of women in the context of national mobilization. Three primary sources including the records of the Office of War Information, trade journals, and contemporary observations by media scholars and commentators were investigated to shed light on the interactions between journalists and

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propagandists. Archival research conducted at the National Records Center at College Park, Maryland, focused on the records of the Domestic Operations Branch of the OWI. The collection of pamphlets, internal memoranda, press releases, correspondence between OWI personnel and media professionals, reports and surveys concerning the success of various war campaigns showed how the agency rallied media support for home front mobilization. The papers of the Women's Unit in the News Bureau in particular documented the effort of the OWI to raise the patriotic awareness of women by adapting the news service of the government to the format of women's pages. For example, to encourage greater press pick-up of OWI material, the women's unit crafted publications specifically for women's editors with stories and illustrations ready for reprint in their own newspapers. In addition, the OWI actively solicited the feedback of women's editors on how to make war information from Washington more accessible and appealing, underscoring the importance of newspapers, particularly their women's pages, in the distribution of domestic propaganda.

To understand media responses to OWI initiatives, all issues of *Editor & Publisher*, the flagship trade journal of the newspaper industry, from 1941 to 1944 were screened to glean insights into professional perspectives on the purpose, practice, and rationale of the participation of the newspaper industry in the war effort. Publications of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the Newspaper Guild from this period were also consulted. Among the three professional journals, *Editor and Publisher* contained the best chronicle of the war service provided by the press to the government. Although it catered mainly to mainstream newspapers, black newspapers no doubt shared similar business interests with white publications. Their unique concerns as minority newspapers were taken

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into consideration based on additional information available from secondary sources on the black press in wartime. Furthermore, articles in the *Journalism Quarterly*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and the "Press" section of *Time* and *Newsweek* provided comments on the effectiveness of the OWI and the role of the press in wartime. Overall the wealth of information gathered from these three sources enhanced the textual analysis of news about women's war effort with rich details on the propaganda goals and publicity strategies of the OWI, and how they were implemented and mediated in press accounts.

Conclusion

Rather than assuming a direct correspondence between propaganda goals and news content, the dissertation's emphasis on the interplay between the government and the newspaper industry in home front mobilization reflected a contextualized cultural approach to journalism history. Proposed by James Carey as an alternative to the Progressive paradigm, the cultural approach seeks to explore how news reports function not merely as a chronicle of facts but as a symbolic form to organize social experience into consciousness and how consciousness finds public expression as journalism.[83] Richard Johnson's emphasis on a more comprehensive research framework in his broad critique of cultural studies further underscored the importance of the social context of news. He argued that the traditional approach focusing on the reading of a text in isolation limited our understanding of culture. To gain a broader and more integrated perspective, the analyst must locate the subject of

[83] Carey, "The Problems of Journalism History," 27.

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study in a circuit of cultural production and consumption, which consisted of four distinctive but interrelated moments: production, texts, readings, and lived culture.[84]

The involvement of the newspaper industry in the war effort constituted an important, if obscured, dimension of the news stories read by the large readership commanded by the four newspapers selected for the study. Understanding the significance of these news accounts required careful consideration of the relationship between the OWI and the newspaper industry as part of the context of production. The research design of the study therefore aimed to facilitate an analysis of journalistic representations of women anchored in the specific conditions of news production in wartime. To establish the historical context in which the appeals of female patriotism circulated, the next chapter of the dissertation will explain how the bureaucratic structure of the OWI incorporated the editorial and advertising resources of the press and why the newspaper industry was interested in cooperating with the government in home front mobilization.

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[84] Richard Johnson, "What Is Cultural Studies Anyway?" *Social Text: Theory/Culture/Ideology* 16 (Winter 1986-87): 38-80.

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CHAPTER II

NEWS AND PROPAGANDA ON THE HOME FRONT

In July 1942, a special series of advertisements greeted readers of both of the dailies in Rochester, New York. Sponsored by thirty-five companies in the community, the ads, rather than selling their services and products, sought to impress upon the minds of the citizens of Rochester that the country was deeply in the war although the city remained much the same as in peace time.[1] For most Americans, like the residents of Rochester, the media offered a sense of the relevance of World War II--a prolonged foreign war whose profound impact appeared distant from the reality of their daily lives. Removed from the immediate devastation of war, the American home front was uniquely blessed with prosperity as war production revitalized the economy. In contrast to the hardship of the Depression years, many people, enjoying higher earnings and standards of living, had a good time in the war years. As a supermarket owner whose business did very well serving war workers observed, "The war was not really in our consciousness as a war."[2]

With their incomes boosted by the war economy, the savings of Americans in 1942 were estimated to reach a record high of $40 billion. To prevent the "loose" dollars from feeding into inflation, the Treasury Department specifically directed the Second War Loan

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[1] "War Reminder Ads," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 July 1942, 37.

[2] Michael C. C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 129-30.

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campaign toward small buyers in order to channel the increased buying power of the public into bond purchases.[3] In addition to helping the government finance the war effort, more importantly, the sale of war bonds and stamps, as other home front war programs did, served to raise the war consciousness of civilians. As Elmer Davis, director of the Office of War Information, said in his assessment of civilian morale in 1942, Americans were not yet "ankle-deep" into the war effort.[4] The lack of enthusiastic support by the public, a prevailing concern of the administration since the beginning of war, led officials such as Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr. "to use bonds to sell the war, rather than vice versa."[5]

To reach every home in the nation with the plea "They Give Their Lives--You Lend Your Money," Morgenthau enlisted the help of newspaper publishers and editors. After a meeting with Morgenthau, representatives of newspapers and press associations around the country formed the Allied Newspaper Council to promote the bond campaign. All sections of the press, including dailies, weeklies, foreign language newspapers, labor and farm publications, responded with overwhelming support. Even the black press, despite its criticism of the hypocrisy of war rhetoric, which purported to secure freedom for all but ignored racism at home, encouraged bond purchases as an expression of the loyalty of blacks.

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[3] Walter A. Steigleman, "The Second War Loan Campaign--Its Organization and Operation," *Journalism Quarterly* 20: 2 (June 1943): 130.

[4] Hillier Krieghbaum, "The Office of War Information And Government News Policy," *Journalism Quarterly* 19: 3 (September 1942): 246; and A. H. Feller, "OWI on the Home Front," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 7: 1 (Spring 1943): 57.

[5] John Morton Blum, *V Was For Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 17.

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Black newspapers in the New York area, for example, held a two-month drive to sell $2 million of war bonds.[6]

As the backbone of the drive, the nation's newspapers publicized the campaign slogan in banner headlines from coast to coast on April 12, 1943. Many papers issued special sections or whole editions dedicated to the bond drive. In addition to editorial space, the campaign generated 73,938 advertisements in daily and weekly newspapers. Valued at more than $4.5 million, the publicity was contributed by both advertisers and publishers.[7] In all, the bond drive, according to the Treasury Department, enjoyed the largest amount of space devoted to a single service in the history of American media. By September 1942, newspaper carriers had sold $50 million in war stamps. In November, thousands of newspapers also became official issuing agents for the sale of war bonds at the invitation of the Treasury Department. In a letter expressing the appreciation of the government, Morgenthau noted "the magnificent help which the press of America is giving to the war bond campaign."[8]

The contribution of the newspaper industry to the Second War Loan campaign highlighted the role of the press as a champion for the fighting spirit of Americans. News promotion of the war effort, as Morgenthau commented, helped "demonstrate to our armed forces, our allies and our enemies what a voluntary and united effort we can accomplish on

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[6] "Negro Bond Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 April 1943, 106.

[7] Steigleman, 136-38.

[8] "Newspaper Carriers Sell 50 Million in War Stamps," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 September 1942, 31; and "Newspapers Qualify As War Bond Issuers," *New York Times*, 19 November 1942, 1.

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the American home front."[9] While the government relied on the expansive reach of print news to manage civilian morale, the newspaper industry thrived on its increasing importance as a central forum of war information to attract readers as well as advertisers. Under the symbiotic dynamics between the press and government, patriotic appeals were fashioned to align women's priorities with war objectives. It is therefore important to examine the operation of domestic propaganda by the government in relation to the undercurrents of professional ideology and business interests motivating the war effort of the newspaper industry.

The American Press Goes to War

Interventionist or not, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, rival newspapers united in the mission to hasten the final victory of the Allies. In May 1942, members of the American Newspaper Publishers Association made a pledge during their annual meeting to show President Roosevelt their "individual and unswerving support in this hour of crisis."[10] The Negro Newspaper Publishers Association, formed in February 1940, also reiterated the full support of the black press in its annual conference. Later during the year, the American Newspaper Guild sent a similar message to the President showing the commitment of more than 18,000 newspaper workers.[11] Local chapters of the national organizations and state

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[9] Letter of Secretary Morgenthau to publishers, 2 April 1943, quoted in Steigleman, 133.

[10] "ANPA Talks War," *Newsweek*, 4 May 1942, 60.

[11] "Murray Keynotes Guild's Role in Wartime," *The Guild Reporter*, 4 July 1942, 3; and "Full Program for Wartime Is Approved," *The Guild Reporter*, 4 July 1942, 1, 13.

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press associations also declared war policies and implemented war programs to mobilize the resources of the industry.[12]

A Patriotic Mission for the Journalism Profession

With a strong patriotic sentiment in the news room, if all journalists did not act as "patriots first and reporters second"[13] in the words of Byron Price, director of the Office of Censorship, at least many of them embraced both roles. As reiterated in professional forums such as *Editor & Publisher* and the *Guild Reporter*, the wartime duty of journalists was to keep the public informed as well as inspired.[14] "The newspaper industry has a product of its own, too," declared the Newspaper Guild, "It is citizen morale."[15] Energized by the challenge of national mobilization, the role of the press in society was reformulated to incorporate the traditional journalistic obligation of providing news with a new sense of civic advocacy. The attempt of *Editor & Publisher* to develop a national pool of editorial ideas to

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[12] "Guild's War Course Is Charted," *The Guild Reporter*, 15 January 1942, 1; "With the Auxiliary: Beat Hitler Week Coming Up," *The Guild Reporter*, 15 January 1942, 6; "Guild Gives 55,750 for War," *The Guild Reporter*, 1 May 1942, 1; "Guild Promotes Victory Sales," *The Guild Reporter*, 15 March 1942, 6; "War Program Is Advanced by Guildsmen," *The Guild Reporter*, 15 December 1942, 6; "Tennessee Press Meets in Nashville," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 July 1942, 42; and "Contributed Space," *Editor & Publisher*, 20 February 1943, 8.

[13] "Price Says Press Stimulated Morale," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 October 1942, 10.

[14] "'Whereas...Therefore Be It Resolved...,'" *The Guild Reporter*, 15 March 1942, 6; "Comics at War," *Editor & Publisher*, 21 November 1942, 22; T. S. Irvin, "Wartime Service," *Editor & Publisher*, 5 December 1942, 36; "'Typical' Daily's Record Shows Aid to War Effort," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 July 1943, 37; and "Ad Bureau Release," *Editor & Publisher*, 31 July 1943, 28.

[15] "Boston Offers Program for Morale," *The Guild Reporter*, 15 March 1942, 6.

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help win the war illustrated the dual responsibilities of the press in wartime society: "U. S. dailies have a wartime duty to do beyond the printing of news. As leaders and influencers of the civilian population they are obligated to *arouse* civilians to the war's importance; *encourage* them to buy bonds, save rubber and volunteer for defense work and in other respects be good citizens, *promote* civilian and soldier morale [emphasis included]."[16]

As patriotism became the center of the social responsibility of the media in wartime. publishers, editors, and reporters strove to stimulate enthusiasm for the war effort through the news platform.[17] In addition to extensive coverage of the war, the *New York Times*, for example, donated a 1,000-line space each week to leading advertising agencies for their most effective appeal to the patriotism of Americans. Even the *Chicago Tribune*, noted for its anti-Roosevelt editorial policy, demonstrated tremendous support for the war effort. During the first year of the war, the paper devoted 14 percent of its editorial content to building civilian morale. Worth more than $3,300,000 if sold to advertisers, the amount of space represented more than 70 percent of the total expenditures of general advertising in the *Tribune*.[18] Although not as prominent as metropolitan dailies such as the *Times* and the *Tribune*, small-town newspapers, which were more attuned to local conditions, played an instrumental part in generating interest in the government's vast war program throughout the

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[16] "Suggest Newspaper Pool of War-Winning Ideas," *Editor & Publisher*, 4 July 1942, 14.

[17] "Daily Aids U.S.O.," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 July 1942, 42; "N. Y. Times Gives 1,000-Line Space for War Message," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 December 1942, 12; "Contributed Space," *Editor & Publisher*, 20 February 1943, 8; and "Milwaukee Survey Shows Extent of Daily's Aid in War," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 June 1943, 52.

[18] "How a Newspaper Contributes to War," *Editor & Publisher*, 30 January 1943, 24.

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country. In the mountain valley city of Yakima, Washington, for example, the *Daily Republic* contributed more than 7,500 inches in editorial space and almost 6,000 inches in advertising space to the bond campaigns alone in the first two years of the war. Other war programs such the Red Cross War Fund and the U. S. Crop Corps also received extensive coverage in the paper. Publisher W. H. Robertson said that he hoped to help put the country "on the proper basis for an all-out war effort," because newspapers, with their reach into the community, were "better equipped than any other medium for the selling job necessary to this accomplishment."[19]

Geared toward promoting the commitment of the public to every phase of the war effort, the public service of the newspaper industry blurred the fine line between the practice of journalism and the dissemination of domestic propaganda. The approach of the press to home front mobilization reflected a firm if somewhat naive conviction in the persuasive power of words shared by many in the journalism profession as well as in the burgeoning field of government war information service.[20] They believed that dramatic and vivid presentation

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[19] "'Typical' Daily's Record," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 July 1943, 37.

[20] "Fourth Estate," *Newsweek*, 17 November 1941, 60-61. The outbreak of war brought a mushrooming network of government information services to the nation's capital in 1941. In addition to the expanding public relations units found in almost every federal and military agency, an assortment of new organizations such as the Office of Emergency Management and the Office of Facts and Figures were created to coordinate the dissemination of defense information. During the fiscal year of 1941, the fledging machinery of war information cost the government $10,000,000, with 1,400 journalists, stenographers, and clerks working in nine federal bureaus to churn out information on the Army, the Navy, the Treasury and State Departments, and other war agencies. For the early development of government information services in World War II, see Robert L. Bishop and LaMar S. Mackay, "Mysterious Silence, Lyrical Scream," *Journalism Monographs* 11 (May 1971): 1-21.

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of the country's war effort would eliminate public apathy, which hampered unified support for the government's war measures. The job for the press, as a 1942 editorial in *Editor & Publisher* reiterated, was to "guide public thought to the best of editorial minds."[21] From military recruitment, sales of war bonds, promotion of victory gardens, to drives for womanpower, the newspaper industry joined force with the government in more than fifty campaigns to build a home front army of patriotic citizens.[22] As journalism historian Sidney Kobre noted, the media turned themselves into social instruments to carry out civic and war objectives. [23] Acknowledging the function of the press in home front mobilization, Byron Price noted that "the problem of public morale would be beyond solution in this free country but for the daily services of newspapers."[24] Republican Representative Charles A. Halleck from Indiana also hailed the press as "one of our most potent internal weapons."[25]

The leadership role of the press in building civilian morale not only gained the appreciation of government officials but also became popular within the industry as well.[26]

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[21] "Comics and the War," *Editor & Publisher*, 21 November 1942, 22.

[22] Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism, A History: 1690-1960* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), 766.

[23] Sidney Kobre, *Development of American Journalism* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1969), 688.

[24] "Price Says Press Stimulated Morale," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 October 1942, 10.

[25] *San Francisco Chronicle*, 5 March 1943, 6.

[26] To those in the publishing industry, the most controversial issue about the morale boosting function of newspapers was the conflict between accepting war advertising sponsored directly by the government and maintaining the independence of the Fourth Estate. Generally publishers were in favor of the plea of *Editor & Publisher* for government advertising while some editors were concerned about the strings attached such as increasing government control and loss of public trust. See "The Press: Bundles for Publishers?" *Time*,

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Only occasionally was criticism registered about the integrity of the journalism profession as it ventured further into the quagmire of government propaganda.[27] In July 1943, at the invitation of the domestic branch of the Office of War Information, nine industry leaders formed an advisory committee presumably to improve the service provided by the agency for the press. Headed by Roy Roberts, managing editor of the *Kansas City Star* and president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the committee, perhaps anticipating disapproval, insisted that it was interested only in making war news more accessible to the public. Denying involvement in helping the government sell the war to Americans, the public statement conceded nevertheless that the committee's goal to maintain an open flow of war information also served to raise civilian morale.[28]

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4 May 1942, 68; "Government Use of Advertising Proposed to Speed War Effort," *Editor & Publisher*, 17 January 1942, 3; "Not a Subsidy," *Editor & Publisher*, 14 February 1942, 22; "Two State Groups Urge U. S. to Use Paid Advertising," *Editor & Publisher*, 28 February 1942, 8; "A.S.N.E. to Vote on Question of Government Paid Advertising," *Editor & Publisher*, 25 April 1942, 17; and "U. S. Department of Commerce Strongly Urges Use of Paid Space by the Government," *American Press* 60:6 (April 1942): 3.

[27] In the wake of World War I, propaganda acquired a negative stereotype of shameless falsehood and insidious influence. Because of the war hysteria and exaggerated hope for peace incited by the work of the Creel Committee, Americans grew particularly wary of the dissemination of domestic propaganda. The means of mass manipulation was considered a violation of the principle of democracy as an exercise of individual free will. It was under the specter of public distrust that the American government established its domestic propaganda machinery in World War II, carefully using the term "war information" to describe its operation in order to avoid the suspicion of brainwashing the public. See Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 1-7.

[28] "OWI Newspaper Advisory Group Lists 7 Principles," *Editor & Publisher*, 17 July 1943, 12, 22.

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The disclaimer did not keep critics from voicing concerns about conflict of interest. "The propaganda interests of any government in war or peace are incompatible with the complete freedom of news and of opinion which editors should maintain," warned Carl W. Ackerman, dean of the graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, demanding that Roberts resign from the OWI position. In response, Roberts defended the work of the committee, saying that "If the war isn't won there won't be any free press or independent journalism. That's our first job."[29] Echoing Robert's position, others in the news industry saw themselves not as agents of domestic propaganda but as leaders in the fight for the American way of life--a life built on the principal of free enterprise without which the business of newspaper publishing could not survive.[30] The pages of a newspaper represented simply a powerful medium of public education at the disposal of patriotic journalists to help readers fulfill their civic responsibilities in wartime society.

In contrast to the mainstream press, whose strategy for mobilization emphasized the obligations of American citizens, the black press advocated full rights for minorities in its approach to the war. Despite the moderate increase in job opportunities, the war intensified, rather than alleviated, the social predicaments facing blacks. Widespread race riots in the crisis period from 1941 through 1943 registered increasing racial tension and discontent among blacks. Continuing discrimination both in the military and civilian sectors further

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[29] "Roy Roberts Refuses to Resign from OWI Group," *Editor & Publisher*, 17 July 1943, 12.

[30] Explaining to the nation's publishers why it was important for newspapers to help win the war, the letter from Frank Tripp, chairman of the Allied Newspaper Council, illustrated the internal rationalization for the industry's war effort. See Steigleman, 133-34.

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affected the sagging morale of blacks. A poll undertaken by the Office of Facts and Figures in New York City in May 1942 found that only 44 percent of blacks interviewed felt that their lives had improved since the war and the majority did not believe that their lives would be better after the war. A total of 18 percent actually felt that they would be better off under Japanese rule.[31] Reflecting the general skepticism of blacks toward the war effort, James G. Thompson, in a letter to the *Pittsburgh Courier* in January 1942, posed the question: "Should I sacrifice to live 'half American'?" He called on blacks to defend the United States abroad and fight for true democracy at home as well, urging them to "adopt the double VV for a double victory. The first V for victory over our enemies from without, the second V for Victory over our enemies from within."[32]

The next issue of *Courier* initiated the campaign with four Double V drawings. Other papers quickly adopted the "Double V" platform to foster positive attitudes toward the war effort while they continued the tradition of protest in the black press.[33] Denounced by critics as a call for an immediate racial revolution, the campaign in fact aimed to channel the growing militancy of blacks into full participation in the war as a strategy to promote Allied

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[31] Office of Facts and Figures, "The Negro Looks at the War," Report No. 21, 19 May 1942 (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress), cited in Charles David Lloyd, "American Society and Values in World War II from the Publications of the Office of War Information" (Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 1975), 202-203.

[32] James G. Thompson, "Should I Sacrifice to Live 'Half American'?" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 31 January 1942, 3.

[33] For the rise of the Double V campaign in the black press, see Patrick S. Washburn, "The Pittsburgh *Courier's* Double V Campaign in 1942." *American Journalism* 3:2 (1986): 73-86; and Lee Finkle, *Forum for Protest: The Black Press during World War II* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Press, 1975), 108-28.

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war aims while demanding racial equality in the United States. Opposing any form of civil resistance, the black press orchestrated the campaign mainly to motivate blacks to contribute to the war effort by connecting the struggle against racism with the war's ideological commitment to freedom and democracy. The Double V stance thus allowed the black press to expose discrimination in the defense program and at the same time cooperate with the government to mobilize the support of blacks. Working with various war agencies such as the War Production Board, the Selective Service, and the OWI, black publishers sought to convince their readers through the rhetoric of the Double V policy that blacks too had a stake in the outcome of the war.

Wartime Challenges for the Business of Newspaper Publishing

The war service of newspapers grew as much out of the respective ideological agenda of the white press and the black press as the common concerns of publishers with the well-being of the industry in the uncertain climate of wartime economy. Although readership peaked during the war years, the enterprise of newspaper publishing nevertheless faced new challenges such as increasing government control, competition with other media, mainly the radio, and above all the specter of decreasing advertising revenues. Promotion of war campaigns offered an all-around solution to alleviate the pressure to survive and prosper as a profit-oriented business. Repeatedly urging newspapers to publicize their contribution to the war effort, Frank Tripp, general manager of the Gannett newspapers and chairman of the Allied Newspaper Council and the Bureau of Advertising of the ANPA, told publishers in an off-record address that "we need it not alone to take our place with industry and our advertisers who are paying their money to build their own case, but we need it to crystallize

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in the minds of the people and the government that we are having a big hand in the winning of this war. . . . if we are to emerge from the crisis with the public appreciation and the honor and the glory which are due the American press."[34] Echoing Tripp's emphasis on the promotional value of war coverage, Basil L. Walters, executive editor of the *Minneapolis Star-Journal and Tribune*, touted the achievement of the press in gaining "good-will and better understanding of the value of the newspaper" through war service. At the 1943 conference of the National Newspaper Promotion Association in New York, he urged all newspapers to be more aggressive in their war promotion both from the standpoint of social contribution and "intelligent self-interest."[35]

A genuine desire to contribute to a larger cause no doubt motivated publishers to promote the war effort, but potential pressure from the government also presented an important incentive for them to help with the distribution of propaganda messages. Wartime shortages of material and labor kept businesses including the newspaper industry under the increasing authority of the federal government. Publishers, for example, were subject to the orders of the Selective Service for draft deferments to retain their employees on the mechanical and editorial staffs; the restrictions of the Office of Price Administration to provide gas rations for their reporters; and the regulations of War Production Board to obtain their share of newsprint and other materials such as zinc, copper, and brass. To publishers of

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[34] "Tripp Tells 4-A Press Is Asset in War Effort," *Editor & Publisher*, 21 November 1942, 11; and Frank Tripp, "Urges Newspapers to Promote Own Interests," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 June 1944, 53.

[35] T. S. Irvin, "NNPA Plans Greater Role in Press Drives Aiding War Effort," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 April 1943, 19.

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black newspapers, the power of the government posed an even more daunting obstacle. Through the war years, FBI investigations and the threat of sedition charges haunted the black press, which was viewed by the government as an obstruction to the war effort because of its attack on racism.[36] Aside from the FBI harassment, black publishers faced a particular hardship under regulations holding their metropolitan weeklies, even those that were nationally circulated, to the same newsprint quota as smaller white country weeklies. They suspected that the government was using inequitable restrictions to retaliate for their criticism of the war effort.[37] In addition to the difficulty of obtaining necessary trade material, black newspapers struggled also with the lack of sufficient access in the process of gathering government information. Many officials refused to allow black correspondents in their press briefings let alone grant them personal interviews.

In order to function as smoothly as possible under such wartime curbs, it was important for both white and black newspapers to gain the good will of the government through cooperation in publicizing war programs.[38] Official recognition of the industry as an

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[36] For the wartime struggle of the black press for First Amendment rights, see Patrick S. Washburn, "FDR Versus His Own Attorney General: The Struggle over Sedition, 1941-42," *Journalism Quarterly* 62:4 (Winter 1985): 717-24; "J. Edgar Hoover and the Black Press in World War II," *Journalism History* 13: 1 (Spring 1986): 26-33; and *A Question of Sedition: The Federal Government's Investigation of the Black Press during World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[37] John D. Stevens, "From the Back of the Foxhole: Black Correspondents in World War II," *Journalism Monographs* 27 (1987): 7; and "Negro Press Holds Meeting in New York," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 June 1944, 18.

[38] "Newsprint Unaffected in WPB Program," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 July 1942, 12; "Not Realistic," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 July 1942, 20; "OWI Supports Publishers in Protest on Zinc," *Editor & Publisher*, 15 August 1942, 9; "ASNE Fights For Free Press Against Federal Controls," *Editor & Publisher*, 20 February 1943, 7; and Walter E. Schneider,

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essential part of the war effort often led to benefits for publishers such as exemption from tightening restrictions on telephone installations in 1942 and expansion of editorial personnel on the list of "critical occupations" in the manpower crunch in 1943.[39] The pressure of government surveillance also prompted outspoken black publishers to show their good faith intentions through promotion of war aims. In a meeting between Attorney General Francis Biddle and *Chicago Defender* publisher John Sengstacke in June 1942, the government agreed not to indict any black publisher for sedition. In response, Sengstacke promised that the black press would promote the war effort if black reporters could gain more access to government press conferences.[40] Cooperation with the government in raising the morale of blacks helped the black press establish itself as an effective and responsible agent in the preservation of national unity. Furthermore, the role of the black press in home front mobilization enhanced the political leverage of black publishers as leaders of their community. For instance, in a conference with President Roosevelt on February 5, 1944, the Negro Newspaper Publishers Association presented a twenty-one point statement of current and postwar aims of blacks. Bringing three months of agitation to an end, the meeting culminated in the certification of the first black White House correspondent. Five days later, Harry S.

"ANPA Acts to Save Free Press Threatened by Wartime Curbs," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 April 1943 9.

[39] "Press Exempt," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 September 1942, 4; "Manpower Pinch," *Editor & Publisher*, 9 January 1943, 22; "News Editors, Photogs Added to 'Critical List,'" *Editor & Publisher*, 6 February 1943, 32; and "Four Newspaper Jobs Remain 'Essential' in New Draft List," *Editor & Publisher*, 21 August 1943, 6.

[40] Washburn, "J. Edgar Hoover," 28-29.

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McAlpin, former chief of the *Chicago Defender* Washington bureau, attended the President's press conference as the correspondent of the *Atlanta Daily World*.[41]

Aside from production difficulties posed by government regulations, newspapers were threatened by the rise of radio, whose ubiquitous household presence seemed to encroach on the sphere of influence wielded by the press as the primary medium of public communication. Claims about war contribution from the broadcasting industry such as "$100,000,000 Worth of Talent and Time," "300,000,000 Listeners a Week," and "891 Stations Broadcast 8,000 Messages a Day,"[42] spurred the newspaper industry on in the race for the attention, trust, and appreciation of the public. Extensive coverage of the ever changing war directives offered newspapers much-needed opportunities to boost their popularity by helping readers adjust to wartime conditions. Through detailed reports of the latest information on how to save, how to find war jobs, and how to conserve resources, the press sought to establish an outstanding record of public service by interpreting the nation's complicated war effort in local terms that affected the everyday life of Americans.

The Financial Appeal of War Advertising

War publicity was particularly significant to white newspapers because it enhanced their financial prospect. At the early stage of the war when manufacturers switched to war production, a gloomy outlook on advertising haunted the newspaper industry. The

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[41] "Negroes Ask Right to Press Galleries," *Editor & Publisher*, 20 November 1943, 20; and "First Negro Newsman Covers White House," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 February 1944, 37.

[42] T. S. Irvin, "Paper Should Record Their War Contribution," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 July 1943, 30.

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advertising field projected a loss of 80 percent of business in the course of the war due to the lack of consumers goods to sell.[43] In light of the cutback in World War I, which eventually forced more than 2,300 newspapers into suspension,[44] the plunging index of advertising activity was particularly devastating to white newspapers because they depended on advertising rather than circulation as the main source of revenue. The fear of loss in linage was soon offset by the rise in war advertising. With the blessing of the Treasury ruling that a "reasonable" advertising expenditure to maintain good will was permissible as a corporate income tax deduction,[45] businesses continued to advertise throughout the war years to keep their brand names visible. Those no longer offering civilian goods, however, could not justify huge expenses on direct product advertising for tax purposes. Even for companies still selling to the public, the traditional pitch that encouraged unlimited consumption was not as viable given the government's concern with inflation and conserving national resources.

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[43] L. D. H. Weld, "Advertising during Two World Wars," *Printer's Ink*, 25 January 1943, 16.

[44] In addition to the lack of advertising support, various repressive laws also contributed to the demise of some of the newspapers that went out of business in World War I. "Importance of Advertising," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 July 1942, 20; and "Ark. Press Discusses Wartime Problems," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 July 1942, 42.

[45] For example, the Internal Revenue Service said in a statement in September 1942 that "the bureau realizes that it may be necessary for taxpayers now engaged in war production to maintain, through advertising, their trade names and the knowledge of the quality of their products and good will built up over past years, so that when they return to peace time production their names and the quality of their products will be known to the public." See "Necessary Ads Are Allowed in Tax Deduction," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 September 1942, 32; "Advertising as Government Sees It," *Printer's Ink*, 9 October 1942, 13-14, 28; and "Wartime Use of Advertising Acknowledged by Treasury," *Advertising Age*, 31 August 1942.

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Instead both institutional and retail advertising turned to the patriotic appeal, and sponsoring publicity of war causes on the home front became a common public relations strategy.[46]

In addition to the need for a fresh promotional angle, the crusade of the War Advertising Council made tie-ins with war programs popular in advertising. Representing a united front of advertisers, agencies, and media, the Council was created to defend the legitimacy of the practice of advertising, which not only appeared to be superfluous in the wartime economy but also suffered from general public distrust as a result of the consumer movement.[47] In response, the industry launched an aggressive campaign to improve its image and to prevent drastic curtailment by the government through advertising contribution to the war effort.[48] Eager to render its service available to the government, the Council rallied more than 400 agencies to send the American public "a war message in every ad."[49]

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[46] Statements of President Roosevelt on several occasions illustrated the government's appreciation of the role of advertising in financing the publicity of war information. In a message to the 38th annual convention of the Advertising Federation of America, Roosevelt, thanking advertisers for reiterating "the desire for liberty and freedom" in their war effort, reassured the industry its place in wartime economy. See "Advertising in Wartime," *Newsweek*, 6 July 1942, 49; and Blum, 18-19.

[47] For the wartime struggle of the advertising industry, see "That Was 1942," *Printer's Ink*, 5 February 1943, 148; "Educators Called for Curtailing of Ads," *Printer's Ink*, 8 January 1943, 52; "Advertising in the War," *Time*, 22 March 1943, 68; and Frank W. Fox, *Madison Avenue Goes to War: The Strange Military Career of American Advertising, 1941-45* (Provo, Utah: Brigham University Press, 1975), 49-66.

[48] P. H Erbes, Jr., "Advertising Agencies Are Contributing Many Thousands of Hours to War Effort," *Printer's Ink*, 27 November 1942, 60, 62, 64; and "World's Greatest System of Mass Communication Is at Call of U. S. Government," *Printer's Ink*, 10 April 1942, 33.

[49] "'War Message in Every Ad' Set Up as Goal of Field," *Advertising Age*, 14 June 1943, 8; and "Manual Out to Help Sell War Theme Ads," *Editor & Publisher*, 13 May 1944, 58.

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Throughout the war years, advertisers supported every war objective of the government as the number of campaigns served by the Council increased from fourteen in 1942 to sixty-two in 1944.[50] As shown by the $352,650,000 worth of advertising contributed to home front campaigns in 1943, the advertising industry successfully weathered its wartime crisis by converting the commercial tool of persuasion into an important extension of domestic propaganda.[51]

Eager to tap the trend of wartime advertising, the American Newspaper Publishers Association started its public relations effort early in the war with a booklet titled "Advertising Goes to War" to showcase the value of newspaper advertising as "a vital war weapon on the home front."[52] As the war progressed, the publication grew into a regular series, promoting newspapers as the ideal medium for the war effort of advertisers, whose enthusiasm pumped new lifeblood into the nation's press. "It is evident that a lot of space has been sold in connection with national and community war efforts," a newspaper advertising executive observed in July 1942, "and an important new source of advertising has

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[50] "War Theme Ads $302,000,000, Council Reports," *Advertising Age*, 23 April 1945, 59.

[51] "Council Reveals Sum Spent on 1943 War Ads," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 March 1944, 32; and "$352,650,000 of War Ads Placed in 1943," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 June 1944, 62.

[52] "Ad Bureau Issues War Supplement," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 September 1942, 16; Dr. Miller McClintock, "Newspaper Advertising Playing Vital Part in War Effort," *Editor & Publisher*, 26 September 1942, 7 (NW); "Newspaper Ads Shown As War Weapon At Home," *Editor & Publisher*, 7 November 1942, 8; "Recent War Ads Pictured in Bureau Booklet," *Editor & Publisher*, 8 January 1944, 16.

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been established."[53] By 1943, expenditure on war advertising in newspapers had soared to $65 million a year.[54] Reinvigorating the newspaper industry with a new source of revenue, the popularity of war themes in advertising exerted a strong, if not openly acknowledged, influence on the news agenda. Promotion of war programs generally increased the attention of readers in the war effort and thereby reinforced the interest of advertisers in the war angle.[55] For example, touting news coverage as the key to public understanding and acceptance of food rationing, a trade journal article urged publishers to capitalize on the rise in readership as a result of increased concern with the food issue: "If advertisers and agencies are deluged with reminders of the upward surge of newspapers they may become more sharply aware of the strength and vitality of the medium."[56]

The constant effort to court war-minded advertisers made coverage of war programs all the more important as evidence of a high level of editorial commitment to the war effort. The observance of the National Newspaper Week highlighted the financial significance of the war service of newspapers. Driven by the concern that "newspapers should be *sold* to the

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[53] "NAEA Survey Finds Retail Ads Best To Offset Linage Losses," *Editor & Publisher*, 4 July 1942, 7.

[54] "$16 Million in War Effort Ads In Three Months," *Editor & Publisher*, 1 January 1944, 32; "$4,255,324 Spent on War Ads in November," *Editor & Publisher*, 5 February 1944, 20; and "War Ads in Dailies Running At $65,000,000," *Editor & Publisher*, 1 April 1944, 56.

[55] "Importance of Advertising," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 July 1942, 20; and L. M. Hughes, "First Year of War Re-emphasizing Vigor of Newspaper Advertising," *Editor & Publisher*, 26 December 1942, 4.

[56] T. S. Irvin, "All Newspapers Should Plug Upward Trend," *Editor & Publisher*, 19 June 1943, 38.

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advertisers, sold to readers, sold to boards of directors, sold to advertising agencies [emphasis included],"[57] the industry had, since the war, expanded the event in the first week of October into an annual publicity blitz geared toward peddling the war contribution of newspapers. In 1942, publishers launched a gigantic scrap metal collection campaign and doubled their effort in war bond promotion. The following year, under the slogan, "Free Press: The Key to Four Freedoms," the program emphasized the achievements of newspapers in aiding various war campaigns as a way of "selling the public on the importance of newspaper advertising as a part of the free enterprise system."[58] Aside from the publicity initiated by trade organizations, for individual newspapers, an outstanding record of war service provided the best material for self promotion. From the *Alhambra Post-Advocate* in California to the *Daily Sentinel* in Colorado, ads and booklets with titles such as "Newspapers Goes All Out for Victory" and "The Daily Sentinel Goes to War," helped newspapers lure advertising dollars with their editorial promotion of the war effort.[59]

In addition to the general drive to increase the advertising capital of the industry, the more specific editorial decisions in the newsroom also reflected the influence of war advertising as the revenue potential of a war campaign added a new dimension to the

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[57] T. S. Irvin, "Pioneer Spirit Needed to Promote Newspapers," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 June 1943, 11.

[58] "Newspaper Week to Show War Service of Press," *Editor & Publisher*, 19 September 1942, 5; and "Newspaper Week to Be Sparked by War Themes," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 September 1943, 40.

[59] "Newspapers' Share," *Editor & Publisher*, 31 October 1942, 18; T. S. Irvin, "Sentinel to War," *Editor & Publisher*, 20 March 1943, 42; and "Milwaukee Survey Shows Extent of Daily's Aid in War," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 June 1943, 52.

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assessment of news value. The intensive news coverage that turned the Victory Garden campaign into a national movement in the spring of 1943 illustrated the power of advertising in enticing newspapers to gear their editorial resources toward lineage prospects. Special food and gardening supplements allowed newspaper advertising managers to raise the ratio of ads to news in their publications to 50 percent by selling space to businesses that normally did not advertise. The revenue draw gave newspapers a great incentive to promote Victory Gardens both as a community service and a means of attracting advertisers.[60] To tap the opportunities for institutional advertising and greater lineage from garden supplies, the *Milwaukee Journal*, for example, developed a comprehensive publicity package that included not only its news columns but also a daily almanac, women's features, picture layouts, garden club activities, editorials, and comments from government officials to encourage gardening as a vital aid to the war effort.[61]

In case the editorial staff did not grasp the advertising advantages of the campaign, *Editor & Publisher* suggested that it was up to the promotional department to bring on the pressure. "We cannot urge too strongly every salesman reading this piece to immediately bring to the attention of his editors the importance of frequent news items on Victory Gardens. There's a lot of lineage to be obtained from immediately starting to sell every available prospect in our market the idea of running copy on Victory Gardens."[62] In the

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[60] "Discuss Victory Garden Promotions," *Editor & Publisher*, 20 February 1943, 34.

[61] "*Milwaukee Journal*'s Victory Garden Plan," *Editor & Publisher*, 6 February 1943, 31.

[62] Frank E. Fehlman, "Ad Opportunities in Victory Gardens," *Editor & Publisher*, 20 March 1943, 12.

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planning of news budgets, newspapers were thus more inclined to lavish attention on war programs perceived as suitable vehicles for advertisements. Programs that were popular with advertisers also commanded greater editorial support as a result of the vested interest of newspapers themselves in the success of the war causes of their sponsors, which in turn added to the prestige of the news institution.[63]

Although black newspapers operated under a different system of financial support, war service nevertheless influenced their business prospects. While white newspapers received only about one-third of their revenues from circulation, black papers made almost all of their profits from copy sales because of the dearth of support from advertisers. As one historian observed, "Beyond advertisements about skin bleachers, hair straighteners, and magic lodestones, the black publisher was stymied in his effort to gather advertising."[64] The lack of substantial revenues from advertising made readership satisfaction all the more important to the black press. In its effort to shape public opinion on the pursuit of racial equality, the black press therefore had to balance the advancement of its own political agenda with the need to cater to the majority of readers. According to a 1943 readership survey, 96 percent of black newspaper readers desired more emphasis in the news on the role of blacks in the war.[65] War coverage from a minority viewpoint helped black newspapers increase their

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[63] "Booklet Tells Story of Press' Home Front Job," *Editor & Publisher*, 29 January 1944, 38.

[64] Henry G. La Brie, "The Black Press: Where to? What Next?" in *Perspective of the Black Press: 1974*, ed. La Brie (Kennebunkport, Maine: Mercer House Press, 1974), 195.

[65] Consuelo Young, "A Study of Reader Attitudes toward the Negro Press," *Journalism Quarterly* 21: 2 (June 1944): 149.

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circulation as the establishment media almost all but completely ignored the contribution of blacks to the war effort. As a devoted reader of the *Chicago Defender* wrote, "Surely I read the daily papers, magazines, etc., but what do I get out of them? . . . In other words, the white paper is published for the white man, not for the American people as a whole. . . . I read the paper (the Defender) from front to back. This is the one and only way to see what part the Negro is playing in this struggle for world freedom in civilian and army life."[66] The racial bias in mainstream news accounts created a market niche for the black press to provide a chronicle of the lives of blacks in the war years and to counter the negative stereotypes readers often encountered in their daily newspapers.[67]

More importantly, the war service of black newspapers allowed them to address the interest of their readership by rallying the support of blacks for the country's war effort without deferring the demand for equal opportunities both in civilian and military sectors. As historian Lee Finkle noted, the wartime policy of the black press was "an approach that sought to encourage mass support for the war aims of the country attuned to the propaganda needs of the black community."[68] Critics often charged the black press for what was perceived as a militant stance that served only to incite its readers but failed to represent the majority of black Americans. A nationwide survey showed, however, that 84 percent of the

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[66] "There's a Real Point in This Comment," letter to the editor, *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 3 June 1944, 14.

[67] "Field Urges Greater Recognition of Negroes," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 June 1944, 8; and "Negro Press Holds Meeting in New York," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 June 1944, 18.

[68] Finkle, 128.

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people polled felt that the black press did speak for most blacks.[69] Had the black press adopted the call to "close ranks" as it did in World War I,[70] it would not have been able to maintain the trust of its readership and attract the national attention that boosted the circulation of many papers in the war years. W. E. B. Du Bois, who was faulted after World War I for the setback in the advancement of blacks because of his wartime support for a truce in racial struggles, underscored the business interest of publishers in continuing the protest tradition of the black press in World War II. "They know in what kind of news Negroes are interested," he wrote in 1943 in defense of black newspapers criticized for their sensationalist approach to race relations, "If it (the black press) becomes shrill with resentment and bold in its demands it is because the surge of feeling in the Negro race demands and applauds this kind of expression. If a Negro newspaper tried to stem this tide of feeling it would immediately feel the result in rapidly decreasing circulation."[71]

The war promotion of the black press reflected primarily its orientation toward a minority readership. Publishers of black and white newspapers nevertheless shared similar interest in pursuing war advertising as an additional source of revenue. Like the white press,

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[69] Wallace Lee, "Does the Negro Press Speak for Most Negroes?" *Negro Digest* (February 1943): 54.

[70] During World War I, black leaders and newspapers, hoping to gain the appreciation of whites in the struggle against racism, stopped their protests against discrimination for the sake of national unity. When the support of blacks failed to translate into postwar improvement in their status, many attributed the ineffective political strategy to an editorial titled "Close Ranks" published in July 1918 by W. E. B. Du Bois, who advocated the full participation of blacks in the war effort. For the approach of the black press to World War I, see Finkle, 110-111.

[71] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The American Negro Press," part 1, *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 20 February 1943, 15.

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the black press also benefited from excess profits tax rulings during the war years, which allowed businesses to continue their advertising campaigns. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, the largest black newspaper in the country, for example, enjoyed increasing attention from national advertisers as the number of advertisements in the paper rose from 402 in 1941 to 709 in 1944.[72] Even though advertising had less editorial control over the black press than the establishment press, when advertisers started buying space in black newspapers in 1942, publishers generally softened their criticism to make their publications appear moderate and hence more attractive to advertisers as a promotional vehicle.[73] Critics in the war decade noted the increasing influence of advertising on the editorial content of black newspapers. Thomas Sancton, editor of the *New Republic*, for example, wrote in April 1943 that "Negro publishers are apt to be primarily business men whose interest in race welfare is secondary to their interest in selling newspapers."[74] Under the pressure of wartime economy, both white and black newspapers approached the war effort not only as public forums of information and opinions but also as private capital investments.

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[72] In their study on the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Mary Alice Sentman and Patrick S. Washburn argued that the excessive profits tax rulings during the war brought an advertising boom for the black press. The number of national advertisements in the *Courier*, however, started to decrease in 1945, and the decline continued in the postwar years. Despite the wartime increase, national advertising most likely did not become a dependable source of revenues for publishers until after the war. See Mary Alice Sentman and Patrick S. Washburn, "How Excess Profits Tax Brought Ads to Black Newspaper in World War II," *Journalism Quarterly* 64 (1987): 769-774, 867.

[73] For the influence of advertising on the Double V campaign, see Washburn, "The Pittsburgh*'s* Double V Campaign," 83.

[74] Thomas Sancton, " The Negro Press," *New Republic* (April 26, 1943), 560.

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Civilian Morale and the Dissemination of War Information

The enthusiasm of newspapers and advertisers in promoting the war effort provided the government with the best resources in its endeavor to build a unified home front dedicated to the war effort. Despite the fact that 10 million Americans were inducted into service after Pearl Harbor, the lack of immediate danger and collective peril compounded the challenge of national mobilization. As historians William A. Link and Arthur S. Link observed, it was astonishing that "Americans could engage in total war without submitting to the discipline of total war at home."[75] The difficulty of managing morale on the home front was revealed by polls showing low civilian interest in understanding the meaning of the war. Even at the lowest point for the Allies in 1942 when Axis forces swept through much of Asia, threatened North Africa, and dominated the eastern front in Russia, public confusion and indifference persisted on the American home front. Shortly after General Jonathan Wainwright surrendered in the Philippines early in May, fewer than 10 percent of the civilian population was able to name correctly the much exalted twelve-word credo of the Four Freedoms. In July, a third of Americans still felt that they did not have a clear idea of what the country was fighting for.[76] Blacks in particular perceived the contradiction between racial discrimination at home and the fight for freedom abroad. The OWI found that such widespread confusion was detrimental to the war effort, belying negative attitudes toward a variety of issues ranging from rationing, racial equality, to America's Allies.

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[75] William A. Link and Arthur S. Link, *American Epoch: A History of the United States since 1900*, vol. 1, *War, Reform, and Society, 1900-1945* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 381.

[76] Jerome S. Bruner, "OWI and the American Public," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 17:1 (Spring 1943): 129-131.

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The morale problem on the home front prompted government information officials and media professionals to join forces in the task of presenting a clear and compelling story of the war effort of the United States in order to generate public interest and commitment. Acknowledging the promotion of public understanding as a vital part of the war effort, President Roosevelt set aside his reservation about the use of propaganda and issued Executive Order 9182 on June 13, 1942 to establish the Office of War Information. Director Elmer Davis, a popular news commentator and analyst for the Columbia Broadcasting System, took charge of streamlining the government's public information services to provide the public with an accurate and consistent flow of news about the war. To deflect concerns about mass manipulation when the government assumed centralized control of public information, Davis pledged to "tell the truth and nothing but the truth" in the operation of the OWI. Like many of his colleagues in the newspaper industry, Davis approached news as an instrument of public education on the home front and vowed to facilitate "the fullest possible understanding of what this war is about." Heated debates on whether the OWI was out to maintain national morale and whether the government should be engaged in domestic propaganda were irrelevant in his view because "the better the American people understand what this war is about, the harder they will work and fight to win it."[77]

The Domestic Operation of the Office of War Information

Under the lead of Davis, the OWI functioned neither as the sole authoritative voice of the wartime government as was the case in England and most other countries at war, nor

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[77] Elmer Davis, "OWI Has a Job," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 7: 1 (Spring 1943): 8-9.

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merely a coordinating agency as its ill-fated predecessor, the Office of Facts and Figures. Instead, the OWI became an all-purpose coordinating, issuing, and counseling agency. In its advising capacity, the OWI offered guidance on general information policies and specific campaign publicity to other war agencies as well as media professionals who frequently sought direction from the government on how they could contribute to the war. Overall, the agency geared its domestic activities toward four functions: providing assistance to the news media, keeping the flow of war news as open as possible, eliminating confusion and mistakes in the dissemination of public information by synchronizing the publicity of all federal departments and agencies, and finally enlisting the support of the public for war programs. In the absence of clear boundaries between news, information, and propaganda, the OWI enjoyed a flexible ambiguity in its mandate, which allowed the agency to fulfill some of the information needs of the wartime administration without overtly impinging on the tradition of a free press.[78]

The Domestic Branch, headed in the first fiscal year by Gardner Cowles, Jr., president of the Des Moines *Register* and *Tribune*,[79] had a total personnel of about 1,500. It operated on an annual budget of $9,500,000, including $1,062,146 for the News Bureau.[80] The initial

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[78] Davis, 7-9; and Feller, 56-57.

[79] In the summer of 1943, Palmer Hoyt, editor and publisher of the *Portland Oregonian*, became director of the OWI's domestic operation. In January 1944, the position went to George W. Healy, Jr., a newspaper executive from New Orleans.

[80] The operation of the Overseas Branch constituted the bulk of OWI's activities, claiming about three-quarters of the total expenditure of the agency in the first year. The Domestic Branch accounted for about 10 percent of the OWI's work throughout the war years.

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scope of the OWI's extensive domestic operation was later curtailed in the budget hearing for the fiscal year 1944, held in Washington in May 1943. Regarded by a hostile Congress as a public relations machinery for securing another term for Roosevelt, the domestic branch of the OWI, facing accusations of partisanship, radicalism, and incompetence, suffered a great setback with its budget reduced to $2,750,000 as a result.[81] Cowles had asked Congress for $988,097 to finance the OWI's News Bureau, which, he maintained, performed an essential service to the press, furnishing information to all--"from the largest metropolitan paper to the smallest weekly, from the most elaborate trade paper to small mimeographed employee' magazines, from the largest foreign language papers to the smallest local labor publication."[82] As a result of the budget cut, the News Bureau received only half of the funding it requested. In the summer of 1943, Congress forced the OWI to cease direct distribution of information on the home front, leaving the dissemination of domestic propaganda to rely all the more on the initiatives and cooperation of the media.

Although Cowles and subsequent directors frequently defended the OWI's domestic program as a necessary service to the press,[83] in reality, it was difficult for the agency, which had no jurisdiction over the information policy of the military and other war agencies, to free the flow of war news. In addition, the influence of advertising and business executives

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[81] "House Orders OWI to Quit Domestic Operations," *Editor & Publisher*, 26 June 1943, 20; and "Domestic OWI Cuts Budget," *Editor & Publisher*, 18 March 1944, 8.

[82] Quoted in Cedric Larson, "OWI's Domestic News Bureau: An Account and Appraisal," *Journalism Quarterly* 26:1 (March 1949): 11.

[83] Palmer Hoyt, "OWI in 1943--Coordinator and Service Agency." *Journalism Quarterly* 20:4 (December 1943): 320-25; and "Healy Stresses Keeping People Fully Informed," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 February 1944, 37.

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brought in by Cowles when he reorganized the Domestic Branch in February 1943,[84] steered the focus of the OWI's domestic operation away from the provision of news to the publicity of war programs. In its domestic propaganda effort, the OWI sought to create a sense of participation by linking the private lives of Americans on the home front to the outcome of international struggles. "An 'E' award, a worker's phenomenal record, a farmer's increased planting of bumper harvests--these are just as essential to the winning of the war as military triumphs," the OWI told the media.[85] Even the smallest act of buying fresh fruit versus canned substitutes was tied to the fight for freedom and democracy. The OWI hoped that media use of militaristic rhetoric of home front solidarity and national strength would inspire every civilian to become a soldier for democracy. In its policy guidelines, the agency stated that "not only is the war production worker a soldier, but so, too, is the housewife, the desk worker, the men and women in every corner and kind of American life."[86]

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[84] Cowles brought in as his senior assistants, William B. Lewis, formerly vice president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, and James Allen, a film executive, to direct the Bureau of Campaigns, which functioned as a mechanism of central control to coordinate all war-connected information campaigns of the government. As the bureau worked through various media to facilitate civilian cooperation with home front war measures, the OWI gradually leaned toward advertising promotion techniques that appealed to the emotions and self-interest of Americans to sell the war to the public. See Blum, 38-39; Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, 62-63; Lester G. Hawkins, Jr. and George S. Pettee, "OWI--Organizations and Problems," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 7 (Spring 1943): 15-27; and Jordan Braverman, *To Hasten the Homecoming: How Americans Fought World War II Through the Media* (New York: Madison Books, 1996): 65-66.

[85] Office of War Information, "Operating Policies," *War Information Guide* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 3.

[86] Ibid.

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Driven by the overall emphasis on national unity in domestic propaganda, the OWI formulated its policy concerning minority groups to minimize racial tension and consciousness. In its attempt to address the low morale among blacks, the agency therefore opted for direct, emotional appeals to invoke feeling of patriotism. As Gardner Cowles remarked, "unless the Negro is made to *feel* he is part of America we cannot expect him to be a good American [emphasis included]."[87] Instead of engaging the thorny issue of racial discrimination, the OWI simply instructed its personnel and other media professionals to avoid demeaning racial stereotypes and to cultivate general appreciation of the contribution of blacks. As Deputy Director George A. Barnes noted, the agency adopted what was in effect "a direct and powerful Negro propaganda effort as distinct from a crusade for Negro rights."[88]

The official stance on the treatment of blacks underlined propaganda effort such as the controversial pamphlet "Negroes and the War." Downplaying the effect of racism, the OWI aimed to shore up the support of blacks for the war by convincing them that their best interest lay in preserving the democratic system of the United States, which, despite some faults in the past, was marching toward equality for all in the future. In the pamphlet, the OWI also highlighted the wartime accomplishments of blacks to promote the full utilization

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[87] Gardner Cowles Jr. to Committee on War Information Policy, 12 August 1942, Box 15, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, Md., quoted in Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, "Blacks, Loyalty, and Motion-Picture Propaganda in World War II," *Journal of American History* 73 (September 1986): 390.

[88] George A. Barnes, Memorandum to James Allen, 28 September 1942, Entry 1, Box 8, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, Md., hereafter cited as OWI Records.

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of minorities as an essential source of labor. Although the approach of the agency to race issues seemed bland and moderate, the pamphlet drew heavy fire in the 1943 congressional budget hearings. The OWI was attacked for overemphasizing the achievements of blacks and forcing racial equality on whites, especially in the South.[89] Despite the agency's intention to promote positive images of blacks in the media, its publicity was often criticized by black editors for reinforcing racial stereotypes. Pictures and stories distributed by the government to emphasize the role of blacks in the military depicted black soldiers mostly in menial duties, digging ditches and peeling potatoes, rather than in heroic combat roles. A navy poster in February 1942 featured a Ubangi to illustrate its message, "A Slip of the Lip May Sink a Ship." A Treasury ad in March 1943 used a fat mammy figure supposedly to inspire patriotism among blacks.[90] On a mission to encourage participation in the war program, black newspapers, however, ran the objectionable ad as well as other promotional items for bond drives and a variety of war programs.

Ties with the Press

The dissemination of government information through established news channels provided the OWI with one of the most important avenues to engineer civilian perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in relation to the war. Its News Bureau, headed by Robert Horton, formerly a reporter with Scripps-Howard, had the most direct and rapid impact on the

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[89] Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, 56-57.

[90] John D. Stevens, "From the Back of the Foxhole," 7.

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public.[91] Staffed by about 250 full-time and several hundred part-time and temporary employees, the bureau functioned along the line of a city newsroom.[92] The General News Desk, directed by Elmer Roessner, former city editor of *PM*, served as a center for editing, clearance, and dissemination in order to avoid confusion and duplication, and to ensure overall continuity and harmony of presentation. News released to the home front went first to the Domestic Copy Desk, directed by Hyman Aronstam, former city editor of the *Miami Herald*, to be edited and cleared with all the agencies involved. Copies were then issued in the name of the appropriate department to the reporters stationed in the pressroom of the OWI and other Washington correspondents as well for dissemination through the channels used by the press. In addition, the chief of the domestic desk acted as a liaison between the press and the OWI, communicating the requests of reporters to the General News Desk for proper responses.[93]

Besides monitoring the output of the independent information divisions of various war agencies, the News Bureau also originated stories that cut across agency jurisdiction to provide a more comprehensive background to specific phases of the war. A seventeen-page comprehensive report on the subject of womanpower, for example, was distributed on April

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[91] When Horton shifted to the Office of Price Administration later in August, Paul C. Smith, editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, took charge as chief of the News Bureau. The position later went on to George Lyon, former city editor of the New York *World Telegram* and managing editor of *PM*.

[92] Larson, 10-11.

[93] George McMillan, "The News Bureau of the OWI--Its Functions and Operations," *Journalism Quarterly* 20: 2 (June 1943): 122.

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14, 1944, as a general news release for newspapers on Friday morning.[94] An internal report claimed that the information campaign not only filled but surpassed the quota of 1,500,000 women workers needed to maintain essential military and civilian production in the spring of 1944. By the end of June 1944 at the close of the Womanpower campaign, the number of all women employed in all categories, despite the decline in the second half of 1943, rose again to an all-time high of 18,000,000.[95] In the calendar year of 1942, the domestic news desk along with its predecessor, the Division of Information, sent a total of 9,052 releases to the daily press and the trade press. Without a direct link between the agency and individual newspapers, the OWI releases could virtually make their way into every newspaper in the country within an hour.

The News Bureau's Feature Desk, directed by Sutherland Denlinger, former New York *World-Telegram* feature writer, worked directly with the OWI's Office of Program Coordination to carry out its campaign objectives in news media and geared its operation toward facilitating public understanding, acceptance, and adjustment in regards to wartime restrictions on civilian life. The six sections of the Desk--Campaigns, Labor Press, Negro Press, Rural Press, Victory, and Women's Press--rewrote the general releases with appropriate detail, explanation, and background to suit the specific needs of every branch of the press and to obtain better coverage of OWI information in different sections of the newspaper such as the women's pages, Sunday features, cartoons, comic strips, and special

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[94] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Writers' Division, Womanpower general news release, Entry 194, Suit Box No. 1, OWI Records.

[95] Ibid.

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supplements. The Negro Press section, headed by Theodore Poston, former New York *Post* and *Amsterdam News* reporter, funneled all material on the war activities of blacks from the federal government to black newspapers through three press services: the Associated Negro Press of Chicago, Continental News Service of New York, and Press Photo Service of Chicago. It also redistributed overseas material received from black war correspondents through the Negro Newspaper Publishers' Association. In addition to publicizing the role of blacks in the war, the section, responding to queries about blacks from daily newspaper reporters, functioned as a bridge between the white press and the black press.

Conclusion

The OWI's news service reached a total of 8,840 publications in the United States with a combined circulation of 79,769,829, including every one of the 1,754 dailies, 228 black newspapers out of a total of 300 with a circulation of 2,000,000, and 30 shopping newspapers out of a total of 38 with approximately 3,000,000 readers.[96] The dissemination of war information highlighted the symbiotic relationship between the media and the government. In its attempt to mobilize the home front, the American government had to rely on an independent press, which, despite public cynicism to a certain degree, nevertheless commanded more trust and credibility than a government owned and controlled press would have. At the height of its influence, the black press, as the leading institution next to the

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[96] Ibid.

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church in the black community, offered the government a particularly important channel of communication to the black population throughout the war years.[97]

The extensive distribution network already established by the press also proved to be the most convenient channel to deliver government information to the public.[98] For example, without the assistance of newspapers, which printed rationing calendars, application forms, complete lists and addresses of local war price and rationing boards at the request of the Office of Price Administration, the government would not have been able to bring detailed rationing information to the attention of the public.[99] The publicity of campaign information, on the other hand, helped finance the nation's press in war time. Through the War Advertising Council, the OWI's Office of Program Coordination channeled advertising of war programs to newspapers. To the newspaper industry, the OWI thus represented the largest advertising department with the government as its client.

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[97] For example, right after the Pearl Harbor bombing, under the pretense to discuss war aims, the War Department summoned black editors to a conference, urging them to "lead cheers for the war." See John D. Stevens, "From the Back of the Foxhole," 2. In a Cabinet meeting on May 22, 1942, Roosevelt, concerned with the negative attitude of blacks toward the war program, asked Attorney General Francis Biddle to reach out to black editors "to see what could be done about preventing their subversive language." See Washburn, "Sedition," 28. And with race riots erupting throughout the country in 1943, government officials again relied on black publishers to ensure the commitment of blacks to the war effort. See Finkle, 84.

[98] "Dear Names 16-Man Committee to Launch U. S. Scrap Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 September 1942, 3; "Morgenthau Thanks Press for Bond Aid," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 April 1943, 8; "Press Spurs Gardens," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 June 1943, 52; and "All Out Effort on Waste Paper Asked by WPB," *Editor & Publisher*, 5 February 1944, 58.

[99] "OPA Ask Newspaper Aid with Ration Forms," *Editor & Publisher*, 6 February 1943, 32; "ANPA Finds Dailies Print Ration Calendars," *Editor & Publisher* 20 March 1943, 34; and "Reprinting Addresses of Rationing Boards," *Editor & Publisher*, 4 July 1942, 12.

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In addition to the financial support, the OWI's centralized information service provided the press with an indispensable resource in the reporting of public affairs. The number of reporters assigned to the OWI doubled within the first year of its operation, rising from 125 in July 1942 to 275 in the following spring. Among them, forty-eight maintained permanent facilities in the pressroom, devoting all of their attention to covering war news issued by the OWI. By 1944, the number of correspondents accredited to the News Bureau had increased to 450.[100] The impressive attendance illustrated the success of the operation of the Domestic News Desk and the dependence of the press on the news service of the government. As one correspondent noted, "He couldn't get to first base in covering the government if he didn't have the handout and the press contact man."[101]

The News Bureau provided reporters, who were pressed for time and overwhelmed by the complexity of the war, with an easy access to a reliable source of government information. The service of the bureau was particularly important to smaller newspapers, which were hit hard by the manpower shortage and could not afford direct representation in Washington. Correspondence from publishers and editors across the country also indicated that black newspapers, many of them with limited resources, appreciated the service of the Negro Press section as an important source of news on the war activities of blacks, which

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[100] McMillan, 122; and Office of War Information, News Bureau, Entry 194, Suit Box 1, OWI Records.

[101] Joseph H. Mader, "Government Press Bureaus and Reporting of Public Affairs," *Journalism Quarterly* 19: 2 (June 1942): 176.

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their readers could not find in daily newspapers.[102] Toward the end of the war, the operation of the OWI became even more valuable to the press in general as newspaper staffs were progressively depleted by the demands of the armed forces and indeed the government information machinery itself.

Clearly the OWI could not dictate propaganda messages to the press as its purpose was meant to supplement not replace the work of a free press. Many reporters did follow up on the leads of the press releases and uncovered exclusive news stories through their own enterprise. The heavy flow of prepared material, however, tended to inhibit the development of reporting initiatives. Although the OWI lacked the authority to control exactly what Americans read in the newspaper, it had a subtle, indirect influence over what they might read about. For example, domestic director Cowles once found that among a typical day's output of forty-four OWI news releases marked for immediate use, thirty-two of them were used by the New York *Journal of Commerce.*[103] The crucial function of the OWI in the wartime enterprise of news gathering boosted the agenda-setting influence of the government on the press. The accessibility of print news, on the other hand, enhanced the tremendous reach of domestic propaganda. The editorial and advertising connections cultivated by the OWI thus ensured the establishment of the ideology of patriotism as the major framework through which the press represented women's role in the nation's war effort.

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[102] See for example, letters from James M. Reid, editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, 10 March 1943; P. R. Jervay, publisher of the *Carolinian*, 22 April 1943; and E. L. McKinstry, editor of the *Daily Local News*, 18 March 1943, all in Entry 205, Box 1050, OWI Records.

[103] Larson, 12.

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PART I CONCLUSION

WOMANPOWER IN HOME FRONT MOBILIZATION

World War II brought newspaper publishers, editors, and reporters the challenge of defining the role of the press as an institution in American society. Most journalists perceived in their craft a civic responsibility to further the war aims of the country. They believed in the dual purposes of news to inform the public about the progress of the war as well as to raise the morale of Americans in the fight for democracy. As newspapers sought civilian support for the government's war measures, the dissemination of war information highlighted the persuasive function of journalism in national mobilization.

The approach of the press to the war effort reflected not only a shift in professional ideology but also changes in the economy. As other businesses during the war, the newspaper industry faced increasing federal control of the private sector. Press promotion of war programs on the home front served to win publishers the good will of government officials on issues affecting the industry such as regulations on censorship, newsprint, tax-deductible advertising expenditure, and draft deferment of news personnel. Concerns with the future growth of the industry under competition with other media, especially the radio, also made newspapers eager to display their patriotic enthusiasm. To publishers, the war service of a newspaper represented a public relations campaign to gain the confidence of advertisers and the appreciation of readers. In its effort to help the government raise war consciousness on the home front, the newspaper industry functioned as a powerful extension

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of the domestic operation of the Office of War Information. The large base of female readership cultivated by the press was particularly important to the OWI as it strove to increase the participation of women in the war effort.

Total mobilization for World War II introduced to Americans a new word--womanpower--to mark the importance of women's war contribution in every aspect of national defense. "Never in history have American women played such an important part in wartime," declared the Office of War Information, "Womanpower is this country's reserve of industrial labor and military strength"[1] As a key target of the government's effort to mobilize support for the war on the home front, women commanded special attention from the OWI. The Domestic Copy Desk addressed women through its daily dissemination of general news to explain the effects of the war on the home life of Americans. In addition, the Campaigns section of the Feature Desk distributed a column designed specifically for women. The "Shopping News Column," published twice a week, offered women advice on how they could best serve their families and the country as efficient and patriotic consumers.

Women's pages in daily newspapers offered the OWI a readily available channel of mass communication to engineer public responses to wartime privations such as rationing and price control, and to encourage greater participation in civilian defense. The dissemination of domestic propaganda prompted the News Bureau to take advantage of this specialized news forum to court the enthusiasm of women for the war. The Women's Press section of the Feature Desk, headed by Hazel Howard, a New York publicity writer, served as the contact

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[1] Office of War Information, Campaign guide, "Women in the War," 1, Entry 90, Box 587, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, Md.

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between the OWI and the press. Howard distributed OWI material directly to 500 women's departments[2] through news releases, correspondence with women's editors, and its flagship publication titled "Fortnightly Budget--For Wartime Editors of Women's Pages."[3] The publication featured information on the war activities of women both in and outside their homes. For instance, in an ostensible appeal to the patriotic spirit of American women, on November 13, 1943, *Fortnightly Budget* debuted its "Guest Editor" page written by women who were well known for their contribution to the government's war program. They represented the proper wartime role model for women to be celebrated in women's pages. Although the Women's Press section was aggressive in soliciting editorial support from newspapers, an OWI survey of 150 women's pages in the spring of 1943 revealed, however, that government material was not receiving as much play as expected.[4] After revising its method of distribution by working with feature writers and syndicates, the Women's desk subsequently retooled its publication in June 1944 so that it resembled the content and style of women's sections more closely. Renamed "The Women's Page," the publication sought to promote greater interest among women's editors in disseminating OWI information.

In its effort to manipulate news coverage of women in the war, the OWI did not recognize black women as a distinctive group as the division of responsibility in the Feature

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[2] Cedric Larson, "OWI's Domestic News Bureau: An Account and Appraisal," *Journalism Quarterly* 26:1 (March 1949): 11.

[3] The OWI publication for women's editors can be found at the National Archives. See Office of War Information, Box 1035, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, Md.

[4] George McMillan, "The News Bureau of the OWI--Its Functions and Operations," *Journalism Quarterly* 20:2 (June 1943): 125.

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Desk indicated. The generic approach of the Negro Press section made no distinction between women and men as different targets for government information on blacks. The Women's desk, addressing its material to women in general, made little, if any, specific effort to reach black women. The absence in the black press of a full-fledged women's section with the traditional emphasis on service features suggested also that the network between the women's unit of the OWI and women's editors did not extend to black newspapers. As a result of the structure of the OWI, government propaganda targeting women, although addressing all groups in principal, focused on the white majority in practice.

In addition to the long range effort carried out by the news service of the OWI to court women's support for war programs on the home front, the government launched two major campaigns to emphasize the need for womanpower through intense, short-term publicity. The two campaigns in the fall of 1943 and the spring of 1944 sought to recruit women for military service and wartime employment in defense and essential civilian industries. The womanpower drive aimed also to counter public disapproval of new lines of work for women that breached established notions of gender differences. The OWI prepared an extensive information guide to explain the overall appeals to be highlighted and specific strategies to be adopted by the media. Despite the interest of the OWI in promoting war activities for women that defied sexual stereotypes, the guidelines drew largely on a dichotomized view of gender roles and identities. For instance, the media were supposed to present wartime paid employment as a civic duty for women comparable to military service for men. The OWI suggested also that media publicity take advantage of the strong identification of women with the domestic sphere to convince them that war work was similar

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to their household tasks such as running a sewing machine or a vacuum cleaner. The strategies encouraged women to undertake unfamiliar tasks in the wartime economy and at the same time upheld the principle of sexual division of labor.[5]

In the promotion of military service, the OWI asked the media to accentuate the differences rather than similarities between women and men. In fact, according to the OWI's analysis, recruitment pitches showing women working side by side with men and accustoming themselves to Spartan comforts as men had not been effective. Apparently, the misplaced emphases on equality deterred women from joining up because they did not want to lose their feminine lifestyle and identity. "Women have *not* been told in national publicity that military service does not destroy their femininity nor detract from it," the OWI insisted. "There has *not* been sufficient emphasis on the fact that women in the Armed Forces are not remolded into some other kind of half-male, half-female hybrid [emphasis included]."[6] The media were therefore advised to emphasize the feminine interests and activities of women in uniform, portray their work as similar to what women did in civilian life, and characterize their training and services as vastly different from the experiences of men in the military. The overall strategy was to convince women that military service would not change their fundamental way of living as women. To "get to the girl information that would sell her into the armed services in an interesting manner," the News Bureau provided newspapers with popular and entertaining features such as crossword puzzles and "score yourself" tests with questions

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[5] Office of War Information, Campaign guide, "Women in the War," 2, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[6] Ibid., 5.

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such as whether women in the military could wear lipstick or had dates with civilians.[7] In short, the appropriate copy approach according to the OWI would show servicewomen dating, dancing, going to parties, performing supportive duties, and above all avoid making any impression that they were ever engaged in combat.

Through its connection to the media, the OWI became a powerful agent in defining women's place in wartime society. Although the agency never articulated a clear overarching policy concerning the mobilization of American women, the fragmentary discourse on womanpower as seen in the stream of news releases, special publications, and campaign directives nevertheless implied a loosely constructed hierarchical system designating differential value to women's work. As the demands of national mobilization privileged the war contribution of women in their more public roles, military service and paid employment generally took precedence over volunteer work and domestic work in the propaganda effort of the OWI. Within the public sphere, women's work in the military appeared to assume top priority because the requirements of the armed forces were well defined in quotas to be met. The clearly expressed goals facilitated publicity of national recruitment campaigns, which made military services highly visible in the drive for womanpower. Although the needs for additional labor in war and civilian industries were equally urgent, a more complicated set of variables such as the supply and demand in a particular industry and local labor market made it more difficult for the OWI to make effective national appeals that could be easily grasped by the public.

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[7] Office of War Information, "Women in the War Presentation," Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

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Despite its significance as a public outlet of the patriotism of American women, volunteer work such as providing canteen services to soldiers, giving child-care assistance to war workers, and helping out at the local Office of Civilian Defense received only token recognition in the publicity of the OWI. The policy of the OWI stated that, "Volunteer work should be supplementary to, not instead of, a job." The OWI acknowledged the importance of volunteer work to the wartime society under the strain of insufficient human resources. The publicity guidelines nevertheless relegated volunteer work to the spare time after an eight-hour shift on a war job through which women were told they could make more contribution to the country's war effort.

Domestic work such as shopping with proper rationing stamps, growing Victory Gardens, and recycling waste paper represented a universal but not primary form of war contribution for women in OWI material. Recruitment pitches at times vilified domestic responsibility as a lame excuse women used to shirk their civic responsibility to the country at war. When the importance of the family was invoked, women's household duties were portrayed as a second shift they must learn to juggle with full-time war work. When the cooperation of homemakers were sought, women's work in maintaining the wartime household was glorified as a vital service to the country just as that provided by the more glamorous roles of women in uniforms or overalls. The higher value attributed by the OWI to the more direct war contribution of women in military services and war production signaled increasing tension between new demands on women's work and traditional notions of gender roles. "There is charm in the trim uniforms of the WAVES or the WACS. There is excitement and novelty in the overalls of the girls in defense work," a San Francisco

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housewife noted in a letter to the *Chronicle* in March 1943. "The only uniform the housewife---the kitchen patriots---has is the same old work apron. Yet the importance of her part in the war is second to none."[8]

Because government propaganda depended on mass media for maximum circulation, the system of differential value imposed by the OWI on women's work in wartime society had to contend with the limitations of cultural expectation and the priorities of the newspaper industry. The next two parts of the dissertation will examine how the press responded to the initiatives of the OWI in news about women's war effort at home and in the work force. Part two addresses the investment of militaristic values in female domesticity with two chapters focusing on the circulation of war information in the press to integrate women's work in the consumer household with the nation's war effort. Part three approaches the wartime reconstruction of the terms of female employment with two chapters analyzing media attitudes toward the use of womanpower in the battle of war production.

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[8] "A Letter about Kitchen Patriots," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 March 1943, 22.

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PART TWO

"EAT TO BEAT THE DEVIL": THE POLITICS OF DOMESTICITY

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INTRODUCTION

MEDIA PROMOTION OF THE IDEOLOGY OF PATRIOTIC DOMESTICITY

For four days in March 1943, 1,200 women packed the Paramount theater in Aurora, Illinois, seeking not the latest cinematic adventure offered by Hollywood but the newest homemaking tips provided by a group of home economists, community leaders, and government representatives organized by the local newspaper. Each morning, the participants gathered to confront challenges in wartime life such as using meat alternates, planning balanced meals, and shopping with rationing stamps. These seemingly mundane topics belied the militant spirit of the program's headline--"Eat to Beat the Devil"--a popular slogan for similar civilian defense efforts elsewhere in the country. The *Aurora Beacon-News'* cooking school rallied women to turn their domestic skills into a war weapon. Armed with scientific knowledge of food and nutrition, so the program promised, women could increase national productivity and help defeat the Axis through domestic tasks as simple as packing "a lunch a man can work on." Broadcast also over the local radio, the event, a tie-in with the paper's food coverage and the national rationing and nutrition programs, captured the interest of the community as well as the praise of officials from Washington. More importantly it brought the newspaper a revenue boost from over 60,000 lines of advertising. Urging others in the news industry to adopt the promotion idea, publisher Charles W. Hoefer

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said, "I can conceive of no program that could be sponsored by newspapers that would excel or approach this one from the point of linage and community service."[1]

Wartime homemaking schools were indeed a popular promotional strategy among newspapers publishers. Along with recipe contests and cook books, they sponsored a variety of cooking, canning, sewing, gardening, and home nursing programs. The community service of newspapers marked a prevailing concern among their readers with how to maintain a home life as normal as possible in wartime. As an editorial writer noted in March 1943, "If there is any subject that is close to the hearts of all mankind, it is the getting of their daily bread, its cost, and the assurance that its supply will not be interrupted. On each of these counts every American who is not in uniform has had many moments of anxiety."[2] Extensive news coverage of issues related to household management not only registered the impact of war on every home, it also underscored the deployment of women's domestic effort in the realm of national defense. The economy of war called for a highly supportive consumer sector willing to comply with wartime restrictions such as rationing orders and price ceilings as well as to step up the productivity level of the home in order to reduce demands on social resources and accommodate market changes. In the division of labor within the 1940s' household, the work involved in these consumer and domestic activities was considered "women's work" as they customarily assumed the responsibility for tasks such as shopping, cooking, sewing, and cleaning.[3] Driven by the gender association of consumption and housework, the effort to

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[1] "Illinois Daily Has Wartime Nutrition School," *Editor & Publisher*, 20 March 1943, 14.

[2] "Food Is News," *Editor & Publisher*, 27 March 1943, 22.

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cultivate civilian support for war measures affecting daily life on the home front largely targeted women.

To socialize American women to new consumer behaviors and homemaking practices that had to be coordinated with military interest, a new domestic advice industry composed of federal, state, and municipal agencies, home economists, nutritionists, advertisers, women's page editors, writers, and columnists emerged in the media, seeking to integrate women's work in the domain of the consumer household with the nation's war effort. For the duration only, the boundary between the private and the public was redefined to encourage women to embrace a sense of political purpose in the daily routines of procuring and provisioning for one's family. To "speed our boys home," the government urged women to "Produce and Conserve, Share and Play Square."[4] Energized with a patriotic spirit, the "proper" mode of homemaking widely circulated in the wartime media emphasized the contribution of women to the war in their capacity as housewives. The patriotic appeal prescribed domestic commitments as socially sanctioned exercises of women's political function as American citizens. "You won't be called upon to man a battle station off New Guinea or handle a

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[3] Statistics from various sources indicated that in the war decade women did about 70 to 80 percent of the housework themselves with some help from other family members or from maids for those who could afford them. While wives worked daily to meet the subsistence needs of the family, husbands were responsible for more periodic work such as yard chores, repairs and maintenance, and care for the family automobile. With a large number of men away from home during the war, the government encouraged changes in the sexual division of market labor and housework as well, urging housewives to tackle "manly" tasks such as the maintenance of household appliances and cars. For the pattern of housework in wartime, see D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 173-76.

[4] Hazel Howard, Letter to women's editors, 9 October 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, Md., hereafter cited as OWI Records.

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machine gun in the tail-turret of a B-17," the Office of War Information told women, "but this is what you can do: buy only what you really need; pay no more than ceiling prices; buy rationed goods only by using stamps; put your money to work fighting the war in taxes."[5]

In contrast to the requirement of military service from male citizens, which could rely on the coercive power of the law for enforcement, the obligations of the wartime homemaker could hardly be imposed on women but with the pressure of social norms. Because of the credibility associated with information presented in the form of a news report, press promotion was instrumental in the government's effort to normalize specific codes of behavior in the operation of the household as expressions of female patriotism. For the benefit of the newspaper industry, participation in the distribution of propaganda on women's war effort through homemaking routines increased the advertising appeal of its approach to female readership. Editorial attention on women's domestic interest helped publishers attract advertisers who were eager to win over the American housewife through their generous support of home front campaigns directed at women. A report in *Editor & Publisher* in May 1943 thus urged the industry to tap into the revenue potential presented by a group of national and regional advertisers who, with a combined annual budget of $75,000,000, promoted the eight major themes of the government's wartime food program to enlist the cooperation of women.[6]

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[5] "Axis Propaganda Broadcast Aim to Raise U. S. Prices," *Fortnightly Budget*, 4 September 1943, 5, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[6] "63 Advertisers Back Food Campaigns," *Editor & Publisher*, 22 May 1943, 12.

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To cater to the interest of advertisers, newspapers updated their traditional news features for women such as food coverage with a war angle to provide educational and morale building pegs for war ads designed to attract homemakers. With a format well established in the women's section to address issues of household management, the daily press in particular readily converted to war, turning the forum of news into a propaganda venue to condition American women to the ideology of patriotic domesticity. This part of the dissertation will examine the role of the press in popularizing the patriotic appeal to women's domestic interest. Chapter three will focus on the image of the "citizen consumer" in shopping news. Established in the press as a distinctively female political identity, it promoted the civic responsibility of women to make proper consumer choices for the stability of the wartime economy. Chapter four will address the image of the "kitchen patriot" in the service features of women's pages. Celebrated in the press as the female paragon of civic virtue, it highlighted the military ramifications of women's role as homemakers to draw them into the war effort.

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CHAPTER III

THE CITIZEN CONSUMER

In the wake of the shocking news of the Pearl Harbor bombing, millions of Americans rushed to the store to stock up for war. General apprehension about shortages of consumer goods created an artificial demand, which drove up prices soon after war was declared. When diversion of resources to military needs did start to diminish supply to civilians, consumer demand grew simultaneously due to the economic boom spurred by the radical increase in defense spending. As a result, the cost of living rose 7 percent during the first half of 1942, spawning fear of uncontrollable inflation.[1] In response, the government instituted a host of programs intended to stabilize the economy and channel the growing buying power of Americans into the war effort. Measures such as heavy taxes and bond sales, for example, aimed to divert their new found wealth into financing the war. The government also established the Office of Price Administration in January 1942 to keep inflation at bay and control civilian consumption. For the duration, access to many necessities such as sugar, coffee, butter, meats, shoes, tires, and gasoline were restricted by rationing and price control.

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[1] Allan Winkler, *Home Front U. S. A.: America during World War II* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: H. Davidson, 1986), 38.

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In addition to legislative and judicial mechanisms, the government sought to facilitate stringent economic control through propaganda designed to foster public acceptance of federal interference in consumer freedom. Publicity guidelines of the Office of War Information thus advised the media to avoid the negative connotation of mass hysteria by substituting the word "inflation" with phrases such as "high cost of living" and "uncontrolled rise in prices." In addition, the OWI asked the media to put a positive spin on the economic stabilization program, which was to be presented not as a series of government regulations imposed on the public but as patriotic duties willingly adopted by American citizens. The patriotic ethics of consumption that the OWI sought to popularize emphasized frugality over extravagance, saving over spending, and delayed fulfillment over instant gratification to promote self regulation among wayward consumers who placed personal desires above national interests. To the government, the housewife, who held the purse string of her family, had an especially important obligation to the country in the consumer choices she made. If she used the increase in her family's disposable income to pursue the pleasure of consumption, the OWI warned that she would be following the Axis line, which sought to raise consumer demands and prices to destroy the economy of the United States.[2]

Public awareness of the importance of consumer restraints to the war effort "requires continuous emphasis," the OWI noted, "particularly in media which reach women."[3] Through the channel of news dissemination, the OWI circulated consumer information across

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[2] "Axis Propaganda Broadcasts Aim to Raise U. S. Prices," *Fortnightly Budget*, 4 September 1943, 5, Entry 194, Box 1035, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, Md., hereafter cited as OWI Records.

[3] Office of War Information, News Bureau, , Economic Stabilization Program schedule, 20 June 1944, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

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the country to coax women to do their part in the war by planning better and shopping more carefully. Daily newspapers as well as weeklies aimed at blacks advocated higher consumer awareness among women to strengthen civilian defense. From finding substitutes for rationed items to the conservation of materials, women were called upon to fulfill their responsibility as both citizens and homemakers by keeping up with latest developments in Washington as they strove to maintain the standard of living for their families.[4] "Housewives have a most important job on the home front," the *Chicago Defender* declared, and "they must prepare themselves by keeping informed of all war-time measures and help make them function properly."[5] This chapter will examine the distribution of consumer information in the wartime press to mobilize women for the inner economic war.

The Lure of Consumerism

As World War II revitalized the U. S. economy, general feelings of affluence converged with the lingering legacy of deprivation from the Depression years to mark a new era of mass consumption when luxuries formerly out of reach for the vast majority became benchmarks of middle-class status in American society. Increases in military spending and demand for manpower by the government translated into greater employment opportunities and higher wages for many on the home front. The miracle of war production created 17 million new jobs and increased the total earnings of Americans by 50 percent during the war.[6]

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[4] S. J. Monchak, "General Features Issues Column on Wartime Buying," *Editor & Publisher*, 7 November 1942, 29.

[5] "Housewives to Hold Point Ration Meet," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 20.

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The phenomenon of wartime prosperity swelled the purchasing power of the public. A typical consumer, with a monthly average of more than $150 on hand in the spring of 1944, had more than twice as much cash to spend as in the fall of 1941.[7] While higher incomes stimulated spending, wartime shortages curtailed supplies for civilian use, setting off a race for consumer goods through the nation. In 1944, department stores in both Chicago and New York reported record high volumes of sales. Nationwide sales in the last week of August climbed 18 percent over the same period in the previous year, and the average sale in a department store had jumped from $2 before the war to $10.[8] As historian John Blum noted, "Within the arsenal of democracy, government expenditures made business vastly better than usual and restored the circumstances of a carnival of consumption."[9]

Women's role as consumers in particular indexed the prosperity afforded by the war. Although rationing and shortages posed new challenges, with greater family income, more women than ever before were able to manage with greater ease the responsibility of budgeting and shopping. "Most housewives don't have to pinch pennies today," a market analyst observed in 1943, "all they have to worry about is new ways to prepare the restricted

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[6] For summaries of the unique circumstances of World War II that created the economic recovery from the Depression, see Michael C. C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 114-8; and John M. Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 90-2.

[7] "$152 Cash on Hand In Average Pocket," *New York Times*, 11 April 1944, 1.

[8] "Store Sales Show 11.6% Gain in June," *New York Times*, 6 July 1944, 22; "Department Store Sales Rise Far Above Year Ago," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 September 1944, 23; "Store Sales Show 18% in Nation," *New York Times*, 1 September 1944, 17; and Winkler, *Home Front U. S. A.*, 34.

[9] Blum, 90.

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list of foods that are available."[10] The purchasing power of women rose during the war in response not only to the higher earnings by their husbands for those who were married, but also their own increasing participation in paid employment. The manpower shortage brought 6.5 million women into the labor market, generating a surge of $8 billion in the amount of money at their disposal.[11] "Every day, thousands of women are hanging up their kitchen aprons, donning work clothes or uniforms which they may wear for several years," an advertising specialist noted, advising retailers to tap into this new source of income for women. "Thousands of them are experiencing for the first time in their lives a sense of security, independence and freedom that they have always dreamed about. When they enter a dress shop or any other women's accessory shop, they have their own money, to do with as they like." In addition to purchases for family consumption, the first year of war saw women spending more money on themselves as well, setting new records for sales of women's apparel and luxury items such as cosmetics, fur, and jewelry.[12]

While those who were able to benefit from the war boom embraced the quest for material abundance, those who were not yet able to escape the hardship of the Depression continued the struggle for a decent standard of living. The defense build-up did not provide as immediate a relief for minorities from the devastating effects of the previous economic

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[10] Frank E. Fehlman, "East Liverpool Review Sells Recipe Campaign," *Editor & Publisher*, 1 May 1943, 16.

[11] Historian John M. Blum noted that the pleasure of consumption was a major attraction for women to enter the labor market in World War II. See Blum, 94-5.

[12] Frank E. Fehlman, "Dress Shop Feature In 'After Sundown Apparel,'" *Editor & Publisher*, 5 December 1942, 12.

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debacle. In the spring of 1942, blacks, for example, constituted less than 3 percent of all war workers.[13] Only when the labor shortage became so critical in the second half of 1942 that employers were forced to put aside prejudices did minorities start to benefit from the opening of jobs. Significant improvement of their economic situation thus did not occur until later into the war when opportunities in defense industries raised the incomes of blacks substantially after 1943. For low income and fixed income families whose purchasing power did not rise during the war, the unprecedented high amount of discretionary spending that characterized wartime mass consumption remained elusive. For instance, as of October 1943, a service wife with two children could count on a monthly allowance of only $72, which, according to Treasury reports, fell $50 short of what the average consumer had to spend.[14]

In addition to insufficient income, the lack of low priced goods in war time further impinged on the consumer choices of women who were trying to make do as manufacturers concentrated on more expensive lines with larger profit margins. A national survey by the OPA in early 1944 showed that the scarcity of inexpensive consumer goods topped the list of concerns of housewives as they searched, often futilely, for items such as children's clothing, women's panties, and household linens. Of those interviewed, 66 percent felt worse off financially than they were a year ago.[15] Unexpected shortages of many food staples posed

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[13] Fair Employment Practices Committee, "First Report," (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945.)

[14] "Ask $120 Month Allowance for Yanks' Families," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 October 1943, 2.

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additional problems to families already struggling to procure their rations for daily existence because they had no means to stock up in advance as did more comfortably situated families. When rationing orders froze the sale of butter, fats, and oils in March 1943, for example, thousands of families in Harlem were caught with less than half-a-pound of supply in hand.[16] Although rationing eventually improved the distribution of scarce goods, underprivileged consumers were more likely to find it difficult to cope with the regimen it imposed on shopping and homemaking. They compensated for the lack of financial resources with hard work, making multiple trips to the stores to obtain enough just for the day and bargain hunting to cut down on the hidden cost involved in ever-rising prices for inferior merchandise.

Despite the uneven pace of economic improvement, in general, Americans enjoyed a higher standard of living than before the war. The income of black families, although still far below that of whites, showed a dramatic increase during the war, doubling between 1939 and 1945.[17] After years of hardship endured for the exigencies of survival, people were eager to relish a more affluent lifestyle that allowed them to pursue long-awaited comfort, conveniences, and status symbols through ownership of consumer goods. Advertisers, commodifying the meaning of the war, further propagated the culture of consumption. In contrast to the gloomy outlook on the fighting front in the spring of 1943, a cheerful

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[15] Lloyd Norman, "Poser Faces U. S. Wives," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 23 January 1944, part 5, p. 18.

[16] "Food Shortage Acute Problem for Harlemites," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 1, 23.

[17] D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 218.

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newspaper advertisement, for example, featured a designer collection of "Freedom print" dresses complemented by a Freedom lipstick offering "a fighting mad red for gallant lips--brighter, clearer, more vibrant lip tone, in tune with the tempo of the times."[18] The personal indulgences blatantly encouraged in mass media, however, contradicted the quest for the common good as the central moral of the war. Aside from the ideological conflict, fear of inflation as a result of consumer demands exceeding supplies prompted the government to rein in the capitalist impulse of individual acquisitiveness. Simply put in the words of the OWI, the problem posed by wartime prosperity was "there's more 'easy money' in America today and there's less to spend it on."[19]

Concerned that the promises of the consumer culture were luring Americans away from the war effort, the government found what it perceived as rampant consumer desire among American women a particularly insidious threat. In November 1943, the OWI sent out a stern warning through women's pages that "if the dread spectre [sic] of INFLATION [emphasis included] appears over America soon, the women of the country will have to shoulder a great deal of the blame" because apparently they were spending record sums on clothing, jewelry, furs, and cosmetics. Compared with August 1942, purchases in women's ready-to-wear stores in August 1943 rose 25 percent. Sales of furs in July 1943 showed an increase of 149 percent over that of the same period in 1942. Much to the dismay of the government, women's purchases of these "luxury items" represented a higher proportion of

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[18] "Proudly We Hail," *New York Times*, 28 March 1943, 4 (L)

[19] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Undated shopping news column, Entry 194, Box 1034, OWI Records.

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their income than in 1942 despite the OWI's effort to discourage civilian consumption in the face of growing shortages of goods. Chastising women for excessive consumption on the home front, the OWI concluded that "much of the spending is for spending's sake--not for the sake of necessity."[20] To control such frivolous behavior of the buoyant wartime consumer, the government sought to impose on Americans a lifestyle that discouraged the inclination toward gratification and pleasure in consumption to emphasize instead the value of restraints and sacrifices in achieving equality and freedom for all.[21] Pleading with women not to agitate for higher wages for their husbands, the OWI reminded them that "if the going gets tough when the weekly pay envelope seems too small to go around, remember--that's your chance to make a real sacrifice for winning the war."[22]

Women and The Economy of War

When Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt returned from England in November 1942, she urged American women to follow the example of British women, who were showing tremendous

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[20] "Women's Greater Spending Points Way to Inflation," *Fortnightly Budget*, 11 November 1943, 4, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[21] It is interesting to note that the conflicting views on mass consumption advanced by commercial media and government propaganda invoked what historian Warren I. Susman called the dialectic of scarcity versus abundance. Susman examined recent American history in terms of the clash between an older world view defined by the Puritan-republican culture, which emphasized limits, sacrifices, and building strength in character, and a newer vision of life that emerged in the late nineteenth century with the rise of the culture of mass consumption, which stressed gratification, fulfillment, and projecting charm in personality. See Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the 20th Century* (New York: Pantheon Book, 1984) and "Scarcity vs. Abundance: A Dialectic of Two Cultures," *The Nation* 240:6 (February 16, 1985): 172-6.

[22] "Axis Propaganda Broadcasts," *Fortnightly Budget*, 4 September 1943, 5.

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courage under deprivation and hardship. Deeply engulfed in the war, women in England were coping without bobby pins and hot water bottles to speed up the final victory. Simply by exercising more restraint in the purchase of non-essential goods, American women too could save labor and material for war production, exhorted the first lady.[23] Her appeal highlighted the importance of women as consumers in the war. Usually responsible for the family budget, women directed 85 percent of household purchases in peacetime. In wartime, the absence of a large number of men and the curtail of the production of durable goods, a customary male sphere of decision making in the family, further increased the importance of women in determining the pattern of household consumption. "These days many of them are directing the spending of the whole dollar since more homes are man-less today," the OWI observed, "In the final analysis they will really be the ones to control any inflationary trend."[24] In addition, shortages and rationing, which impinged on the subsistence needs of families, a responsibility traditionally designated to women, added urgency to their significance in maintaining the proper functioning of the consumer household in wartime society. The government's effort in engineering consumer behavior therefore focused on women, whose support enabled the wartime administration to control inflation, pay for the war, and fulfill the demands of military priorities without hurting civilian morale.

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[23] Winifred Mallon, "First Lady Hails British Courage," *New York Times*, 19 November 1942, 14.

[24] Hazel Howard, Letter to women's editors, 19 June 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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In its shopping column distributed regularly to the press, the OWI preached the virtue of thrift and sought to adjust individual women's buying habits to the collective needs of the market. For example, in July 1945, the column, urging housewives to take advantage of the record tuna catches, advised them to stretch the value of their ration stamps and procure more nutritious foods.[25] Not always synchronized with the war's demands, private concerns with the well-being of their families, although often invoked as an appeal to women, could also be criticized as a petty female transgression that nevertheless had serious repercussions for the economy. In another instance, the OWI warned that the affluent housewife, who had extra cash jingling in her purse to pay more than ceiling prices for what her family needed such as a dozen eggs or a chicken, threatened the purchasing power of every household by driving up the cost of essentials.[26]

According to the OWI, the mechanism for economic stability would collapse if the housewife did not vigilantly guard against the temptation of consumer goods and the maternal instinct to nurture her family at any cost. If she paid as little as one penny more on a 20-cent item, the extra cost to all American families would be about $4,000,000,000 a year, said the OWI.[27] To make women aware of the damage of extravagant buying to the war effort, the OWI enlisted the help of newspapers to fight against wasteful, unnecessary

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[25] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Shopping column, 31 July 1945, Entry 194, Box 1034, OWI Records.

[26] Ibid.; and Office of War Information, News Bureau, Undated shopping news column, Entry 194, Box 1034, OWI Records.

[27] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release for women's page editors, 6 April 1945, Entry 194, Box 1036, OWI Records.

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consumption. Anticipating heavy consumer spending in the 1943 holiday season due to an increase of 14 percent in individual income after taxes,[28] in November, the women's unit offered women's editors the "Squander Bug" created by Dr. Seuss to help them dramatize the "sermons on extravagance" with the dragon-toothed, worm-necked, swine-bellied monster gorging on dollar bills and replete with useless Christmas gifts.[29]

Echoing the feminine undertone of the official discourse on the threat of inflation, news reports framed rising costs of living essentials as an issue of particular interest to housewives through narrative devices such as photo illustrations, the emphasis of headlines, and the choice of interview subjects. "Housewives Report Increases in Cost of Most Living Essentials," proclaimed a news report on the Bureau of Labor Statistics index.[30] Another story on the meaning of inflation and price control sought to catch the attention of readers with this headline: "Here's News for Chicago Housewives."[31] Editorial discretion on layout and content further reinforced the gendering of news on the topic of wartime consumption, a common practice in both the dailies and the black weeklies. To keep women informed of general market changes and the more specific consumer issues affecting black communities, the *Chicago Defender*, for example, dedicated space in its society page to a column titled "I Go to Market." Many newspapers circulated a nationally syndicated column launched by

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[28] "Women's Greater Spending," *Fortnightly Budget*, 11 November 1943, 4.

[29] Howard, "Is There a Squander Bug in Your Home?" Letter to women's editors, 6 November 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[30] "Housewives Report Increases in Cost of Most Living Essentials," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 18 November 1944, 5 (A).

[31] "Here's News for Chicago Housewives," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 16 January 1943, 5.

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General Features in November 1942 in their women's pages to help readers meet the challenge of wartime household buying. Written by Genevieve Smith, formerly a women's editor, the column titled "More for Your Money" coached women on the economy of patriotism.

The Feminization of Consumption in Food Rationing

The emphasis on consumer information in the wartime press echoed the government's assumption that as consumers, women must be monitored constantly and manipulated skillfully to ensure the proper functioning of the economy. To control buying behavior, the Office of Price Administration closely watched the shopping habits of women. For example, the agency analyzed the food diaries submitted by 2,000 housewives across the country who served on its Consumer Panel to determine value points for rationed items. When the information indicated that consumers were buying too much butter during December 1944, the OPA raised the point value and cut down purchases by 16 percent in January.[32] The implementation of food rationing, which, unlike other war programs, affected every one on the home front, further underscored the feminization of consumption in wartime society. Soon after the war was declared, the government, in response to conditions that made import difficult, initiated straight rationing of goods supplied largely by foreign sources. Purchases of items in severe shortage had to be validated with coupons issued by local rationing boards,

[32] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release for women's page editors, 7 June 1945, Entry 194, Box 1036, OWI Records.

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which entitled a consumer to a fixed amount of supply such as one pound of sugar per person per week, and one pound of coffee every five weeks for every one over 15.

As the war went on, government demands of other foods increasingly clashed with civilian needs. Military and allied allotments took up as much as 25 percent of the entire food production for 1943, compared with only 13 percent in 1942, and 4 percent in 1941.[33] Consequently, home front consumption was curtailed to fulfill the needs on the war front. Early in 1943, the government called for a drastic reduction in civilian consumption of meat from 137 pounds per person in the previous year to 91 pounds as well as a 50 percent decrease in the consumption of canned vegetables.[34] Other wartime exigencies such as labor shortages, difficulties in transportation, and scarcity of metal used in canning further complicated the issue of how to equitably distribute a fairly large supply of foods produced on the home front. Summing up the nation's food dilemma, an editorial writer concluded, "we must make both bullets and beans, in full recognition of the fact that food is a basic war weapon."[35]

To achieve a more sophisticated control of demand and supply, in the spring of 1943, the OPA introduced two major rationing orders based on a complicated point system. Rationing of canned and processed foods started on March 1, 1943. Each individual was

[33] "Food Copy Mobilized Behind War Effort," *Editor & Publisher*, 27 February 1943, 10; and Office of War Information, *The Information Guide* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 43.

[34] W. J. Enright, "Supplies of Food Change Sharply," *New York Times*, 7 March 1943, 10 (E).

[35] Merryle Stanley Rukeyser, "At Last, It's Guns and Butter," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 30 March 1943, 10.

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entitled to forty-eight ration points per month in blue stamps. Two No. 3 cans of peaches and one can of soup, for example, would take up the March quota. The second rationing order starting on March 29 covered meats, fats, and cheese. The allotment was sixty-four points per person per month in red stamps. A shopper could spend the sixteen points per week on one pound of porterhouse steak and one pound of cheese, for example, or one pound of butter and one pound of bacon. According to availability, the OPA assigned items of food different point values, which also fluctuated with the market from month to month. Consumers had to present money as well as the exact amount of ration stamps for their purchases.

Resistance against Federal Control of Food Supply

Before World War II, Americans had never accepted rationing and price control. Intrusion by the government into those personal decisions on a daily basis seemed to violate the principal of individual freedom so highly valued in American democracy. Even after total mobilization in December 1941, many were not convinced of the necessity of food rationing, suspecting that the government was imposing the system to raise war consciousness on the home front.[36] A war program as unpopular as food rationing provided ammunition to Roosevelt's opponents and invited further criticism of his administration. Dissatisfaction with growing food shortages in the face of increased output mushroomed into accusations of government monopoly of supply, bringing the conflict between civilian and military needs

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[36] "Housewife Takes Over," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 April 1943, 6 (S); "Food Is News," *Editor & Publisher*, 27 March 1943, 22; and Arthur Robb, "Food Facts Not Revealed by Government," *Editor & Publisher*, 3 April 1943, 10.

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into sharp relief. Calling the federal government the nation's "biggest hoarder," the American Institute of Food Distribution, a non-profit research organization, charged that excessive government purchase of canned fruits and vegetables was causing the acute shortages confronting civilians.[37] The Institute's report claimed that up to 75 percent of the crop packed in 1942 was reserved for the government, while less than 15 percent was needed to supply the army and navy until the fall of 1943.

In most parts of the country, food shortages topped the list of civilian complaints about wartime living. Oppositional newspapers portrayed housewives fainting in front of crowded meat counters and soldiers' wives suffering from declining purchasing power as victims of inept federal management. Relying on the female consumer's plight for narrative credibility and moral authority, critics represented the suffering housewife as a symbol of unnecessary civilian deprivation caused by exaggerated military privileges as well as excessive global commitments of the American government.[38] Dismissing these criticisms of the government's food policy as rumors, the OWI claimed, "Despite the fact that American soldiers are the best fed in the world, food is not handed out to them without regard for other

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[37] "Charge Nation's Biggest Hoarder Is Government," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 March 1943, 8.

[38] "OPA's Civilian Meat Quota to Be Slashed 25 Per Cent," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 January 1943, 1; "Advance in Many Staples Come as Big Surprise," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 March 1943, part 1, p.1 and 14; "Foods from Midwest Fortifying Red Army; Big Shipments Listed," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 March 1943, part 1, p. 1; "Price Roll Back Under Attack From All Sides," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10 May 1943, 8; "Turkey Seekers Likely to Get Only the Bird!" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 November 1944, part 1, p. 3; "WFA to Hire Commission Men to Sell Surplus Food," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 October 1944, 19; "U.S. Can't Feed All Europe's Millions, Says Packing Official," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 31 May 1944, 15; and "August Beef Output Is Record," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 September 1944, 23.

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demands."[39] With the threat of resistance looming large, Price Administrator Prentiss Brown noted that American housewives "better than anyone else, can eliminate the popular misconception of the OPA."[40]

Women as the Prime Target of Food Propaganda

As a result of the importance attributed to women's role as consumers, although government food restrictions applied to every civilian by definition, in practice, they were directed largely at women. Before point rationing of canned vegetables and fruits went into effect, the OPA bombarded housewives with advice, pleas, and directives through the press. From Washington, Paul M. O'Leary, OPA rationing chief, churned out instructions to housewives, asking them to budget their points, prepare shopping lists, spend high point stamps first, and above all, "don't be impatient."[41] Before meat rationing started, OPA officials again repeatedly warned housewives against rush buying. "Stay home and study your needs for the week," the agency cautioned, "don't spend all your coupons the first day for meat and then find you must go without butter all week."[42] The reaction of the press to the debut of point rationing reinforced the OPA's approach to the program as primarily a women's issue. Titled "Ration Problem," a photo in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of March 2, 1943, showed a housewife "trying to make up her mind whether a can of peaches is worth

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[39] Rukeyser, "Guns and Butter," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 30 March 1943, 10.

[40] "Housewife," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 April 1943, 6 (S).

[41] "Point Rationing---It's on Today," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 March 1943, 6.

[42] "Today's Rationing Changes," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 March 1943, 9.

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half her rationing allowance for the month."[43] A similar picture in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on the same day showed another woman contemplating various point values in the store.[44]

In addition to framing food rationing as an issue of household management of concern mainly to women, newspapers reflected apprehension of irrational female buying behaviors that would disrupt the program as well as doubts about the ability of the average homemaker to comprehend the complexity of the point system. "Housewives Cling to Ration Coupons," the *New York Times* announced on March 2 in its front page.[45] Headlined "Scare Buying Subsides," a story in the day's *Louisville Courier-Journal* also observed with relief that housewives in the area heeded official advice and did not go on a "point-spending spree."[46] Contrary to the OPA's fear of a breakdown of the system on the eve of point rationing, the *New York Times* reported that it was "truly surprising" that the average housewife caught on to food points as quickly as she apparently did. The intense publicity contributed by the press particularly in March might very well have led to a better understanding of food rationing among women. Although only half of them understood food restrictions in January, three months later, 88 percent of women had mastered the complicated federal system.[47] In light of the successful inauguration of point rationing, the OPA "made a profound bow to the

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[43] "Ration Problem," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2 March 1943, 9.

[44] "Shopping with Points," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 March 1943, 8.

[45] "Housewives Cling to Ration Coupons," *New York Times*, 2 March 1943, 1 and 15.

[46] " 'Scare Buying' Subsides as Point System Starts," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 2 March 1943, sec. 2, p. 1.

[47] Campbell, 180.

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country's newspapers for their help in publicizing the program."[48] Chicago metropolitan area OPA administrator Michael F. Mulcahy noted that "the housewives have been so well educated in the program by the newspapers that we believe they will know just how to go about point shopping."[49]

The success of the rationing program indeed hinged on the cooperation of women as they were in charge of food consumption in most families. Further propaganda to explain the overall food program therefore also focused on mobilizing the support of women as the OWI sought to justify military priorities and maintain civilian morale. "Nothing in this war is more important than tough and well-equipped fighting men," the OWI asserted. The agency told its staff that when they worked to inform the public about wartime food shortages, "it is important to emphasize that the requirements of our armed forces must be met *first* [emphasis included]."[50] Tapping into the cultural reservoir of gender bias that customarily subordinated the feminine to the masculine, the official discourse on food rationing emphasized military priorities, which were equated with the well-being of the heroic American soldier, over civilian needs, which were trivialized as the frivolous impulse of the selfish housewife. An ad donated by the *New York Times* thus rebuked civilians for complaining about wartime living conditions. "So steak is hard to find at the butcher's?

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[48] "Housewives 'Catch on' to Food Points Quickly," *New York Times*, 7 March 1943, 10 (E).

[49] "OPA Rules Put U.S. on Short Rations Today," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 March 1943, 1.

[50] Office of War Information, "What You Say," *The Information Guide.*

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American soldiers, and American women and children, prisoners of the Japs, are living on weak tea, rice, and half-decayed fish." Exhorting civilians to be "more worthy of the men dying for us," the war message challenged those on the home front to "tighten our muscles, strengthen our wills and steel our resolution."[51]

The primacy of the needs of the soldier implied a moral obligation for American women as well as other men who were free from military obligations to at least make sacrifices on the home front to support those risking their lives on the war front. The images of various foods associated with masculinity and femininity further illustrated the gender implications of the food propaganda. Urging the public to accept the civilian weekly quota of 2 1/2 pounds of meat per person compared to 7 pounds in the armed forces, propaganda messages asserted that "few foods so satisfy the 'inner man.'"[52] To help conserve this apparently macho food to sustain the fighting men of America, housewives should strive to convert their family, including their civilian husbands, to abundant supply of salads and fresh fruits--"sissy" foods in the words of the OWI. The feminization of the civilian diet might not be easy, the agency conceded, but attention to variety, crispness, and colorful arrangement would help coax changes in the typical meat and potato diet of Americans.[53]

Other publicity strategies were also provided in detailed guidelines prepared by the OWI for internal and media use. To avoid negative connotations of the word "rationing," the

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[51] See ad in *New York Times*, 30 March 1943, 12.

[52] "Meat Today, Learn More Cuts," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 September 1942, 23; also in *New York Times*, 30 September 1942, 27.

[53] "Your Working Husband Changes His Mind About 'Sissy Foods,'" *The Women's Page*, 19 August 1944, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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OWI advised the media to describe it instead as a process of "sharing" that benefited every consumer.[54] In particular, the OWI wanted rationing information to convey the idea that far from impinging on consumer choices, the government devised the program to ensure that American housewives continued to enjoy as wide a choice as possible, and therefore they should appreciate the buying rules as an exciting challenge to their consumer expertise. "Learning how to use it [ration points] will be something like learning to play a new game," an OPA official maintained, "you'll find it not unlike the art of spending money."[55] Another ad, also trivializing the problem faced by housewives, told women that "if you can add up a bridge score, you can figure the score on rationed and unrationed foods for your family that they'll like and thrive on."[56] Furthermore, the OWI asked the media to foster positive attitudes toward rationing by encouraging the public to view the inconveniences not as regulations imposed by the government but as opportunities embraced by patriotic citizens to contribute to the defeat of the enemy. For Mrs. America, the rationing stamp represented "your ticket to victory," an advertisement proclaimed. "It represents a power far beyond the ability to purchase. It carries out the will of a democratic people to **share the right** to purchase [emphasis included]."[57]

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[54] Office of War Information, "Rationing," *The Information Guide*.

[55] "OPA Aide Explains Point Rationing," *New York Times*, 15 January 1943, 14.

[56] "Smart Tricks in Meal Planning," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 2 April 1943, sec. 2, p. 6.

[57] See ad in *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 3 March 1943, 3.

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Media Support for Food Rationing

Despite criticism by some newspapers, overall the rationing program received tremendous support in the media. Threatened by attempts of the government to abolish brand names, eliminate advertising as a marketing instrument, and simply deliver food to the public as a bulk commodity, food advertisers enthusiastically offered their resources to serve the propaganda needs of the government.[58] The Grocery Manufacturers of America, for example, enlisted its members, who spent approximately $1 billion annually on advertising, to promote government food programs.[59] On February 19, 1943, after a meeting with representatives of several government agencies in the New York Times Hall, three hundred leading food manufacturers and their advertising agencies pledged their support to sell the idea of point rationing to the public.[60] The OWI announced that the effort was the largest coordinated advertising promotion in support of a war program.

Coinciding with the announcement of point rationing, large-scale ad campaigns by manufacturers such as Campbell's Soup, Heinz, General Foods, Kellogg, and Libby made a big splash in newspapers from coast to coast. Libby's full-page ad with "official information on point rationing" appeared in newspapers in every city with a population over 50,000.

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[58] "Time for an Offensive," *Printer's Ink*, 10 April 1942, 14; "World's Greatest System of Mass Communication Is at Call of U. S. Government," *Printer's Ink*, 10 April 1942, 33; "Advertising Agencies Are Contributing Many Thousands of Hours to War Effort," *Printer's Ink*, 27 November 1942, 60, 62, 64; and "'War Message in Every Ad' Set Up as Goal of Field," *Advertising Age*, 14 June 1943, 8.

[59] "Food Industry to Explain Government Campaigns," *Editor & Publisher*, 13 February 1943, 10.

[60] "Food Copy," *Editor & Publisher*, 27 February 1943, 10.

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Featuring a special "Ration Budget Form," the campaign sponsored by Heinz illustrated the public education approach of advertisers who sought to generate good will by coaching women on the intricacies of wartime shopping. To encourage weekly menu planning in preparation for shopping with points, the ad listed all rationed goods with space provided for the size of the package and the number of points required for each. Kellogg's ad went into newspapers in every city with a population over 25,000 as well as 2,800 weeklies, urging women to follow the "Golden Rules of Food Rationing":

> Shop early in the day, early in the week and only once a week, if possible, to lighten congestion in the store. Make up a shopping list and add up the points BEFORE you shop. Include fresh fruits and vegetables, cereals, and other unrationed foods where you can. Plan your family diet carefully. Get enough nourishment. Make up menus for the week. Use 8 and 5 point stamps when you can. Save 1 and 2 point stamps to make the count come out even. Your grocer cannot give you "change" in Blue Stamps.[61]

Besides being a medium for propaganda messages sponsored by advertisers, newspapers provided an ideal channel for the timely distribution of complicated rationing information to the public. The *New York Times*, for example, condensed the OPA's cumbersome point rationing chart into an "easy-to-understand form" widely distributed through the wire service. Readers were urged to clip the form, which, the paper boasted, "is just the right size to be pasted in the back cover of the ration book."[62] Even the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, which remained critical of the government's food policies throughout the war, devoted ample column space to printing official tables of point values for various foods. In addition to straight news coverage, women's pages added the necessary human interest angle

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[61] "Help Your Grocer," *New York Times*, 3 March 1943, 12.

[62] "Clip and Paste in Your Ration Book No. 2," *New York Times*, 2 March 1943, 14.

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to the theme of universal sacrifices stressed in government propaganda. A *New York Times* story appearing on the first day of point rationing marked the editorial influence of the OWI's approach to food rationing. "Any Americans inclined to grumble about wartime food restrictions may be interested to learn that they are probably eating better than Britain's royal family, which is lucky to have meat more than once a week," reported the *Times*.[63] The paper went on to tell readers of its women's page in great detail how the King and Queen were coping with the deprivation of their peace time luxuries. The point well made in the story was that everyone had to live with rationing.

Similarly, the press ushered in the second major rationing order with profiles of the all-American family of the price administrator. Headlined "Brown Family Feels Common Pinch," a United Press story picked up by many women's pages assured readers that Mrs. Prentiss Brown, who "hasn't seen meat for a long time," got no advance rationing tips from the price administrator. "When butter stocks were frozen last week, the Browns were caught butterless just like thousands of others."[64] Accordingly to the report, the Brown family were coping with food shortages "like any other American family." Apparently quite popular with women's editors, two days later the wire service story, embellished with a series of exclusive photos of the Browns at home, appeared in an elaborated version. Readers were challenged to bet their bottom dollar that there was no hoarding in the home of the price administrator. Even Brown himself had once passed up a chance to buy a twenty-five-pound sack of his favorite "home-state" Michigan beans although he knew they would be rationed later that

[63] "Royalty Is Subject to Rationing, Too," *New York Times*, 1 March 1943, 16.

[64] "Brown Family Feels Common Food Pinch," *New York Times*, 30 March 1943, 18.

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night. "He was sorely tempted, but he didn't give in."[65] The pictures showed Brown with his wife and children during a typical day at home. Filled with details of Brown's home life, the profiles relied on what media scholar Stuart Hall called "the classical counterposition of public figure/private man" to neutralize opposition against rationing orders. As a textual strategy, it served to deflect the issue of food restrictions away from the political toward the personal by establishing a bond between the government represented by the OPA chief and the public feminized as the housewife figurehead.[66] On the ideological level, the perspective on rationing constructed through features slanted toward the interest of women sought to emphasize the OWI's point that wartime sacrifices were being distributed "evenly and fairly, without favoritism."[67]

Gender and Race in Civilian Consensus on Food Distribution

Generally receptive of federal control of food consumption, the press promoted rationing as a collective response to the shopping woes of individual housewives in the face of necessary civilian support for America's fighting men. The purpose of the point system, according to the *New York Times*, was to "give the housewife as wide a choice as possible."[68] And the government "is doing every thing it can" to help housewives shop under point rationing, wrote a columnist in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In the spirit of good

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[65] "Meet the Browns," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 1 April 1943, sec. 2, p. 3.

[66] Stuart Hall, "The Determinations of News Photographs," in *The Manufacture of News*, ed. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1973), 176-90.

[67] Office of War Information, "Operating Policies," *The Information Guide*, 3.

[68] "The Rationing Situation in the New York Area," *New York Times*, 4 April 1943, 37.

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citizenship, the housewife should "do your part to make the new ration plan work smoothly" by following the rules for buying and using rationed foods offered by the Department of Agriculture.[69] Although rationing was first enforced in Germany and Japan, the American effort, promoted as the "only fair way of making sure that everybody gets a fair share," registered in the press less as a sign of totalitarianism than of democracy. "The Negro should be glad he's an American," the *New York Amsterdam News* said in a ringing endorsement of the rationing of canned foods, "since under Hitler & Co. the Aryan would come first in the rationing line and all others last."[70]

Blacks in general were skeptical about the fair distribution of food under the rationing system. Many found it challenging to spread out the ration points and to get enough food for a large family.[71] Despite the discontent expressed by some readers, the black press, concerned about the improving its relationship with the government, was willing to help mobilize the support of blacks for rationing and price control so long as "Washington takes note of the fact that Negroes of this country are solidly behind all democratic efforts to win the war."[72] The intervention of the government in personal choices of consumer goods purported to protect those with less purchasing power to honor a collective commitment to

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[69] Jane Friendly, "Here Are Helpful Suggestions for Food Rationing," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 March 1943, 5 (S).

[70] "Rationing Canned Foods," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 16 January 1943, 6.

[71] Adele Glasgow, "We Ask the Question," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 10.

[72] "Canned Foods," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 16 January 1943, 6.

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individual equality in consumption. Wary of the hardship of lower-income families, the black press supported the government's effort of economic control also as an initiative to defend the rights of those who were vulnerable to price hikes and consumer discrimination. Condemning the rampant favoritism and the ruthlessness of the merchants "preying upon the pocketbooks of many Negro families," the *New York Amsterdam News*, for example, welcomed the establishment of a new rationing board in Brooklyn in the spring of 1944.[73]

The newspaper industry reaped considerable patriotic reward from the food rationing program. Representative Charles A. Halleck (Republican, Indiana) hailed the press as "one of our most potent internal weapons."[74] Arguing against stringent restriction of newsprint, he said food rationing, "provided just one example of the indispensable position occupied by the newspaper." In July 1943, OPA chief Prentiss Brown wrote a letter to *Editor & Publisher*, praising the press for its public service: "No finer single service in the interest of the American public has been performed during this war." Capitalizing on the official recognition, industry leaders boasted that newspapers "had not only facilitated, but actually had made possible the smooth and rapid inauguration of the food rationing system."[75] In their cooperation with the government to publicize the rationing program, newspapers and advertisers made an important contribution to home front morale by displacing the tension between competing civilian and military needs. Rationing was promulgated as a collective

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[73] "Jail the Black Market Racketeers," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 10; and "A Job Awaits New OPA Board," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 27 March 1944, 2.

[74] *San Francisco Chronicle*, 5 March 1943, 6.

[75] "No Finer Single Service," *Editor & Publisher*, 19 July 1943, 38.

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resolution for civilians to share limited food supply not only with each other but more importantly with soldiers fighting on the war front. To lower public resistance to federal control, the publicity focused on equality in consumer rights and civilian sacrifices as the spirit of economic democracy epitomized by the rationing program adopted by patriotic American citizens.

Targeting women in the collective effort to sell point rationing to the public, government agencies, newspapers, and advertising depoliticized the public's concern with distribution of food supplies as a private issue of household consumption. Coded as the patriotic responsibility and family obligation of the homemaker, the burden of coping with food shortages fell mostly on women. Moreover, it became virtually impossible for them to question government food policies during the war without appearing treasonous. Largely excluded from the process of policy making on rationing, women were nonetheless held responsible for upholding the system. In contrast, the black press approached rationing also as an issue of community interest from a racial perspective. Reflecting the double V stance, black newspapers exposed racially-based discrimination against consumers while mobilizing the support of black women for food rationing.

The feminine overtone of the rationing program helped the government secure the consent of the majority of Americans. A Gallup poll in March 1943 indicated that "an overwhelming majority of Americans have come to accept food rationing as necessary and are ready to take it in their stride."[76] Over 80 percent of the subjects approved of rationing. Interestingly the survey revealed the effect of the propaganda's focus on women as it showed

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[76] George Gallup, "America Speaks," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 5 March 1943, 2.

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a large gender gap in the understanding of how point rationing worked. Half of the men compared to three-quarters of the women surveyed said they understood the system. As civilian support for rationing grew into a consensus on the home front, the public discontent registered in press criticism earlier in the war dissipated. Toward the end of the war in 1945, even after a prolonged period of restrictions, 80 percent of Americans still approved of rationing on the home front in order to send more food abroad.[77]

Consumption and Female Citizenship

Although most Americans approved of the idea of rationing and price control, public support did not prevent those overwhelmed by self interest from operating or patronizing black markets. The government, disgraced by what it viewed as a lack of strength and determination on the home front, projected the menace of black markets on the image of the selfish housewife who violated the rights of other consumers when she ignored government mandates. Calling for social sanction against the "black market" housewife, the OWI started the Home Front Pledge campaign in the summer of 1943 to shore up American women's patriotic commitment to maintaining the stability of the economy.[78] Citing the runaway inflation in Italy as an example of the danger of unlimited consumption, the OWI declared, "Mrs. American Housewife, by observing rationing and price rules, is depended on to help

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[77] Campbell, 182.

[78] Office of War Information, News Bureau, "The Ration Coupon Counterfeiter and the Housewife," News release for women's page editors, 21 May 1945, Entry 194, Box 1036, OWI Records.

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keep such outrageous prices from happening here."[79] The campaign's appeal to American women's responsibility as citizens highlighted the significance attributed to their contribution to the war effort as consumers. As the OWI noted, "The citizen-housewife can be the staunchest and hardest worker for price control as a bulwark against inflation."[80]

The Home Front Pledge sought the promise of women not to pay more than ceiling prices and not to accept rationed goods without giving up ration stamps. To encourage active participation, the campaign also urged women to make price check-ups a part of their shopping routine. The women's unit of the OWI distributed stickers and pledge forms designed for the campaign to women's editors across the country. The initiative received a lukewarm response from the *Chicago Tribune*. In a typically critical tone toward the administration, the paper reported that Chicago housewives, in response to the call to volunteer as price investigators, said that they did not like to snoop for the government.[81] Most newspapers nonetheless responded with enthusiasm. The *New York Times* warned housewives who patronized black markets that they were "dancing to Hitler's tune."[82] The *Citizen and Times* in Asheville, North Carolina, started a door-to-door campaign to ask housewives to sign the pledge. They were also encouraged to post official stickers on their front doors to pressure others in the community to conform. Assisted by an OPA news and

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[79] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Undated shopping news column, Entry 194, Box 1034, OWI Records.

[80] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Shopping column, 31 July 1945, Entry 194, Box 1034, OWI Records.

[81] "Snoop for OPA?" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10 May 1943, 8.

[82] "Don't Be An Axis Puppet--Shun Black Markets," *New York Times*, 6 July 1944, 17.

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feature writer, the paper devoted a 32-page special edition entirely to the campaign on August 31, 1943, which generated over 50,000 lines of advertising for the issue in addition to continuing linage.[83] Other papers printed OPA's lists of top legal prices and carried pictures of housewives pledging their cooperation with the government.

Taking the opportunity to stimulate the war effort in black communities, the black press too promoted women's active participation in the campaign as a way to show the patriotism of blacks. "It's the least you can do," the *New York Amsterdam News* pleaded with black housewives.[84] Another story detailed the war contribution of thirty black housewives in Georgia who were cited by the OPA as models for price panel assistants throughout the country for helping to enforce price and rationing rules in their own communities.[85] Closer to home, volunteer price assistants received recognition for decreasing the number of price violations in food markets in the Harlem area. In addition to the patriotic appeal, the black press encouraged consumer activism from a racial point of view by portraying women as crusaders for the rights of black consumers. The case of Rose Lee Artist against the OPA, for example, made front page headlines in the *New York Amsterdam News* in January 1944. Unable to purchase butter from a local store, which withheld its stock for white customers, the Long Island beautician took action to challenge

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[83] "Devotes Entire Issue to Fight Black Market," *Editor & Publisher*, 18 September 1943, 44.

[84] "It's the Least You Can Do," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 2 September 1944, 10 (A).

[85] "Georgia Housewives Lauded As 'Models' In War Effort," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 11 December 1943, 8 (A).

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OPA rules that apparently condoned favoritism. Playing up the outrage on the front page, the paper quoted the recalcitrant grocer rebuking Artist: "Just for snooping around to see that we have butter for our old customers and none for you, we won't sell you anything now."[86] Informed by local officials that they could not compel a merchant to sell products, Artist took the case to the OPA Washington headquarters, determined to fight consumer discrimination against blacks under retail rules supposedly designed by the government to ensure an equitable distribution of goods. Other reports of housewives organizing to establish effective price control in stores and household service establishments in black neighborhoods highlighted a form of female collectivism that combined domestic concerns with racial interest to protect the purchasing power of black families.[87]

Conclusion

Media publicity of the government's economic stabilization program established a civic identity for women in national mobilization based on the role of the housewife-consumer. Not just a private ritual, shopping acquired a public purpose that offered women the right to police retailers and to obtain refunds for purchases made over ceiling prices. Exposing overcharges to keep inflation in check was "one of the important wartime duties of

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[86] "OPA Rule On Foods Fosters Black Market," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 22 January 1944, 1(A).

[87] "Hulan E. Jack to Aid OPA's Harlem Effort," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 1; "Local Conference Planning Drive to Establish Prices," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 11 December 1943, 1 (B); "Housewives' League Meets," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 3 October 1942, 19; "Housewives Conference To Be Held October 25-27," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 3 October 1942, 18; and "Home Service Under OPA Fire," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 8 July 1944, 1 (B).

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housewives," declared the OWI.[88] One woman reportedly received $57 back on a used washing machine. In addition to the satisfaction of contributing to the war effort, real rewards as such no doubt provided incentive for women to participate in the campaign. In New Orleans, 250,000 women signed the Home Front Pledge in four weeks. The OWI reported that in the following month, the city's average food costs dropped 5 percent.[89] Elsewhere as housewives began shopping with the official list of legal prices in hand, the cost of food also went down. The price for round steak dropped 18 cents a pound in Montgomery, Alabama, for example, and in Columbus, Georgia, the price for bananas came down from 15 cents a pound to 10 cents after the drive.[90] Compared to the sharp increase in the cost of living at the rate of 2 percent a month shortly after the war was declared, the cost of food actually decreased in 1944 and retail prices for other essentials rose only 2 percent.[91] The OWI attributed the success of price control to women, who in turn benefited from the increasing value of their food purchases. A family spending $20 a week for food in April 1945 could get almost a dollar's worth more than two years earlier.[92]

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[88] Office of War Information, Shopping column, 31 July 1945.

[89] Howard, Letter to women's editors, 11 September 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[90] "Home Front Pledges Bring Lower Prices," *Fortnightly Budget*, 13 November 1943, 5, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[91] "Housewives Report Increases in Cost of Most Living Essentials," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 18 November 1944, 5 (A).

[92] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release for women's page editors, 12 April 1945, Entry 194, Box 1036, OWI Records.

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Encouraged by government policies and propaganda, consumer activism emerged in the press as a prime outlet for female patriotism in the wartime civic culture. Both daily and black newspapers mobilized women to boycott high priced items, to expose black market patrons and operators, and to help disseminate consumer information in public spaces such as markets and community centers. Because of the cooperation of women, the wartime administration was able to distribute scarce goods relatively fairly and kept inflation under control. From mid-1943 to mid-1945, consumer prices showed a slight increase of less than 2 percent.[93] The success of the government's economic control program underlined its strategic appeal to public demands as well as private interests, which converged in the Home Front Pledge campaign to increase the power of women as consumers. In turn, the propaganda promised women that consumer cooperation with wartime economic measures would allow them to discharge their obligation to the country as citizens as well as to fulfill their responsibility to their families as caretakers. The next chapter will analyze the implications of the patriotic mode of consumption for women's role in managing the wartime household to meet the demands of the war effort.

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[93] Winkler, *Home Front U. S. A.*, 40.

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CHAPTER IV

THE KITCHEN PATRIOT

The demands of national mobilization highlighted the war contribution expected of women not only as consumers but also as homemakers. Chagrined that after almost a year of war, the home front still failed to "act and think like the Marines on Guadalcanal," *Life* magazine warned that the country would not look like "a real war machine" until American women would "just remember that everything your family consumes retards the war effort."[1] Indeed, if women had not thrown away 7,000,000,000 cans in the kitchen in 1944, according to the Office of War Information, they would have saved enough tin to make 2,300,000 hand grenades.[2] The imperative to divert material and resources into the military not only imposed limits on civilian consumption, it also required changes in household management. For example, as much as government propaganda focused on food rationing as just a new way of shopping, the program inevitably entailed increasing difficulties in home cooking. Gone were the good old days when the housewife could turn out a satisfying meal simply by setting forth a chopped sirloin steak seasoned merely with salt and pepper, a writer lamented in the *New*

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[1] "What Women Can Do," *Life*, 28 September 1942, 32.

[2] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Shopping news, 31 July 1945, Entry 194, Box 1034, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, MD., hereafter cited as OWI Records.

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York Times, noting the new challenge facing the home cook to "serve a meal equally appetizing when the chief ingredient is no longer beef but kidney beans."[3]

Wartime changes in the pattern of mass consumption such as food rationing prompted shifts in the continuing evolution of housework since the industrial revolution. As many necessities formerly produced by women at home became available for sale in the late nineteenth century, people increasingly resorted to the market to meet their daily subsistence needs and shopping became an important aspect of housework for women.[4] By World War II, commercial production on a large scale had largely replaced home production as the main source of goods for family consumption. To compensate for the acute shortages of consumer goods in wartime, women had to rely more on their own labor within the household. The inadequacies of the wartime economy in meeting the needs of consumers thus boosted the value of women's domestic productivity in maintaining the standard of living of their families. More importantly, the willingness of women to meet the needs of family members without imposing on war-strained public and commercial services represented a critical resource for the government to keep human resources replenished on a daily basis for the prolonged war

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[3] Jane Holt, "News of Food," *New York Times*, 28 July 1943, 12.

[4] For the influence of the rise of mass consumption on the division of labor in the household, see Victoria de Grazia, "Changing Consumption Regimes," in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* ed. de Grazia with Ellen Furlough (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 11-24; Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender and the Promises of Consumer Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), Glenna Matthews, "Toward an Industrialized Home," chap. in *"Just a Housewife": The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 92-115; Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983); and Christina Hardyment, *From Mangle to Microwave: The Mechanization of Household Work* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1988).

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effort. In the words of a public health official, "the nutrition needs of a healthy human body must be kept at par for defense work."[5] If Americans were to achieve maximum war production under food restrictions, housewives "must learn the techniques of keeping healthy on different diets," the *New York Times* warned in a report on the threat of nutritional deficiencies.[6] Widespread concern with public health underscored the expectation that women were to maintain the productivity of the wartime society through their nurturing role in the private sphere.

Traditionally not considered "work," housework was excluded from the calculation of a country's gross national product, and housewives were not rewarded with rights and benefits as other workers. The exigencies of war, however, highlighted the connection between domestic labor and national productivity. In the view of the government, the success of many war programs on the home front required the mobilization of women's service in the domestic realm. Rendered in the private context of family responsibility in peace time, the labor of love performed mostly by women was redefined as the wartime responsibility of citizens to help sustain the nation's war effort. Unlike the attempt to regulate the market behavior of women as consumers, which was aided by more formal means of control such as quotas, price ceilings, and judicial processes, the effort to coordinate their non-market behavior as homemakers with national interest had few resources to depend on other than media support for government propaganda. Newspapers across the

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[5] "Cod Liver Oil May Soon Be Part of Diet," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 March 1943, 6.

[6] "Program Offered for Food Front," *New York Times*, 4 April, 1943, 36.

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country, often in cooperation with local civilian defense committees, federal agencies such as the War Food Administration and the Agriculture Department, and volunteer organizations such women's clubs and Red Cross chapters, disseminated the knowledge and skills developed by home economists in response to war conditions. This chapter will address the role of the press in reforming the homemaking practices of women for the war effort.

Women and the Patriotic Household

As in the government's effort to harness the purchasing power of consumers, the cooperation of women was the focus of its initiative to increase conservation of critical material on the home front and the self-sufficiency of the wartime household. In addition to meeting the war's logistical demands, programs such as salvage drives and Victory Gardens served a morale function as they inscribed war consciousness on American homes. Throughout the war years, the government and the media targeted women in a crusade against waste to raise civilian awareness of the importance of recycling to the war effort. In December 1943, the government, anticipating heavy use in the holiday season, called on women to save paper for military purposes. Right from the wrapping papers, paper bags, newspapers, letters, magazines, boxes, and paper cartons found in their homes, the OWI asserted, women could supply an important war material for packages of "K" rations, ammunition containers, bomb fins, bomb rings, and gears for motors.[7] Women's editors were asked to remind their readers not to be lavish in the use of facial tissues and paper towels. To

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[7] Hazel Howard, "Salvaging Waste Paper," Letter to women's editors, 6 November 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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eliminate the Christmas tradition of gift wrapping, the OWI advised editors to make a point in their pages that "Aunt Mary will enjoy her present just as much without fancy wrappings."[8]

The OWI's paper saving advice resonated well with the press. Over 1,100 daily newspapers pledged support for the waster paper drive.[9] The *Chicago Daily Tribune*, for example, warned that "housewives who consign old paper to the trash burner are contributing to a shortage of vital war material which threatens to impair overseas shipments of blood plasma, food, ammunition, and other supplies."[10] Women's pages across the country urged their readers to accept goods from stores unwrapped and to reuse their own shopping bags. The paper saved through these simple acts would package enough blood plasma to take care of all the wounded men, the OWI's women's unit exhorted, and American women would have the satisfaction of making a real war contribution when they joined the "shopping bag brigade."[11] In February 1944, the government noted that the intense publicity targeting

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[8] "Saving on Use of Paper--Real War Job for Women," *Fortnightly Budget*, 25 December 1943, 3, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[9] Mary E. Lasher, "Over 1,100 Dailies Pledge Waste Paper Drive Aid," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 December 1943, 8; "180 Key Cities Now Aiding Waste Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 15 January 1944, 52; "Waste Drive Looks Better; Greater Effort Asked," *Editor & Publisher*, 22 January 1944, 24; "Only Half of U. S. Saving Paper, Gallup Reports," *Editor & Publisher*, 26 February 1944, 64; "Thorough Plan for Paper Drive Drawn in N. Y.," 11 March 1944, 26; and "Press Spur Waste Paper Collection to High Level," *Editor & Publisher*, 29 April 1944, 94.

[10] "Waste of Paper Called Peril to War Transport," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 December 1943, 14.

[11] Howard, Letter to women's editors, 1 January 1944, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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women in the holiday season helped collect an additional 200,000 tons of paper beyond the annual goal of 8,000,000 tons.[12]

The imperative to relieve resources such as equipment, transportation, and labor power for war and necessary civilian production further enhanced the significance of women's conservation effort. In early 1944, the government declared war on civilian wastefulness with a comprehensive "Fight Waste" campaign. The media's appeal to women featured a series of "reminder stamps" to increase their attention on household details that could help save manpower, utilities, gas, tires, food, paper, tin cans, and used fats for the armed forces.[13] The long-term program of household fat salvage in particular illustrated the support of the media in bringing the operation of the American household in line with military logistics. The collection of used fats and oils for the war effort started in July 1942. Blessed with generous support from the nation's advertisers, the campaign, which commanded an annual advertising budget of over $400,000 in 1943, received great press.[14] Sponsored by weekly ads on a continual basis in more than 600 newspapers, the drive from March to June in 1943, for example, geared up public awareness through more than 22,500 news items in the first three weeks alone.[15]

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[12] "Lauds Press Role in Record Paper Salvage," *Editor & Publisher*, 19 February 1944, 20.

[13] "Ad Council Begins 'Fight Waste' Program," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 February 1944, 66.

[14] "Fat Salvage Drive Budget Set for '43," *Editor & Publisher*, 6 February 1943, 16.

[15] "Ad Agency Lauds Papers for Fats Campaign," *Editor & Publisher*, 15 May 1943, 7.

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Throughout the year, the press continued to promote the fat salvage campaign. The *New York Times*, for example, asked women to "grease the United Nations' war machine by saving the grease from the Thanksgiving turkey." Women were urged to turn in every bit of waste fat in order to yield 30,000,000 pounds of glycerine annually for ammunitions and medial supplies for the military.[16] "Uncle Sam Needs Those Xmas Fats," exhorted the *Chicago Defender* in a similar appeal to women.[17] Overall, American newspapers published approximately 118,000 editorials, news releases, cartoons, pictures, and comic strips in December 1943 to urge women to salvage kitchen grease.[18]

In addition to the holiday messages, reminders for women to turn in waste fats for "points and pennies" became a regular fixture in women's pages along with detailed instructions on how to turn in every drop of fat with no further nutrition value.[19] To promote the participation of housewives, a Michigan publisher introduced a special calendar featuring caricatures of Hitler, Hirohito, and Mussolini. For every tablespoonful of waste kitchen fats saved, women were told to strike off the picture of the dictator who appeared on the calendar that day. At the end of the month, the dutiful housewife would have a pound of fats saved, and more significantly the reassurance of the importance of her work at home through a daily ritual that symbolically eliminated the threat to the sanctity of her domain

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[16] "Thanksgiving Aids War If Turkey Fat Is Saved," *New York Times*, 19 November 1942, 28.

[17] "Uncle Sam Needs Those Xmas Fats," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 16 January 1943, 7.

[18] "Support Fat Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 29 January 1944, 40.

[19] "Tips to Housewives," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 25 March 1944, 7 (A).

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posed by all the enemies of democracy. Apparently quite a popular local promotion, the calendar went national after winning recognition by the War Production Board, spreading fervent rhetoric of militant domesticity through the country.[20] "Blow up the Axis 'rats' with your kitchen fats," wrote one reader in a letter to the *New York Amsterdam News*.[21] Despite shortages of meat, butter, fats, and cheese, which eventually led to rationing of these items at the end of March 1943, collection of household fats in the month soared to an all-time high, bolstering the confidence of officials and the media in the effect of the intensive publicity.

The campaign tripled household collection in the first year of the program. The result, however, was not enough to fulfill the monthly quota of 25 million pounds. Apparently the publicity turned out to be more informative than persuasive. Government studies showed that by late 1943, 96 percent of women knew that the government needed their waste fats, but only one-third were contributing on a regular basis. With the demand for war material increasing, a new drive started in November 1943, relying on 1,655 newspapers across the country as the chief medium. In addition to advertising in every daily newspaper, the advertising agency in charge of the program set up a news service to feed feature stories to women's pages in an attempt to persuade more women to incorporate national defense goals with their housework routines.[22] By 1944, American women had salvaged more than 120,000,000 pounds of waste kitchen fats. Roy W. Peet, chairman of the Fat Salvage

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[20] "Develops Calendar for WPB Fat Salvage Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 4 September 1943, 14.

[21] "Kitchen Fats at War," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 8 July 1944, 6.

[22] "Start Your Campaign for Fat Salvage," *Editor & Publisher*, 6 November 1943, 46.

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Committee, credited the response of women to newspapers, noting that they "have had tremendous influence on fat collections through the support given in their news and editorial columns."[23]

Media publicity no doubt raised awareness, but material rewards provided an important incentive as women across the country obtained about 25,000,000 red ration points each month in exchange for used fats. When point values of lard, shortening, cooking and salad oils went up in the spring of 1945, women demanded a raise in point payments for their used kitchen fats as well. In response, the OWI asked the media to explain that the purpose of the reward was to encourage fat salvage rather than to give women more ration points to spend. In case the lofty appeal did not quell the agitating point pinchers, the OWI reminded women that the current reward of two ration points per pound was actually worth more now that point values for many meats, butter, and other fats were higher than they were last fall. Already alert to the value of the extra points, women increased the amount of used fats they turned in by 30 percent in the first half of 1945.[24]

The publicity of home front salvage programs highlighted the military significance of the household under the management of the patriotic housewife. The Victory Garden movement further underscored the wartime ideal of the American home where the housewife was to fulfill the needs of her family as well as the country. Extensive media promotion through regular garden pages in the newspaper, special editions of gardening books, and

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[23] "Press Praised for Fat Salvage Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 1 January 1944, 44.

[24] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release for women's page editors, 7 June 1945, Entry 194, Box 1036, OWI Records.

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advertising messages turned gardening into one of the most vivid legacies of life in the war era. Press promotion not only stimulated reader interest in war gardening, it also helped publishers attract the attention of advertisers to women's pages, which offered features slanted to increase demands for gardening supplies.[25] "Vegetable gardening is patriotic," the *New York Times* proclaimed in an ad for its garden special.[26] "Planting for Victory" and "Canning for Victory" drives sponsored by newspapers swept through rural communities as well as urban centers across the nation. In 1942 when the program began, 2,300 families in Chicago's south side, for example, started their own gardens. The second season saw more than 7,000 families in the area join the effort as the interest of the public peaked in 1943.[27] Nationwide, there were 15,000,000 victory gardens in 1942, according to the OWI, each producing half a ton of vegetables.[28] At the height of the program, there were 20 million gardens. They produced 8 million tons of food, which represented 40 percent of the total fresh vegetable production in the United States, and introduced new foods such as Swiss

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[25] "Going to Grow Your Own This Spring," *New York Times*, 15 January 1943, 7; Ben Markland, "How to Make a War Garden," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 March 1943, part 1, p. 20; "Milwaukee Journal in Victory Garden Plan," and "Community Gardens Now Victory Gardens," *Editor & Publisher*, 6 February 1943, 6; "Inquirer Urges 30,000 Gardens," *Editor & Publisher*, 13 February 1943, 16; "Gardening Table," *Editor & Publisher*, 13 February 1943, 20; "Discuss Victory Garden Promotions," 20 February 1943, 34; and "Victory Garden Festival," *Editor & Publisher*, 17 July 1943, 14.

[26] "Going to Grow Your Own" *New York Times*, 15 January 1943, 7.

[27] "Interest High in South Side Food Projects," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 March 1943, Part 3, 1 (S).

[28] Palmer Hoyt, "OWI in 1943--Coordinator and Service Agency," *Journalism Quarterly* 20:4 (December 1943): 323.

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chard and kohlrabi into the American diet.[29] Overall, two-thirds of families had Victory gardens, and three-quarters of housewives canned in the war years, providing a vital source of food to relieve shortages on the home front.[30]

Home Economics at War

In addition to the more overt appeals to patriotism advanced by the publicity for war salvaging and gardening, the allure of science offered by the home economics profession provided an important cultural resource for the government and the media to reconceptualize the purpose and the process of women's housework in wartime society. The discipline of home economics, originally called domestic science, emerged in late nineteenth century.[31] The pioneers, mostly well-educated women who were excluded from male-dominated professions, sought to create a niche for themselves by applying their knowledge of science

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[29] "Governors Asked to Spur Gardens," *New York Times*, 20 March 1944, 1.

[30] Interest in home gardening waned in 1944, perhaps as a reflection of optimism toward the war that boosted public confidence in the country's food supply. At the same time, however, the proportion of the commercial supply of canned vegetables allocated for civilian consumption was further slashed to meet the increase in military demands, which forced officials to raise the goal for 1944 to 22 million gardens. To support the War Food Administration's "Grow More in '44" campaign, the OWI sent out repeated requests in the spring for women's editors to interest their readers in war gardening. In spite of the intensive effort, a Gallup poll found that only half of all families in the United States had planted vegetables by the end of May, compared to two-thirds in the previous season. See Howard, Letters to women's editors, 11 March 1944, Entry 194, Box 1035, and 25 March 1944, Entry 194, Box 1036, OWI Records; "Garden Helps," *Editor & Publisher*, 18 March 1944, 56; "Victory Gardens," *Editor & Publisher*, 15 April 1944, 44; and George Gallup, "Victory Gardens Far Below Goal," *New York Times*, 31 May 1944, 16.

[31] For the rise of home economics and its impact on the domestic sphere, see Glenna Matthews, "The Housewife and the Home Economists," chap. in *"Just a Housewife": The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 145-71.

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to home improvement. Adopting the male ethos of professionalism, they advocated a more business-like approach to housework in order to establish it as a respectable pursuit worthy of the aspirations of talented, intelligent, middle-class women. In the struggle for a professional status, the proponents of home economics sought to distinguish the expert from the amateur housewife by devaluing common sense and the female craft tradition as the basis of homemaking. They emphasized instead outside training under expert authority and the principles of scientific management. The early home economists dedicated themselves to the pursuit of efficiency and strove to rationalize the process of housework by establishing standards of household management against which homemaking practices by individual housewives could be evaluated.

As the discipline's emphases on sanitation and nutrition contributed to the improvement of public health in the early part of the century, home economics gradually gained the acceptance of the public. By the 1910s, despite the elitism of its origin, home economics was considered a profession particularly suitable for women and taught at all levels of education. World War I further boosted the popularity of the field as Americans searched for expert advice on how to cope with wartime food problems such as sugar shortages and meatless days. Government pamphlets titled "Save Sugar," "Do You Know Your Corn Meal?" and "A Whole Dinner in One Dish" were welcomed at millions of homes.[32] After the war, the discipline finally achieved full legitimacy when the Department of Agriculture established the Bureau of Home Economics in 1923. An influential movement

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[32] Matthews, 158.

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by the 1940s, home economics was well positioned on the eve of war as a cultural industry to nationalize the homemaking practices of American women for the duration.

Training the American Housewife for War

The Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics of the Department of Agriculture enjoyed increased prestige and visibility during the war years as it provided a source of scientific authority to propaganda materials designed to integrate women's domestic effort with the nation's war operations. The suggestions, guidelines, and opinions of the bureau, frequently cited in OWI information, bolstered the code of patriotic domesticity being urged on women with the scientific credibility of experts. In its effort to interest women in the war effort, the newspaper industry further popularized the principle of patriotic household management and diffused the techniques of wartime homemaking to all parts of the country. In Georgia, both the *Journal* and the *Constitution* in Atlanta organized annual cooking and canning workshops to enlist the cooperation of women with the government's nutrition and food preservation programs.[33] The canning school of the *Atlanta Journal*, following its successful Victory Garden program, attracted 2,500 women in 1943. In Texas, the *News Messenger* adopted the popular slogan "Eat to Beat the Devil" for its comprehensive food program to teach women how they could help defeat Hitler through a proper diet for American families. Editorial promotion of the four-day workshop in the summer of 1943 brought the publisher considerable profits from sales of its Nutrition

[33] "Canning School," *Editor & Publisher*, 29 May 1943, 16; "Canning Institute Planned by Daily," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 June 1943, 11; and "Cooking School," *Editor & Publisher*, 6 May 1944, 28.

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Handbook along with thousands of inches of advertising space, and an award for outstanding community service.[34] In addition to press initiatives, wartime advertising also promulgated the tenets of home economics. Homemaking schools and advertising campaigns sponsored by the food industry and utility companies publicized the latest knowledge of nutrition and methods of food preparation. Copy writers enhanced product appeal by offering recipes, menu plans, and pep talks from home economists. For example, a full page ad for Jewel shortening seen in forty markets in the South showed women how to plan wartime meals with a small number of red stamps for fat.[35]

Women's pages, already pervaded by the influence of the discipline before the war, devoted even more space to homemaking topics to make expert advice and guidance widely accessible. Linking the homemaking responsibility of women to the larger cause of the war effort, traditional service features increased the relevance of women's pages by offering a convenient forum for newspapers to address inevitable lifestyle changes during the war. For example, food recipes, a long-standing feature of many newspapers, took on new significance as a result of rationing. Usually toiling in the back page, food columnists found themselves thrust in the spotlight of public attention in the spring of 1943 when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt revealed that newspapers provided the basis of White House meal planning with recipes for "wonderful made-up dishes" to save meat.[36] Emphasis on wartime nutrition as an issue of public health further elevated the low status attributed to the women's section in the

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[34] "Nutrition Program Clicks," *Editor & Publisher*, 5 June 1943, 14.

[35] "Ad Plug Shortening," *Editor & Publisher*, 26 June 1943, 46.

[36] "Use Food Columns," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 April 1943, 106.

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newsroom. To get an adequate diet under rationing, the San Francisco City Health Department, for example, urged all citizens to follow the news provided by the home economics departments of newspapers.[37] "Food is news," a government information specialist noted, "and nutrition information in the daily press will help war workers and their families make the best use of available foods and conserve our national resources of food and manpower."[38]

Public interest in confronting the challenges of wartime life translated into a temporary career boost to women who combined their home economics expertise with journalistic skills. Many feature writers and food editors parlayed their responsibility in the women's department into book publication and national syndication. Cashing in on the popularity of her coupon-saving recipes, seasonal menus, and canning instructions, Edith M. Barber, food editor of the *New York Sun*, published her own cookbook and syndicated her daily food column in 1943.[39] Others emerged from the obscurity of the women's department to the front line of war propaganda, serving on local and federal advisory committees to help guide government informational campaigns that touched upon almost every aspect of daily living. In the spring of 1943, the War Advertising Council created a committee composed of fifteen media and business women including Eloise Davison, home institute director of the

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[37] "Rationing, Health," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 April 943, 7.

[38] "Illinois Daily Has Wartime Nutrition School," *Editor & Publisher*, 20 March 1943, 14.

[39] "Wartime Cook Book," *Editor & Publisher*, 26 June 1943, 42; and S. J. Monchak, "General Features Distributing Daily Food Column," *Editor & Publisher*, 4 September 1943, 30.

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New York Herald Tribune, and Zola Vincent, food editor of the *New York Journal-American*. to assist the OWI and other war agencies in the publicity of issues such as conservation of household equipment, nutrition and food planning, and the work of local rationing boards.[40]

War information for the home had a great appeal to women as the government invoked the expertise of the home economics profession to adapt their household routines to the demands of national mobilization. Practical advice in the daily press on how to be an efficient and patriotic homemaker proved popular among women's page readers, drawing the attention of black women as well who consulted dailies for ads and news not available in black weeklies. Two publishers in Oklahoma, for example, reported that the most appreciated feature in their newspaper was a column that kept women updated every day on the availability and prices of groceries in the local market.[41] As an industry expert observed, "Never has Mrs. America needed so much information just to plan her family's living from day to day. Today's housewife must keep up with every changing price and point-value, every altered rule that affects the wartime planning and buying. It's a universal, ever-present problem in every home. . . . Inevitably, Mrs. America has come to depend more heavily than ever on her newspaper for help."[42]

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[40] "Food Ads To Aid Nutrition Drive to Meet Shortages," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 April 1943, 12.

[41] "Women's Page Hits War in Stride," *Editor & Publisher*, 13 May 1944, 52; and "What's Cookin'?" *Editor & Publisher*, 24 April 1943, 74.

[42] "Where Do People Get Most of Their Information," *Editor & Publisher*, 6 May 1944, 17.

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In addition to service features in the newspaper, women were drawn to home economics education provided by publishers in support of government propaganda on women's war effort in the domestic sphere. In the promotion of home canning, for instance, newspapers across the country found tremendous enthusiasm among women. Three thousand pages of requests poured into the *New York Times* in the spring of 1943 after the paper offered a leaflet on the salt method of preserving in a single small ad on its garden page.[43] The cooking school of the *Hartford Courant* attracted thousands of women annually and expanded into a complete program of wartime homemaking to cover other areas such as fashion and conservation of household appliances.[44] Black newspapers, with no regular space for traditional service features in the women's section, did not cover the subject of wartime homemaking as extensively as white dailies, but nonetheless advocated home economics awareness among women and promoted training opportunities through civilian defense programs. The discipline offered "an answer to the prayers of many women who wish instruction in becoming more efficient at their duties within their own families," observed the *New York Amsterdam News*.[45] The paper reported that housewives in Harlem, eager to learn how to cope with wartime food problems, showed great interest in group discussions and cooking demonstrations on topics such as "how to entertain eight people at a Christmas buffet supper for only 8 brown points."[46]

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[43] T. S. Irvin, "NAPA Note Book," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 July 1943, 30.

[44] "Homemakers' School," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 October 1942, 32.

[45] "Education and Recreation Offered At Free Class," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 15 April 1944, 9 (A).

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The Renaissance of Thrift in Homemaking

As Thanksgiving was approaching, Mary Meade, food editor of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, advised women in November 1944 to keep the upcoming holiday feast simple. "Nowadays we enjoy wide expanses of tablecloth or polished bare table," she proclaimed, "and we like less food in smaller portion, carefully prepared and arranged attractively." The traditional lavish display of food on the holiday table was in bad taste in wartime, she noted. Moreover, from an aesthetic point of view, a cluttered table was "confusing and unattractive."[47] United by a common desire to help win the war, various proponents of home economics from both public and private sectors such as Meade herself projected through the news media a patriotic vision of homemaking that impelled women to follow the spirit of war embodied in the principle of simple living. The Victorian fad in home decoration was outdated, the *New York Times* declared in October 1944. An urge toward simplification reflected the influence of the war on the trend in interior design, a decorator observed, advising women to streamline their homes to achieve a spare "Army barracks" look that would be most soothing to their solider husbands.[48]

One of the most distinctive themes to emerge from the discourse on wartime homemaking was the virtue of thrift. In a sharp contrast to the concept of "creative waste"

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[46] "Harlem Given Help in Its Food Problem," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 31 July 1943, 4; and "Preparations of Wartime Foods," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 11 December 1943, 9 (A).

[47] Mary Meade, "Keep Nov. 23d Fare Simple, but Traditional," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 November 1944, part 7, p. 8.

[48] Mary Madison, "Less Cluttered Homes Are Seen When Men Return from the War," *New York Times*, 7 October 1944, 16.

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advocated as the supreme duty of the housewife by home economists who helped advertisers commodify the American household in the 1920s,[49] ingenious frugality, a test of both character and resourcefulness, was the yardstick for good housekeeping in wartime. "Old time THRIFT is again due to become a part of America's daily life [emphasis included]," the OWI said when it unveiled the Textile Conservation Program on the home front in September 1943.[50] The agency urged American women to follow the lead of British women who, accepting with zeal their government's plea to conserve clothes, made children's dressing gowns from old bathing wraps, skirts from old trousers, and undershirts from pajamas.[51] Newspapers too offered women laundry and sewing tips. "It's a WARTIME DUTY to make your clothes wear longer [emphasis included]," proclaimed the *Chicago Defender*.[52]

The OWI's plea for women to treat every thing in the home "as gently and as scientifically as a new baby" epitomized the emphasis on frugality as the guideline for wartime household management.[53] Salvage conscious American housewives held the first

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[49] Home economist Christine Frederick coined the term "creative waste" in her book "Selling Mrs. Consumer" to describe the advertising strategy used to stimulate consumer demands by encouraging housewives to see "beyond the draining of the last bit of utility" and free themselves from the imperative to save. See Matthews, 186-87.

[50] "Women Are Called on to Help Save Fabric," *Fortnightly Budget*, 4 September 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[51] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Shopping news, 22 September 1943, Entry 194, Box 1034, OWI Records; and Cover cartoon for the Textile Conservation Program, *Fortnightly Budget*, 27 November 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[52] "8 Easy Ways to Help Make Your Clothes Last Longer," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 August 1942, 4.

[53] "Substitution Hero in American Home," *New York Times*, 15 June 1943, 24.

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line of defense, exhorted Mary Brewster, national woman's director of the War Production Board. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reminded readers that an old lawn mower was good for six three-inch shells, an old electric iron could be converted into five three-millimeter antiaircraft shells, and an old wash pail could be turned into three bayonets.[54] Gearing their editorial approach toward "the current feminine desire to save rather than waste," women's pages insisted that if housewives learned to be creative enough, they could save and salvage in every aspect of the household to contribute to the war effort without any serious compromise in their living standards.[55] For instance, women were reassured that, despite sugar rationing, those who followed the advice of home economists would still be able to satisfy the sweet tooth of their families through creative uses of molasses, honey, and beets as substitutes.

Aimed to reduce civilian dependence on the market for goods and services, the emphasis on thrift entailed increasing labor within the household at a time when better employment options created by the war accelerated the exodus of domestic servants. In the interwar years, more and more housewives found it necessary to do their own housework, as factory jobs and immigration restrictions decreased the supply of domestic help while its rising cost became even more inhibiting for families whose income declined in the Depression. The outbreak of war further drained the traditional source of domestic workers. In 1940, 60 percent of all employed black women were engaged in domestic service compared to 45 percent in 1944, and half of the white women employed in the field left

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[54] "Women in War Work," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 August 1942, 15.

[55] "Women's Page," *Editor & Publisher*, 13 May 1944, 52.

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during the period.[56] As a result, half of the housewives accustomed to having domestic servants lost their help.[57] Increasingly a reality of war, the servantless household was trumpeted by the domestic advice industry as a new source of pride for the patriotic housewife in an all-out effort to normalize the "do-it-yourself" attitude.

The revival of sewing and canning as basic domestic skills illustrated the wartime shift away from detached supervision of outside help toward the personal involvement of the housewife in the daily operation of the household. "The rag bag and button box of two or three generations ago once more are destined for a place in the sun," the OWI noted, "sewing machines are being oiled up, pin cushions restocked, shears sharpened." Propaganda messages promised women that the craft of home sewing not only helped save fabric for military uses but also gave them "the thrill of pride that comes from actually creating something to wear, something to use around her home."[58] Even for the fashion conscious, apparently it was more trendy to sew than to shop according to a syndicate service that featured tips from designers on how to make the latest fashions at home. The necessity

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[56] Due to the greater exodus of white women from domestic service, black women actually constituted a higher proportion of all private household workers as their percentage went up from 47 percent before the war to 60 percent in 1944 despite the decrease in the total number of black women working for individual households. See Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 237-8; and Karen Tucker Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired: Black Women Workers during World War II," *Journal of American History* 69:1 (June 1982): 83.

[57] D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 173-4.

[58] "Help Save Fabric," *Fortnightly Budget*, 4 September 1943.

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of wartime living, combined with media promotion, increased interest in home sewing. In the first year of war, sales of fabric, patterns, and other supplies rose 40 percent. The following year, the "make-it-yourself" trend culminated in the "Sew and Save Week," when the media, civilian defense committees, and 40,000 stores from coast to coast joined forces to urge American women to help with the war effort by refurbishing old slip covers, turning pieces of waste material into hats and bags, and converting men's suits, now hanging idly in closets while their owners were off fighting the Axis, into outfits for wives and daughters.[59]

Similarly, the media encouraged women to learn home canning as a patriotic service. Before the war, advertisers and home economists promoted the use of pre-packaged foods as a more scientific and efficient alternative to homemade varieties. Since the war made these appeals obsolete with the rationing of many canned foods, media attention turned to reviving women's interest in home canning. Urging housewives to increase their productivity for the country, women's pages asked them to study canning rules and directions from the government and follow the instruction of experts to avoid the danger of spoilage.[60] Eager to increase demands for canning supplies, commercial interests such as utility companies, hardware stores, and household furnishing stores fed into the enthusiasm for home canning. To pursue this new source of revenue, newspapers ran stories in the women's section about the importance of knowing exactly how to can, employed home economists to start classes

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[59] "Revival of Home Sewing Brings a 40% Rise in Yard Goods' Sale," *New York Times*, 20 February 1943, 16; and "It's a Woman's War, Too," *New York Times*, 28 March 1943, 15 (X).

[60] Mary Meade, "Homemakers: Make Study of Canning Rules," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 20 March 1944, 21; and Jane Holt, "News of Food," *New York Times*, 6 July 1944, 18, and 7 October 1944, 16.

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for readers who sought "scientific information," and organized local housewives to endorse the products of their advertisers.[61] Motivated perhaps by more private reasons such as keeping the pantry fully stocked in the winter, women who added canning to their repertoire of domestic skills were praised by the media for showing Uncle Sam that "the kitchen front is now working overtime for Victory."[62]

Frugal Gourmet

Changes in home cooking also reflecting the ideal of domestic simplicity promoted by the media in the war years. Emphasizing balanced nutrition over gastronomic pleasure, women's pages advocated a frugal and practical approach to cooking in place of the extravagant and decadent. "Cheese is not a dessert---at least not now," Jane Holt said in her food column in the *New York Times*, reminding readers to pay more attention to good nutrition rather than good taste.[63] Food garnish such as lemon and parsley too was a waste to be cut out from home cooking. In her column in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Mary Meade also asked women to drop their little cooking extravagances. "It won't be a hardship once we're used to cooking economically."[64] Her advice on food conservation for the day: "Never

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[61] Frank E. Fehlman, "Sell Someone the Idea of 'Canning Schools,'" *Editor & Publisher*, 12 June 1943, 34.

[62] "Summer Campaign on the Food Front," *Editor & Publisher*, 18 September 1943, 39.

[63] Jane Holt, "Yardstick of Good Nutrition," *New York Times*, 6 March 1943, 10.

[64] Mary Meade, "Advice Given for Conserving Rationed Foods," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 March 1943, 17.

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wash the skillet, kettle or roaster in which meat has been cooked without first rinsing out the remaining flavor with hot water." The flavored water was to be used later in gravy or soups. And "forget deep fat frying for the duration."[65]

To help conserve fuel, newspapers published detailed instructions on how women could cooperate with the government by cooking with less water in the pot, less gas in a blue rather than a yellow flame, and planning more "one-dish" meals. The *Tribune* offered a recipe for baked apple pudding to fit in with an oven menu plan as a fuel saving measure.[66] Changing culinary practices as such underscored the way in which the discipline of home economics intersected with the logistics of total mobilization to form new homemaking criteria. As delineated by the Office of Defense, Health, and Welfare Services, the task for the patriotic homemaker was to combine "scientific knowledge of nutrition with practical ingenuity in using the foods available for a balanced diet."[67] Summing up the war mission of the home chef, Jane Holt noted, "The budgeting of ration stamps is not the only thing to be kept in mind in planning wartime menus--the meals must also be attractive, relatively easy to assemble and nourishing."[68]

To this end, women's pages reinforced the codification of home preparation of foods through cooking methods that were rationalized step by step to minimize waste. Food

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[65] Ibid.

[66] "Cooperate with Your Government, Use Less Gas," *New York Times*, 15 January 1943, 10; and Mary Meade, "Baked Apple Pudding," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 October 1943, 21.

[67] "Victory Foods Get a Mixed Reception," *New York Times*, 19 November 1942, 28.

[68] Jane Holt, "News of Food," *New York Times*, 11 December 1943, 12.

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writers promoted nutrition rules based on the scientific knowledge of experts to enhance public health and preached careful menu planning according to official guidelines to stipulate calculations of serving, calories, and nutritional values. The thoughtful layout of a weekly menu, standardized as a ritual for American housewives, but practiced as an expertise by home economists, stressed the importance of sophisticated management skills for the average homemaker to achieve a balanced family diet under rationing. Women were urged to stick to a basic plan based on the seven food groups defined by the Agricultural Department but to be nevertheless ready and willing to make a second choice from the chart of alternate foods prepared by the government. "In these days of uncertain supplies housekeepers must learn the art of being flexible in their shopping," advised the *New York Times*.[69]

To accommodate shortages of staples, newspaper food writers encouraged culinary adventurousness, promoting the use of foods as unusual as horse meat and beef tongue, which, as described in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, possessed the virtue of being "ration free, highly nutritious, and a good buy."[70] In addition to exploring novel sources of meats, the resourceful home cook could always go meatless. "Don't be discouraged," a writer consoling disappointed shoppers said, "you may prepare a very substantial main dish like this with spinach and eggs and cheese."[71] Despite the universal appeal to women presumed by newspapers offering homemaking advice, the strategy of weekly menu planning revealed a

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[69] Ibid.

[70] "Beef Tongue Is Nutritious Dish," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 September 1944, 14; and "Horse Meat Sales Boom At Market in Newark," *New York Times*, 28 March 1943, 17 (L).

[71] "If the Butcher Disappoints You," *New York Times*, 15 January 1943, 14.

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subtle class bias. The dual emphases on foresight as well as flexibility required a larger food budget beyond the reach of women who did not have enough disposable cash to stock up well in advance.

The effort of the press in reforming recipes to suit wartime conditions also reiterated the importance of every woman doing her bit for the country in the kitchen. Daily newspapers encouraged their readers to follow and develop proper wartime recipes designed not only to save ration points, money, and fuel but also to enhance public health through a balanced home diet with variety. Created to channel civilian food consumption, recipes published in the women's page emphasized dishes in harmony with current market conditions. A typical day's menu offered in the *New York Times* included Spanish omelet for breakfast, turnip and carrot sticks for lunch, and for dinner, fried liver sausage and onions, creamed potatoes, and spinach--all inexpensive and unrationed foods.[72] The selection of ingredients in these newspaper recipes marked the humble and earthy attitude advocated by war conscious home economists toward household management. Favoring the simple and basic over the fancy and exotic, newspapers food writers promoted the use of moderately priced items identified by the Bureau of Home Economics.

Although black newspapers did not have regular food features, they too devoted editorial resources to the promotion of the latest "victory food" special posted by the Agriculture Department and state agencies to encourage use of surplus foods. Prompted by the record summer crop of tomatoes in 1942, the *Chicago Defender*, for example, promoted the Victory food designated for August 24 to September 5 with recipes for fried tomatoes,

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[72] Jane Holt, "News of Food," *New York Times*, 31 May 1944, 16.

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baked eggs in tomato cups, and scrambled eggs with tomatoes. Later that year when tin was no longer available for canning, the *New York Amsterdam News* urged housewives to use up the record crop of cabbage, designated as the Brooklyn Victory special in October, either in its fresh form or in home-made kraut stored in alternative containers.[73] Always attuned to market changes, the victory food recipes were on occasion sensitive to the needs of readers such as one for an apple "quickie" featured in the food column of the *New York Times* as an alternative to the more time-consuming traditional apple pie for the home cook in a hurry.[74]

In addition to special recipes for Victory Foods, newspapers also sought to popularize "economical and non-strategic foods" through society features on the "victory luncheons" that were all the rage for women's organizations and government functions. At the 1942 meeting of the National Council of Women, the women's page of the *New York Times* reported, 125 women leaders feasted on a special war menu featuring cabbage salad with wheat sprouts, kale soup, whole wheat rolls, whole wheat apple scallop, soy beans, and herb coffee.[75] The promotion of soy products as a meat substitute illustrated the media effort mobilized to convert American housewives to new culinary standards. "Cooking with soya flour and soya grits is a new and pleasant experience," the OWI declared in a special

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[73] "Fresh Tomatoes Become Victory Food Special," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 August 1942, 21; and "Designate Cabbage New Victory Food," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 3 October 1942, 18.

[74] Jane Holt, "News of Food," *New York Times*, 30 October 1942, 14.

[75] "Victory Foods," *New York Times*, 19 November 1942, 28.

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publication issued to introduce new soy recipes.[76] The *New York Times* too encouraged housewives to use soy beans, showing various dishes made out of the humble but "palatable and nutritious" food being served to guests in the state dining room of the New York Executive Mansion. Apparently the official family themselves had been using soy beans more since meat rationing started in the spring of 1943. "We had some soy bean ginger bread the other night," Governor Dewey commented, "It was excellent, we also have enjoyed soy bean muffins and bread sticks."[77] Black newspapers also caught the soy fever. The *Chicago Defender* in the same week featured a recipe for a "meatless meat loaf" made with soy to promote its value to the housewife under a tight budget of cash and points.[78]

Proper execution of these wartime recipes offered in newspapers called for the magic touch of the home cook to create appealing dishes out of less familiar or less desirable substitutes that often took more time and required a higher level of skill to prepare. "We must work hard to make meals tempting and taste good," Mary Meade said, reminding her readers that contrasts in color, texture, flavor, and temperature were all the more important in preparing meals with limited food variety.[79] The preparation of meats--a focal point of general anxiety about civilian deprivation--was a particularly important subject in the effort to

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[76] "Get Acquainted with Soya Flour and Grits," and "Tasty New Soya Recipes Add Nutriment to Meals," *Fortnightly Budget*, 25 December 1943, 4-5, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[77] "Governor Is Host at Soy Bean Lunch," *New York Times*, 15 June 1943, 24.

[78] "The Economy Clinic: Soy Beans," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 19 June 1943, 20.

[79] Mary Meade, "How to Give Menu Variety," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 March 1943, 14.

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upgrade the cooking skills of American housewives. "Housekeepers are obliged to get the full value from every bit of meat they purchase nowadays," observed Jane Holt.[80] Exhorting women to conserve available supply, food writers, meat industry experts, and civilian defense groups coached them on new ways to enhance taste and cut down waste in preparing variety meats and lower priced cuts left over from military and lend-lease requirements. A meat company in Chicago, for example, released an advertising campaign in July 1943 with recipe ads appearing twice a week in 310 newspapers in 260 cities to help housewives cope with meat rationing.[81]

Publishers also courted the attention of housewives who had to make do under the circumstances. Newspapers organized demonstrations and published cookbooks to introduce tips on meat stretchers such as a meat loaf using macaroni, cereals, crackers, and bread crumbs, and ideas for high protein meat replacers such as old-fashioned baked beans, corn and cheese soufflé, and rice and peanut loaf.[82] Rather than adding to the drudgery of housework, the extra work needed to compensate for lesser ingredients was touted as an expression of patriotism as well as female prowess. "It is a challenge to the ingenuity of the Mrs.," observed one meat industry expert trying to convince women that in capable hands,

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[80] Jane Holt, "News of Food," *New York Times*, 10 May 1943, 16.

[81] "Aid in Meat Problems," *Editor & Publisher*, 17 July 1943, 45.

[82] "Stretching Meat," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 October 1943, 21; "How to Cook Beef Shown," *New York Times*, 7 October 1944, 16; and Jane Holt, "News of Food," *New York Times*, 10 May 1943, 16.

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low cost cuts turned out just as palatable.[83] To validate the domestic skills of their readers, many women's departments held recipe contests regularly through the war years. Special recipe campaigns keyed to the interest of advertisers also helped newspapers prop up sagging food linage figures. The *Minneapolis Star Journal*, for example, sponsored a $800 contest in October 1943 to elicit food-saving ideas. Thousands of alert readers in the Upper Mississippi Valley deluged the paper with practical, helpful hints for food conservation.[84] "Women just never tire of reading a new recipe," an advertising expert observed. "The big idea back of this type of advertising is that it automatically helps to sell hundreds of related items."[85] As female patriotism became encoded in more sophisticated culinary practices, the advice industry raised the homemaking standard for the average housewife who was pressured to hone her skills to make a homely hamburger look and taste like "a boneless porterhouse."[86]

Food for Victory

The significance of women's war contribution as homemakers, if only implicit in the wartime development in home economics, emerged in the forefront of the drive for victory in the National Nutrition Program. Spearheaded by the Food Fights for Freedom campaign launched by the War Advertising Council in May 1943, the program sought to improve

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[83] Arnold Erickson, "Low Cost Meat Is Palatable if Prepared Right," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 September 1944, 14.

[84] "Ideas for Saving Food," *Editor & Publisher*, 23 October 1943, 20.

[85] Frank E. Fehlman, "East Liverpool Review Sells Recipe Campaign," *Editor & Publisher*, 1 May 1943, 14.

[86] Jane Holt, "News of Food," *New York Times*, 15 June 1943, 24.

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public health by raising women's awareness of food as a "weapon of war."[87] "Make Food Fight for Freedom by Eating Wisely," an overview of campaign strategies prepared by the OWI, the War Advertising Council, and the War Food Administration underlined the connection between food consumption and national strength. Explaining the importance of nutrition to war production, the OWI observed, "No one can estimate with accuracy the appalling amount of absenteeism in war plants simply because workers have failed to eat the right foods." To foster proper eating habits on the home front, the OWI designed the National Nutrition Program to drive home "the importance of good health as another weapon with which to fight the war." In addition to concerns with the productivity of war workers, the need to reduce demands on war-strained medical facilities further increased media attention on the importance of civilian health. "Sick, weak, ailing, undernourished people on the home front are the things that cause a country to lose a war," the *Editor & Publisher* said, urging newspapers to promote a healthful diet for Americans as one of the most important phases of the successful prosecution of the war.[88]

Food as a War Weapon for Women

The emphasis on nutrition as a war issue highlighted the political function of the wartime household within which the role of women as nurturers was intimately related to the outcome of the war. "Housewives in particular must be shown that it is quite possible to

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[87] "Sponsored Ads to Play Role in Food Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 28 August 1943, 11.

[88] Frank E. Fehlman, "Fresh Fruits, Vegetables Need Special Ad Copy Now," *Editor & Publisher*, 13 March 1943, 12.

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provide adequate nutrition for their families even under present conditions, if they will only learn the principles of nutrition and use them with initiative and imagination," the OWI said in regard to the purpose of the nutrition program.[89] Campaign slogans targeting women such as "Food Is Fuel for Victory," "Portrait of a Patriot," and "Today's Meals Make Tomorrow's Men" further reiterated their responsibility in maintaining civilian health.[90] The effort to change the typical breakfast menu of American families, for example, underscored the significance of women's domestic control to national productivity. Interviews with war workers around the country found that few came to work with an adequate breakfast, leading the government to conclude that if only American women would heed the advice of nutritionists and serve a balanced breakfast that supplied one-third of the day's nutritional requirements, the workers of America would be able to work at peak efficiency.[91] Under the banner "U. S. Needs Us Strong--Eat the Basic 7 Every Day," the nutrition campaign aimed to sell women a new set of food rules devised to compensate for shortages of many staples through radical changes in the food habits of Americans. To remind housewives to follow current rules of nutrition in their daily use of food, the OWI distributed through women's pages a kitchen "pin-up" chart. Follow-up stories suggested to the news media included fun

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[89] Office of War Information, "Wartime Nutrition," *The Information Guide* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 50.

[90] "Place Candy Ads on Nutrition Theme," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 December 1942, 56.

[91] "Inadequate Breakfasts Eaten by Most Workers," *Fortnightly Budget*, 27 November 1943, 5-6, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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features such as a pop quiz for women to see how they rated as a "Fighter for Freedom with Food."[92]

The drive for media support, however, revealed contradictions inherent in the paradoxical appeal to women's private commitments as well as public obligations. Resorting to guilt, the OWI accused the housewife who failed to serve the "Basic Seven" every day of "robbing your family of strength and health." On the other hand, if she did not serve the delicious roast she planned for the week, there was no need to apologize to her family because as patriotic citizens they should accept a lower cut or a no-meat alternative just as cheerfully. If she happened to buy one extra pound of butter to be sure of having extra supply, she should be ashamed of herself for not doing her part for the war, but if she did not stock up on potatoes to make use of the record crop, she should also feel guilty.[93] Emphasis on the importance of food variety in achieving the current nutritional standard also contradicted the imperative to conserve food supply. Women were instructed to refine every phase of household food consumption so that they could balance the need to have daily variety and to eliminate food waste. "Not an ounce more should be purchased than the family will actually eat," the OWI warned. To address these dietary concerns, nutritionists rationalized the process of menu planning to encourage the calculation of calories and number of servings and suggested recipes for creative uses of the inevitable leftovers so that every woman could fulfill her "patriotic duty to see that every bit of food is used and none

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[92] "Quiz Yourself (Honestly) on the Pin-Up Chart," *Fortnightly Budget*, 27 November 1943, 7-8, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[93] Ibid.

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wasted."[94] In addition to careful buying and serving, housewives were also responsible for acquiring knowledge of proper food storage and monitoring the eating habits of family members to make sure that there was no waste of food in her home. According to the OWI, if every home left just one half slice of bread each week, the waste would total 17 million slices, about one million loaves. "Can't you imagine what that would mean to the starving children of Greece?" asked the OWI, urging women to be careful of the grave consequences of what might seem mundane and trivial details of everyday living.[95]

Media Promotion of Nutrition Awareness

To sustain the long-term effort of public education entailed by the nutrition program, the government relied on the resources of the press and the advertising industry to teach women how to properly feed their families.[96] Industry experts believed that "educational advertising" represented one of the most powerful means at the disposal of the government to change women's attitudes and behaviors toward food. *Editor & Publisher* thus urged food advertisers to design their campaigns around sample meals.[97] A full-page ad for Crisco, for example, showed housewives "How to Turn 16 Red Ration Points into 21 Hearty

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[94] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Advance release, 15 February 1943, Entry 194, Box 1036, OWI Records.

[95] "Quiz Yourself," *Fortnightly Budget*, 27 November 1943, 7-8.

[96] "Food Ads to Aid Nutrition Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 April 1943, 12; "Nutrition Ad Guide," *Editor & Publisher*, 15 May 1943,14; and "Food Fights for Freedom," *Editor & Publisher*, 28 August 1943, 11.

[97] "How Food Store Can Sell New Protein Diet," *Editor & Publisher*, 21 August 1943, 36.

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Meals."[98] Titled "Armour shows how to buy your meat under point rationing," a full-page ad sponsored by Armour and Company offered complete weekly menus for a family of four.[99] Another ad for Royal Scarlet Fine Foods featured menu plans by well-known home economist Bertha M. Becker to demonstrate to homemakers how to spend red and blue points for sound nutrition.[100] "Patriotic homemakers throughout the country are serving nutritional foods every day to help build strong Americans," an ad in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* declared, offering housewives three recipes to give carrots new appeal.[101] Advertising in black newspapers too traded on the nationalistic significance of the housewife's effort to nourish her family. "Your government must have strong healthy men to beat the Axis," an ad declared in the *New York Amsterdam News*. While men fought in the war, women were supposed to do their part by supplying their families with energizing and healthful foods.[102]

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[98] "How to Turn 16 Red Ration Points into 21 Hearty Meals!" *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 29 March 1943, 9.

[99] "Armour Shows How to Buy Your Meat under Point Rationing," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 29 March 1943, 10.

[100] "How to Feed Your Family under Point Rationing," *New York Times*, 31 March 1943, 15.

[101] "U. S. Needs U. S. Strong," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 September 1942, 20.

[102] Perhaps in an effort to promote advertising in the black press, the *Amsterdam News* reported that black women, at least in the Harlem area, welcomed the race specific appeal as suggested by increased sales of products featuring black people in their tie-in with the war effort. "Enriched Bread Is Best for Workers," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 25 July 1942, 5; and "Bond's New Soft Loaf OK'd By Housewives," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 19 June 1943, 7.

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The nutritional program along with other food campaigns proved to be popular vehicles of promotion as they provided advertisers with great morale building pegs for commercial messages. When publicity for the "Food Fights for Freedom" campaign started in August 1943, a total of about 2,200 separate, locally sponsored ads brought the newspaper industry a windfall of revenues during just the first two weeks. Later in October, a set of four advertisements released by the War Advertising Council were endorsed by individual food producers and distributors in more than 1,800 newspapers to help the government explain the food situation to the public and sell women new ways of using food substitutes for scarce items. As advertising broke in the nation's press, women's pages carried out preliminary educational effort to familiarize housewives with the theme of the campaign. By November, which officials designated as "Food Fights for Freedom" month, the program had turned into the largest food campaign in history, backed by the influence of the entire food industry and the comprehensive preparation of the OWI, the War Advertising Council, the War Food Administration, and the Office of Price Administration.

In response to the rich potential of revenues from advertising promotion of government food campaigns, the newspaper industry started organizing press activities and orchestrating editorial content in the women's section early on. Advocating industry support for the food programs, Frank E. Tripp, president of the Allied Newspaper Council, called on newspapers to serve as the nation's "food time table," which American housewives would turn to first for information.[103] In addition to building their food coverage, newspapers

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[103] Frank E. Fehlman, "Food Stores Need Institutional," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 September 1943, 24; "Food Campaign," *Editor & Publisher*, 18 September 1943, 12; "Largest Food Ad Campaign Gets Under Way," *Editor & Publisher*, 30 October 1943, 11; and "Grocery Chain Uses Institutional Ads," *Editor & Publisher*, 6 November 1943, 42.

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sponsored nutrition schools, held recipe contests, and marketed timely cookbooks to pump up patriotism in the kitchen. The *Des Moines Register and Tribune* held a "Food for Victory" slogan contest in June 1943 with war bonds as rewards. Twenty-five thousand entries poured into the paper within one month. The effort was hailed by *Editor & Publisher* as "a demonstration of the power of newspapers to serve critical national needs."[104] The *Chicago Daily Tribune* held a daily contest for recipes in keeping with the wartime nutritional standards as well as food restrictions. "Rich dessert recipes and elaborate party menus have been put away for the economy years," the paper announced. Particularly in demand were entries featuring meatless all-in-one dishes, simple salads and desserts, fresh fruits and vegetables.[105]

The *Tribune* also published a series of booklets by its food editor Mary Meade, who offered to help the homemaker "stretch her meat supply, supplement the sugar rations, cook vegetables temptingly, and prepare healthful meals."[106] *The New York Sun* too had its own assortment of coupon saving recipes, seasonable menus, and canning instructions designed to meet the needs of the ration-distressed homemaker.[107] With all the information the media had to offer, an industry observer warned that women who failed to follow the advice of experts

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[104] "'Food For Victory' Slogan Contest," *Editor & Publisher*, 26 June 1943, 42.

[105] "Recipe Contest Stresses Easy Wartime Foods," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 April 1943, 19.

[106] "Booklets Offer War Time Aid in Home Cooking," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 April 1943, 19.

[107] "Wartime Cook Book," *Editor & Publisher*, 26 June 1943, 42.

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would find it "increasingly difficult to explain to their families why the meals seem so uninviting, so colorless, and unattractive."[108] On the other hand, those who showed higher nutrition consciousness were lauded as "wielding a weapon important to the war effort---the weapon of food." For instance, hundreds of housewives who enrolled in nutrition courses received commendation from the Red Cross for "demonstrating they realize the grave responsibility of keeping their families well-fed in spite of food shortages."[109]

Both white and black newspapers supported the conversion of women to the modern science of food advanced by home economists. To the black press, women's access to the newest information on nutrition not only signaled upward social mobility but also helped alleviate the food problems affecting black communities.[110] To the extent that the responsibility of the housewife was to overrule the palate in favor of nutrition, the women's section advised her to distrust common sense, individual taste, or family tradition and adopt new codes of behavior, including the eight "kitchen commandments" offered by the *New York Times*, to prevent loss of vitamins and minerals caused by improper food preparation and storage.[111] Advertisers too touted the scientific virtue of the advice industry, making their sales pitch out of the knowledge of dietitians who were rapidly invalidating old ideas of cooking. "Many women will use the same meat loaf recipe year after year," an advertising

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[108] "Protein Diet," *Editor & Publisher*, 21 August 1943, 36.

[109] "Red Cross Campaign," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 March 1943, 3.

[110] "Harlem Given Help In Its Food Problem," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 31 July 1943, 4.

[111] William L. Laurence, "Relativity in Diet Found Necessary," *New York Times*, 30 October 1942, 14.

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expert who advocated wider use of recipe ads complained. "Many will serve the same vegetables, week after week, preparing them in exactly the same way every time they are served."[112]

Market research blamed the lack of variety in the diet of Americans on the average homemaker who used only sixty-three different recipes a year. Taking on the challenge to defy old habits, the media prompted American housewives to experiment with new ingredients and new cooking methods. By May 1943, 40 percent of women were buying meat substitutes. One of every five women had also learned to prepare meat differently, incorporating "stretchers" and leftovers in their cooking.[113] Those who adapted their food preparation to modern standards updated by scientific research and mandated by war conditions as well not only avoided the stigma of being backward but also made an important contribution by keeping Americans fit for war. Despite prolonged periods of rationing, Americans achieved a higher nutritional standard as their diets showed a trend toward homogeneity that minimized decades of class differences. Statistics on the consumption of calories and a variety of essential nutrients all indicated that the gap between the poorest and the richest third of the population narrowed dramatically during the war. The differential in the intake of protein and calcium decreased by 50 percent, for example, and for iron, 75 percent.[114] The nutritional revolution underscored the general level of prosperity, the media's

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[112] "Fresh Fruits, Vegetables, " *Editor & Publisher*, 13 March 1943, 12.

[113] Campbell, 181.

[114] For the nutritional improvement in wartime, see Campbell, 180-82.

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push for a stronger America, and above all, the dedication of women to their domestic as well as political responsibilities as nurturers.

Conclusion

The prolonged participation of the United States in World War II created favorable conditions for the continual growth of the field of home economics. Motivated by the momentum of the war, its disciples in government agencies, the advertising industry, and the news profession strove to condition American women to a new mode of household management driven by civilian dedication to the war effort. Covering almost every aspect of housekeeping, the tremendous resources of mass communication in American society made war campaigns out of domestic rituals as mundane as the daily selection of foods for family consumption. For example, when storage facilities fell short for the all-time record crop of potatoes in the fall of 1943, the OWI launched a drive to reduce the stock through retail channels. The women's division asked editors to emphasize not only the nutritional value of potatoes, but also the importance of stocking up, a domestic routine that, ironically, officials had worked hard to discourage while promoting rationing programs. In this case, "storing for the future is not hoarding," the OWI maintained, "but is a patriotic and intelligent use of a plentiful commodity."[115] Women were urged to buy at least a peck at a time until they had a bushel or two accumulated. In response to government propaganda, women's pages promoted recipes developed by the Agricultural Department's Bureau of Home Economics

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[115] Howard, Letter to women's editor, 9 October 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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to coordinate household consumption with changes in the nation's food supply. The bureau's potato recipes in the fall of 1943 and egg recipes in the spring of 1945 were two of the most popular government propaganda overtures among women's editors. These widely publicized recipes for overproduced items encouraged home front conservation of more premium foods for the armed forces, ushering patriotic spirit into the civilian diet.[116]

Both daily newspapers and black weeklies emphasized efficient management of available household resources to accommodate wartime changes in their approach to issues of wartime life. Elaborate attention on homemaking details in the press underscored the achievement of domestic expertise as an important aspect of the patriotism of American women. The wartime women's pages retired the image of the affluent housewife of the 1920s who remained detached from the more menial labor within the household in her function as a home supervisor of domestic help. Instead the pages represented the average American housewife as an independent and efficient domestic worker who was capable of canning the harvest from her Victory garden, fixing her own gadgets, and maintaining the family car--in short, running a largely self-sufficient household all by herself. Once a sign of declining economic status, the ability to exploit resources within the household testified to the competence of the housewife who rose to the challenge of wartime living as well as her patriotic dedication to the Allied cause.

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[116] "Appetizing Recipes for Potato Lovers," *Fortnightly Budget*, 7 October 1943, 5; and "Some Timely Egg Recipes from Dept. of Agriculture," *Fortnightly Budget*, 15 April 1944, 4, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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PART TWO CONCLUSION

THE CONVERSION OF THE AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD TO WAR

A contingent of conflicting images regarding women's domestic roles paraded through the American press in the war years. On the one hand, women were enemies of the inner battle for economic stability, represented by the much maligned black market housewife who undermined the equal distribution of scarce goods, the self-indulgent compulsive shopper who helped Hitler thwart America's war effort by feeding into the threat of inflation, and the unconscionable wasteful homemaker who impaired war production in her careless extravagant style. On the other hand, women were also patriots depended on by the government for the smooth functioning of the war machine, portrayed as the much exalted citizen consumer who upheld rationing rules and price regulations, the self-sacrificing stoic housewife who took necessary wartime deprivations in stride, and the dutiful thrifty household manager who fueled the arsenal of democracy through her own effort at home.

As polarized as these media representations might appear, they shared a common emphasis on the significance of women in the conversion of the American household to war. Reinforcing the division of labor along gender lines, the war effort prescribed to women the civic responsibility of gearing the operation of the household to the nation's military priorities. While the armed forces and a booming market economy drew more men into the public sector, the home, further feminized by the absence of a large number of men, constituted the primary site of war work for women. Severed gradually in its relationship to

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the public world after the late nineteenth century, the home had come to serve largely a privatist function in American society in the two decades before the war. As it became fully entrenched in the consumer culture of the roaring 1920s, marketing changes such as brand names, aggressive advertising, and credit and installment buying declared a new purpose for the home to perpetuate the cycle of prosperity by proliferating consumer desires.[1] Although the Great Depression disrupted the reign of consumerism, the throes of poverty also pushed the home further into the private sphere as mass economic dislocation focused attention on the satisfaction of basic subsistence needs. Buoyed by the patriotic impulse of the war years, the home emerged in the public sphere as a social unit fundamentally related to the outcome of history being determined in the theater of military confrontations.

Government propaganda and mass media publicized private decisions on consumer choices and housekeeping tasks as "opportunities to make positive contributions toward the defeat of the enemy."[2] Just as the American Revolution called upon the consumer consciousness of the colonial home in the struggle for independence when it mobilized housewives to boycott British goods, the American effort in the Second World War relied on the consumer cooperation of the modern household in the fight for democracy when it asked housewives to restrain civilian spending. Against the tidal wave of general prosperity, war

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[1] Glenna Matthews noted that the cultural status of the home rose to its height in the second part of the nineteenth century when the home provided a touchstone of values for social reform and legitimated women's participation in the public world. The cultural influence of the home and the moral authority of the housewife declined as consumerism replaced many of the functions and values formerly attributed to the domestic sphere. See Glenna Matthews, *"Just a Housewife": The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 35-65 and 172-96.

[2] Office of War Information, "What You Say," *The Information Guide* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943).

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messages, appealing to women's concern with the common good, urged them to resist the temptation of consumption, which the commercial media propagated as the gateway to domestic privacy and well-being long denied by previous economic hardships. Instead of buying all she wanted, the patriotic housewife was to purchase only what she needed in order to divert the rising income of her family into financing the war. The wartime government wanted increasingly affluent Americans to pay taxes willingly, put more of their wages into War Bonds, maintain savings accounts, buy insurance, pay off old debts and avoid contracting new ones. Should these economic directives contradict the appeal of consumerism, advertisers who commercialized the mobilization effort directed at women promised them the delayed fulfillment of precisely those desires repressed for the duration as the reward for the war contribution of the citizen consumer. Enticing women with a vision of postwar domestic comfort in exchange for their patriotic sacrifices, a kitchen planning guide by Hotpoint, for example, offered exciting ideas to turn the future kitchen into the best-loved spot in the American home with "lasting charm and built-in efficiency."[3]

Elevated from the irrelevance of the private sphere, the wartime home served as an arena for the display of female patriotism where consumer desires were tempered to maintain the nation's economic stability or else satisfied by home production to reduce strains on market resources that must first serve the demands of war production. The quest for women's support for wartime economic measures privileged the "typical" American household in which men were supposed to assume the producer-breadwinner role, and

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[3] "Let Us Help Plan Your Kitchen of Tomorrow," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 7 October 1944, 13.

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women, the provisioner-consumer. The housewife's control of patterns of family consumption enhanced the public perception of women as political subjects whose actions constituted an intrinsic part of the nation's war effort. The emphasis on national interest in the mobilization of consumers, however, undercut the political potential of the buying power of women. Stressing collective obligations, media publicity increased the social pressure on women to self regulate their consumer behaviors in compliance with war measures without creating commensurate expectations of political rewards. With the exception of black newspapers, which continued to nurture the tradition of consumer activism among women as one of the means for black communities to fight discrimination by white establishments, the press largely encouraged women to follow government orders on wartime consumption rather than assuming leadership roles.[4]

Through women's commitment to their role as nurturers, the home also acquired a new political function in keeping Americans energized for the defense of democracy. Propaganda targeting housewives glorified their homemaking effort as a vital public service in national defense to be performed nevertheless in the private sphere. The militarization of the home rescued the housewife from the usual obscurity of domestic minutiae as the media enhanced her public profile in the civic culture in wartime. Although not a redefinition of

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[4] Established in 1933, the National Housewives' League of America directed the purchasing power of black women into the broader aim of racial equality, organizing boycotting and picketing campaigns against establishments that refused to hire blacks. For the use of consumer activism by club women as a political strategy to retain material resources within their communities and to force open employment opportunities for blacks, see Darlene Clark Hine, "The Housewives' League of Detroit: Black Women and Economic Nationalism," chap. in *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-construction of American History* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1994): 129-45.

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housework in legal or economic terms, the new understanding of the meaning of women's domestic effort in regard to the war was nevertheless significant as a cultural response that illuminated the political significance of women's function in household management. Fashioning a political identity out of women's private responsibility of procuring and provisioning for their families, the press encouraged them to participate in civilian defense not only as responsible consumers but also as productive homemakers.

The code of patriotic domesticity promoted by newspapers arguably mitigated the segregation between the public and the private spheres, establishing connections between women's household responsibilities, their economic role as consumers, and their political role as American citizens. The renegotiation of cultural boundaries, however, failed to translate into a reorganization of the division of labor within the household.[5] The war-oriented mode of household management clearly increased the work load of housewives, but the wartime society allocated relatively few resources to ease their burden. Despite public tributes to the significance of housewives to the war effort, housework remained largely privatized and individualized with its status dwarfed by the higher priority placed on the military-industrial sector. Even magazines devoted to cultivating domestic skills and consciousness such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Gourmet* conducted the business of running a household as usual and failed to deal with the impact of war on housewives.[6]

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[5] See D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 175-85 and 230-31; Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 88-91; and Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 165-8.

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In contrast to the tone of magazines, which tended to be elitist and escapist, newspapers acknowledged the increasing demands on women in wartime. Service features in the women's section offered helpful and practical advice by home economics experts to address the everyday challenges facing the average wartime homemaker. While magazines targeted a carefully selected audience, women's pages sought to make themselves available to a larger and more diffused readership by cultivating a intimate, neighborly rapport among editors, writers, and readers. The pages encouraged women to turn to their staff for help on issues that would probably be considered too trivial in other forums of public dialogue. "I can't buy canned mushrooms. How do I use the dried ones?" one reader asked, and others inquired about making Christmas punch without depleting the precious fruit juice stamps.[7] More importantly, by establishing a network for sharing homemaking ideas and concerns, women's pages helped maintain the morale of American women. Editorial attention on the difficulty of wartime homemaking offered recognition of the daily struggle and contribution of their readers, providing a sense of camaraderie as well as comic relief. For example, the women's section of the *San Francisco Chronicle* on April 2, 1943, carried a drawing showing a woman thus advised by a book store clerk: "For some good 'escape' literature, I

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[6] It is interesting to note that media reactions to the war's impact on the home differed among venues of publication. Instead of encouraging changes in the home to accommodate wartime restrictions, passing observations by scholars suggested that the magazine industry emphasized the importance of maintaining things as usual in the home to preserve the American way of life. See Doris Weatherford, *American Women and World War II* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 206; and John M. Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 88-90.

[7] Mary Meade, "Kitchen Pointers," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 December 1943, 17; and Jane Holt, "News of Food," *New York Times*, 11 April 1944, 22.

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might suggest this pre-war cook book."[8] Some rather unexpected side effects of food shortages on the isolated homemaker were featured in another cartoon in which a housewife complained to her husband: "The butcher is so surly, I practically never see the milkman or the laundryman. No one ever dreams of running in to borrow a cup of sugar or something. I just have no social life at all anymore."[9]

In the spirit of these "Grin and Bear It" cartoons, Cissy Gregg, food editor of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, wrote in the introduction to her chicken recipes on March 7, 1943, "Aren't we lucky that chickens haven't been rationed? Isn't it grand that we can guzzle them without compunction about causing shortages in the shiploads of food sent to the boys all over the world?"[10] After the first month of point rationing, she noted, "the cautious shopper probably will come out better on the fateful last few days of a stamp period than the ones who can't see anything but a steak as long as there are stamps to pull out."[11] As to how she herself was faring under point rationing, she told readers, "I hope I will know enough about myself to be able to work the stamps much better, and get over the feeling that I am having a tooth pulled each time one is taken out. There is the same bit of finality about

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[8] *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2 April 1943, 12.

[9] *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 March 1943, 13.

[10] Cissy Gregg, "Comes Spring and Broiled Chicken," Sunday magazine, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 7 March 1943, 15.

[11] Cissy Gregg, "Points Plus Money Makes Shopping Hard," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 2 April 1943, sec. 2, p. 9.

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both operations---the teeth won't come in again, and the stamps once spent have gone their way, too."[12]

Women found in the newspaper an important resource for coping with the difficulty of accomplishing homemaking tasks under circumstances beyond their control. The domestic advice industry assumed, however, that individual housewives, blessed by the guidance of experts devoted to improving the conditions of housework, should strive to conform to more exacting norms of homemaking. As wartime difficulties increased the time and labor housework required, women's pages nonetheless raised the standard of homemaking in their emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge, skill, and efficiency through the discipline of home economics. "In these busy times," the *New York Amsterdam News* advised in an article on how to arrange space in the kitchen, "homemakers faced with extra wartime tasks, need to arrange home equipment for maximum efficiency to reduce time-consuming work and to guard against fatigue."[13] Far from reducing the work load for the housewife, the point of rearranging the kitchen rather than the division of labor within the household was of course to increase her productivity so that the home continued to function as smoothly as in peace time.

Reflecting the implicit goal of the home economics discipline to encourage acceptance of the status quo rather than changes in the pattern of housework, the advice industry took for granted the sexual asymmetry in the division of domestic labor and reinforced the assumption that women were responsible for the smooth running of a home regardless of

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[12] Ibid.

[13] *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 11 September 1943, 9 (A).

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their increasing outside commitments. To facilitate women's participation in war activities outside the home, Virginia Gildersleeve, dean of Barnard College, for example, advocated "scientific arrangements for domestic service."[14] Women's pages served as a forum to promote the diffusion of homemaking expertise as a solution to the war's conflicting demands on women. Since expert advice was supposedly easily accessible to every housewife through the media, if the welfare of her family was jeopardized, the blame must be laid upon the lack of initiative on her part not the lack of social support and material resources.

The diversion of domestic help into other sectors in the labor market further increased the social expectation that the housewife assume sole responsibility for homemaking. Prompted by market changes in wartime, emphasis on the self-sufficiency of the American household achieved by the homemaker who substituted outside help with her own labor heralded a shift in the image of the ideal housewife. Held up as the model of homemaking proficiency by women's pages, the patriotic housewife transformed herself from the affluent and glamorous lady of the house to, in the words of historian Susan Benson, the "miracle worker of consumption." Instead of dedicating her energy to the pursuit of leisure and luxury, the paragon of female patriotism took pride in her ability to stretch limited resources to ensure the wartime well-being of her family as well as the ultimate victory of her country. Remarkably similar to the "good manager" role embraced by working class housewives as

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[14] "Part-time Jobs for Women Urged," *New York Times*, 19 November 1944, 25(L).

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shown in Benson's study of survival strategies adopted by families in the interwar period,[15] the image of the patriotic housewife marked the trend of homogenization across class lines in the development of housework since World War I. In part, the response of women's pages to a new economic order in World War II, which forced many of their readers to forego their class privilege based hitherto on the availability of inexpensive domestic help supplied largely by black women and recent immigrants, accelerated the transition of middle-class housewives into independent, all-purpose domestic workers like their working-class sisters who relied mostly on their own enterprise in the operation of the household.

Class distinctions and racial implications aside, efforts by the government and the media to mobilize the support of housewives reinforced the identification of women with consumption and housework--traditional female spheres of labor ordained by the culture of consumption. The war effort of women in managing the consumer household added to the tension between the demands of housework and the pressure to take on war employment. The fact that homemaking in wartime was a full-time job deterred many women from entering the labor market despite the appeal of government propaganda. The next part of the dissertation will examine the responses of the press to the challenges faced by the government in mobilizing women for paid employment in defense industries and civilian sectors struggling with acute manpower shortages.

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[15] Susan Porter Benson, "Living on the Margin: Working-class Marriages and Family Survival Strategies in the United States, 1919-1941," in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. Victoria de Grazia with Ellen Furlough (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 212-43.

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PART THREE

"OIL ON MY HANDS": THE RISE AND FALL OF WOMANPOWER

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INTRODUCTION

PROPAGANDA FOR ROSIE THE RIVETER

When the war began, Carol Chilton, dubbed as the "dance darling of Europe's stage," by the *Chicago Defender*, came home to do something for the boys. Touring with Noble Sissle's "Harlem on Parade," Chilton soon became the secret passion of servicemen all over the country. However, the glamorous life she led on stage grew strangely unfulfilling as the fighting escalated abroad. "Even though I know the soldiers appreciated and enjoyed our dancing, entertaining seemed such an intangible thing," she said; "I wanted to put the weapons of war in the boys' hands." She traded her ballet slippers and taps for overalls and micrometers in the vast Studebaker airplane engine plant in Chicago. Although smudges of grease hid her dimples, which once set "so many male hearts a-flutter," the *Defender* found the dance sensation thriving off stage in the spring of 1943 with a new sense of purpose and joy in her war work. To those who wondered if a war plant seemed rather dull compared to show business, she replied, "How could I dance while America was at war?"[1]

The story of Chilton marked the interplay of race and gender dynamics underlying the mobilization of Americans for World War II. The *Defender*'s profile emphasized the loyalty of blacks while underscoring the contribution of women to war production as a universal outlet of female patriotism that transcended a social division as profound as race to unite all

[1] "Dance Darling of Europe's Stage Discards Ballet Slippers for Job in Plane Plant," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 15.

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women behind America's fighting men. News stories as such dramatized the metamorphosis of the fun-loving, glamorous all-American girl into the self-sacrificing, patriotic soldier of production as a cultural icon of femininity in the wartime press. Created first by the War Manpower Commission, the industrial heroine embodied by the popular image of Rosie the Riveter in overalls, goggles, and a bright bandanna captured the "grin and bear it all" fighting spirit glorified in the wartime popular culture. Sporting a victory smile enhanced by a touch of lipstick--a little feminine luxury spared from the long list of rationed goods by the government to keep up morale--the New Woman of the war era rallied civilian support for military operations and indexed the extent to which the mobilization of the home front was identified with women's full-time employment in the industrial sector of the wartime economy.

Record high industrial output was essential to the war effort of the United States as the battle on the production front was crucial to the Allied victory in World War II. The Selective Service, however, drained the primary source of labor supplied by men, who constituted 75 percent of the civilian labor force when the war started.[2] By mid-1942, the draft was taking from 150,000 to 200,000 men a month, which further complicated the imperative of maximum war production as the fast-growing defense industry strove to make up for the manpower drain. Labor shortages were particularly acute in fields critical to the defense build-up such as shipyards, ammunitions plants, and the aircraft industry. By September 1943, 10 million men had gone to war, and almost all of those remaining home

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[2] "Employment Status of the Population 14 Years Old and Over, by Race and Sex: 1940," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 67th ed. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 172.

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were employed as the number of unemployed men showed a steady decline from 5.6 million in 1940 to only 500,000 in the fall of 1943.[3] In addition to the draft, the migration of workers to better paying war jobs threatened to cripple civilian sectors struggling to function under the steep competition for human resources with defense industries and to meet the increasing demand for goods and services from the general public. Traditionally marginalized in the labor market, women were identified by the government as the largest source of reserve labor, which presented the ideal solution to the manpower shortage induced by the war. The imperatives of the wartime economy thus compelled a revision of the prevailing social norm regarding women's proper roles in American society to accommodate paid employment for the duration. "Women must work as men must fight," the Office of War Information declared in its effort to enlist media support for the recruitment of women.[4]

The use of propaganda to fulfill recruitment goals accentuated the significance of the media in the mobilization of women for war work. At the national level, the OWI designed comprehensive campaigns using all available media outlets to raise public awareness of the importance of womanpower to the nation's war effort, which established the ideological framework for labor drives conducted at the local level. Led by the War Advertising Council, advertisers who were stymied in making direct pitches sought to update the image of their products and services with a timely patriotic appeal to encourage women's participation in

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[3] "Estimated Civilian Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment: Quarterly Average, 1940 to 1945," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 67th ed. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 173.

[4] Office of War Information, Campaign guide, "Women in the War," 2, Entry 90, Box 587, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, Md.

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the work force. Outlines offered by the government for planning local campaigns further illustrated the emphasis on media cooperation in the use of womanpower. To obtain editorial support from newspapers in labor shortage areas, recruitment officials were told to plan a continuous flow of news releases, sample editorials, and photographs to stimulate press coverage of the need for women to take up paid employment. In particular, they should approach women's editors with story ideas such as personal profiles and question-and-answer columns to develop frequent features on women in war work because women's pages offered a highly effective channel of communication. In addition to these editorial resources, a successful recruitment drive should involve advertising contributed by newspapers and war-minded local businesses to rally community support for the employment of women.[5]

The newspaper industry, as profit oriented as other private businesses, welcomed government propaganda overtures in the recruitment of women for war work mainly for the financial rewards and public relations benefits. Encouraging publishers to promote the drive for womanpower, *Editor & Publisher* commented, "The net effect is to impress readers and advertisers alike with the overwhelming amount and the tremendous value of the wartime services rendered by the newspapers."[6] The recruitment of women for war work provided newspapers with an opportunity to improve their public image, and more importantly to boost their advertising revenues. For example, advocating press support for the womanpower campaign in the fall of 1943, *Editor & Publisher* urged the industry to sell

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[5] The War Manpower Commission, *America at War Needs Women at Work,* (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1943), 4.

[6] "Enlisting Women," *Editor & Publisher*, 8 May 1943, 34.

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classified advertising as a powerful tool for recruitment through in-house display advertisements as well as editorial coverage. To enhance its help wanted ads, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* prepared a series of ads featuring various war jobs in April 1943, along with an illustrated page in its picture section featuring women at work in war plants.[7] Other newspapers ran similar campaigns to help enlist women in war industries. Cooperating with local civic organizations and war agencies, the *Cleveland News* featured a wartime job clinic for women as front-page news in November 1942 to increase their interest in war industries. To promote public understanding of women war workers, fifteen prominent women journalists including Lucy Greenbaum of the *New York Times*, Marcia Winn of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and Mary Hornaday of the *Christian Science Monitor* went on a two-week tour in August 1942 to visit war plants across the country. Many newspapers also started carrying special columns such as the *Chicago Tribune*'s "Women in War Work" to publicize training and employment opportunities.[8]

Buoyed by the demands of the wartime economy, Rosie the Riveter emerged in the media as a new icon of female patriotism in World War II. This part of the dissertation will examine her presence in the press as a result of how the newspaper industry responded to the government's effort to mobilize American women for wartime employment. Chapter five will

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[7] "*Inquirer* Promotion Aids in Getting Women for Jobs," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 April 1943, 26; "Classified to Aid in Women War Worker Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 31 July 1943, 32; and "New Approach to Help Wanted Ads," *Editor & Publisher*, 23 October 1943, 46.

[8] "Job Clinic for Women," *Editor & Publisher*, 21 November 1942, 14; "NAM Takes Women Writers on Tour," *Editor & Publisher*, 5 September 1942, 32; and "Women at Work Column," *Editor & Publisher*, 21 August 1943, 16.

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address the interactions between the press and the government in selling war jobs to women as patriotic services. Press promotion of the government's womanpower campaigns revealed how the definition of women's place in the labor force adapted to the demands of the war effort to encourage the participation of women as the most viable solution to the manpower crisis without threatening fundamental beliefs in gender differences. Chapter six will compare the approaches of the daily press and the black press toward labor and social issues raised by wartime shifts in the pattern of female employment. News coverage on hiring discrimination, sexual and racial tension in the workplace, and the conflict between paid employment and family responsibilities facing an increasing number of working women underscored the limits of war mobilization in eliminating the persistent resistance against the full integration of women in the work force.

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CHAPTER V

SELLING WOMANPOWER

The American mobilization for World War II swiftly ended the crisis of mass unemployment in the Depression and subsequently created an unprecedented manpower shortage. Due to the rapid expansion of the defense industry, the home front needed an additional one million workers in the first year of the war to keep up with the accelerating pace of war production. In response, President Roosevelt established the War Manpower Commission in April 1942 to gear the civilian labor force toward the nation's military priorities. The increasing demand for labor marked not only a robust economy driven by defense goals but also highlighted the widening gap between market conditions and traditional notions of sexual division of labor to be bridged by the wartime government. Although the war effort called for more women to work outside the home, two out of three women remained full-time homemakers a year into the war. As frustrated manpower officials noted, community traditions and employer prejudice continued to present major barriers to female employment in a slow thaw of the chilly climate that dominated the prewar era. Fueled by a profound economic recession, social sanctions against working women flared into denunciation of the "double earner" in the Depression era. A Gallop poll in 1936 found that 82 percent of the public opposed paid work for women with

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employed husbands.[1] Portrayed in the media as selfish and greedy pin-money workers, women who ventured into the labor market were criticized for taking jobs away from male breadwinners while the federal and local governments, private institutions, and businesses refused to hire married women. Punitive laws enacted at the federal and the state level to prevent the employment of both spouses further institutionalized the prevalent prejudice against married women in the labor market.

Even in the face of war, public hostility toward working women persisted, especially in the industrial sector traditionally dominated by men. As a survey in the fall of 1941 indicated, half of the manufacturing firms in the state of New York did not consider hiring women. Immediately after Pearl Harbor, only 27 of the 623 major defense plants in the country employed women.[2] Echoing industry bias toward male workers, official approval reinforced the practice of preferential hiring in the early stage of the war effort. The War Department, for example, declared that defense firms should not be encouraged to utilize women on a large scale until all available male labor in a given area was exhausted. Despite the growing labor shortage, little incentive existed for industry to make the necessary adjustment for the employment of women for war work. Employers argued that women lacked the physical strength and the mechanical ability to handle industrial jobs. Opinion leaders who perceived a threat to familiar gender roles posed by the breach of sexual division of labor also opposed the induction of women into industry.

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[1] Mary Martha Thomas, *Riveting and Rationing in Dixie: Alabama Women and the Second World War* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1987), 5.

[2] D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 112.

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In a typical note of male anxiety, columnist Max Lerner worried that the war was creating a "new Amazon" who would "outdrink, outswear, and outswagger" the men.[3] As labor shortages turned more and more pressing, persuading women as well as men to suspend their personal beliefs in proper gender roles for the sake of national interests became one of the top priorities for the government in home front mobilization. This chapter will examine the use of media resources by the government to overcome resistance against the employment of women.

The Womanpower Policy of the United States

As a result of the expansion of the armed forces, the male civilian labor force showed a decline of six million during the war.[4] The government called on women to enter the labor market to compensate for the decreased number of men available for employment. Despite the increasing need for female labor, the United States did not institute a legislative mechanism for the industrial mobilization of American women. The manpower shortage generated some momentum early in the war for the conscription of women for war work, but the wartime administration was unable to reconcile society's conflicting demands on women to take up new economic responsibility in addition to maintaining their traditional domestic function. Polls indicated that in the spring of 1942

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[3] For an overview of the persistence of prejudice against women in the labor force early in the war, see Allan Winkler, *Home Front U. S. A.: America during World War II* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: H. Davidson, 1986), 50-51.

[4] "Employment Status of the Noninstitutional Population, by Sex: 1940 to 1947," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 69th ed. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), 174.

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between 66 to 80 percent of the public was in favor of establishing an inventory of women available for employment. Women's organizations and civil groups also supported the movement for labor registration. Congress, however, rejected a bill introduced in 1943 to impose universal obligation on women eighteen to fifty, and the idea of female conscription never materialized.[5] Although propaganda often compared women's war work to men's military service, lawmakers were inhibited by the political tradition of a liberal state that emphasized freedom of choice as well as the cultural tradition of a society that sanctified motherhood. The wartime government therefore failed to legislate the civil responsibility of American women to include war work outside the home.

Opting for a voluntary approach instead of a conscription system, the government relied on the power of propaganda to persuade women to enter the labor market so that men could be released for military duty. "America at War Needs Women at Work," proclaimed WMC.[6] The emphasis on work for women as a response to the imperative of war rather than a desire for social change established the framework of the mobilization of women. The focus on collective responsibility rather than individual rights in recruitment propaganda helped the government fulfill the needs of the wartime economy without offering women enough political leverage to stake a permanent claim for equal

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[5] For the attempt to compel American women to register for war work, see "Mobilization and Propaganda Policies in Germany and the United States," chap. in Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 74-99; and Eleanor F. Straub, "United States Government Policy Toward Civilian Women during World War II," *Prologue* 5 (Winter 1973): 240-54.

[6] The War Manpower Commission, *America at War Needs Women at Work*, (Washington, D. C.: GPO, June 1943), 1.

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employment opportunities after the war. To maintain the traditional pattern of sexual division of labor in the consumer household and the work force, the recruitment effort underscored a hierarchy of hiring preferences that privileged the male breadwinner and female consumer/homemaker ideal. WMC guidelines on the use of womanpower reiterated the policy that no attempt should be made to promote the employment of women until all available men had been placed, affirming the legitimacy of men's privilege to work. When the use of alternative sources of labor became necessary, the recruitment of women who were single or married but without young children to care for took precedence, which reinforced the primacy of women's commitment to motherhood. In particular, manpower officials considered married middle-class white women without children under the age of ten as prime recruitment targets because of the prevailing assumption that they were unsaddled by financial needs and would be more than happy to retire from the job market as soon as their service was no longer needed.

The approach to womanpower as a temporary measure of expediency allowed the government to promote public acceptance of women as a flexible supply of labor ready to be organized and disbanded depending on the needs of the economy. Based on the auxiliary characterization of female labor, the mobilization of American women for war work proceeded without the guidance of well-formulated policies. Mired in turf fights with several agencies, the WMC played an advisory role in labor recruitment and allocation without the authority to draft women or to force employers to comply with federal directives for the successful induction of women into industry.

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In response to pressure from women's groups, director Paul V. McNutt established the Women's Advisory Committee in August 1942 to develop a more effective approach to womanpower.[7] The male-dominated agency, however, rarely sought the advice of the women's committee and largely ignored its recommendations. With little power to influence labor policies concerning women, the committee existed as a mere token to acknowledge gender equality. The Women's Bureau of the Labor Department sought to facilitate the use of womanpower, but it also suffered from the lack of political clout.[8] Marginalized in federal bureaucracy, these agencies representing women's interest served mainly a public relations function for the wartime administration and accomplished little to integrate the employment of women with the manpower program except for publicizing issues of interest to working women such as community needs, work conditions, labor standards, and wage scales. In the absence of an efficient mechanism for centralized control, the government resorted to media publicity as the main avenue to the mobilization of women for war work. As historian Leila Rupp observed, "The policy of

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[7] Led by Margaret Hickey, the Women's Advisory Committee was supposed to represent women's interest in the manpower program, but McNutt vested little authority in the committee. After several futile attempts of protest against their marginal status, the women relinquished their struggle to exert influence on labor policies and the committee settled for serving as a connection between the government and women's groups. For the power struggle within the War Manpower Commission, see Straub, 249-54.

[8] The Women's Bureau was created in 1920 to carry on the work of the Women in Industry Service, which sought to increase the employment opportunities of women in World War I. Headed by Mary Anderson, the Women's Bureau strove to establish appropriate labor standards, promoted modification of plant facilities and expansion of community services to suit the needs of women workers, and emphasized the importance of protective legislation to guard the interests of working women in World War II. See Straub, 245-7.

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selling the war became the government's major strategy in the task of labor mobilization."[9] Working closely with the Office of War Information, the WMC sought to align media images of women with the labor needs of a militarized economy.

The Mobilization of Women for War Work

The government sought to fulfill war production goals by drawing additional labor from the seventeen million women with no children under ten who were not yet in the job market by 1942. With no compelling financial reasons to work, most of these middle-class housewives were unwilling to relinquish a lifestyle focused on caring for their families. Concerns with brutal foremen, dirty shops, vulgar fellow workers, and dangerous machinery further deterred those blessed with the economic advantage that allowed them to stay away from the job market. OWI surveys found that many women approved of paid employment for women in general but did not feel it was their personal responsibility to respond to recruitment drives because their highest priority was set on family life.[10] Even those who felt inspired by the patriotic appeal were often reluctant to take up outside employment over the objection of their husbands. Some women also worried that holding jobs usually reserved for men would lessen their femininity. Still others were held back by their class awareness, fearing that factory work might result in a loss of social

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[9] Rupp, 90.

[10] Office of War Information, Bureau of Special Services, Survey Division, "Willingness of Women to Take War Jobs,' Special memorandum no. 93, 22 November 1943, Entry 90, Box 587, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, Md., hereafter cited as OWI Records.

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status. Reflecting on the reservations about war work felt by women who had little financial motivation to enter the labor market, the OWI complained that "asking some women to get a job is as startling as asking them to learn to fly."[11] The OWI hoped that propaganda promoting the full use of womanpower in the war effort would reduce the prejudice of employers, lower the disapproval of men, and counter the resistance of women against paid employment.

"Women in Necessary Services"

In the spring of 1943, sixteen million American women were working outside the home, constituting 30 percent of the civilian work force.[12] The WMC estimated that the country needed one and a half million more women in the work force by the end of 1943 to relieve the growing labor shortage affecting daily life on the home front. The expansion of the female work force was especially important to civilian sectors such as agriculture, education, transportation, medical care, child care, and retail and service businesses because they were unable to compete with higher-paying war industries for labor supply. Early media coverage on womanpower had focused on women taking up unusual tasks such as welding and riveting rather than the more mundane jobs. "Two out of three women workers will be needed in jobs outside factories to release other workers for the armed forces and for specialized jobs in war factories," the WMC cautioned in June

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[11] Office of War Information, Fact sheet no. 247, 12 June 1944, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[12] "Estimated Civilian Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment: Quarterly Average, 1940 to 1944," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 66th ed. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), 127.

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1943.[13] In September, the WMC joined forces with the OWI to sell one hundred "unglamorous jobs" to American women as "war work." The OWI asked the media to emphasize a broad definition of war work. "Any job a woman takes which releases a man is a war job," the OWI explained.[14] "The woman who waits on trade in a grocery store, or cares for the children of war workers, or takes over the neighbor's washing is doing an important job," reiterated Paul V. McNutt, WMC chief.[15]

The purpose of the womanpower drive in September 1943 was to expand the general public's rather narrow perception of war work to include any job that helped maintain essential civilian production or services, or release workers for the more important positions in war production or military services. The OWI knew that it would be difficult to promote the kind of work for which women were needed on the home front because most of the jobs offered low pay and had no union representation. Before it started the campaign headlined "The More Women at Work...The Sooner We'll Win," the OWI called on women's editors in June to provide "preliminary education" to make women more receptive to unattractive jobs that employers in the service sector found particularly hard to fill in the face of competition from war industries. The women's unit suggested story ideas such as a series of surveys to report local conditions in essential civilian industries, case histories of hardships experienced by women as a result of

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[13] WMC, *America at War Needs Women at Work*, 1.

[14] Office of War Information, "September Womanpower Program," Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[15] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Shopping News column no. 1, 1 August 1943, Entry 194, Box 1034, OWI Records.

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manpower shortages, and interviews with women who had recently entered the job market to fill in for men who had gone into the armed services.[16] In late August, the OWI reminded women's editors again that "unfortunately these jobs are not only far from the battle front and ordinary, but many are jobs which have always offered the lowest pay and poorest working conditions. They will have to be glorified as a patriotic war service if women are to be persuaded to take them."[17] Gardner Cowles Jr., director of domestic operations, solicited the cooperation of the media to spotlight women working, for example, as clerks, messengers, telephone operators, and elevator operators to raise their awareness of essential civilian work as a unique war contribution of women.[18]

The campaign debuted with Labor Day cover illustrations in all magazines showing women in a wide variety of jobs to convince them that "work in stores, trains, schools, banks, offices and on farms is war work, just as valuable in total war as war jobs in factories or joining up with the WAACS, WAVES, SPARS, and Women Marines."[19] The women's unit asked newspaper editors to address reservations about war work frequently held by women, especially housewives, such as lack of financial incentive, concerns with social status, fears of their own inexperience, and the demands of strenuous work. To

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[16] Hazel Howard, Letter to women's editors, 19 June 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[17] Howard, Letter to women's editors, 28 August 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[18] "Advertising News and Notes," *New York Times*, 10 May 1943, 29; and "Ask Ad Support to Get Women Workers," *Editor & Publisher*, 22 May 1943, 32.

[19] Office of War Information, Magazine Division, "Information Needed for OWI Womanpower Program," Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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encourage readers to rise to the challenge of war work, editors were urged to take advantage of the familiar genre of personal accounts to feature women who have overcome their feelings of insecurity to achieve personal growth as role models. A sample story offered the example of Jessie Plenner, who wanted to help with the war effort while her husband was away in the Army. Troubled initially by her lack of experience with factory work, she relied on her patriotic enthusiasm to land a position in the Bloomfiled plant of the Aircraft Division of General Motors in New Jersey. Within a short time on her job as a paint sprayer, the women's unit reported that Plenner had transformed herself from a timid homemaker inexperienced with industrial work to an award-winning war worker admired for her patriotic dedication. Through the angle of self improvement, the OWI hoped that newspapers would help make women appreciate the value of war work in "making oneself a better American citizen."[20]

As the campaign proceeded, the effort to enlist the editorial support of women's pages continued in the OWI's regular publication for women's editors. For example, in a guest editorial, one of the features of the *Fortnightly Budget* used by the OWI to inspire women to follow the examples set by those who were making vital contributions to the war effort, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins urged the press to enrich the meaning of war work by acknowledging the importance of women working to meet war needs and civilian needs as well. She wrote to women's editors that "today the woman clerk in your grocery, who perhaps hasn't worked outside her home in 20 years, is as much a vital war worker as the girl who rivets sheet metal in an aircraft assembly plant."[21] In addition to

[20] *Fortnightly Budget*, 4 September 1943, 2, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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emphasizing civilian jobs, the women's unit geared its operation to raising women's interest in working outside the home and boosting their confidence in performing what was usually considered men's work. The *Fortnightly Budget* frequently promoted the womanpower program with illustrations and stories ready for the use of women's page editors. For example, coinciding with the Labor Day drive of the magazine industry, the cover of the issue on September 4, 1943, featured a drawing by artist Alton Graves to highlight one of the many surprising rewards women apparently found in heavy work. Holding a power drill, a woman remarked to her co-worker, "You know this little thing has juggled off 10 pounds, and 2 inches for me!" Also taking a light-hearted approach to war work, a later cover illustration portraying a woman enjoying a coffee break showed her boasting to her friend that after war work helped her lose twenty pounds, "The men are whistling at me again."[22] Both illustrations downplayed the physical demand of factory work, which deterred many women from war industries, and at the same time emphasized how the experience accentuated, rather than diminished, the sex appeal of those who took up men's jobs.

Although the OWI was not able to ascertain the effect of the propaganda, internal evaluations indicated some measure of success achieved in the 1943 campaign. The analysis of editorial opinions, which showed "a growing feeling that the manpower problem is basically a womanpower problem," credited the intense media publicity for

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[21] *Fortnightly Budget*, 27 November 1943, 2, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[22] *Fortnightly Budget*, 4 September 1943 and 5 August 1944, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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legitimizing the employment of women as a wartime necessity to foster public acceptance of change.[23] Apparently, the promotion of civilian jobs also raised women's awareness of their relative value to the war effort. As an OWI survey found in October 1943, more than 80 percent of the women interviewed thought that those who held civilian service jobs were making as important a contribution as those working in war plants.[24]

"Women in the War"

The number of women in the labor force increased sharply from 1942 to the summer of 1943 when it reached a peak of 18.5 million. In the following six months, however, the female labor force decreased by 1.7 million.[25] In the first month of 1944 alone, 400,000 women left the labor market. Many women workers found it hard to keep their full-time jobs because of fatigue, lack of community services, and general difficulties in meeting the demands of home responsibility and outside employment. Instead of reentering the job market, they decided to stay home to rest or to focus on homemaking. The OWI reported that in January 1944, an average of 77 women left their war production jobs for every 79 who were hired. In the aircraft industry, the turnover reached an alarming rate of 78 for every 58 hired.[26] The OWI attributed the high departure rate

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[23] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Undated memorandum, "The Problem of Womanpower," Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[24] "Willingness of Women to Take War Jobs," OWI Records.

[25] "Estimated Civilian Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment: Quarterly Average, 1940 to 1945," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 67th ed. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 173.

[26] Office of War Information, "The Problem of Womanpower."

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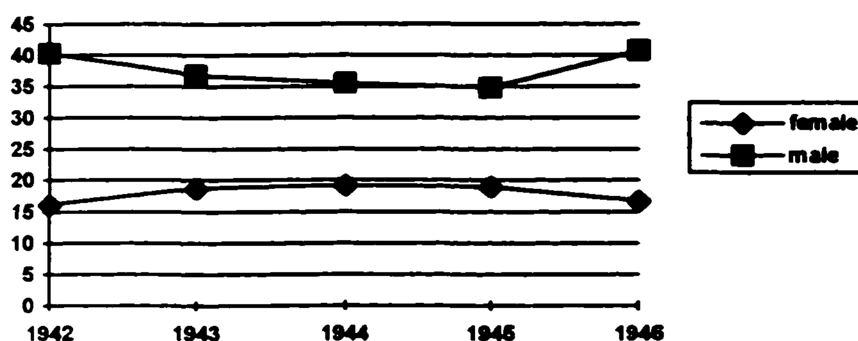
among women to their selfish and premature pursuit of domestic comfort. Criticizing women workers for shirking their responsibilities, the OWI noted with chagrin that some women were leaving demanding war work "to go back to bridge tables or soft jobs when they are still badly needed at lathes, behind welder's masks and in the thousands of other places where they are doing man-sized jobs."[27]

Figure 1. Changes in the Number of Women and Men in the Civilian Labor Force from 1942 to 1946 in Millions[28]



Cutbacks as a result of contract cancellations and other production adjustments in the defense industry also increased the number of women withdrawing from war work. Unwilling to take full-time jobs or less rewarding positions, many of those who were laid off delayed their re-entry to the job market, raising concerns about a sharp decline in labor supply. In response, Margaret Hickey, who headed the Women's Advisory Committee of the WMC, commented that the retention of women in the labor market was the "No. 1

[27] Ibid.

[28] "Civilian Labor Force, By Age and Sex: 1942 to 1947," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 69th ed. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), 175.

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manpower task of 1944."[29] The OWI urged women's editors to remind readers who were thinking about trading a riveting gun for a skillet that they should not start dreaming of blissful days in the kitchen because they had not fulfilled their obligation to the country in the battle of production until the last shot was fired.[30] In the civilian sector, despite the September drive, one and a half to two million women workers were still needed by mid-1944 to fill openings, particularly in seasonal employment such as canning and agriculture. The WMC estimated that 80 percent of the new workers would need to be recruited to work on farms and food processing plants as the harvesting season began in 1944.[31]

In response to these labor problems, the OWI followed up the 1943 Labor Day campaign with another concerted effort in the spring of 1944.[32] Headlined "Women in the War for the Final Push to Victory," the campaign highlighted the importance of women

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[29] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release, "Womanpower Report," 14 April 1944, 3, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[30] "The War Still Needs the Women," *The Women's Page*, 19 August 1944, 3, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Despite the publicity coordinated by the OWI for the national drive for womanpower in September 1943, the first overall program prepared by the agency did not start until the spring of 1944. Before the "Women in the War" campaign, the OWI had used its media resources only in cooperation with individual drives of other agencies such as the Army, Navy, and War Manpower Commission. On November 19, 1943, the joint Army-Navy Personnel Board issued a directive that the armed services would cooperate with the War Manpower Commission and the OWI in coordinating their various recruitment campaigns into one over-all program to eliminate the confusion and overlapping of appeals, which government officials considered as the main reason why the recruitment of women had not been more successful. The Marine Corps Women's Reserves drive from January 31 to February 10 in 1944 marked the last separate recruitment program for women through OWI facilities.

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continuing their participation in the labor market to meet the nation's needs in the final stage of war. Media promotion started on the first of March to dispel concerns deterring women from war work. The OWI's Bureau of Campaigns planned propaganda material for every form of mass communication. For front-page news coverage, the OWI released a story on "Women in the War" to all press bureaus and national wire services. In addition to the general release, campaign information was slanted for different sections of the newspaper such as the editorial, food, and women's pages to obtain more publicity. Women's editors, for example, received a story on women holding unusual war jobs.[33] The News Bureau also offered human interest stories and photographs through syndicates such as King Features and the Associated Press to cultivate the long term interest of the press in the campaign beyond the intensive coverage expected in the first month of the womanpower drive.

Through the publicity that continued into the fall of 1944, the OWI aimed to raise women's awareness of the need for their service in many fields of war work and to galvanize them into action through more effective appeals. The OWI found that the previous propaganda effort was successful in making women realize the need for more workers, but not in inspiring a sense of personal responsibility. Their typical response to the government's plea for womanpower was "Let Maisie do it." Even more self-oriented appeals based on wages, community and plant adjustments, training and educational opportunities were not powerful enough to overcome what manpower officials perceived

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[33] Office of War Information, News Bureau schedule, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

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as the "apathetic feeling" of women. To increase the cultural pressure on women to take up war jobs, the OWI, relying heavily on the expertise of advertising professionals, propagated the theme that "women must work as men must fight."[34] Aimed at the five and half million single women and non-farm housewives without children under fourteen who were still resisting paid employment, the appeal sought to motivate them to seek out job opportunities by equating war work as a civic duty for women to military service for men.[35] "The women of America must be made to realize that in wartime, just as men of military age must *fight*, women of working age must *work*," [emphasis included] the War Advertising Council reiterated in late January in an attempt to shore up industry support for the upcoming womanpower campaign. Facilitated by the resources of the Council, the OWI distributed copy and layout ideas to dramatize the connection between war work on the home front and casualties on the battle front, hoping to create a sense of urgency by relating women's war effort to the lives of American soldiers.

The OWI also solicited media cooperation through a campaign guide featuring proper responses designed to neutralize specific points of resistance. To ease the transition from the kitchen to the factory, for example, the OWI encouraged the media to help women identify with war work through their homemaking experience. "Many war factory jobs are very similar to running a sewing machine or vacuum cleaner, assembling a

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[34] Office of War Information, Campaign guide, "Women in the War," 2, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[35] War Advertising Council, "Women at War," (Washington D. C.: War Advertising Council, 1944); and Office of War Information, Pamphlet, "Women in the War," Suit Box 1, Entry 194, OWI Records.

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meat grinder, sewing by hand, and other familiar household tasks," the OWI proclaimed in one of the guidelines for media publicity.[36] The domestic analogy assured women that they were well suited and prepared for non-traditional jobs in the wartime labor market. Not only were men's jobs easy to pick up, as the OWI maintained, industries offered amenities superior to the familiar home environment in many ways. In the scientifically designed workplace of the modern factory, women could escape the monotony of housekeeping to reap significant rewards by performing cleaner and more pleasant work.[37]

Opponents of women's entry to male-dominated fields insisted that women lacked the physical strength required by industrial work and cast gender difference as a liability for women. The OWI turned feminine attributes into assets for women workers when it argued that they had much to contribute to war production because women possessed a special ability in performing repetitive, tedious work that required patience, dexterity, and attention to detail as well as a unique ingenuity to translate domestic common sense into industrial efficiency.[38] In a feature story on award-winning devices created by women war workers, the women's unit announced that "the fabled ingenuity of women with a hairpin--she can fix anything with one--has been geared to war production." For example, Miriam Bennett, who worked in an airplane plant in Columbus, Ohio, invented a dispenser for applying moist chromate paste to steel parts, fashioned after an ordinary kitchen pastry

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[36] OWI, "Women in the War," 3.

[37] Ibid.

[38] "Feminine Ingenuity Helps Step Up War Production," undated story for *The Women's Page*, Entry 84, Box 9, OWI Records.

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tube used in decorating cakes. Her idea not only speeded up operations but also saved the plant fifteen dollars in material every day. To catch the attention of women's page editors, the women's unit distributed additional profiles highlighting the success of women in turning their expertise in the domestic sphere into proficiency on the assembly line. In short, as *The Women's Page* noted, "Women have taken their inspiration from the familiar gadgets of their daily lives or have adapted sensible kitchen routine to the production shop."[39] Apparently quite pleased with the effect of propaganda, the OWI boasted that by the end of June, the "Women in the War" campaign had surpassed the original goal of recruiting 1.5 million more women, pushing the total number of women employed to a record of over 18 million.[40]

Crafting Patriotic Appeals in the Recruitment of Women Workers

Through an extensive network of national and local media, the OWI sought to engineer the responses of women to recruitment drives. Guidelines for media promotion of womanpower asked editors to stress the responsibility of women to make their employment decisions based on the specific needs of their communities.[41] The emphasis on the localized nature of labor shortages helped the government coordinate media publicity with complicating changes in the demand and supply of labor during the war. Women were encouraged to enter the local job market only when there was a pressing

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Office of War Information, "Womanpower Recruitment Result," Entry 194, Suit Box 1, OWI Records.

[41] OWI, "Womanpower Report," 2.

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shortage of manpower. The government's approach to womanpower as mainly an auxiliary labor force underscored the gender bias of recruitment efforts, which directed the flow of the female work force to avoid the competition of women with men. For example, as an increasing number of men were being discharged from military service for health reasons, the male civilian labor force grew by 800,000 from the spring of 1944 to the fall.[42] Although shipyards in the New York area needed 9,000 workers in July 1944, the WMC, expecting to fill the jobs with a surplus of male workers, announced that there was no need for women in that area.[43]

As the degree of labor shortage and the types of worker needed varied greatly across the country, the womanpower program became a tangle of confusing appeals in different stages of war. For instance, in the spring of 1944, many people thought that cutbacks in some defense industries meant that the war would be over soon. When the "Women in the War" campaign started in March, the public was not sure if the government still wanted women to leave their homes to go to work.[44] The news service of the OWI provided the press with a reliable source of centralized information on the often confusing womanpower program of the government. More importantly, the OWI's enterprise served to coordinate news coverage of war work for women with the large ideological framework of domestic propaganda designed to cultivate civilian support for

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[42] "Estimated Civilian Labor Force," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 67th ed., 173.

[43] "Shipyard Labor 10.3% Women," *New York Times*, 6 July 1944, 18.

[44] OWI, "Women in the War," 3; and "The War Still Needs the Women," *Women's Page*, 19 August 1944, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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American military superiority and to forge home front unity in wartime. The WMC believed that the large pool of labor constituted by middle-class housewives with no young children provided the ideal solution to the manpower crisis. Media promotion reflected the government's assumption that new workers needed for the war effort would be drawn from this source of womanpower with abundant patriotic spirit. Recruitment appeals thus de-emphasized financial motivations and individual gains as the press endorsed paid work as American women's patriotic service to the country.

Heroine Worship

The OWI strove to build up a positive image of women war workers in the popular media to encourage greater use of women in traditionally male-dominated fields. For example, in the lumber industry, as another OWI story in late 1943 showed, women not only increased their number from 8,000 early in the war to almost 30,000, but broke down industry traditions that confined them to lighter jobs such as tying bundles, checking, marking and cleaning up. No longer limited to handling small timber, they branched out to jobs formerly held by men only. Displaying "agility, calm nerves, and trigger-quick judgment," observed the *Fortnightly Budget*, they proved to skeptical employers that women, too, could serve as headsaw operators and deck scalers or work on the cranes and at the controls of the trimmers.[45] In addition to the vote of confidence in women to work as men's equals, the OWI trumpeted the discovery of female superiority as they ventured

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[45] "Wartime Lumber Production More Dependent on Women," *Fortnightly Budget*, 27 November 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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into new territories. In some industries such as the manufacture of diamond dies, the OWI noted that women were turning out a better work record than men.[46]

The press offered an additional boost to public confidence in the ability of women to excel in industrial work. Not only did they exceed men in endurance, the *New York Times* reported in September 1942, they also coped better with nervousness and frustration. Furthermore, contrary to the popular belief, women had no more industrial accidents than men.[47] In another instance, the paper highlighted "the ability of women to adapt themselves to these strange jobs and the efficiency with which they do the many jobs which formerly were done by men alone" through a feature on women steel workers.[48] The *Chicago Daily Tribune* also noted that the management was constantly amazed by how well the women turned out their share of equipment. In fact, with their "flying feminine fingers," women were outperforming men in the more precise work that required patience and dexterity.[49] Similarly the black press celebrated the achievement of women who filled in for men on the production front. A photo essay on women war workers in the *Chicago Defender*, for example, showcased the contribution of black women such as

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[46] "Women Die Makers," *Fortnightly Budget*, 10 July 1943, 10, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[47] "Says Air Plant Women Top Men in Endurance," *New York Times*, 30 September 1942, 20.

[48] "800 Women Fill Steel Mill Jobs," *New York Times*, 10 May 1943, 16.

[49] Kate Massee, "Women in War Work," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 December 1943, 15.

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Hynie Fields, who moved from Chicago to work in a shipyard in California, joining the vast home front army of production soldiers "welding for Uncle Sam."[50]

The focus on women taking up the jobs men left behind revealed internal inconsistencies in the OWI's approach to womanpower. Despite the goal of both womanpower campaigns to achieve a broader understanding of war work, propaganda strategies overshadowed the more mundane jobs in fields traditionally sanctioned for women such as food processing, service and retail, and some light industries. Following the recruitment policy to draw middle-class housewives into the labor market, OWI writers relied on the higher cultural value attached to work usually done by men to increase the appeal of war work to propaganda targets. Although many defense jobs were boring and monotonous, recruitment propaganda portrayed war work as an escape from domestic drudgery for women, emphasizing the social prestige and personal satisfaction associated with male-dominated fields. News reports encouraging women to enter the defense industry also promoted factory work as a rewarding experience. Isolated housewives supposedly found relief from domestic doldrums in the pleasant environment of modern factories where women workers enjoyed well-planned cafeterias and first aid rooms, recreational programs outside work, and social interactions with co-workers.[51]

More significantly, with a higher requirement of technical skills, defense work promised women accolades of being heroines of war production who worked as equal

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[50] "Welding for Uncle Sam," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 20 February 1943, 15, 26.

[51] OWI, "Women in the War," 3.

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partners with men in the nation's war effort as well as being trailblazers who broadened women's horizon beyond the boundaries of middle-class gender convention. Touting the value of personal growth, the publications of the women's unit encouraged women to identify with even the less than glamorous jobs through a sense of pride in defying gender barriers to perform men's jobs. For example, the *Fortnightly Budget* featured a story in December 1943 of women who entered the slaughtering and meat packing industry, taking up "one of the most unfeminine and certainly unpleasant war jobs." Contrary to the traditional pattern of sexual segregation in the industry, the majority of jobs filled by women involved handling and processing meat rather than clerical work. In the boning department, the report noted that these women proved to be so proficient that at home they would never have to pass the carving knife across the table to their husbands.[52]

The focus on women in traditionally male-dominated industries resulted from an editorial compromise on the part of OWI writers to catch the attention of editors and reporters. The overrepresentation of women taking up "men's jobs" in government propaganda further biased the media toward Rosie the Riveter. With its penchant toward the new and the unusual, the press showed women working at drill presses, engine lathes, and grinding machines in war plants as they took up industrial jobs normally done by men. The *New York Times*, for example, reported in May 1943, that more than eight hundred women, working as scarfers, burners, and crane operators in the steel mills of Buffalo and

[52] "Slaughter House Jobs Being Filled by Women," *Fortnightly Budget*, 11 December 1943, 6, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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Lackawanna, were doing "man-size" jobs.[53] The heroine worship in the popular media focused public attention on the defense industry and undermined the priority of the womanpower program to address the more pressing labor concern with essential civilian work.

The White-collar Girl!

War work in clerical positions, a field with no difficulty attracting women, received little attention in OWI material. In comparison, the role of women in facilitating the bureaucracy of war claimed a relatively high profile in the news because of the middle-class perspective of the press well as the business interest of publishers. In addition to housewives, women's pages addressed themselves to upwardly mobile young women whose career opportunities were expanded by the growing demand for office workers in the wartime government and businesses. Without the distraction of budgeting for the family, these young single women whose disposable income was boosted by their salaries from office work made up one of the most important groups of consumers sought after by advertisers, joining those who held the purse strings of the family as the target audience of women's pages in wartime. To attract the vast home front army of white collar workers, many newspapers ran special interest material to highlight their war contribution. Ruth MacKay, who wrote the column "White Collar Girl" in the *Chicago Tribune* throughout the war, thus declared, "I consider the white collar girl as the real 'All-American' girl, who

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[53] "800 Women Fill Steel Mill Jobs," *New York Times*. See also, for example, Kate Massee, "Women in War Work," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 September 1942, 21; 19 November 1942, 23; and 15 January 1943, 17.

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sets the style in clothes, who is interested in improving her background. . . . She is the type of girl that the G. I. boy is going to marry when this war is over, rather than the glamorous pin-up girls now associated with our fighting men."[54]

Emphasis on job security in the postwar period distinguished the promotion of clerical work in the press from the recruitment of women for service jobs and industrial work, which relied mainly on the patriotic appeal. Calling for 2,000 women to fill immediate openings in the War Department, the "Women in War Work" column of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* encouraged readers to apply for such wartime positions that offered a peacetime future with the opportunity to learn skills for well-paying jobs after the war.[55] The promise of future prospects indicated a greater willingness to accept office work for women beyond the duration of the war whereas assembly line work for women was assumed to be a short-term phenomenon for the duration. The black press also encouraged women to seek white collar work, especially in the federal government, which offered black women important opportunities for career advancement in fast-growing war agencies such as the War Department, the Office of Civilian Defense, the Office of Price Administration, and the War Manpower Commission.

Reflecting its commitment to the advancement of the race, the black press celebrated the entrance of black women into civil service as a milestone in what it hoped to be a permanent expansion of the access of blacks to non-traditional fields. Before the

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[54] "Column Appeal Brings $50,000," *Editor & Publisher*, 24 April 1943, 120; and "*Chicago Tribune* Has Working Girl Column," *Editor & Publisher*, 18 March 1944, 24.

[55] Kate Massee, "Women in War Work," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10 May 1943, 19.

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war, blacks accounted for only 8 percent of government employees. By the spring of 1943, they had increased their presence to 18 percent with a significant rise in the number of blacks employed in white collar positions. For example, black clerks, although still underrepresented at 2 percent of all clerks in 1942, quadrupled in number from 1940. As a result, by 1943, one of every two blacks working for the federal government, instead of one out of ten before the war, held a white collar job.[56] Society coverage, one of the most popular features of the black press at the time, chronicled a shared sense of race pride in the accomplishment of black women who were doing their part for Uncle Sam as typists, stenographers, and filing clerks. A staple in the wartime society news, photographic portraits of women entering government positions, some displayed prominently on the front page, provided a visual tribute to the pursuit of respectability and upward social mobility championed by the black press.[57] News attention on the increasing number of women who benefited from the wartime boom in clerical jobs showed that media promotion of war work for women further diverged from the agenda of government propaganda in the approach of the press to the white-collar realm.

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[56] "National Grapevine," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 17. See Campbell, 107, for the impact of the wartime clerical boom on the employment pattern of blacks.

[57] See for example, "Wins OPA Promotion," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 25 July 1942, 1; "Provident Secretary Now U.S. Signal Corps Clerk," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 25 July 1942, 6; "To Capital," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 August 1942, 7; "In War Work," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 3 October 1942, 2; "Gets OCD Post," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 3 October 1942, 4; and "1st Overseas OWI Scribe in London," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 8 July 1944, 1.

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Stand Behind Your Man

The types of war work promoted in the press indicated inconsistency between news content and recruitment goals. The seemingly universal appeal to patriotism also functioned within significantly different frames of reference. While official propaganda appealed to women's political identity, the press referred mainly to their gender identity in its mobilization effort. The OWI's womanpower campaigns created pressure on women to join the work force by linking paid employment with women's social responsibility as citizens of a democratic state. The press sought to increase women's interest in working outside the home by invoking their personal obligation as mothers, sisters, wives, and sweethearts of American soldiers. A story in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in February 1943, for example, showed how an ordinary mother such as Mary Tinerrella was inspired by her soldier son to become a heroine of war production, leading a large group of workers to exceed their production quota. The *Tribune* reported that, like Tinerrella, almost all of the women sewing and assembling chin straps, head bands, and hammocks for military helmets at the Scholl Manufacturing company felt personally spurred to intense effort by close family ties in all branches of the service. Another story featured Lillian Sheets, a drill press operator who sported the greatest number of service stars among the employees in the Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator company, working hard for her two sons and one daughter in the Marines; one son, two brothers, and one son-in-law in the Army; and two nephews in the Navy.

In addition to older women whose maternal instinct helped them transcend the limit of age to excel in war production, younger women who made unusual sacrifices such

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as giving up glamorous careers or braving the uncertainly of relocation also figured prominently as models of American womanhood. The *Tribune*'s special column for women in war work, for example, extolled the dedication of Viola Iverson, who gave up her modeling career to help turn out equipment for hit precision bombing for her husband serving in the Navy.[58] Appealing to American women to "back up the men in uniform," as an ad for Chesterfield Cigarettes seen in the *New York Amsterdam News* urged, the theme of personal obligation also marked the representation of women war workers in the black press.[59] A front-page story in the *Chicago Defender* in September 1944, for example, celebrated the transformation of Lula Geneva Martin from a grieving war widow to one of the best defense workers at the Calumet Harbor yards of Pullman-Standard. Spurred by the death of her husband, a pilot killed in action in France, Martin, without any experience in welding, took up training offered by the company to help build war ships. Her fighting spirit to help with the war effort won her the honor as the first black women in Chicago to christen a U. S. war vessel.[60]

Personal testimonies provided a human interest angle that helped women relate to the abstract idea of womanpower. The emotional appeal was further popularized by advertisers. Titled "She's Engaged," the widely circulated series of ads for Pond's

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[58] Kate Massee, "Women in War Work," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 20 February 1943, 13, and 11 December 1943, 15.

[59] "They Meet Every Test," *New York Amsterdam Star-News* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 3.

[60] "Woman Launches War Ship Built in Chicago," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 2 September 1944, 1.

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featured profiles of "so many plucky, darling girls today who have given up all personal ambition so as to become 'production soldiers' behind their fighting men." One such ad seen in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in March 1943 introduced Hope Bulkeley of New York, who gave up her acting aspirations to work in a war plant. As her busy fingers turned out aircraft instruments, she visualized how every little glass tube she handled might help her fiancé in the Navy.[61] And for Camels, women war workers on the home front bonded with men fighting in the war front not only through a common dedication to victory but also the same taste in cigarettes.[62]

Promising women that, by taking up defense work, they could help save lives on the war front and speed up the final victory, these ads sought to appeal to women through a positive spin on the "do your part" plea. Others, however, resorted to the negative tactic of threat in an attempt to make the drive for womanpower more compelling. Exploiting women's feelings of guilt, these ads warned women that they would endanger the lives of men--brothers, sons, and husbands--if they did not pitch in to help supply them with weapons and munitions. Titled "Oil on My Hands," a full-page newspaper ad by the *Woman's Home Companion*, for example, accused those who failed to step forward to the dirty and strenuous jobs on the production front for risking the lives of loved ones on the war front. The first-person copy declared, "I should feel as if there were blood on my hands--his blood--if there were no oil on my hands today."[63]

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[61] "She's Engaged," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 March 1943, part 8, 23.

[62] "They've Got What It Takes," *New York Times*, 10 May 1943, 12, and *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10 May 1943, 6.

[63] "Fight Worker Lack," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 September 1943, 62.

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With strong emotional underpinnings in the personal responsibility women felt toward men, the image of Rosie the Riveter functioned as a powerful symbol of national unity in the press by strengthening the intimate human connections between the war front represented by the soldier as a brother, son, or husband, and the home front spearheaded by the woman war worker as a sister, mother, sweetheart, or wife, who was responsible for his welfare.[64] "The more we produce the more lives we save," asserted Donald M. Nelson, chairman of the War Production Board, highlighting the direct connection between productivity on the home front and casualty on the battle front in a speech on the strategic importance of maximum war production.[65] In addition to reinforcing a shared sense of purpose between military and civilian activities, the representation of women war workers in the news inscribed national unity through the emphasis on the common bond among women in their ties to the nation's fighting men that transcended their mutual differences. Drawn by the single cause of winning the war, women from different walks of

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[64] Studies of the representation of women in other wartime media such pin-ups, magazines, and magazine fiction indicated a cross media circulation of this popular theme of wartime propaganda that articulated what Judith Hicks Stiehm theorized as the asymmetrical relation between men as the protector and women as the protected in the gendered terms of family and romantic connections. See Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*; Maureen Elizabeth Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984); Robert B. Westbrook," 'I Want a Girl, Just Like the Girl That Married Harry James': American Women and the Problem of Political Obligation in World War II," *American Quarterly* 42: 4 (December 1990): 587-614; and Judith Hicks Stiehm, "The Protected, the Protector, the Defender." *Women's Studies International Forum* 5 (No. 3/4 1982): 367-76.

[65] "Produce More and Save Lives," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 October 1943, 6.

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life--housewives, beauticians, waitresses, salesgirls, secretaries, and actresses alike--all took a solid stand in their war work behind America's fighting men.

Conclusion

The womanpower propaganda emphasized the essential role played by working women in the war effort to counter prejudice keeping them away from the job market. "Women must be accepted in jobs that are now barred to them," WMC chairman Paul V. McNutt pleaded with employers in October 1942, "and every rule, whether of management or labor, that keeps them from these jobs must go."[66] In addition to federal initiatives, many states adopted laws to foster favorable conditions for women to enter war work, reflecting a more positive public attitude toward working women. In the first two years of the war, twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia passed new standards for women's employment. Delaware, for example, amended its rules for night work to permit women to work until eleven, and Ohio raised the weight that women were allowed to lift from 25 to 35 pounds. Washington and Illinois adopted equal-pay laws, and in July 1944, New York also banned wage discrimination against women.[67]

The press was responsive to the initiative of the government in creating a more receptive condition for the mass employment of women so long as the logistics of war compelled changes in the American labor force. Many employers who barred women in peacetime found themselves having to tap into the female labor force in wartime. For

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[66] "Single Job Agency in Plan of McNutt," *New York Times*, 30 October 1942, 11.

[67] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release, "Womanpower Report," 14 April 1944, 12, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records; and "State Is Enforcing Law on Equal Pay," *New York Times*, 7 October 1944, 16.

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example, the Census listed only 36 women employed in shipbuilding in March 1939. By January 1944, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, almost 130,000 women were working in shipyards, raising the proportion of women in the field to 10 percent. The aircraft industry absorbed women workers at an even more rapid pace. In the first year of war, the number of women employed in aircraft assembly increased nine times. By January 1944, more than 473,000 women were working in airplane engine and propeller plants, and 36 percent of all aircraft workers were women.[68] The combination of a severe shortage of manpower induced by the draft and a rapid expansion of opportunities generated by the defense build-up broadened the employment prospects for American women, leading to a dramatic increase in the number of women in the labor force from 12.3 million in beginning of 1941 to over 19.3 million in the fall of 1945.[69]

The rapid expansion of the female labor force reflected a more hospitable environment in the labor market marked by the effort of the wartime government to mitigate the Depression era's overt hostility toward women working outside the home. Government propaganda distributed through a vast network of popular media helped forge a consensus on the importance of womanpower to the war effort. At the peak of the industrial mobilization, women made up 36 percent of the civilian work force.[70] The dependence of military strategy on female labor was highlighted by the breakdown of

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[68] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Advanced news release, 14 April 1944, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[69] "Estimated Civilian Labor Force," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 67th ed., 173.

[70] Winkler, *Home Front U. S. A*, 50.

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sexual stereotypes evident in the variety of jobs being performed by women for the first time. Extolling the war contribution of working women, Labor Secretary Frances Perkins, who once denounced them as pin-money workers posing a menace to society before the war, observed in November 1943, "We have women who scrape the carbon from pipes in oil refineries--a dirty job to say the least. We have women who seal ton rolls of paper in the pulp mills--a hard, painstaking job. We have women who wash down locomotives, women who drive buses, women who operate foundry cranes, and women who pilot tug boats."[71] Boosted by a receptive labor market, the percentage of women in the work force jumped from 28 percent in 1940 to 36 percent in 1945.[72] The next chapter will examine how the press approached the war's impact on racial and sexual relations as a result of changes in female employment.

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[71] Frances Perkins, "Meaning of 'War Work' Widened by Women's Jobs," *Fortnightly Budget*, 27 November 1943, 2, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[72] "Employment Status of the Noninstitutional Population," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 69th ed., 174.

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CHAPTER VI

NEGOTIATING WARTIME SHIFTS IN FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

The editorial and advertising promotion of war work for women drew on a sense of personal responsibility through family or romantic connections as the main motivation for women's participation in war production. The dominant image of Rosie the Riveter in recruitment propaganda portrayed the typical woman worker as a white middle-class housewife inspired by patriotism to venture out of the familiar comfort of her domestic domain. In contrast, working-class women with substantial experience constituted the majority of the wartime female labor force. A survey of ten war production areas in 1944 showed that 75 percent of the women had worked for more than two years. Almost 50 percent of the women had been employed for at least five years, and 30 percent at least ten. The Women's Bureau of the Labor Department concluded that "wartime employment for these women was not, therefore, a venture into something new but rather part of their continuing work experience."[1]

Most of the women in the work force were driven by the imperative to support themselves, or to supplement the income of their families, as they sought to capitalize on a more open job market during the war. The exigencies of war not only provided an increasing

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[1] U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *Women Workers in Ten War Production Areas and Their Postwar Employment Plans*, Bulletin 209 (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 4.

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number of women with opportunities for paid employment, but also offered them wages that exceeded what they would have been able to command under the traditional pattern of sexual segregation of labor. The number of women in manufacturing increased 141 percent during the war as their share of manufacturing jobs rose from 22 percent in 1940 to almost 33 percent in 1944.[2] The influx of women into war industries such as aircraft, shipping, and ammunitions led to a rise in the percentage of women in all durable goods production from 8 percent in 1939 to 25 percent in 1944.[3] The expansion of war production thus forced open the male-dominated, high-paying, skilled, and unionized sector of the labor market to women, and offered them wages that averaged 40 percent higher than traditional female jobs in trade and service industries, or non-durable goods manufacturing.

However, the government's perspective on womanpower masked the significance of the material benefit women garnered from paid employment. The OWI assumed that women would find wages from war work a stigma rather than an incentive. Publicity guidelines for the womanpower program in fact advised the media to reassure women that a pay check was merely a token to recognize their service to the country.[4] The ideological appeal to patriotism that circulated in the media further underlined the class and racial bias inherent in

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[2] Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1978), 51.

[3] U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Handbook of Labor Statistics*, Bulletin 916 (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1947), 17.

[4] Office of War Information, Campaign guide, "Women in the War," 3, Entry 90, Box 587, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, Md., hereafter cited as OWI Records.

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the public dialogue on the mobilization of women for war work. Addressed mainly to the nation's fourteen million middle-class housewives with no young children, the womanpower propaganda reinforced the enduring myth of the peripheral role of wage labor in women's lives as mothers and homemakers. The propaganda's simplistic view of what war work meant to women betrayed the complex impact of women's paid employment on wartime society. This chapter will examine how the press mediated the tension between continuity and change as an increasing number of women entered the labor market during the war.

The Myth of Rosie in the Daily Press

In the years before the war, women across class divisions increasingly found work to be a necessity rather than an option. Pressured by the declining income provided by a single wage earner in the family, women continued to enter the job market in the 1930s despite the prejudice against working wives.[5] In particular, black women were pressed to find outside employment as their families tended to experience more financial hardships than white families during the Depression. By 1940, nearly 38 percent of black women over age fourteen were in the work force, compared to 24 percent of white women, with service,

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[5] The participation rate of women grew slowly from 22 percent to 25 percent during the 1930s, reflecting barriers including the prolonged recession and institutionalized discrimination. For women's experience in the labor market in the two decades before the war, see Leila J Rupp, "'Occupation: Housewife,'" chap. in *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 51-73; Mary Martha Thomas, *Riveting and Rationing in Dixie: Alabama Women and the Second World War* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1987), 5-7; and Glenda Riley, *Inventing the American Women: A Perspective on Women's History* (Arlington, Ill.: Harland Davidson, 1987), 211-24.

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domestic and agricultural jobs as the main source of employment.[6] Even for women who did not need to work for survival, paid employment was becoming more acceptable during the prewar period because it was justified by the pursuit of a higher standard of living in an increasingly consumption-driven culture.

In the war decade, the appeal of the consumer culture combined with the boom in clerical, retail, and professional fields to draw middle-class women into the job market. During the war years alone, retail employment showed a 43 percent increase with women claiming 92 percent of the gains, which doubled their number in the field. Similarly in clerical work, women doubled their number and soon turned the field into a female domain. Black women, although still underrepresented and often segregated, also made some advancement as the access to clerical positions in the federal government improved for minorities. Overall, the number of women in white-collar jobs rose 65 percent in the 1940s, which indicated a change in the gender norms regarding women working outside the home.[7] In sum, the exigency of family survival and the drive of the consumer culture gradually outweighed conformity to traditional notions of proper sex roles that hampered the employment of wives.[8]

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[6] "Employment Status of the Population 14 Years Old and Over, by Race and Sex: 1940," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 66th ed.(Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), 126; and Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1984), 231-2.

[7] D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 104-108.

[8] Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 9-10.

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However, the popular image of Rosie the Riveter in the media led the public to perceive working women as novel pin-money workers despite changes in the economy. As a labor activist noted in 1944, "Many people think, or wish to believe, that women industrial workers today have gone into gainful employment for the first time and purely for patriotic reasons. . . . There is nothing more important to any serious worker than the size of their pay check."[9] Financial reward had always been a primary factor in the work history of women. Under wartime conditions, financial concerns became even more pressing as a result of changes such as the absence of the primary breadwinner of the family and the rising cost of living. In 1944, the Women's Bureau found in a survey of more than 155,000 women that 60 percent of them worked to support dependents.[10]

Reflecting the ideological influence of the patriotic appeal in official propaganda, the daily press glossed over the significance of wages in shaping women's employment decisions and experiences. Pay differential, a major discontent among working women that contributed to their heavy turnover, received only sporadic news coverage. Although the National War Labor Board adopted the principle of equal pay for equal work at the beginning of the war, many employers still paid women less than men in the same position. Observing a low morale among women war workers due to wage discrimination, the Women's Bureau reported in 1944, "Women resented the fact that irresponsible young boys were hired as chore boys at

[9] Elizabeth Hawes, "Do Women Workers Get an Even Break?" *New York Times Magazine*, 19 November 1944, 13, 41, 42.

[10] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release, "Womanpower Report," 14 April 1944, 14, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

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beginning rates of sixty cents while women's minimum was forty-five cents and many who had worked for years were still earning less than sixty cents."[11]

While the management kept female wages low by breaking down jobs formerly performed by men into simpler parts for women, the male-dominated unions neglected the rights of women workers in contract negotiations and in seniority rules. As a result, even in the relatively open wartime job market, women all over the country continued to find their advancement in the workplace compromised by discrimination in terms of wages, promotions, training opportunities, and seniority rights. After more than two years into the war, the pay for women in manufacturing averaged about thirty-one dollars a week, which was twenty-three dollars less than that for men.[12] In New York, for example, the State Department of Labor reported that women war workers made an average of less than thirty dollars a week as of February 1944. Although the average earning represented a 72 percent increase from May 1939, it was a result of more overtime pay rather than higher wage rates for women. As the rise in the cost of living diminished the growth in their income from war work, many working women still found it hard to make ends meet.[13]

Other labor issues affecting women also received little press attention. Legislative measures and community initiatives needed to help women thrive in their role as wage earners by improving working conditions, providing training opportunities, and upgrading

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[11] Office of War Information, "Womanpower Report," 13.

[12] Campbell, 136. The estimate of pay differential reflected the effect of sexual discrimination as well as objective differences between men and women such as experience, rank, industry, and hours.

[13] Office of War Information, "Womanpower Report," 13.

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wages in predominantly female fields gathered marginal media support. The lack of news interest in the concerns of working women revealed that the daily press failed to account for the experience of the majority of women in the wartime labor market. The wide publicity given to women in jobs formerly reserved for men contributed to the prevailing perception of revolutionary changes in the employment pattern of women, but the majority continued to work in female-dominated fields during the war. Only one out of every six women employed in January 1944 worked in war production. Most working women were engaged in the civilian sector. They provided the services needed by the wartime society to sustain record production, but they rarely saw themselves bestowed with patriotic accolades in the columns of daily news.

Womanpower and the Double V Campaign

The distinctive approach of the black press to women's participation in war production illuminated the extent to which the womanpower concept was identified with middle-class white women in wartime society. Despite overlapping references to the dominant appeal of patriotism, the black press also viewed war employment for women from a racial vantage point and promoted defense work as an economic strategy for family survival.[14] "Our women need jobs just as bad or worse than the white women. They have bills to pay, and other little mouths to feed," wrote a reader to the *Chicago Defender* in

[14] See, for example, "Women, You Can Quickly Qualify for War Work," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 August 1942, 5; "Labor Shortage in Sewing Industry," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 August 1942, 9; and "More Power Machine Operators Wanted," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 3 October 1942, 8.

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March 1943, urging equal employment opportunities for black women.[15] While the mobilization of women for war work in government propaganda and the daily press aimed to overcome the presumed female indifference to financial incentives, recruitment messages in the black press highlighted the appeal of material rewards, which underscored the injustice of an economic hierarchy that kept black women in the most vulnerable position.[16]

The Double Bind of Racial and Sexual Discrimination

Early in the war, labor shortages were not yet serious enough to significantly alleviate the economic disadvantage of minorities in a job market still entrenched in prejudice. The United States Employment Service perpetuated the pattern of racial discrimination by continuing to cater to the preference of employers who requested white workers only. After more than a year into the war, only 30 of the 618 war plants in the Chicago area employed at least 10 percent blacks, and almost half of these war plants still operated without a single black worker on their payrolls.[17] Similarly in New York, an analysis of 27 firms by the state government showed that in April 1943, blacks constituted only 4 percent out of a total of 33,357 war workers.[18]

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[15] "Negro Women Refused Defense Jobs," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 16.

[16] See, for example, "Wives Advised to Find Work or Learn Trade," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 21 November 1942, 19; "Dorrie Sees Trainees at NYA Center," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 16 January 1943, 8; "Dunbar Offers Training for War Workers," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 8; "On Women in Defense," *New York Amsterdam Star- News* (City Edition), 25 July 1942, 9; and "Bedford School Places Trainees," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 15 May 1943, 2.

[17] "Urge Work Ban Be Lifted Against Negroes and Jews," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 16 January 1943, 15.

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Racial discrimination thus continued well into the defense build-up, especially in areas where there still existed a surplus of white male workers. When employers were compelled by severe manpower shortages to resort to alternative sources of labor supplied by women and minorities, their hiring preferences depended on the particular racial and sexual flexibility of an industry. In general, employers in heavy industries preferred minority men and in light industries, white women. The overall hiring pattern indicated systematic exclusion of black women. The expansion of the wartime job market that benefited other disadvantaged groups did not necessarily bring immediate economic relief for black women.[19] For example, the opening of industrial jobs for women, so vigorously championed in government propaganda and the mainstream press, remained elusive for black women. They were neglected in the collective effort to mitigate sexual prejudice and barred by a combination of sexual and racial prejudice in the defense industry. As a survey conducted by the United Auto Workers in April 1943 found, only 74 out of 280 plants that employed women in production work were willing to hire black women.[20] Even in areas with a high concentration of black women such Detroit and Baltimore, where they constituted 17 to 19 percent of the female labor force, employment services continued to refer them to service jobs. Furthermore, many war plants

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[18] "N. Y. State Gaining Headway in Campaign on Job Jim Crowism," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 15 May 1943, 1, 4.

[19] While the openings available for women were mostly taken by whites, black men obtained work in a variety of jobs at all skill levels. As a result, the number of all blacks in manufacturing increased 135 percent between April 1940 and January 1946, but the number of black women in such work rose only 59 percent, indicating that black men, shielded by the male preference of the heavy industry, encountered less difficulty than black women. See Karen Tucker Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired: Black Women Workers during World War II," *Journal of American History* 69:1 (June 1982): 84.

[20] Ibid.

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rejected black women, or hired them only for the most arduous work with the lowest pay.[21] As of late 1942, defense plants in the Detroit area had only one hundred black female production employees out of a total female work force of ninety-six thousand.[22] By April 1943, the vast majority of automotive plants had yet to hire any black women even though they had come to accept an increasing number of white women and black men.[23]

Employers who had a hard time competing with war industries in recruiting workers also resisted hiring black women. As a result, major sources of employment opportunities for women such as the textile industry remained virtually closed to blacks during the war. In the retail and service sector, when employers did hire black women, they preferred to place them in clerical, stock-handling, packing, and wrapping work, as opposed to positions that involved public contact.[24] In addition to the prejudice of customers and employers, the conflict of class interest among women also compromised black women's access to higher paying war jobs. Concerned with losing a source of affordable domestic help provided by black women as maids, cooks, and nurses, local white housewives opposed the hiring of black women by industry.[25] As class disadvantage and sexual prejudice combined to exacerbate the racial discrimination faced by black women in the wartime labor market, their

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[21] Anderson, *Wartime Women*, 37.

[22] Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 239.

[23] Campbell, 113.

[24] Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired," 89, 97.

[25] Giddings, 237.

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occupational structure, if not reinforced by the war effort, showed little change. While the proportion of black women in domestic service declined from nearly 60 percent in 1940 to a little less than 44 percent in 1944, their share of those jobs increased at the same time from 47 to 60 percent due to the exodus of white women who were in a better position to pursue higher paying jobs in other fields. Black women also filled a disproportionate share of institutional service jobs, which employed 18 percent of black women in the job market in 1944. Despite some migration out of farm work and domestic service, which tripled the proportion of black women in industry to 18 percent during the war, low-paying service jobs continued to dominate their employment options. [26]

The Struggle for Equal Employment Opportunities

The barriers against the advancement of black women in the wartime job market underlined the effort of the black press to mobilize women for war work. More than an outlet of patriotism, the employment prospect fostered by the wartime manpower shortage presented an overdue opportunity for black women to escape from domestic work. Commenting on the significance of war work to the employment pattern of black women, the *Chicago Defender* noted in July 1942, "There is no reason why our girls should be doing domestic work, with long hours, and little pay when they can get a defense job and have their week-ends off, an eight hour day and a salary of not less than 40 cents an hour." While the mainstream press encouraged war work for women as an escape from domestic doldrums, the black press welcomed defense jobs for black women as an long awaited exit not so much

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[26] Jones, 234-8.

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from their own kitchen, but from "the white folks' kitchen."[27] The *New York Amsterdam News*, for example, reported in November 1942 that black women who were house workers before the war were receiving wages ranging from $23 to $43 for a forty-hour week in munitions plants. Some earned up to $64 a week in positions formerly held by white men only as leaders of the assembly line, powder and detonator carriers, or working on the night shift.[28]

In addition to personal gains, stories about war work in the black press also emphasized the significance of women's participation in the collective effort to upgrade the black labor force to a more skilled and higher paying level through the training and employment opportunities presented by the extraordinary circumstances of the war. Attacking the "artificial" labor shortage created by employers who refused to hire minorities, black newspapers exposed discriminatory practices in industrial centers all over the country and championed the struggle of black women to gain equal access to war employment. As the mainstream press was gearing up for the womanpower drive in the fall of 1943, the *New York Amsterdam News* noted early in the summer the irony that "while government spokesmen and officials of private industry are raving and ranting of a labor shortage, hundreds of experienced men and women are being brazenly discriminated against by employers."[29] When publicity for the campaign started in September 1943, the *Amsterdam*

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[27] "Washington's Offers More Defense Jobs," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 25 July 1942, 6; and "Newark Booms with War Work," *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, 21 November 1942, 13.

[28] "Newark Booms," *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, 21 November 1942, 13.

[29] "Manpower is Sabotaged," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 31 July 1943, 1, 12.

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News launched an investigation of the Ford Motor Company for importing white workers while turning away well-qualified black women, a practice that violated the WMC mandate for the use of local sources of labor to lessen overcrowding of war communities. The paper also accused the company for damaging the morale of black communities supporting the effort to recruit women for war work.[30]

The criticism of the black press revealed not only the hypocrisy of the government's haphazard approach to womanpower, but also the inadequacy of the government's nominal gesture toward equal opportunity to eliminate discrimination against black women. Continuing discrimination against blacks in the defense industry prompted civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph to organize the March on Washington Movement in January 1942. Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, called for 500,000 blacks to march in the nation's capital to demand equal employment opportunities.[31] In response to the threat of mass protest, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 in June 1942 to ban racial discrimination in companies holding defense contracts and established the Fair Employment Practices Committee to enforce the equal opportunity policy.[32] Drawing public

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[30] "FEPC Gets Dope on New Prejudice At Ford," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 11 September 1943, 7 (A).

[31] For the March on Washington Movement, see Lee Finkle, *Forum for Protest: The Black Press during World War II* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Press, 1975), 96-7; and John M. Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 185-8.

[32] Crippled by insufficient funding, congressional hostility, and legislative inefficacy, the FEPC had no effective means to enforce its recommendations. Even when the agency could prove discrimination, it had no power to force compliance except for making threats of defense contract withdrawal, which carried little weight given the imperative of maximum war production. Historian Karen Anderson thus noted, "Despite pressure from civil rights

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attention to frequent violations of FEPC mandates against discrimination, black newspapers exposed covert maneuvering by employers to uphold their preferential hiring pattern. For example, in an extensive report, the *Amsterdam News* documented how war plants in the New York area eliminated black applicants through rigid testing and arbitrary rejection despite the agitation of civil rights groups. One plant, in an desperate attempt to enlist women workers, placed recruitment ads in the daily newspaper but told all the black women who responded that there were no openings. Another rejected sixty-four out of the seventy applicants handpicked by the Brooklyn Urban League for war work.[33]

Backed by the executive order, the black press relied on the symbolic commitment of the government to equal opportunity to fortify the legal and moral grounds of its criticism of the industrial mobilization of women. Moreover, the black press was able to reinforce its rhetorical position by appropriating the patriotic appeal of official propaganda. The *Chicago Defender*, for example, accused employers who turned away black women seeking defense work of betraying the war effort of the United States and sabotaging the world struggle for peace.[34] Tapping into the personal spirit of patriotism in propaganda urging women to pitch

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groups and occasional threats of strikes by black male workers, the equal opportunity machinery of the government proved unable to aid minority women in any substantial way." Relying largely on publicity and persuasion to facilitate change, the FEPC was able to resolve only one-third of the eight thousand complaints it received. Although its official policy treated discrimination against men and women equally, in cases involving women, the agency had an even lower rate of success. See Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired," 93; Thomas, 52-3; and Winkler, *Home Front U. S. A.*, 62.

[33] "Manpower Is Sabotaged," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 31 July 1943, 12.

[34] "Defies U. S. in Refusal to Hire Negroes," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 August 1942, 5.

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in for their loved ones, the black press highlighted a sense of poignancy in the discrimination faced by black women. Just as white women, black women also hoped to help their husbands, sons, and sweethearts fighting for the country. "Why should our Negro women be given such a raw deal? . . . We ask you, is this Democracy? Is this what our Negro boys are fighting for?" asked a group of war workers in a letter to the *Chicago Defender* detailing the discriminatory practices against black women they witnessed in the American Steel Foundry in Chicago, where eight hundred white women were employed in various jobs, but only two black women were hired as janitors.[35]

In addition to intervening in the discrimination against black women in the defense build-up, the black press publicized their individual and group protests. In July 1942, when the FEPC started investigation of racial discrimination at several war plants at Union Stockyards, a direct confrontation between twenty black women and the Armour Company made front-page news in the *Chicago Defender*. The women had been frequenting the employment office of the company to seek work only to see white women hired on the spot while they received repeated rejections. Their futile job search continued for over five months until they staged a spontaneous sit-in. Their demand for an explanation of the preferential hiring was greeted with rough police tactics. Arrested for disorderly conduct as a result of the struggle, the women were hailed by the *Chicago Defender* for standing up against the "flagrant bias" of the war industry.[36] Also drawing wide attention in October

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[35] "Negro Women Refused Defense Jobs," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 16.

[36] "6 Girls Held in Protesting Discrimination," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 25 July 1942, 1, 2, 5.

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1942, the struggle of 19-year-old Corona Browner of Philadelphia to become the first black woman to secure a man's job in the Navy Yard in Portsmouth, Virginia, illustrated the interest of the black press in reinforcing the strong tradition of labor activism among black women in the war years. Highly recommended by the National Youth Administration, Browner reported for work as a trainee welder only to find herself assigned to janitorial duty by the shop master, apparently for the lack of separate restroom facilities and drinking fountains for black women. After a round of appeals to higher officials, Browner began welding for Uncle Sam, winning the praise of the press for fighting to open opportunities at the naval plant for other black women.[37] Clearly a departure from the cheerleading spirit prescribed by government propaganda for the media to promote war work for women, the image of black women as vanguards of the struggle for equal employment opportunity energized the Double V campaign of the black press.

Triumphs of Black Women in the Wartime Job Market

Most of the stories exposing hiring discrimination appeared in the sample of black newspapers in 1942 and early 1943. The timing reflected an improvement in employment for blacks during the later stages of the war as a result of the pressing demand for labor and the persistent campaigning of civil rights organizations. After 1943, the United States Employment Service stopped honoring race specific requests, and the National Labor Relations Board refused to certify unions that barred minorities. By April 1944, the number of blacks in the labor force had increased from 4.4 million in 1940 to 5.3 million. In the

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[37] "Girl Welder Fights for Work Rights," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 3 October 1942, 15.

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defense industry, the proportion of blacks rose from 3 percent in 1942 to 8 percent in 1945. The federal government also provided increasing opportunities as the number of blacks it employed rose from 60,000 to 200,000.[38] Citing record job placement rates, a USES official noted in January 1944, "Negro workers are finding greater acceptance in industry."[39] Not only did blacks find it less difficult to find employment, it was also easier to cross the traditional racial division of labor as an increasing variety of work available broadened their options in the job market.

Overcoming racial and sexual prejudices, black women improved their access to jobs formerly held only by men as well as those in traditionally female fields vacated by white women seeking higher wages in the defense industry. Department stores, for example, started hiring a large number of black women as wrappers, messengers, stock clerks, and elevator operators. However, many employers were still reluctant to use black women in retail and service positions that required direct contact with customers. Although these jobs did not command the social prestige and financial appeal of professional and industrial jobs in the wartime economy, the black press fought to have them opened to black women, marking the struggle as a significant indicator of the racial climate throughout the war years. In November 1942, the *New York Amsterdam News*, for example, urged picketing of Broadway theaters that refused to hire black women in the concessions stands.

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[38] Winkler, 63.

[39] "Job Placement Record Is Set," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 January 1944, 13.

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As the flight of white women from lower paying jobs slowly lowered the color barrier in retail and service industries, the black press chronicled the triumphs of black women in breaking into positions formerly restricted to whites only. When Macy's started hiring black women in sales jobs in November 1942, the *New York Amsterdam New*, following the theme of its Double V campaign, hailed the department store for making an effort to make democracy work at home. Two years later, the paper again touted the spirit of equal opportunity in the employment of black women as operators by the New York Telephone Company. Similarly, a front page story and a personal profile in the *Chicago Defender* celebrated the accomplishment of Finimore Bracey as the first black cashier to be employed by the Illinois Bell Telephone Company in April 1944.[40] Registering the improvement of employment opportunities for black women, the *New York Amsterdam News*, in a note of unbridled optimism, observed at the end of 1943 that women between 21 and 35 could qualify by age for almost any job they chose.[41]

The success of black women who were able to transcend sexual and racial barriers in the job market provided black newspapers with an inspirational angle to use in covering the war effort. A survey in 1943 showed that more than 80 percent of black newspaper readers wanted to see more achievement news emphasizing the positive role of blacks in the war

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[40] "Macy's Effort for Democracy," *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, 21 November 1942, 1, 4; "Telephone Company Accepts Operators," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 18 November 1944, 12 (A); "Phone Company Hires First Negro Girl in Loop Office," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 15 April 1944, 1; and "Bell Telephone Cashier," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 15 April 1944, 5.

[41] "Jobs-A-Plenty?" *New York Amsterdam News* (Brooklyn Section), 11 December 1943, 11 (B).

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effort.[42] The positive approach gained the appreciation of readers all over the country as it helped balance the focus of the black press on conflicts of racial interests in the national defense program. In January 1943, the *New York Amsterdam News* reported, for example, that more than 100 black women were promoted from unskilled positions to skilled production jobs on the assembly line at the ordnance plant in Jacksonville, Arkansas. The plant was one of the first few in the nation to hire black women as supervisors, inspectors, and line leaders as a result of their favorable work performance and the effort of the Urban League.[43]

The industrial mobilization of women advocated by civil rights groups and black newspapers underlined the importance of black women, who constituted 60 percent of the 1,000,000 blacks entering the job market during the war years, in the collective struggle for the economic advancement of blacks.[44] Summing up the racial significance attributed to women's wartime employment, a columnist for the *New York Amsterdam News* noted in 1942 that the consensus in the black community was that women who were pursuing economic security through marital prospects instead of the opportunities opening in various aspects of the national defense program were shirking their responsibility for racial improvement.[45]

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[42] Consuelo C. Young, "A Study of Reader Attitudes Toward the Negro Press," *Journalism Quarterly* 21:2 (June 1944): 148-52.

[43] "Women Given Assembly Jobs," *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, 16 January 1943, 11; and "Women Get Jobs in Louisville Plant," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 22 January 1944, 8 (A).

[44] Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired," 82.

[45] "And Ole Man, the Talk's About the Women," *New York Amsterdam Star- News*, 25 July 1942, 14.

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Driven by the agenda of the Double V campaign, the black press enthusiastically promoted war work for women in its effort to tap into the momentum of national mobilization to energize the struggle for full citizenship. The intersecting appeals to female patriotism and racial equality illuminated the social parameters of the womanpower concept obscured by the simplicity of the image of women seen in the daily press as patriotic soldiers of war production.

Challenges Facing Women in a Hostile Work Environment

In a stark contrast to the critical attitude of the black press, the daily press remained largely silent on hiring discrimination. Other labor issues of interest to women such as sexual and racial harassment in the workplace were also virtually excluded from daily news. Perceived as a threat to social order, the prospect of economic independence afforded to women by better employment opportunities triggered male antagonism. The presence of women in men's jobs, which was exaggerated by the media, challenged notions of masculinity that depended on the association of manhood with hard physical labor. Although factory women never suffered from the slander of promiscuity as military women did in the war years, they contended with workplace harassment such as whistling and ogling, which made them feel uncomfortable and intimidated in male territory. "The majority of these men believe sincerely that they do not want women to work because it should be a woman's privilege to stay at home and a man's privilege to support his family," a labor activist observed. Providing further insight on the conflict felt by men caught between women's changing economic function and traditional gender roles, she said, "In reality, they are afraid on the

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one hand that women will replace them at their own jobs, and on the other that their male superiority will be diminished if women get the habit of earning their own money."[46]

In addition to overt hostility, the male insecurity underlying the introduction of women into fields dominated by men also led to intensifying scrutiny of female sexuality. Instead of changing the attitude of men through education and discipline, industry and unions were concerned with workplace fraternization and patrolled the appearance and behavior of women at work through dress codes and rules on female indecency. The media, however, undermined the efforts of employers who imposed the burden of self censorship on women presumably to keep them from distracting men at work. The media encouraged the display of female sexuality to assure the public that women, with the help of a flattering lip color or nail polish, could still be beautiful and glamorous in overalls. The prevailing image of working women as sexual objects in advertising and service features in the press implied that the masculine work they were taking up would not result in fundamental changes in their sexual orientation. The emphasis on the femininity of women in male jobs challenged the assumption that feminine characteristics were incompatible with hard physical labor. Largely in disregard of the sexual politics of the workplace, the press failed to engage the public in a dialogue to improve the work relationship between men and women.

Compared to the daily press, the black press was more sensitive to the needs of working women as it offered readers information on how to adjust to the demands of paid employment. For black women, the pressure to conform to the gender norms of a white-dominated workplace further underlined their tenuous position in the work force. To secure

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[46] Hawes, "Do Women Workers Get an Even Break?" 42.

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their gains in the wartime labor market, the black press supported the "Hold Your Job" campaigns of women's organizations aimed to encourage black women to gear their work performance toward the expectations of employers.[47] The National Council of Negro Women, for example, sought to facilitate the integration and retention of black women in production jobs by establishing a public image of black women as efficient, respectable, and reliable workers. Promoted in the widely read society page, workshops and publications of the NCNW served to socialize black women to gender ideas based on white middle-class codes of appearance, behavior, and attitude.[48] In addition to the internalized pressure of assimilation, the racial prejudice of white co-workers compounded the challenges faced by black women in the workplace. Segregation of plant facilities in particular became a focal point of racial tension among working women. The objection of white women to sharing rest rooms, locker rooms, and cafeteria compromised opportunities for black women in war industries.[49] As a result of white intolerance, strikes against the introduction of minorities

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[47] "Group Cooperating with the 'Hold Your Job,' Committee," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 31 July 1943, 9.

[48] In her evaluation of the war effort of the National Council of Negro Women, Karen Anderson faulted the organization for focusing its resources on changing the behaviors of disadvantaged employees rather than the policies of prejudiced employers, arguing that the accommodationist strategy failed to address the reality faced by the majority of black women in the wartime labor market. See Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired," 94-95.

[49] Historians have noted that the racial prejudice of white men was based mainly on the fear of loss of economic advantages but that of white women was driven more by the fear of personal contacts. In her study of the defense industry in World War II, Karen Anderson noted that white women, afraid that black women were infected with venereal diseases, refused to share work space and facilities. The fear of white women underlined the racial incarnation of the virgin versus whore dichotomy as a particularly divisive dimension of racism among women. Similarly, D'Ann Campbell documented how a walkout staged by twenty-two white women at Point Breeze Works in Baltimore to demand separate facilities

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shut down war plants across the country including the Packard bomber engine plant in Detroit and the Western Electric Company plant in Baltimore.[50]

The black press was critical of workplace segregation, which not only betrayed the democratic ideal trumpeted in mobilization propaganda, but also added to the disillusion of blacks in the war effort. Highlighting the mistreatment of black women, news coverage of racial conflicts at work further fueled the indignation that rallied both men and women in boycotts of plant facilities. For example, in July 1944, prompted by the segregation of a hitherto integrated cafeteria system, 1,500 blacks walked out on their jobs at the Pratt and Whitney airplane engine plant in Kansas City, Missouri. In the report of the strike, the *Chicago Defender* charged that the security guards escalated a peaceful demonstration into a violent incident when they broke into the separate restrooms for black women and drove them out of the plant with night sticks.[51] Drawing a sharp contrast between the vulnerability of black women and the brutality of white male authorities, news of labor and management confrontations in the black press tapped into the collective racial consciousness by invoking the humiliation of minority men in a social order that stripped them the power enjoyed by white men as protectors of women. Although framed in racial terms that obscured gender

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from black co-workers resulted in a strike in December 1943. The plant, owned by Western Electric Company, was shut down for seven days until the U. S. Army moved in to take control of the facilities. Most of the white workers remained on strike until the company installed segregated locker rooms and restrooms in March 1944. See Anderson, *Wartime Women*, 37; and Campbell, 128-9.

[50] Campbell, 128-9.

[51] "1,500 Hit Cafe Jim Crow in Plant Strike," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 8 July 1944, 4.

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issues, the more extensive coverage of labor discontent in the black press featured women as legitimate members of the work force. In contrast, the daily press, deferred to the assumption of government propaganda that women serve as temporary substitutes for men in the wartime labor market and largely ignored the hiring and wage discriminations against women. Prejudice against black women in the workplace was a particularly taboo subject in the daily newspaper. In its approach to the issues raised by women working outside the home, the daily press focused instead on the integrity of traditional family life, which reinforced the assumption that the primary rights of women were those connected with fulfilling their domestic responsibility in caring for their families, as opposed to maximizing their marketplace effort to achieve financial security and independence.

Double Shifts between Work and Home

The national mobilization not only accelerated the migration of women into the job market, but also changed the composition of the female labor force. The typical working woman was no longer a young, single woman passing time in a job before marriage. As the strong demand for labor stretched the age limit for women seeking work, older women, especially those with previous working experience, gained wider access to employment. Before the war, a forty-year-old woman would find herself shut out of the labor market by the age bias of employers. During the war, women over sixty were graduating from welding classes with a "new lease on life," reported the *New York Times* in October 1943.[52] "Grandmothers' Clubs are a commonplace," said the OWI, noting the phenomenon of an

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[52] "Life Starts Anew for Many Over 65," *New York Times*, 1 October 1943, 16.

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increasing number of older women obtaining work in the war industry.[53] Age discrimination lessened considerably during the defense build-up, and by the end of the war half of the women in the work force were over thirty-five.[54] The prevalent prejudice against married women in the Depression era also abated. For the first time in American history, married working women, who constituted more than 70 percent of the total increase in female employment during the war, outnumbered single working women.

The influx of an unprecedented large number of older, married women into the labor market brought public attention to the challenges working women had always struggled with privately in balancing the needs of their families and the demands of paid employment. In fact, exacerbated by wartime restrictions that increased women's work load at home, the conflicting roles of women in the consumer household and the market economy underscored the difficulty in recruiting women for war work. Surveys conducted by the OWI both before and after the womanpower campaign in September 1943 showed that almost 80 percent of the respondents between the age of 21 and 39 cited household responsibility as the main reason why they were unwilling to take war jobs despite a higher awareness of the need for their contribution to war production. Of those who were willing to take war jobs, more than 40 percent said that they refrained from paid employment because they were needed at home.[55] Trivializing the concern that many women voiced about their home responsibility,

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[53] "Older Women Workers," *Fortnightly Budget*, 10 July 1943, 3, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records; and Office of War Information, "Womanpower Report," 9.

[54] Winkler, 50.

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the OWI observed in chagrin, "The fact that millions of women now engaged in war work are meeting with success in running their own households is evidence that other women not now in the labor force do not face insurmountable tasks."[56]

Women's reservations about gainful employment nonetheless revealed the extent to which the sexual division of household labor resisted change. Women's increasing involvement in market labor did not challenge the assumption that they continued to assume the primary responsibility in homemaking and child care. Those who entered the job market faced the double shifts of paid employment and household management. The difficulty in juggling work and home responsibilities led to high female absenteeism and turnover rates, which undermined their careers and posed a serious threat to national productivity in the war effort. A 1944 survey of more than five hundred families in Elmira, New York, showed that 20 percent of the working mothers stopped working because of problems with child care. Overall, the WMC found that in May 1944, of every 97 women hired, 66 left their jobs to take better care of their families.[57] The government recognized the importance of easing the dual burden on working women in order to achieve the maximum utilization of womanpower, but it made little organized effort other than using propaganda to encourage industry and

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[55] Office of War Information, Survey Division, Bureau of Special Services, Special memorandum no. 93, "Willingness of Women to Take War Jobs," 22 November 1943, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[56] Office of War Information, Fact sheet no. 247, 12 June 1944, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[57] "High Quit Rate Among Women Blamed on Child-care Lack," *Fortnightly Budget*, 13 May 1944, Entry 194, Box 1036, OWI Records.

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community support for services such as takeout foods, shopping assistance, and expanded store hours.[58]

None of these alternative arrangements designed to help women accommodate both work and home responsibilities held the spotlight of public attention as much as the issue of child care service. Despite a general bias in the womanpower program toward maintaining women's domestic function rather than expanding their economic options, the government realized that the full mobilization of women required assistance in child care to facilitate their participation in paid employment. Under the Lanham Act, the federal government made the largest commitment to a public system of child care service for the first time in the nation's history.[59] Over the course of the war, the government spent approximately $52 million on 3,102 centers serving 600,000 children.[60] In a sharp contrast to the hostility toward working mothers in the earlier decade, the imperative of war production compelled brief but dramatic changes to the extent that propaganda encouraged even mothers of young children to use day care. The OWI noted in the summer of 1943 that as labor shortages grew throughout the country, it was inevitable that mothers of small children would have to be recruited.[61]

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[58] Office of War Information, "Womanpower Report," 15-6.

[59] The Lanham Act was passed in early 1942 to give emergency relief to communities hit hard by the stress of war production. Originally, it made no specific provisions for child care services. Funding for nurseries was later included in the community services allowed under the law as officials realized the importance of child care access to the recruitment of women for war work. For wartime child care, see Anderson, 122-146.

[60] Anderson, 146.

[61] "Editor Note," *Fortnightly Budget*, 10 July 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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Regardless, many of them were reluctant to take war jobs because of the lack of proper child care arrangements.

Operating in tandem with the womanpower drive, the child care program of the OWI aimed to raise public awareness of the "importance of providing adequate care of children at all age levels in order to insure their safety and to make it possible for mothers to hold war jobs."[62] Program manager Natalie Davison coordinated promotional material with the publications of the women's unit to bring media attention to the lack of child care access for working women as a threat not only to the welfare of children, but also to the interest of the nation in achieving maximum war production. For example, in a cartoon appearing on the cover of the *Fortnightly Budget* on July 10, 1943, a woman, apparently at the end of her wits, brought her two small children to work at a munitions plant. Caught hiding them in bomb shells waiting to be assembled under a poster warning "Absenteeism Aids Adolf," she remarked in frustration, "It's either that, or time off until a day nursery is organized." Two weeks later, another cover drawing underlined the dilemma between motherhood and war work faced by many working women coping with the lack of child care. Wrestling with domestic mayhem as she juggled between feeding a baby and answering the phone, a woman dressed in overalls yelled at her crying baby, "Here! YOU tell the foreman why I didn't show up today."[63]

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[62] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Program schedule, 20 June 1944, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[63] Gregory D'Alessio, *Fortnightly Budget*, 10 July 1943, and Ted Key, *Fortnightly Budget*, 24 July 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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Despite the support of government propaganda and funding under the Lanham Act, women did not gain adequate access as day care centers served only 10 percent of working mothers nationwide. Caught in the discrepancy of supply and demand in the local labor market, women who would like to work did not always enjoy the benefit of federal assistance unless they lived in communities that had been declared by the WMC as labor shortage areas. For example, at the height of the womanpower campaign in the fall of 1943, more than one thousand wives of servicemen in New York who needed extra income could not work because funds were not available to establish nurseries in the city to provide care for their children.[64] Even in areas where public facilities were available, many women were held back by difficulties in transportation and objections of fathers, in addition to other social and economic concerns.

Struggling with insufficient funding, many day care centers operated in less than desirable conditions. In addition to doubts about the quality of group care, middle-class women were deterred by the social stigma associated with the traditional image of nurseries as welfare organizations while working-class mothers were discouraged by the high cost. As a result, underutilization was common in child care centers across the country. In response, the OWI sought media support to advocate the use of child care services by working women. A story in the *Fortnightly Budget* in July 1943 offered a positive portrayal of public care to acquaint women's editors with the daily operation of child care centers. The accompanying photo essay showed children of all ages enjoying stories, games, and hobbies under the supervision of trained professionals. In addition to providing recreation, the story maintained

[64] "Lanham Act Limits Child Care Here," *New York Times*, 11 December 1943, 12.

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that through group interactions, the centers instilled a sense of social responsibility in even very young children. Emphasizing the advantage of public care over private supervision in an attempt to dismiss the misgivings felt by many mothers, the OWI asserted that "actually most wartime child care programs give the youngsters far better care than the majority of them receive at home, no matter what their financial status."[65]

The OWI's effort to promote the use of child care service received only nominal support in the mainstream press. Coverage of new local nurseries funded through the Lanham Act affirmed the right of working women to adequate community support in arranging alternative care for their children, but nonetheless emphasized the establishment of public facilities as a temporary measure of wartime contingency.[66] Written from the viewpoint of children's welfare, most news reports dismissed the use of day care services as ultimately an inferior substitute for home care. The typical sentiment as captured in the *New York Times* was that "a mother at work is a real loss to a youngster."[67] Despite the effort of the government to relieve mothers for war work, the mainstream press remained largely critical toward the employment of those with child care responsibilities, reinforcing the top priority of motherhood for women. In a report criticizing the government for pressuring

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[65] "Children Given Best of Care in Organized Nursery School," *Fortnightly Budget*, 10 July 1943, 2-4, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[66] See for example, "More Funds Given For Child Care," *New York Times*, 1 October 1943, 16; "Mothers in Jobs Aided," *New York Times*, 11 December 1943, 13; and "Day Nurseries to Aid Mothers in War Plants," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 March 1943, Part 3, 1 (S).

[67] "Alert Today. . . . Alive Tomorrow!" *New York Times*, 30 October 1942, 12; and "Schools and Mothers Are Urged to Unite to Check Rise in Juvenile Delinquency," *New York Times*, 19 November 1942, 27.

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women to leave home to work, the *New York Times* warned that when mothers left their young children to go into industry, "the very foundations of her family, the very foundation of her children's security, the things her husband is fighting for are destroyed."[68]

Offering a more positive response to public facilities, the black press welcomed federal sponsorship as an added resource to address changing needs of black communities due to the demands of the war effort and the market economy. As the employment of black women in defense industries increased, Lanham funds provided their families with much needed day care services. By mid-1943, government grants had helped to establish 300 child care centers for 14,627 black children between the ages of two and fourteen.[69] However, racial prejudice limited the access of blacks to a large number of facilities that accepted white children only.[70] To provide adequate care to black children, the black press advocated community effort in addition to government support. Raising funds for the expansion of a local nursery to meet the growing needs in Harlem as a result of an increasing number of mothers in war work, the *New York Amsterdam News* touted the center as "a strictly local institution conceived, nurtured and almost entirely supported by colored New Yorkers" in a typical appeal to the community spirit of self-reliance.[71]

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[68] "More Protection for Mothers Urged," *New York Times*, 20 February 1943, 16.

[69] "41 War Nurseries for Negroes Are Approved," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 19 June 1943, 3.

[70] Jones, 254-5.

[71] "Hope Day Nursery Appeals for Funds," *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, 3 October 1942, 24; "Open New Office for War Children's Care," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 11 September 1942, 8 (A); "Plan Child Care to Aid Mothers," *Chicago*

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Despite the OWI promotion, most working women preferred makeshift arrangements with relatives or friends to outside care. For example, in September 1943, the combined registration in seven of the twelve centers receiving Lanham funds in New Jersey was 230, but actual attendance was down to only 187.[72] Nationwide, 2,312 child care units partly supported by Lanham Act funds were in operation by February 1944, providing care to 67,999 children mostly in labor shortage areas. At the time when the government launched the second recruitment campaign in the spring of 1944, few of the applications for Lanham grants were for new facilities, indicating little initiative in expanding existing child care services.[73] In Danville, Virginia, for example, although the textile industry needed three thousand more women in addition to the six thousand it already employed, no day care assistance was available. As the war went on, the lack of child care facilities remained one of the major difficulties for the recruitment and retention of women in the labor market. The daily press, however, remained ambivalent as it sent out mixed signals of support and disapproval. Rather than informing readers of the options available through industry and community support, newspapers either accused women of being slackers who idled at home when the country needed them for war work or blamed them for being negligent mothers who sacrificed the welfare of her children for lucrative defense jobs.

Defender (City Edition), 31 July 1943, 6; and "Irene McCoy Gaines to Address Nursery Group," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 15 April 1944, 3.

[72] "Child-care Centers Shunned in Jersey," *New York Times*, 1 October 1943, 16.

[73] Office of War Information, "Womanpower Report," 16-17.

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The Backlash against Working Women

As the war effort was promising women a greater possibility for improving their economic status, a backlash against precisely those who responded to the need of the wartime society for female labor emerged in the daily press. Increasing social dislocation due to the stress of war prompted opinion leaders to blame working women for unsettling changes. Military and government officials devoted to increasing national productivity, activists and pundits concerned with maintaining family values, and editors and reporters preoccupied with dissecting the latest social trends all pointed to working women as the cause for a host of social problems ranging from the rise in juvenile delinquency to the epidemic of venereal disease. As early as mid-1943 when the number of women entering the work force started to peak, so did public awareness of the disruption of traditional family life perceived in the new wave of youth problems being chronicled in the press. In Chicago, the *Tribune* reported that delinquency among boys increased 14 percent in 1943, and among girls, 20 percent.[74] In New York, the *Times* too monitored the rise of youth crime, reporting in October 1944 that in the first nine months of the year, there were 5,172 cases of delinquent children, compared to a total of 4,906 in 1943, and 3,611 in 1942.[75]

"The wartime problem of juvenile delinquency has shocked the entire country," the OWI observed in the spring of 1944, pleading for more media coverage on the subject.[76]

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[74] Irene Steyskal, "Parent's Place in Delinquency Battle Is Told," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 December 1943, 17.

[75] "Family Problems Increasing in City," *New York Times*, 11 April 1944, 22; and "Delinquency Still Rising," *New York Times*, 7 October 1944, 16.

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When the press did report on juvenile delinquency, it only distracted the public's attention from the issue of providing working women with adequate access to community services as sensational crime statistics, shocking personal testimonies, alarming editorials and advice columns offered little in solution but plenty of caution for the lack of parental guidance and discipline as the major cause of increasing social problems with youth. Most of the reports assumed that working mothers, unlike fathers, had the option to stay home and found fault with women for giving in to the temptation of consumerism as they shirked their maternal responsibility in the pursuit of additional income. The extra money often proved to be a "curse" rather than a "blessing," said the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, cautioning women who were tempted by high wages to think twice before leaving their teenage children at home to head out for work.[77]

In front-page stories and special features analyzing "the growth of this social cancer," the black press also showed great concern with the apparent increase of delinquency among black youth, trying at the same time to avoid reinforcing negative racial stereotypes.[78] In a series of articles on juvenile delinquency in Chicago's South Side, the *Defender* acknowledged in January 1943 that youth crime was higher in the black community, but it carefully contended that the problem reflected not on the race but on difficulties such as unemployment, bad housing, and lack of recreational facilities that affected black

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[76] Howard Hazel, Letter to women's editors, 25 March 1944, Entry 194, Box 1036, OWI Records.

[77] Steyskal, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 December 1943, 17.

[78] "Kids Rebellious About 'Ghettoes,' " *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 8 July 1944, 1(A), 10 (B); and "Does Your Boy Need to Work?" *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 8 July 1944, 3 (A).

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neighborhoods more than white communities. In another report, the paper later asserted that, despite the common belief, delinquency in black youth had not increased in proportion to the rise among other groups.[79] Also attempting to steer clear of the quagmire of racist assumptions, the *New York Amsterdam News* blamed the inadequacy of the white bureaucracy and the black leadership in improving the living conditions in Harlem as well as the breakdown of parental responsibility for the growing youth problem. In general, the black press noted that the increase in the number of women working outside the home contributed to the rise in youth crime, but it attributed the problem mostly to institutional factors such as the inferior living conditions in black neighborhoods due to wartime congestion and the unequal distribution of government resources in addressing the needs of war communities.

The more balanced coverage seen in the black press revealed the extent to which the daily press turned working mothers into a popular scapegoat for youth problems. Both types of newspapers considered the absence of mothers who were distracted from home by work as particularly detrimental to the proper upbringing of girls and young women in a world of fast changes. "Primping, painting, polishing, parading and philandering are the biggest things that our little girls are doing now," said the *Chicago Defender*, warning of a moral bankruptcy of the race if parents continued to ignore the care and protection of their daughters.[80] News

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[79] "Corner Gangs And Crime Films Feed Delinquency," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 9 January 1943, 1, 3; "How to Stop Youth Crime in War Told by Burgess," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 16 January 1943, 1, 2; and "Citizens Seek Police Aid in Curbing Evil," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 11 December 1943, 1, 2.

[80] "Appeals to Parents to Save Their Girls," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 August 1942, 20.

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reports on juvenile offenders generally focused on the rebellious autonomy of young women who left school and home to pursue lucrative jobs in war communities and the sexual liberty of those who sought romantic relations around military camps as evidence of the collapse of the traditional social structure. The emphasis on female morality in press accounts echoed the sentiment of government reports, which lent a feminine overtone to the public's perception of juvenile delinquency. An evaluation of youth problems by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in February 1943 spotlighted the rise in female delinquency. Reporting that arrests of girls under twenty-one rose 56 percent in 1942 over 1941, with a 65 percent increase in prostitution and 105 percent in other offenses such as drunkenness and disorderly conduct, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover called the attention of the nation to "an alarming breakdown" in the moral standards of juveniles, especially among girls.[81]

Government officials regarded the increase in sex offenses among adolescent girls not only as a symptom of the deterioration of the moral fiber of American society, but also as a threat to the nation's civilian productivity and military strength under the specter of an epidemic of venereal diseases. In 1943, 868,000 cases of syphilis and gonorrhea were reported, surpassing the combined total of other threats to public health such as malaria, meningitis, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and typhoid by more than 353,000 cases. Citing a report showing that up to February 1943, young women represented 95 percent of the patients admitted to the venereal disease Rapid Treatment Centers operated under the direction of the United States Public Heath Service, the OWI attributed the epidemic to girls

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[81] "Juvenile Crime Increases in Year," *New York Times*, 20 February 1943, 16.

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who disregarded social decorum to pursue casual and dangerous sexual relations.[82] "They think that the boys are here today but may be dead tomorrow and they reason: 'We'll give them all they want,' " the *New York Times* concurred, analyzing the reckless sexual abandon apparently embraced by many young women in wartime.[83] Those who congregated around military camps to seek the company of men in uniform gained notoriety in the press as the "Victory Girls." According to the OWI, it was the casual pick-up of young women who were not professional prostitutes that constituted the leading source of socially transmitted diseases among soldiers. To curb the growing sexual liaison between the patriotic cheerleaders and their soldier heroes, some war communities adopted curfew laws to ban unaccompanied women or those "under suspicious escort" from the streets at night. In Chicago, for example, a police ban prohibiting women from sitting at bars went into effect in August 1942.[84]

Marked by the profound influence of Jim Crow, the wartime expansion of anti-vice efforts often outraged the black press as thinly veiled smear campaigns against black neighborhoods being publicized in the daily press. In July 1942, for example, naval authorities banned white sailors training at the University of Chicago from the South Side,

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[82] "15 to 19-Year Age Group Second among VD Patients," *Fortnightly Budget*, 4 March 1944, 2, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[83] John Costello argued that the war experience speeded up the trend of sexual liberation of women in American society. For the sexual impact of World War II, see John Costello, *Virtue Under Fire: How World War II Changed Our Social and Sexual Attitudes* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985).

[84] "Roving Police Checks 'Pick-Ups' in Pittsburgh," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 15 May 1943, 24; and "And Now Women Must Drink at Tables," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 August 1942, 4.

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where most of the city's black population congregated. The ostensible purpose of the order, in the words of the commander in charge, was to "protect Negro womanhood." Accusing the authorities for conniving to confine black sailors to areas barred to whites, the *Chicago Defender* denounced the unusual segregation order for perpetuating the myth of black female promiscuity to reinforce racial and sexual divisions.[85] In August, the *New York Daily News* publicized a similar order issued by military officials who declared Harlem off limits for whites because they were concerned with the high number of servicemen contracting venereal diseases in New York. In response to the allegation, the *New York Amsterdam News* called the publicity branding the area as the city's red light district as an insult against every black woman and galvanized club women to picket the white paper's Harvest Moon ball at the famed Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. In May 1943, prompted by the closing of the controversial night club on vice charges, the *New York Amsterdam News* again condemned the attempt by military officials to patrol the sexual behaviors of soldiers for targeting the black community as "a heaven of prostitutes and hoodlums" in the name of the war effort.[86]

Marking the concerted effort of the wartime society to fight the spread of venereal disease, the OWI launched a nationwide program in March 1944 to raise public awareness of its detrimental effect on the civilian and the fighting fronts. The publicity intensified the

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[85] "Protest Navy Ban on White Sailors," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 25 July 1942, 1, 2, 3; "City Fathers Blast Jim Crow Order of Navy Aide," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 25 July 1942, 3; and "Navy Ban Taken to Chief Allman," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 August 1942, 4.

[86] "Picketing Daily News Ball," *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, 22 August 1942, 5; "Scotching a Smear Campaign," *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, 22 August 1942, 6; and "Indignation Grows Over Savoy Case," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition) 15 May 1943, 1, 3.

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scrutiny of female sexuality in the reform effort as it emphasized the role of women in shaping sexual practices. For the welfare of the wartime society, as an editorial writer in the *Fortnightly Budget* urged, mothers must assume the responsibility in providing proper sex education and moral guidance to their daughters.[87] Joining forces with government propaganda, news reports further highlighted the social consequences of female promiscuity such as unwanted babies, dislocated families, strained medical and welfare resources, all as a result of the lack of maternal supervision when women left home for work.[88] The backlash against working women in the press reflected profound prejudice that lingered through the mobilization effort despite the nation's need for women's participation in the labor market.

Conclusion

The war effort accelerated changes in the employment status of American women. The government's appeal for women to help with war and civilian productions created a more open job market as seven million women entered the work force during the war. The rapid increase in the number of women working outside the home, however, brought little change in public opinions on women's place in the labor market. Under the influence of

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[87] "War-working Girls Need Mothers' Help," *Fortnightly Budget*, 8 January 1944, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[88] "Girl Scouts Plan 500,000 Increase," *New York Times*, 19 November 1942, 28; "Women in War Work," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 September 1942, 21; "20,000 to Join Have-a-Heart Drive Monday," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 9 September 1943, 25; "Schools and Mothers Are Urged to Check Rise in Juvenile Delinquency," *New York Times*, 19 November 1942, 27; "A Residence Club for Girls Sought," *New York Times*, 6 July 1944, 18; "New Order Slated for Boro S.P.C.C. Juvenile Shelter," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 25 March 1944, 1 (B); and "Program to Aid Teenage Girls," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 25 March 1944, 7 (A).

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official policies and propaganda on womanpower, the daily press approached working women as substitute workers whose temporary function in the wartime economy was nonetheless oriented toward their primary role in the family. The daily newspapers' lack of interest in labor issues affecting women was particularly conspicuous in comparison to the coverage provided by black newspapers. While the daily press largely ignored the rights of women to equal employment opportunities, the black press encouraged the labor activism of women as a vital aspect of the Double V struggle. The integration of black women in the labor force was an important cause for black newspapers to take up as they sought to mobilize the support of blacks for the war effort without sacrificing the demand for racial equality. The portrayal of black women as vanguards in the protest against racial discrimination in the wartime labor market energized the civil rights agenda of the black press by framing their work experience in the broader terms of the war's ideological commitment to equality, freedom, and democracy.

As the black press showed working women confronting challenges such unfair wages, lack of access to training, denials of promotions, and white hostility at work, the daily press raised issues about the conflict between their work and home priorities. In the beginning of the war, editorial emphasis on the importance of adequate child care access indicated public support for women war workers. However, the public dialogue led to little community effort to alleviate the double burden of homemaking and employment for women. The expansion in the female work force failed to challenge the distribution of household labor as it was expected that working women continued to be the primary caretakers in their families with no assistance from their husbands or employers. As the war went on, negative publicity on the

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social impact of women leaving home to work gradually eroded the positive association of womanpower with patriotism that recruitment propaganda had forged earlier. The image of American women working as an essential force in achieving Allied war aims began to retreat from the public consciousness when the press projected the disruption of traditional family life and the threat of juvenile delinquency on working mothers. The backlash foreshadowed the retraction of social approval and institutional support for women to work outside the home as the war drew to an end.

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PART III CONCLUSION

THE DEMOBILIZATION OF THE FEMALE WORK FORCE

The campaign of the Office of War Information in the fall of 1943 succeeded in forging a consensus among the government, the industry, and the media that the use of womanpower, despite its conflict with social convention, provided the most viable solution to the manpower shortage in the war of production. In response to the necessity of mobilizing American women for the arsenal of democracy, the daily press encouraged them to assume unfamiliar roles outside the domestic domain to fulfill their civic responsibility. Special features, newly designed columns, classified and display ads, recruitment drives, and war worker contests saluted the working woman as the paragon of civilian dedication to military priorities. As a champion for racial equality, the black press, in addition to making the patriotic appeal, urged black women to seize wartime employment opportunities to contribute to the economic advancement of the race.

The brief coalition of public opinion that supported work outside the home as a vital aspect of women's war contribution failed to sustain the reconstitution of the labor force on a long-term basis. As the war continued in 1943, the tide turned in the favor of the Allies as their counteroffensive campaigns overwhelmed Axis power in the Pacific, the Atlantic, and Europe. In July, Anglo-American forces successfully invaded Italy. By September, with the Italian surrender, the Allies had gained complete control of the Mediterranean and secured an invaluable offensive position toward Central Europe. On the eastern front, Russian armies

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were poised for a winter drive toward Ukraine and Romania by October. In the Battle of the Atlantic, the Anglo-American alliance reduced U-boat sinkings by more than 60 percent from March to May and eventually destroyed a total of 237 German submarines in 1943. By November, Allied forces had also penetrated the Japanese defense line in South and Central Pacific.[1] The overseas military success in 1943 boosted the confidence of Americans in a final victory for the Allies. Toward the end of 1943, the daily press began to show a waning interest in the mobilization of American women as the focus of news switched from recruitment to reconversion.[2] For married women who were wooed into war employment by the government and industry, the *New York Times* said in an article in December 1943 that "the best place for them when the war is over is at home, looking after their families." Older women without as much home responsibility were advised to leave work to enjoy their leisure. Citing the withdrawal of women from the labor market after the First World War as an example, the *Times* echoed the opinion of many observers who predicted a smooth reconversion of the war economy without the problem of absorbing the seven million women recruits in industry for they would once again willingly return home.[3]

By the spring of 1944 when the OWI was marshaling media resources for the second womanpower campaign, concerns with reconversion were beginning to erode the legitimacy

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[1] William A. Link and Arthur S. Link, *American Epoch: A History of the United States since 1900*. Vol. 1, *War, Reform, and Society, 1900-1945* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 412-20.

[2] See, for example, "Dynamic Force Needed," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 December 1943, 21; "City Workers Get Farms for Use in Future," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 23 January 1944, Part 2, 5; "200 Billions Asked for Post-War Jobs," *New York Times*, 20 March 1944, 10; and "Nelson Calls in 8 on Reconversion," *New York Times*, 11 April 1944, 11.

[3] "Women Wage Earners," *New York Times*, 11 December 1943, 14.

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of paid employment for women. An OWI analysis of editorial opinions in March indicated that the mainstream press no longer regarded womanpower as a intrinsic aspect of the war effort.[4] Of the 912 editorials published between February 13 and March 20, 158 addressed the problem of manpower and the draft, but only 34 discussed the issue of womanpower. To the dismay of the OWI, the few editorials that dealt specifically with women's role in the war were in general "unfriendly" toward women's participation either in the industry or the military. Three out four used words or phrases indicating "a veiled or unconscious antagonism" toward the activity of women in war work. Typically, women were said to have "invaded" male-dominated fields, or "replaced" men in industry.[5]

The shift in media reaction to government propaganda revealed the contradictory perspectives on the issue of womanpower, which nonetheless underscored a common hostility toward working women. As the OWI noted, when the interest of the press was

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[4] The survey covered 369 daily newspapers and 90 rural weeklies. Office of War Information, Bureau of Special Services, Division of Research, Analysis of editorial opinion no. 41, 24 March 1944, Entry 90, Box 587, Record Group 208, National Archives, College Park, Md., hereafter cited as OWI Records.

[5] Only nursing and farm work continued to receive positive treatment in the news. Nursing enjoyed not only the support of social convention as a field particularly suited for women, but also the aggressive campaigning of the U. S. Cadet Nurse Corps. The seasonal and low-paying work associated more with the female labor force underscored public approval of farming as a significant part of women's war effort. In addition, the tremendous support of food advertisers, who figured prominently in newspaper advertising, fed into editorial promotion of women working in the fields of food production, processing, and distribution throughout the war. For example, the Grocery Manufacturers of America mobilized its members to tie their advertising with the 1943 campaign for the U. S. Crop Corps to help the government recruit 3,500,000 women to work on farms and in the food industry. See for example, "Canning Industry in Big Ad Drive," "Ad Gets Workers," *Editor & Publisher*, 20 March 1943, 34, 36; and "Food Advertisers to Back Manpower Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 3 April 1943, 10.

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focused on the winning of the war, news coverage often condemned women for not doing their part in the final push for victory; when the attention was switched to the postwar outlook, news coverage tended to express the fear that women would like their economic independence too much to be willing to give up their jobs for returning veterans. Significantly, four times as many editorials voiced concerns with the future implication of women's paid employment rather than the ongoing task of involving them in war production. Of those that emphasized the need for women in industry, all expressed at the same time a fear that women would want to keep their jobs at the end of the war. "Women laborers complicate the postwar employment problem," said a newspaper in West Virginia. The *Milwaukee Journal* commented, "What will become of American homes and thus American home family lives if great numbers of women no longer propose to sustain them?" Summing up the response of the press to the womanpower campaign, Clyde W. Hart, chief of the OWI's Division of Research, noted that "on the whole, the discussions of women in the war effort show considerable ill will, based perhaps on fear of the economic and domestic after-consequences."[6]

In contrast to the negative publicity found in the mainstream press that undermined the government's womanpower campaign, the black press demonstrated whole-hearted support for the employment of women. As suggested by published letters to editors, news coverage of war work for women illuminated a close tie between the black press and its readership. Women as well as men approached their newspapers as a forum to bring

[6] Clyde W. Hart, "Editorials on Womanpower," Memorandum to James Brackett and Clifford Sutter, 30 March 1944, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

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community attention to personal indignation as well as a vehicle to seek redress of employment discrimination. In addition to exposing discriminatory practices in the defense industry, the newspapers responded as advocates on behalf of their readers to bring political and legal pressure to bear on employers. The intervention of the black press represented an important resource for black women in negotiating the bureaucracy of the federal equal employment machinery, which placed the burden of proof on the plaintiff because it relied on well-documented complaints rather than employment patterns for grounds of investigation. Serving not only the interest of its readership but also a news agenda geared toward racial equality, the black press reinforced its protest tradition in advocating equal employment opportunity for black women throughout the war.

Frustrated by the focus in the daily press on the postwar ramifications of women's employment, the OWI concluded in the spring of 1944 that "there is at present no great public pressure to lead women to work for patriotic reasons." Hoping that the coming drive toward victory in Europe would once again spark press interest in the outcome of the war to intensify the social pressure on women to seek war work, the OWI advised that recruitment effort in 1944 be directed toward women themselves as much as the public at large.[7] The pace of the war dashed the hope of the OWI to rekindle media interest in encouraging women to work. By mid-1944, as a large number of men were being discharged from the armed services, the first stage of demobilization began in the press with the readjustment of 16 million veterans dominating the news forum as the major issue facing the home front.[8] As

[7] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Undated memorandum, "The Problem of Womanpower," Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

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in the manpower crisis earlier, the mainstream press again called upon American women to make personal sacrifices for the common good of society. The mobilization appeal, which suggested that it was women's patriotic responsibility to take up the jobs men left behind, segued into the demobilization argument, which insisted that it was women's social obligation to surrender those positions to the men who fought to protect them.

Women's interest groups criticized the prescription for women's role in the postwar economy as a misconception of their experience with war work. The Women's Bureau reported a strong interest of women in postwar employment according to its survey of those working in the Detroit area in May 1945, which indicated that three out of four intended to keep their jobs. Contrary to the assumption of manpower officials in the recruitment stage, three-fifths of the housewives who took jobs during the war planned to continue working. A vast majority of 85 percent of the women who wanted to work were compelled by the economic necessity to support themselves and often other family members as well. Overall, more Detroit women wanted jobs after the war than were employed in 1940.[9] The national pattern also reflected a high level of interest among women in continuing their outside employment. Out of approximately 18,000,000 women employed in June 1944, the WMC

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[8] In a report on the status of the female work force in the transition from war to peace, William Haber, assistant executive director of the War Manpower Commission, projected the four phases of demobilization in June 1944 starting from the discharge of servicemen in mid-1944 and continuing through the collapse of Germany, the defeat of Japan, and the "replenishment stage" when production would again be oriented toward civilian demands. "What About Women in Post-war Industry?" *The Women's Page*, 24 June 1944, 3, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[9] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Shopping News column no. 1, 23 May 1945, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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estimated that only 1,500,000 would leave their jobs voluntarily. Although other employment planners predicted twice as many voluntary withdrawals, it was clear that most working women intended to stay in the job market after the war.[10] Commenting on the pressure women faced in the back-to-the-home movement, the Women's Advisory Committee of the WMC warned, "No society can boast of democratic ideals if it utilizes its womanpower in a crisis and neglects it in peace."[11]

Despite the interest of women in paid employment, the government made little effort to direct the media to promote the retention of women in the postwar labor force.[12] Without the intervention of the OWI's propaganda effort, the daily press began to withdraw its earlier vote of confidence in the capability of women to perform industrial work traditionally done by men. In October, both the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and the *New York Times* reported that women were not as well balanced as men and suffered more falls than men in war plants. Although overall, women had fewer accidents in the workplace, the apparent message was that industrial work was not compatible with natural, feminine characteristics.[13] Not only

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[10] "What about Women in Postwar Industry?" *The Women's Page*, 24 June 1944.

[11] "Women Workers Seen As Problem," *New York Times*, 26 December 1943, 31 (L).

[12] Maureen Honey's investigation of the magazine industry also showed a lack of government direction on how to portray postwar American society in the reconversion period. Operating without clear guidelines from the OWI, magazine editors and writers continued to rely on the ideological framework established in the recruitment effort, advising working women to return home once their service was no longer needed. See Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 55-56.

[13] "Women Suffer More By Falls in Plants," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 October 1943, and *New York Times*, 7 October 1943, 16. The frequency of accidents among both industrial and officer workers was 6.79 per 1,000,000 hours for men and 1.92 for women. A study of

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was the competence of working women in doubt again as before the war, the record of their performance was also sabotaged in the press by criticisms of their lack of reliability, bad attitude at work, and excessive absenteeism. Replacing the more positive image of working women in the recruitment period, the negative portrayal indicated a receding level of social tolerance as the media and the public started to perceive women as a liability to the American labor force in the reconversion period.

One of the first signs of the approaching end of the war appeared in early October 1944 as the electric iron, one of the first household appliances to go off the market after Pearl Harbor, reappeared for sale in department stores. Anticipation for the arrival of other long-awaited consumer goods such as radios, automobiles, refrigerators, washing machines, and vacuum cleaners further registered the change of perspective on the home front.[14] Fully preoccupied by the challenge of reconverting the home front army of production soldiers by late 1944, the press channeled the energy of public debate away from continuing the war effort toward projecting a postwar outlook that emphasized the responsibility of women in restoring the prewar sexual division of labor both in the family and in the labor market by surrendering their jobs to the men coming back from the war. Following the premise that mass employment of women was a war measure enacted only for the duration in the absence of a large number of men, the media promotion of women's retreat from the labor market urged them to return to the domestic sphere where they could reap the benefit of their war

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fourteen air depots in the country in the first half of 1944 showed that women had 68 percent fewer accidents than men.

[14] "New Electric Irons Reappear in Stores," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 October 1944, 19; and "OPA Objective: To Hold Prices Near '42 Level," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 October 1944, 19.

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contribution in the postwar haven of consumer society. Reversing the recruitment appeal that work outside the home offered relief from domestic doldrums, writers and advertisers in the reconversion period encouraged women to seek escape from unpleasant wage work in the joy of full-time homemaking enhanced by the delayed fulfillment of consumer desire.

However, the promise of domestic bliss enabled by material abundance in the postwar society did not address black women who, under more pressure historically to seek financial support through outside employment rather than marriage, often aspired to the freedom to take care of their families as full-time housewives, but found their options limited to working in the kitchens of white women.[15] Predicated on white, middle-class gender roles, the popular decree in the daily press that women's place in the postwar world was in the home held little appeal to the black press. As civil rights groups changed the focus of their agenda from job placement to retention in 1944, the black press emphasized the right of women to continue their participation in the labor market in order to achieve full and permanent integration of blacks into the work force. "Women do not intend to be dumped out of their jobs when the war folds up," the *New York Amsterdam News* proclaimed in December 1943. Echoing the plea of the Women's Advisory Committee for the full employment of women in the postwar economy, the paper argued that postwar job security was as important to women as to men.[16]

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[15] For how race influenced definitions of women's liberation, see Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 81-82.

[16] "Women Plan to Hold Jobs After the War," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 11 December 1943, 8 (A); and "Authority Says Women Will Work After the War," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 22 January 1944, 9 (A).

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In the face of the tremendous push of public opinion to lead women back to the home, a women's advocate warned in the spring of 1944 that "a 'hard road' lies ahead for women who want jobs after the war unless a unified effort to preserve gains already won is made."[17] Women's unions observed that despite the skills and techniques women acquired during the war, they would be relegated back to low-paid, low-skilled jobs. "I don't think that women ought to be pushed around that way," said an union representative.[18] Employers, however, resumed their prewar preference for male workers to absorb millions of men returning from military services. Bolstered by the assumption of the modern consumer household with man as the breadwinner, the legal and moral claims of veterans to privileges in the postwar society as the reward for their war effort justified the preferential hiring of men in the process of reconversion. Facilitated by the WMC's priority referral plan, the mechanism set up to restore their economic advantage began undermining the gains women made in the wartime job market. Highlighting the vulnerability of working women in an economy driven by defense needs, a survey of 208 employers in the manufacturing sector in Washington indicated that they expected a disproportionate number of women to be affected by cutbacks with only 3,244 of the 28,493 women workers retaining the positions they held in July 1944.[19]

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[17] "Presses Women's Gains," *New York Times*, 11 April 1944, 22.

[18] "Women Workers Seen As Problem," *New York Times*, 26 December 1943, 31 (L).

[19] For the impact of reconversion on working women, see Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 64-172.

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The inclination of employers to downsize their female staff was confirmed by field representatives of the Bureau of Labor of Statistics who found that contract cancellations and other production adjustments resulted in more displacement of working women, especially in areas where they represented the majority of surplus labor. A survey in late 1944 showed that, even after adjusting for seniority, cutbacks in war industries affected a disproportionate number of women. For example, in ordnance, women accounted for about 25 percent of the total employment, but more than 60 percent of the layoffs. Representing more than 40 percent of those employed in the aircraft industry, women fared better in the field, but still accounted for 60 percent of those laid off.[20] It was particularly difficult for the industrial heroine widely celebrated earlier in the media as a symbol of patriotism to retain her niche in the job market during the heavy purging of women from traditionally male-dominated fields. In the summer of 1945, 75 percent of women in shipbuilding were laid off, and their share of jobs in the Detroit auto industry fell from 25 to 7.5 percent.[21] Overall, the proportion of women employed in higher paying jobs in durable goods manufacturing dropped from 45 percent at the end of 1943 to 25 percent after the war.[22] The WMC found that in all communities affected by cutbacks in defense contracts, men were the first to find new jobs whereas women continued to be unemployed.[23]

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[20] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release, 17 April 1944, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[21] Allan Winkler, *Home Front U. S. A.: America during World War II* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: H. Davidson, 1986), 56.

[22] Carla Schloss and Ella Polinsky, "Postwar Labor Turn-Over among Women Factory Workers," *Monthly Labor Review* 64 (March 1947): 413.

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Reluctant to accept pay reductions in jobs available to women, many chose to stay home to obtain much needed rest or to complete long delayed domestic tasks after losing their war jobs. For example, half of the 400 or so women who were laid off between June 1943 and April 1944 from an ordnance plant in Meadville, Pennsylvania, returned home. In addition to dissatisfaction with their re-employment prospects, tension between work and home responsibilities also contributed the early retreat of women from the job market. The financial reward that initially attracted housewives to paid employment turned out to be somewhat disappointing as the additional costs of going out to work deflated the rise in the income of their families. Moreover, the OWI found that some women workers, in reaction to prevalent concerns with the rise in juvenile delinquency, were shifting their priority from work to home in making their employment decisions.[24] Indicating a heavy toll of the double shifts on women, a lower percentage of women than men responded to the call back to war work even when industrial positions of comparable wage level became available again. Local reports collected by the WMC from across the country showed that such opportunities for re-employment were rarely afforded to black women, who found it difficult to obtain other industrial positions after being laid off from war production.

The government welcomed the return of working women to the home to the extent that their "evaporation" from the job market accommodated the priority of placing discharged servicemen in labor-surplus areas during the final stage of the war. On the other

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[23] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release, "Womanpower Report," 14 April 1944, 10, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[24] Office of War Information, "The Problem of Womanpower."

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hand, the government found it disconcerting that the reserve pool of womanpower needed to maintain war production in labor-shortage areas was being drained by the premature withdrawal of women from the labor force.[25] "If the present exodus from war plants continues, it is going to interfere seriously with the possibility of an early end of the war. . . . We must produce until the last shot is fired," director of the Office of War Mobilization James F. Byrnes warned in August 1944.[26] Concerned that workers were leaving war jobs early to seek positions with more postwar security, the OWI offered the press a rosy forecast of the postwar climate with continuing employment opportunities for women in an attempt to rally them to maintain the level of production for the final push for victory. Citing WMC officials, the OWI told women's page editors that "women will retain much of their new-found place in industries after the war, unless mass unemployment, creating economic fears that heighten prejudice against women on the job, occurs." The *Women's Page* reported in June 1944 that according to a survey of the Women's Bureau, employers would continue to welcome the participation of women in industries. The U. S. Chamber of Commerce predicted that "women will be able to keep almost every gain they have made in industry--in numbers employed, in better types of jobs, in higher wages."[27] Intended to boost morale among women war workers more than to safeguard their economic advancement, the optimistic outlook in OWI material, in contrast to news reports that emphasized their

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[25] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release, 23 August 1944, Entry 194, Suit box 1, OWI Records.

[26] "The War Still Needs the Women," *The Women's Page*, 19 August 1944, 3, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[27] "What about Women in Postwar Industry?" *The Women's Page*, 24 June 1944.

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obligation to help restore the prewar social and economic order, belied the harsh reality faced by women in the postwar labor market.

Cutbacks in the defense industry, preferential treatment of veterans, lack of seniority and job continuity, and discrimination by unions, employers, and government agencies made it difficult for women to retain their wartime gains. Black women suffered even more loss in the labor market due to the persistence of discrimination and their late entry into production work. Overall, the proportion of women gainfully employed decreased from 36 percent at the height of mobilization to 29 percent in August 1946.[28] Despite the factory experience they accumulated during the war, many returned to low-paying positions in traditionally female fields. Although more women were employed after the war than in 1940, most of them found jobs in clerical work, sales, and service industries, while the number of women in the professions and high-paying skilled positions in manufacturing decreased. Across the country, women took pay cuts up to half of what they were making in war jobs to stay employed.[29] Older women and minority women encountered more difficulty in their search for new employment. The expansion of the clerical sector benefited young and attractive women preferred by employers for office positions. The resumption of prewar discriminatory patterns further curtailed opportunities for black women after the war when they no longer enjoyed the advantage of a greater demand for labor and the legal protection provided by wartime manpower policies. The U. S. Employment Service, for example, directed white

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[28] Rebecca S. Greene, "The United States: Women in World War II," *Trends in History* 2 (1981): 74.

[29] D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 150.

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women to clerical jobs and low-paying unskilled positions in manufacturing, but referred black women to work in domestic and institutional service. As more white women were reabsorbed into the work force by an expanding pink-collar ghetto in the postwar job market, the proportion of women who were employed rose slightly from 25 to 29 percent during the war decade, while that for black women remained steady at about 37 percent.[30]

The exodus of women from the industrial sector as well as the return of minority women to the service field marked the shift back to a more rigid pattern of sexual and racial segregation in the labor market despite a brief surge of womanpower. The process of mobilization underscored the military significance of women's market labor in wartime society, but failed to challenge the superiority attributed to work typically performed by men. A message from Mrs. Roosevelt to American women in November 1942 illuminated the value assumption underlying the labor recruitment of women throughout the war. Pleading for more sacrifices on the home front to shorten the war, the First Lady urged women to take up paid employment to relieve more manpower for the armed services and war industries.[31] Reinforcing the premium placed on the role of men in the war effort, news coverage shared with government propaganda the prevailing assumption that women formed a cadre of

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[30] "Employment Status of the Population 14 Years Old and Over, by Race and Sex: 1940," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 67th ed. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 172; "Employment Status of the Population, by Sex and Color, by Region: 1950," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 75th ed. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1954), 197; and Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 262.

[31] "More Sacrifices Needed, Asserts Mrs. Roosevelt," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 November 1942, 24.

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support workers to enable men to perform duties considered more essential to the final victory. In the battle for war production, even at the peak of national mobilization, women held only 4 percent of the skilled positions in American industry.[32] The overwhelming majority of women congregated in female-dominated fields or in job categories created not only to accommodate them in male-dominated industries, but also to rationalize a lower pay scale for women's work.

Designed to increase the appeal of low-paying jobs with patriotic glamor, media publicity saluting the working woman as a paragon of civic virtue nonetheless underlined the lack of social and political commitment to the upgrading of the female work force in the wartime economy. Tethered to the supportive role traditionally expected of women in their relationship to men, those who responded to the patriotic appeal to enter the labor market benefited individually from a higher degree of economic independence and an increased sense of pride in defying gender stereotypes. However, the wartime changes in the pattern of female employment failed to bridge the gap between the significance associated with the work of men and women. The apparent success of women in adapting to what was considered men's work did not lead to a reassessment of the arbitrary nature of sextyping in the labor market as the work they were asked to perform was redefined to uphold traditional ideas of gender roles. Encouraging women to "help out" with the war effort, the daily news reiterated women's marginal status compared to that of men. By representing the army of working women that made record production possible as frontier housewives, the womanpower drive in the media not only trivialized the war contribution of women, but also

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[32] Campbell, 116.

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reinforced the prevalent gender assumption that women war workers were inspired by their role as dutiful mates to the warring heroes to step out of the bounds of domesticity temporarily.

Although the framework of mobilization rhetoric served to contain the radical implications of women's participation in war production, the cross-over of a minority of women into traditionally male fields exacerbated fear of irreversible changes in the American way of life defined in part by familiar gender norms. Illustrating the defensive attitude of those who longed for a sense of peacetime normalcy rooted in clearly marked gender differences, a columnist lamented, "I pity the soldiers who'll come marching home some day hoping to find things as they left them. It'll be a rude awakening to run into clusters of chicks in slacks, wearing low heel shoes, Joe Louis bobs and long key chains, talking in many cases, in mezzo baritone voice about the best cigars to buy for a nickel and about the stretch they put into their postman's route."[33] The caricature of working women as a bizarre hybrid of grotesque gender attributes reflected an undertow of intolerance that quickly turned Rosie the Riveter from a popular icon of patriotism to be emulated by American women into an insidious threat to economic and social stability.

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[33] "Back Door Stuff," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 3 October 1942, 16.

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CONCLUSION

THE INTERFACE OF NEWS AND PROPAGANDA IN THE MOBILIZATION OF AMERICAN WOMEN IN WORLD WAR II

The wartime production of news for and about women reflected the tension between continuity and change that marked the war's impact on American women. The nation's war effort created unprecedented opportunities for women in the public sphere. Their increasing presence in industries, professions, and civil and military services challenged the operating assumption in the newsroom that women read newspapers as housewives with little interest outside the private sphere. The viability of traditional service features became particularly questionable at a time when women seemed to be marching en masse out of the kitchen to the war plant. A managing editor who decided to revamp his women's page in late 1942 explained, "I feel today's newspaper needs more complete reporting of women's activities in the worthwhile endeavors."[1]

In response to the broadening horizon for women, some newspapers sought to update their society and women's news with new features addressing women's surging career interests. The *Atlanta Journal*, for example, printed human interest stories of personal experience submitted by women war workers, and in November 1943, started running a weekly column named "Women Wanted" in its society page to emphasize the variety and

[1] "What Do Women Read?" *Editor & Publisher*, 10 October 1942, 16.

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importance of new jobs open to women.[2] Similar columns aimed to inform readers of opportunities of war employment such as "It's a Women's War Too" in the *New York Times*, "Women in War Work" in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and "American Women at War" in the *San Francisco Chronicle* appeared in the wartime press. The increasing visibility of working women in the press seemed to herald revolutionary changes in the way daily newspapers had traditionally conceptualized their women's pages.

The momentum toward change, however, was dominated by the impetus to cater to what most newspapers perceived as the interest of the majority of their readership. Despite the phenomenal increase in the number of women in the work force, two out of three American women remained full-time homemakers in the war years. To pressure housewives to seek war work, the government disseminated recruitment propaganda through the media, but only one out of four married women took up paid employment. The perspective of the average woman, who was more likely to continue a traditional lifestyle as a wife and mother, remained the primary concern of the more conservative newspaper editors and managers who sought the attention of the greatest number of readers. In defense of the value of traditional features, a circulation manager of a newspaper in California argued that "if a newspaper desires strong home-delivered circulation, it must be edited with the housewife type of women in mind. That means good local news coverage, good social news, club news, home economics, fashions, patterns and lots of pictures."[3]

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[2] "Women's Feature," *Editor & Publisher*, 6 November 1943, 8.

[3] "What Do Women Read?" *Editor & Publisher*.

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Indeed, as most industry experts observed, the appeal of domesticity increased in the war years. The potential disruption of gender norms and family relations posed precisely by the new opportunities for women contributed to a higher level of cultural emphasis on their role in the domestic sphere. Historian D'Ann Campbell reported that three out of four young women in 1943 preferred being a housewife than a career woman.[4] To draw the attention of these future homemakers, newspapers were less inclined to experiment with new approaches to women's pages than to follow the established formula. "In spite of all the high sounding phrases about the newspaper's vital role in the war effort, she probably turns first to the women's pages to read sorority and club news," a newspaper noted in its pitch to advertisers. "Fashion notes, hints on beauty, serial stories and the comics generally follow in the order named. . . . No report on the Russian Drive in the Dnieper Bend, no Pegler blast at unions, will ever be half as interesting to a high school miss as a feature article on new colors in nail polish."[5]

In addition to such stereotypical perception of women as newspaper readers that continued to pervade the newsroom culture, the rising influence of advertising on the direction of women's pages also favored the more traditional format focusing on the domestic concerns of women. As better paying jobs for the husband and sometimes the wife as well boosted the purchasing power of the American household in the war years,

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[4] D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 225.

[5] "Ever Watch a Teen-age Girl Read A Paper," *Editor & Publisher*, 29 January 1944, 36.

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advertisers increasingly sought gender-specific media to target women who held the purse strings of the family.[6] To take advantage of the expanding source of revenue, newspapers strove to boost the value of women's pages as a medium for advertisers by expanding their service features.[7] The *Minneapolis Star-Journal and Tribune*, for example, designed a booklet highlighting features of the newspaper with special appeal to women to court the advertising support of local merchants.[8] Touting the large female readership commanded by its women's page, the *Chicago Tribune* promised prospective advertisers that "you will sell more to them when your advertising runs in the medium which has the attention and confidence of more women."[9] The *New York Times* boasted a women's section that "fits invariably into any advertising schedule addressed to women."[10] The traditional definition of women's news, which revolved around the wife and mother identity shared by the largest cross section of women, provided the most reliable way for a newspaper to deliver the constant mass of female readership demanded by advertisers. Concerned with demographics

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[6] Frank Fehlman, "Drug Stores Can Double Their Cosmetic Sales," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 December 1942, 14; "More Cosmetic Ads Seen Needed Now," *Editor & Publisher*, 29 April 1944, 76; and "Do You Sell A Million Dollars' Worth a Day to Women?" *Editor & Publisher*, 10 June 1944, 1.

[7] As the institutional ads placed by various newspapers in trade journals showed, the women's page continued its financial function in newspaper economy as a major draw for advertising in the war years. See for example, "Hips Hips Away," *Editor & Publisher*, 1 May 1943, 1; "When It's Important to Know," *Editor & Publisher*, 13 May 1943, 17; and "Before a Newspaper Can Sell," *Editor & Publisher*, 29 April 1944, 1.

[8] T. S. Irvin, "In Ribbons," *Editor & Publisher*, 15 May 1943, 30.

[9] "Do Women Look Bigger to You Today?" *Editor & Publisher*, 27 May 1944, 1.

[10] "It's No Secret. . . ," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 June 1944, 8.

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as well as advertising revenues, the newspaper industry continued to define the readership of women's pages in terms of the homemaker stereotype, which limited the news interest of women in the domestic sphere despite increasing employment opportunities for women in the wartime economy.

Profile of News on Women's War Effort

As the country mobilized for war, the traditional focus of women's news on the pursuit of private well-being clashed with the emphasis on public interest. With the imperative to conserve for the purpose of national defense, it seemed hardly appropriate, if not suspiciously treasonous, for the women's page to continue its central mission of advising readers on how to achieve domestic bliss by manipulating the resources that a consumer society had to offer. Even minor editorial transgressions risked harsh criticism. Right before food rationing went into effect in the spring of 1943, the *San Francisco Chronicle* printed a recipe "for use in case you've hoarded some olive oil." An offended reader wrote in response, "To many people who feel that the war is a serious business and hoarding a dangerous practice, this article or recipe was distinctly in bad taste and certainly out of place in the *Chronicle*, of all papers."[11]

Newspapers circumvented the editorial dilemma of maintaining the domestic tenor of women's news while acknowledging the challenges of national mobilization by publicizing the significance of women's war contribution through their role in the private sphere of family life. The war angle helped the industry increase the appeal of the women's section by

[11] "Recipes," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 5 March 1943, 14.

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addressing the concerns of the wartime housewife. "She needs constant information guidance on civilian defense and war welfare activities, on how to save and make things last longer, on the many ways she can help with conservation and salvage," *Editor & Publisher* explained. "The help she gets from both the news and the advertising columns is something she literally can't do without."[12] As an editorial strategy to update the women's page, the redefinition of housework as war work for women allowed newspapers to respond to the imperative of home front mobilization while retaining the focus on the domestic interest of their readers.

Table 1. Comparison of the Number of Stories on Various Types of Women's War Activities in Selected White and Black Newspapers

	White	Black
Housework	113 (31%)	46 (11%)
Paid Employment	49 (14%)	64 (15%)
Military Service	99 (28%)	85 (20%)
Volunteer Work	95 (27%)	232 (54%)
Total	356	427

In the white newspapers surveyed for the study, one-third of the 356 stories on women's war activities featured their participation in civilian defense through homemaking tasks. Highlighted by more press attention than women's involvement with the war through military service, paid work, and volunteer work, housework represented the most prominent

[12] "Where Do People Get Most of Their Information?" *Editor & Publisher*, 6 May 1944, 17.

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aspect of women's war effort traced in the analysis of daily news. Three-quarters of these stories on women's war effort at home appeared in the women's section, which reflected the sexual segregation of news practiced by most daily newspapers. The placement of stories illuminated a common editorial judgment echoing the principle of sexual division of labor underlying the organization of war work. The emphasis on women's significance in national defense based on their household responsibilities validated the assumption of what constituted suitable work for women in wartime society and reiterated the belief in proper gender roles in the process of total mobilization.

Figure 2. Percentage of Stories on Women's War Effort through Housework and Paid Employment in General Interest Section Versus Women's / Society Section in Selected White and Black Newspapers

Coverage of women's war effort in the black newspapers examined in the study diverged significantly from the thematic focus on domesticity that characterized the approach of the white newspapers. In contrast to the editorial attention it received in the white press, women's role as homemakers in the war effort claimed the least coverage in the black press, with slightly more than one-tenth of the 427 stories addressing homemaking issues. These

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stories also received more diffused attention in the black newspapers with half of them placed in the society page intended more for a female readership and the rest in the news section. The layout suggested that stories on women's war work in the home, rather than congregating in a segregated section for women as in the white press, were more often presented as news of general interest in the black press. The operation of the Office of War Information, which was organized by mutually exclusive principles of sexual and racial segregation, contributed to the difference in layout between the white and black newspapers in their reports on wartime household management. The OWI routinely channeled official information on war activities to be carried out in the household to the white press through the connection between its women's unit and women's departments of daily newspapers. The OWI material reached the black press, however, in general news releases marked with a gratuitous and condescending declaration: "This also applies to Negroes."[13]

In addition to the layout, the stories in the black press minimized the gender association of news on wartime homemaking through a more universal form of address, often referring to readers as "consumers," "shoppers," and "families," rather than "housewives." The relatively more gender neutral approach indicated that the black press was not as driven as the white press by the formal constraints of traditional women's pages and the influence of gender specific advertising. Moreover, the content analysis suggested that during the war, the focus on domesticity intensified in the white press as the percentage of stories related to women's war work in the home showed a steady increase from an average of 25 percent of

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[13] Charley Cherokee, "National Grapevine," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 21 November 1942, 17.

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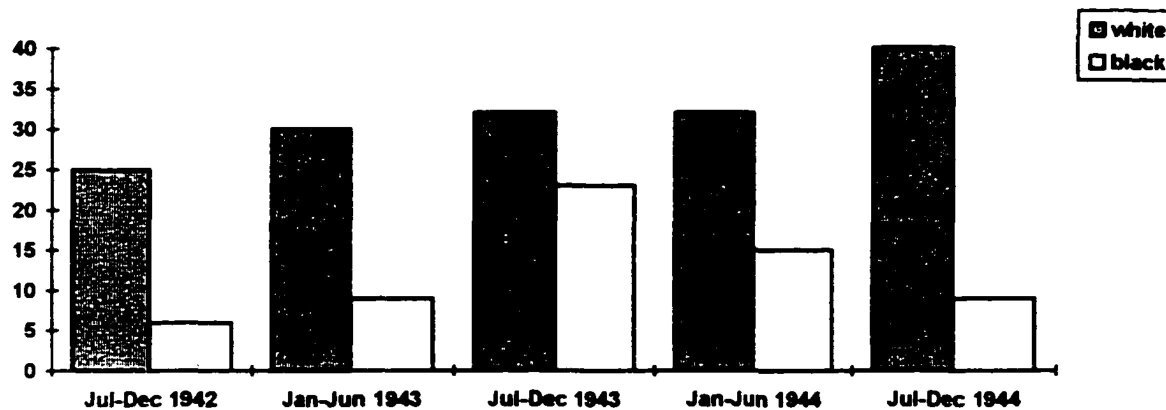
all stories on women's war effort in the second half of 1942 to 40 percent two years later. In contrast to the steady expansion in the white press, the percentage of the same type of stories in the black press peaked at 23 percent at the height of mobilization in the second half of 1943, and then leveled off to 9 percent a year later.

Figure 3. Changes in the Percentage of Stories on Women's War Activities at Home from July 1942 to December 1944 in Selected White and Black Newspapers



Compared to women's war effort in the home, the community, and the military, their participation in the labor market received the least coverage in the white press, accounting for 14 percent of the total number of stories on women and the war. A comparable proportion of stories in the black press featured women in wartime employment. Accounting for 15 percent of all the stories related to women's war effort in the black newspapers, the subject of war work for women claimed slightly more editorial attention than their household responsibilities, but less than volunteer work and military service. Three-quarters of the stories on war work for women in the white newspapers appeared in their women's pages, vying for limited editorial space with service features such as proper recipes and shopping

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tips for wartime. The layout revealed the pervasive influence of the sexual segregation of news in the white press as all stories about women, including those on their participation in the public domain, were customarily relegated to the forum of private interest established in women's pages. In contrast, three-quarters of the same type of stories appeared in the regular news section of the black newspapers, reflecting a more integrated approach to the issue of female employment as part of the impact of mobilization on the economic status of blacks in general.

The process of national mobilization underscored the need for women's labor in achieving war production goals. No longer just a housewife to be wooed by advertisers, the woman of the war years was also a potential recruit in the battle of war production to be courted by manpower officials and employers. Acknowledging the increasing significance of womanpower in the war effort, newspapers expanded their coverage of women's news to address employment issues of interest to an increasing number of women who chose to combine the double duty of family and career. The growing attention on wartime employment for women, however, failed to translate into substantial changes in the way the white press defined women's reading interests. Although the women's section provided an important forum for the labor recruitment of women, it was nonetheless dominated by the traditional format of service journalism aimed to convert women not so much to the value of employment but to the pleasure of consumption.

To capitalize on women's new-found independence afforded by the wages of war work, a newspaper advertising expert advised editors to slant their features for working women to appeal to their feminine concerns. For example, stories devoted to the special

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needs of war workers such as the correct make-up to wear under the artificial illumination of war plants and the use of hand lotions to maintain soft hands were suggested as magnets for reader attention as well as advertising revenue from retailers eager to increase cosmetics sales. A resourceful women's editor thus urged the war worker to dress up after sundown: "Don't wear uniform after hours--wear something frilly--devote an hour to nails, hair, face and arms--and don't forget perfume."[14] It was in the interest of advertisers to convince the increasing number of women who felt free for the first time to wear sports clothes, work clothes, and uniforms all day that they should not let war work get in the way of keeping up their feminine charm. The editorial emphasis on traditional topics such as beauty and fashion was thus all the more important to newspapers that were sensitive to the needs of advertisers.

The interest of advertisers in reaching the majority of women, who remained full-time homemakers in the war years, further inhibited the reconceptualization of readership in the women's page. The emphasis in the white press on the war effort of women at home was reinforced by the generous support of advertisers who directed their war campaigns at the American woman more as a housewife than as Rosie the Riveter. Although at the height of the drive for womanpower in the fall of 1943, seventy of the most prominent national advertisers devoted their resources to campaigns urging women to join the wartime work force,[15] throughout the war years, advertisers who supported the government's war programs

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[14] Frank E. Fehlman, "Dress Shop Feature In 'After Sundown Apparel,' " *Editor & Publisher*, 5 December 1942, 12; and Frank E. Fehlman, "Drug Stores Can Double Their Cosmetic Sales," *Editor & Publisher*, 12 December 1942, 14.

[15] The War Advertising Council claimed that advertising promotion helped recruit five million women for war work in the 1943 campaign. War Advertising Council, "Put Your

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were not as enthusiastic about encouraging women to carry out their share of the war effort outside the boundaries of family life as within them. A survey of 1,250 advertisers who used war themes in the first five months of 1943 showed that programs related to women in their role as homemakers such Victory Gardens, the nutrition and rationing programs, household conservation, and salvage effort were featured in a total of 1,038 national advertising campaigns, while the recruitment of war workers was promoted in only 195 ads.[16]

Newspaper advertising reflected the low priority of the subject of womanpower in war advertising across all outlets of mass media. A study covering the period from August 1943 through February 1944 ranked war industry recruitment below twelve other campaigns promoted in war advertising in all daily and Sunday newspapers.[17] During the three months from August to October in 1943, war work recruitment did receive more support when the OWI and the War Advertising Council geared up for intense publicity to promote the September drive for womanpower. The survey showed recruitment themes nudging ahead of salvage campaigns to the seventh place in the ranking but still trailing behind food programs.[18] Since the various surveys of war advertising never distinguished between male

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Advertising to Work for More 'Women at War,' " (Washington D.C.: War Advertising Council, 1944).

[16] "Ad Cooperators," *Editor & Publisher*, 31 July 1943, 10. Other industry surveys also confirmed the low interest of advertisers in the womanpower program. For instance, in 1943, war advertisers spent four times more on food and conservation than on manpower, which presumably included the womanpower issue since no separate figures were reported on the recruitment of women. See "Council Reveals Sum Spent on 1943 War Ads," *Editor & Publisher*, 25 March 1944, 32.

[17] "War Effort Ads at $2,436,567 in February," *Editor & Publisher*, 27 May 1944, 16; and "War Ads in Dailies Running at $65,000,000," *Editor & Publisher*, 1 April 1944, 56.

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and female recruitment, the subject of womanpower received presumably even less support from advertisers.

The lack of advertising interest in womanpower offered daily newspapers little financial incentive to divert their limited editorial resources from the more profitable war campaigns featuring homemaking themes. In contrast, the mobilization of women to contribute to the war effort in their capacity as housewives allowed the newspaper industry to adapt to war conditions by cooperating with the propaganda effort of the government to win its good will and at the same time boost its asset as an effective medium to advertisers eager to win over the American housewife. As *Editor & Publisher* boasted to potential advertisers, "*Women's sharply increased reliance on the newspaper means increased opportunity for advertisers who concentrate their efforts in newspapers. It means greater effectiveness for the advertiser with a war message for the home today and greater sales results when the products of peace return to market tomorrow* [emphasis included]."[19]

In the black press, the low priority of the subject of paid employment on the news agenda regarding women's war effort reflected not so much the influence of advertisers as in the white press, but the racial bias of the womanpower program. The OWI's effort to increase female employment focused on middle-class white women, excluding black women as potential war workers. Although more accustomed to paid employment than white women, black women were not considered part of the labor pool until shortages of white women and black men became severe enough to change hiring preferences. Occasional

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[18] "16 Million in War Effort Ads in Three Months," *Editor & Publisher*, 1 January 1944, 32.

[19] "Where Do People Get Most of Their Information?" *Editor & Publisher*.

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references to black women in the material distributed by the OWI to the media encouraged them to take jobs vacated by white women seeking better employment opportunities. As historian Jacqueline Jones noted, "Black women thus were supposed to form a behind-the-scenes cadre of support workers for gainfully employed white wives."[20] Rarely addressed to black women, recruitment propaganda was largely irrelevant to the black press as a source of news and inconsequential as a draw for additional revenues from war advertisers.

In addition to the lack of advertising and the racial bias in the labor recruitment of women, the localized nature of labor shortages compromised media attention. After a press conference held by the Manpower Commission on the womanpower campaign in the fall of 1943, the press publicized the immediate need for women workers although there were only 166 labor shortage areas in the country where the urgent appeal was appropriate. Realizing ten days later that the news coverage could lead to competition of women with men for jobs in markets where they were still available, the Women's Desk sent out a clarification, reminding the press that "no pressure should be put on women to go to work in the loose labor areas."[21] These contradictory appeals added to press confusion about the womanpower program. The timing of the propaganda effort of the government also limited press promotion of the womanpower campaigns. Launched in September 1943 at the height of the nation's war effort, the first campaign featured magazines as the flagship medium. When the

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[20] Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 237.

[21] Hazel Howard, Letter to women's editors, 11 September 1943, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

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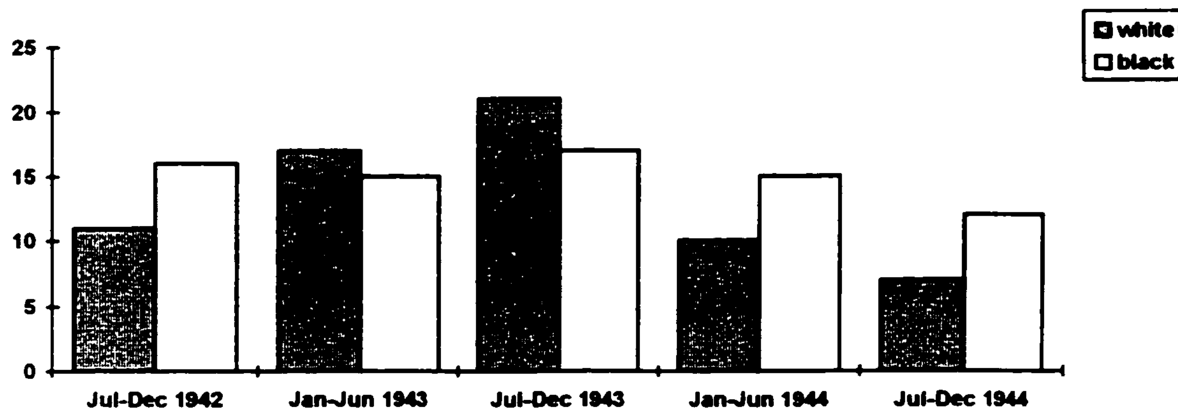
second campaign, in which the newspaper industry was more involved, debuted in the spring of 1944, war consciousness was waning on the home front, and the press had shifted its focus from mobilization to reconversion. Apparently concerned with the declining interest of advertisers in the womanpower issue, the War Advertising Council repeatedly called for more support in January 1944.[22]

Figure 4. Changes in the Percentage of Stories on War Employment for Women from July 1942 to December 1944 in Selected White and Black Newspapers



The lack of enthusiasm among advertisers coincided with the decrease in press attention on war work for women in the later stages of the war. In the white press, the percentage of news stories on women's role in the war as workers in relation to the total number of stories on their war effort reached a peak of 21 percent in the second half of 1943, followed by a sharp decline of 50 percent in the first half of 1944. Coverage in the black press showed a similar but less pronounced pattern of fluctuation from the second half of 1942 to the end of 1944, registering a peak rate of 17 percent in the second half of 1943, and

[22] "Your Ads Can Help Shorten the War," *Editor & Publisher*, 22 January 1944, 41; and "Ads Needed to Help Ease Labor Shortage," *Editor & Publisher*, 29 January 1944, 16.

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tapering off to 15 percent in the following six months. By the second half of 1944, the proportion of stories related to women's employment in the white press had decreased to 7 percent as advertisers reversed gears to urge women to retreat from the labor market. In the black press, where advertisers figured less prominently as a source of revenues, coverage of wartime employment for women did not decrease as much, accounting for 12 percent of the total number of stories on women's war effort during the reconversion period.

By 1945, advertisers had stopped promoting the recruitment of women for war work completely, portraying them as happy homemakers once again in postwar society. Echoing the advertising pitch, the white press encouraged women who ventured into the work force in response to the manpower shortage to reclaim the female province of domesticity as the reward for their war contribution. As the content analysis revealed, the influence of advertising continued to prevail in the production of daily news for and about women in the war years. The increasing power of women as consumers due to the significance attributed to their control of family consumption patterns and the higher income commanded by those who prospered in the wartime labor market boosted the appeal of women's pages as a vehicle for gender-specific advertising. At the same time, the traditional control of advertising over editorial content in the women's page also figured more prominently in shaping news about women's war effort as advertising promotion of war campaigns provided an instrumental link between the government and the media in the distribution of war propaganda on the home front.

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Interplay with Government Propaganda

Conditioned by the operation of the women's department in most newspapers as a draw for advertising, news about women's participation in the war effort highlighted the business agenda of the newspaper industry in engaging the social dynamics of national mobilization to create a cultural product with mass appeal. The publicity of women's war activities generated additional revenues for publishers to offset the loss in retail advertising as many products were off the market for the duration. In addition, press promotion of women's interest in the war helped publishers cultivate an amicable relationship with the wartime government. As the United States waged war abroad, the government relied on the cooperation of the press to control the public's responses to the numerous restrictions imposed by its war program. Editorial support represented an instrumental resource for the OWI to de-emphasize the value of individual freedom embraced by Americans so that it could mobilize civilian support for overseas military operations by fostering collective spirit on the home front.

The participation of the press in home front mobilization largely followed the ideological framework of patriotism established by the OWI. The representation of women's war effort in news nonetheless revealed a pattern of selective responses to the initiatives of the government, underscoring a degree of journalistic autonomy beyond the purview of official propaganda. The service of the women's unit of the OWI provided a vast network of newspapers across the country with access to the most consistent and reliable source of centralized information on the war effort expected of American women by the wartime administration. Editors were receptive, however, mostly to propaganda material that was

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compatible with the business interests of the newspaper industry and the domestic focus of the women's page. As the OWI noted in an internal evaluation of its effectiveness in reaching women, among the news items generated by the women's unit, those featuring their domestic responsibilities were far more popular with women's editors than those promoting wartime employment. "The most successful part of the women's page as put out now seems to be the recipe page," observed an OWI staff member.[23] Next to recipes in press pick-up were "how to do stories" that offered information on life skills specifically related to wartime conditions such as how to take care of a girdle, how to travel with a baby, and what to send overseas for Christmas.

Other aspects of the operation of the women's unit that were geared toward stepping up women's participation in the public realms of national defense gained little press attention. Editors screened out OWI stories such as reports on women in the war industry, features on women in the military, and guest editorials penned by women notable for their war contribution. The OWI concluded that recruitment stories, "whether a straight plea for women workers or human interest idea to encourage entrance of women in various occupations," did not make their way into women's pages of newspapers.[24] The clipping service of the OWI further confirmed the differential interest of editors in women's war activities at home and in the labor market. The collection of official stories reprinted in newspapers sported headlines such as "Use Eggs Freely in Cooking to Consume

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[23] Office of War Information, News Bureau, Memorandum, "Women's Page Change, Centralization of Other Program News," Entry 194, Box 1036, OWI Records.

[24] Ibid.

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Overabundance," "GI Tastes Work Changes in Menus," "Family Disruption by War Analyzed," and "Mail Merchant Seaman Gifts." Tucked away among the wartime homemaking stories was a rare entry on the womanpower program promoting jobs for older women.

The response of the press indicated that the OWI was most successful in coordinating news coverage of the domestic aspect of women's war effort with its propaganda goals. Propaganda material on women's war activities at home, if addressed specifically to a women's editor as a complete news report with a timely slant, was often reprinted verbatim. Other sample stories sent out by the women's unit, accentuated by editors with a local angle, also appeared in women's pages. As a ready source of information to fill space, the OWI's output of service features appealed to editors struggling with under-staffed and short-budgeted women's departments during the war. More importantly, it catered to the business interest of publishers as the least controversial way to promote the war effort. As a media researcher observed in 1949, the press supported what it considered "unpolitical" war activities enthusiastically.[25] For example, during the scrap drive in the fall of 1942, it was estimated that the nation's dailies donated 250,000 columns of space to its promotion. The 10,000 weeklies also contributed an equal amount of space, bringing the total to more than 500,000 columns.[26] War news targeting housewives, considered less political than general interest news because it pertained largely to the private sphere, provided publishers with the

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[25] Cedric Larson, "OWI's Domestic News Bureau: An Account and Appraisal," *Journalism Quarterly* 26:1 (March 1949): 9.

[26] "Nation's Dailies Gave 250.000 Columns of Space to Scrap Drive," *Editor & Publisher*, 28 November 1942, 5.

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most convenient forum to cooperate with government in the distribution of domestic propaganda without risking potential controversy regarding less traditional roles of women that might alienate the more conservative segment of their readership.

For black newspapers, the promotion of women's war contribution in their role as housewives attracted readers who were interested in less controversial and more positive news about the role of blacks in the war effort.[27] Furthermore, the dissemination of information on women's war activities at home drew public attention to the war service of black newspapers to balance their criticism of racial segregation and discrimination in wartime society. Under surveillance by the wartime government concerned with their militant rhetoric in the pursuit of civil rights, black publishers were pressured to display their allegiance to the war effort. Encouraging black women to participate in war programs on the home front allowed publishers to improve their relationship with the government without sacrificing the civil rights agenda. Acknowledging the morale boosting effort of the black press, Attorney General Francis Biddle noted in 1943 that "the Negro press throughout the country, although they very properly protest, and passionately, against the wrongs done to members of their race, are loyal to their government and are all out for the war."[28]

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[27] A readership survey in 1944 showed that 75 percent of those who read black newspapers preferred to see more tempered coverage of racial prejudice in news and editorials. Almost all would like to see more positive stories on the role of blacks in the war. Among women, 82 percent complained about the lack of news on the achievements of blacks and 60 percent disliked the focus on racial tension. See Consuelo C. Young, "A Study of Reader Attitudes Toward the Negro Press," *Journalism Quarterly* 21:2 (June 1944): 149-50.

[28] "Biddle Praises Loyalty of Race Press in Crisis," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 20 February 1943, 15; and "Biddle Lauds Race Press As Loyal to U. S.," *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, 20 February 1943, 1.

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The effort of the government to coordinate news coverage of women's employment with the condition of the wartime economy, however, did not benefit from the rapport that the OWI enjoyed with the press in disseminating information on women's responsibility in maintaining a patriotic household. To mitigate public disapproval of working women, the government propagated the concept of womanpower as an expression of female patriotism. The appeal to patriotism created cultural pressure particularly on women who could afford to stay home to take up paid employment as a war service. To overcome the inhibitions of Americans conditioned by the more rigid pattern of sexual segregation in the peacetime economy, the government enlisted the support of the media in its effort to redefine traditional notions of suitable work for women. The recruitment propaganda also aimed to promote low-paying civilian jobs as war work to coordinate women's employment choices with the changing demands of the labor market.

As enthusiastic as reporters, editors, and publishers were about aiding the war effort, their response to the womanpower propaganda was nonetheless mitigated by deeply entrenched beliefs in gender roles. A profound sense of reservation about radical social changes undercut a full press endorsement of the mass employment of women. In addition to the lack of editorial support, the misplaced news focus on the more glamorous aspect of war work contradicted the OWI's emphasis on the need for women to fill mundane civilian jobs. Tapping into the folk tradition of frontier heroines, the press dramatized the patriotic spirit on the American home front in the representation of women stepping into men's positions in a collective struggle. On the other hand, monitoring every breakthrough of women in traditionally male-dominated fields, the press exaggerated the encroachment of the male

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sphere as a result of women "replacing" men in American industry. Condescending approval for women breaking stereotypes in the work force warned the public at the same time of permanent changes in gender norms that would challenge the pattern of family life that most Americans felt they were fighting to preserve. Constant references to the problem of child care and the increase in juvenile delinquency as the framework of public discussion on female employment overshadowed the positive image of working women in the press. The negative perception of working mothers as a threat to family welfare and social stability perpetuated prejudice against women working outside the home and undermined the government's recruitment goals.

With its resources focused on lowering public resistance against the employment of middle-class white housewives, the OWI made little effort to reach minority women in its recruitment propaganda. Although the OWI espoused a general policy of emphasizing the achievements of blacks in the war effort, its feeble attempt in confronting racial prejudice had little effect on the white press.[29] As W. E. B. Du Bois observed in 1943, the history of the American press showed that white newspapers had offered little information on blacks other than stereotypes of minstrels or criminals. Pleading for a more balanced coverage based on

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[29] In her study of the magazine industry, Maurine Honey found that the OWI's effort to foster positive attitudes toward female employment improved the image of white working women, but failed to change the stereotype of black working women as docile domestic servants. Portrayed mostly as background characters, black women did not benefit from the progressive motivations of recruitment propaganda, which expanded the roles for white women in magazine fiction. Honey concluded that "the racist treatment of black women in propaganda demonstrated that their gender failed to outweigh the negative stereotypes attached to their race. Even in propaganda devised specifically for the working class, a category into which most black women fell, they were completely ignored." See Maurine Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 82-83 and 214.

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the understanding that "what is news to Negroes is also news to whites and of interest to both," Du Bois asked the white press to report war news concerning minorities with more care and regularity.[30] The inadequacy of the OWI in balancing the racial bias of the white dailies created a market niche for the black weeklies to attract an inadequately served readership. As a reader complained to the *Chicago Defender* in 1944, the daily newspaper offered only "the so called white man's version on current topics, civilian, war news, etc., with the spotlight centered on the white civilian or soldier whose merits so deserve."[31]

Addressed toward a white readership, the information on war employment for women in the daily press largely ignored the interest of minorities. To get information on the war activities of blacks, readers turned to the black weekly. The promotion of war work for women in the black press therefore addressed not so much the initiatives of the OWI but the

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[30] The war years saw increasing controversy regarding the practice of the black press in "race-angling" the news as the country found itself embroiled in rising racial tension. Many writers in white newspapers and magazines accused the black press of fanning racial conflicts in its sensationalist coverage of discrimination and violence against blacks, and relentless demands for desegregation of the armed forces and equal opportunities in the job market. In response, black publishers ran articles and special features in defense of the black press as one of the most powerful and persistent advocates of racial equality for all. See, for example, Walter White, "People and Places," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 16 January 1943, 17; "Mrs. Roosevelt Okays Warren Brown's Article," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 16 January 1943, 4; "Southern Gentry Runs 'Wild,'" *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 16; W. E. B. Du Bois, "The American Negro Press," Part I, *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 20 February, 1943, 15, and Part II, *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 27 February, 1943, 15; "Story of Negro and War Widely Circulated in Daily Newspapers," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 25 March 1944, 10 (B); Roi Ottley, "The Negro Press and Democracy," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 3 June 1944, 6 (A); and Lucius C. Harper, "Dustin' Off the News: How the Negro Press Is Defending Racial Rights," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 8 July 1944, 1.

[31] "There's a Real Point in This Comment," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 3 June 1944, 14.

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business and political agenda of black publishers. Catering to the interest of blacks in the political dynamics of national mobilization, the black press encouraged women to take advantage of wartime employment opportunities not only as a way to serve the country but more importantly to improve the overall social and economic status of the race. The representation of black women as pioneers and activists breaking racial barriers in the job market enabled the black press to engage the interest of their readers in the ongoing struggle for equal opportunity in the wartime economy. Despite increased job openings for minorities, the employment experience of black women in the war years underlined the resilience of racial and sexual stratification in the labor market. Investigative reports of hiring discrimination and workplace segregation exposed widespread prejudice repressed in the womanpower propaganda and forged a focal point of race consciousness through which editors reiterated the Double V stance of the black press toward the war effort.

The largely negative publicity that the womanpower program received in both white and black newspapers underscored the limitation of domestic propaganda in engineering media responses to conflicting expectations on the war effort of women. The circulation of war information on women from the government to the press showed that official directives were the least effective when they challenged or contradicted the profit orientation and readership projection of the newspaper industry. The OWI was most successful in appropriating the channel of mass communication established by the news industry with material that complemented and confirmed popular beliefs shared by journalists and their readers in the process of defining proper war activities for women.

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Domesticity as the Anchor for Female Citizenship

World War II brought into sharp relief the significance of gender as a social category imbedded in the construction of American citizenship. Conceived in the democratic impulses of the Revolutionary era, the concept of citizenship embraced presumably both men and women in the new political system. In practice, as historian Linda K. Kerber demonstrated, citizenship has entailed quite different terms of rights and obligations for men and women throughout the history of the United States.[32] The obligation to defend the country in times of national emergency in particular constituted a preeminent aspect of male citizenship.[33] By

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[32] The political ideology underlying the new nation recognized both male and female free adults as citizens without defining precisely what their rights and obligations were. As historian Linda Kerber noted, for men, soldiering became one of the most salient aspects of their political identity as Republican citizens. The strong identification of full citizenship with military service failed to account for the civil status of women because they were excluded from the armed forces. Relegated to a subordinate role as supporters for the military endeavors of men, women were historically perceived as lesser civil beings who were tied to the state vicariously through their relationship with men. While the conceptualization of citizenship evolved to strengthen the connections between male citizens and the state through clearly defined rights and obligations such as suffrage, taxation, and military service, the terms of citizenship remained ambiguous for women. For the connection between militarism and citizenship in the formation of modern nation states, see Donald MacKenzie, "Militarism and Socialist Theory," *Capital and Class* 19 (Spring 1983): 54-60; Linda K. Kerber, "May All Our Citizens Be Soldiers and All Our Soldiers Be Citizens: The Ambiguities of Female Citizenship in the New Nation," in *Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias (Savage, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1990), 89-103; and Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998).

[33] The connection between citizenship and military involvement has conflated rights with obligations to the extent that being able to bear arms for the country has also been understood as a privilege denied to women and some men from minority groups. In World War II, for example, some of the American men of Japanese descent, who were forced into internment camps, struggled for the right to enlist while others refused to participate in military service because of the racist assumption that they were not competent and loyal enough to serve. Black men were subject to the draft but often served in segregated, non-combat units. The wartime black press thus approached military integration as a top priority on the civil rights agenda. War news in black newspapers celebrated combat duties as

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contrast, the conventional exemption and exclusion of women from military service underlined the historical ambiguity of female citizenship as their obligation to the country in wartime shifted with contemporary interpretations of female patriotism.

The ideological and material support required to sustain American involvement in World War II made it necessary to specify appropriate roles for women in the war effort. While total mobilization accentuated the compulsory nature of men's obligation to fulfill the nation's military agenda, it highlighted the persuasive aspect of women's involvement in national defense. With no mechanism of enforcement comparable to the Selective Service, the realignment of women's labor with military priorities occurred mostly in the cultural rather than the legal sector of wartime society. A critical perspective on the cultural resources mobilized to draw women into the war effort enables us to see news reports of women's war activities as prescriptions for female citizenship rather than reflections of lived experience. As one of the most important forums of public expression, the daily press was instrumental in establishing the code of conduct to be adopted by patriotic American women, who were confined by the civil tradition to fulfill their obligation largely outside the theater of war. The editorial stance of the press on how women could best serve the country in wartime illuminated a critical dimension of the public dialogue on what female citizenship entailed in the context of national mobilization.

As the imperative of war challenged the public to reconcile shifting demands on women's labor with deeply entrenched notions of gender roles, the press sought to integrate

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affirmation of the masculinity and patriotism of black males as well as an index of racial parity with whites.

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the war effort expected of women with their gender identity as wives and mothers. Marking the centrality of domesticity in the conceptualization of female citizenship, daily news on women's war effort promoted the home rather than the labor market as the prime outlet for their political interest in the outcome of the war. In the fall of 1942, Mrs. Roosevelt returned from her tour of England with a message encouraging American women to broaden their war activities. Sensing from the comment of the First Lady a public sanction of war employment for women, the *New York Times* responded with an editorial trumpeting the immutable value of the domestic commitment of American women despite the need for women's participation in war production. While an increasing number of women in war work seemed to be breaking gender stereotypes, the editorial urged women to resist the pressure to prove themselves equal to men in the world outside the home. After all the paragon of civic virtue was the patriotic housewife who devoted herself to taking good care of her family and keeping morale high in her own social circle.[34]

The patriotic appeal in news impelled women to contribute to the military resources of the country through their domestic enthusiasm, creating a feminine sphere in the civic culture where women could extend their work in the private domain of family life to the public realm of civilian defense. To condition women to the changing norms of homemaking geared toward the needs of the armed forces, the collective effort of the press and the government invested unprecedented political relevance in the mundane details of housework. As the OWI asserted in a waste paper drive in 1943, "Blood flows freely in places like Tarawa and Salerno, but American women are helping to staunch that flow by the simple act

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[34] "Women in War," *New York Times*, 19 November 1942, 24.

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of salvaging all waste paper in their homes."[35] Expanding news coverage on issues of wartime housekeeping socialized American women to new homemaking practices that combined their private quest for the well being of their families with their public responsibility to provide home front support needed to sustain American military superiority. The mobilization of women's support for the government's home front campaigns thus transformed private issues of household consumption and production into public displays of female patriotism.

The editorial emphasis on the war contribution women were best able to make through their roles as wives and mothers reflected the social value increasingly attributed to women's place in the home. The mobilization of women accentuated their function in reconstructing the home into a political domain where men were energized to fight for the Allied cause and children were socialized to participate in civilian defense as future citizens. The housewife set an example of civic virtue, for example, by converting the family palate to unfamiliar "Victory" foods.[36] The model of female citizenship offered women a leadership role within the private sphere of family life through which they were to transform the American household into the ideal patriotic family with every member a soldier for democracy. Frequently featured in ceremonial news, the matron of the democratic family represented the ideal of American womanhood in the wartime press.[37] A story in the

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[35] "Salvaging Waste Paper Saves Lives in Battle," *Fortnightly Budget*, 11 December 1943, 5, Entry 194, Box 1035, OWI Records.

[36] " 'Victory' Foods Get a Mixed Reception," *New York Times*, 19 November 1942, 28.

[37] "Pick Mother of 5 Fighting Sons to Christen Vessel," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 9 September 1943, 10.

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Chicago Daily Tribune in the fall of 1943, for example, honored Ella Cortzer, a mother chosen to christen a war ship for sending five sons into military service. The black press also lavished attention on service mothers. In the spring of 1944, a special feature debuted in the *Birmingham News* in Alabama to paid tributes to mothers with three or more sons in the military.[38]

The high profile of war widows and Gold Star mothers in both the white and the black press further underscored women's responsibility to propel men to the war front while they strove to keep up morale on the home front. The value placed on female transcendence of personal loss emphasized the cultural purpose of women in reiterating the significance of communal good to be gained from individual sacrifice.[39] As the *Chicago Daily Tribune* said in praising mothers who lost sons in battle, women who proudly carried the cross of grief inspired the nation with "a spirit of patriotic resolution that shines through heartbreaks."[40] As one of the most prominent images of women in wartime news, the grieving war mother marked mourning as a central civil function as well as bonding ritual for women, who were

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[38] "Service Mothers," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 March 1944, 20.

[39] The rationalization of sacrifices in the mobilization of women in World War II finds an interesting parallel in the Civil War South. In her analysis of Confederate narratives of war, Drew Gilpin Faust argued that the gender ideology of the South was inadequate in accommodating increasing demands imposed on women by the reality of war. The expansion of home front sacrifices as a female domain of service led to the discontent of women in the South and eroded their commitment to the Confederate cause. See Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," *Journal of American History* 76: 4 (March 1990): 1200-1228.

[40] "Chiefs of Army Salute Spirit of Yank's Mothers," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10 May 1943, 9.

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supposedly united in bereavement. The spiritual dimension of female sacrifice promoted in the dominant forum of daily news, however, often obscured profound social differences among women. In August 1942, the *Chicago Tribune* carried a front-page story intended to show the patriotic contribution of blacks. Depicting the typical war mother as a shawl wearing, handkerchief-headed "Mammy" figure dressed in colorful clothing, the article drew vehement protests from black newspapers, readers, and civic groups. In later editions of the morning newspaper, the *Tribune* moved the illustration to the editorial page with a caption substituting "She" for "Mammy."[41]

The negative stereotype of black women perpetuated by the white press highlighted the ambivalence of blacks toward the war effort, expressed often through the poignant sorrow of black mothers. As they shared with white women the specter of losing loved ones on the war front, black women, in the words of Mary McLeod Bethune, president of the Nation Council of Negro Women, also "felt the heartsick disappointment that is their lot when they apply for jobs and are denied because of their race."[42] Deployed as an image of political will in the black press, motherhood represented not only the epitome of female patriotism but also the stoic determination of blacks to embrace the war effort as an avenue to full civil rights in postwar society.[43]

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[41] "Daily Paper Slurs Race with Cartoon," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 22 August 1942, 4.

[42] "Mrs. Bethune on Radio for Urban League," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 20.

[43] "War Mothers Club Sponsors 4th War Loan Campaign," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 22 January 1944, 5 (A); "Mixed Crowd OK's Effort to End Bias," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 11 September 1943, 4 (A); "Ft. Benning Honors 3 Women on Mother's Day," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 15 May 1943, 26; "30 Negroes

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The affirmation of motherhood across racial divisions in the press promoted the maternal commitment of women as an integral part of national strength.[44] The renewed interest of the public in the political implication of motherhood in World War II echoed the rise of the ideology of "Republican motherhood" in the late eighteenth century.[45] Just as mothers in the new Republic were given the responsibility of cultivating virtuous citizens to build a solid civic foundation for the nation, mothers in the war years were entrusted with the task of nurturing courageous soldier-sons to form a strong line of defense for American democracy. "The character of the American race is being molded in millions of homes by mothers," the *New York Times* declared in a report praising mothers who sent their sons to face the ordeal of battle with strong moral values.[46] As soldiering represented the most salient aspect of men's civic identity in wartime, mothering constituted the primary definition of women's civic identity. The exaltation of motherhood in the press drew on stereotypes of

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Attend War Mothers' Meet," *Chicago Defender* (City Edition), 18 November 1944, 6; and "Mothers Tell How They Feel About the War Effort as U. S. Takes Sons," *New York Amsterdam News* (City Edition), 27 March 1943, 5.

[44] Along with praises of the sacrificial mother, news reports chronicled criticisms of the overprotective mother and the negligent mother during the war. Stay-at-home mothers were accused of "momism," a catch phrase used to account for a large number of men found unfit for military service due to overindulgent mothers who kept their children from achieving full independence. Working mothers were faulted for neglecting their children and causing the rise in juvenile delinquency.

[45] See Glenna Matthews, "The Rise of a New Ideology," chap. in "*Just a Housewife": The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment--An American Perspective." *American Quarterly* 28 (1976): 187-205, and *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

[46] "Mother's Courage in War Is Praised," *New York Times*, 10 May 1943, 13.

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gender roles that not only limited public perception of women's war contribution within the private sphere of family relations but also reinforced the identification of women with their domestic responsibilities. Even at the height of the womanpower drive, 58 percent of all women said in May 1943 that they could best help the war effort by staying home.[47]

As seen in the daily news, the mobilization of American women revolved around the home as the primary site of the war effort of women. Their cooperation with the government as consumers and homemakers was essential to the stability of the wartime economy and the conservation of critical war materials. Despite the strategic significance attributed to women's role in national defense as housewives, housework never turned into a political platform in the war years as women's organizations failed to forge any collective momentum in the kind of war activities through which women wielded the most bargaining power.[48] The emphasis on reducing the market demands of the American household in order to divert resources to the nation's military priorities encouraged a more private rather than communal pattern of homemaking. It was assumed in government information, news reports, and service features that the typical unit of wartime consumption was a small nuclear family in a self-sufficient household sustained largely by the consumer expertise and domestic dedication of the housewife. If she chose to combine wage work with full-time housework, she was

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[47] Campbell, 216.

[48] Eleanor F. Straub noted that one of the approaches of American mobilization promised women that their rights would advance as a result of their war effort. During the war, a few writers linked the participation of women in the fight for democracy abroad with the effort to achieve gender equality at home, but the feminist movement never gained the same political energy that fueled the Double V struggle for racial equality. See Straub, "United States Government Policy Toward Civilian Women during World War II," *Prologue* 5 (Winter 1973): 242.

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expected to be nonetheless responsible for the proper functioning of the household on a daily basis. As much as the rhetoric of patriotic domesticity publicized the political underpinning of women's domestic function, most of women's war activities did not branch out of the boundaries of the home and the realm of unpaid work. The paradoxical invocation of the split between the private and the public spheres offered women opportunities to discharge their civic responsibility individually through the traditional role of a homemaker without forming a political platform for women to pursue their collective interest.

To further accommodate the diversion of manpower from the civilian sector to the military front, the logic of total mobilization required higher expectations on women's wage labor as well. Created to promulgate paid employment as women's civic responsibility in wartime, the concept of womanpower allowed the government to encourage women to take up work outside the home for the duration while forestalling permanent changes in their domestic commitments. Reflecting the priority of wartime society to maintain motherhood as the primary responsibility of women, the industrial mobilization of American women favored those with the least child-rearing responsibility for war work.[49] The ideal recruit in the womanpower policy of the government was a middle-class white housewife with no young children to care for and little financial incentive to linger in the postwar job market. To lure them into the wartime labor pool, official recruitment guidelines popularized the use of

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[49] Only one out of every eight women with children under the age of ten were engaged in paid employment during the war. The majority of those who entered the labor market had relatively light responsibility in child care. A survey by the Women's Bureau showed that only one-third of the women workers who were married, divorced, or widowed had children under fourteen and over half of these women had only one child. See Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 5, 36.

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domestic imagery in the media to encourage women to relate to factory jobs through their homemaking experience.

The media publicity aimed not only to boost the confidence of female recruits but also to address the concern of the public with the breakdown of sexual divisions of labor threatened by increasing employment of women. To assure the public that war work did not distract from the femininity of American women, recruitment messages accentuated the sex appeal of women war workers and the unique value of their domestic skills to war production. The image of women as patient, "naturally" dexterous, careful, precise, and docile workers propagated stereotypes that upheld presumed gender differences. The implication that women were more suited for unskilled, repetitive, and tedious work than men also rationalized the continual sexual segregation of the work force. The effort to facilitate public acceptance of female employment reinforced the perception of working women as dutiful housewives performing the same function in the domestic as well as the economic realm. The enduring myth of female domesticity perpetuated the assumption that women seeking war work were a temporary addition to the labor force ready to be disengaged from paid employment at the end of the war to return to the home where they truly belonged.

In addition to domestic analogies, recruitment propaganda invoked family ties to energize the political interest of women in war work by humanizing the abstract concept of patriotism as the obligation of American women to the men fighting to protect them. Positioning women in an inferior civic status with little connection to the political ideology of the United States, the mobilization of women rarely featured universal moral values such as freedom and equality or the abstract ideal of democracy, which were more frequently found

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in the appeals addressed to men. Instead, the media urged women to relate to war work in terms of their personal desire to help bring the boys back. Appealing to women's gender identity as mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts, recruitment propaganda channeled the patriotic drive of women toward the ubiquitous icon of female obligation embodied by the American solider. The strenuous jobs of war production, according to the OWI, held "an allure for women who visualize the finished product--the destroyers, Flying Fortresses and giant tanks--as tools their husbands and brothers will use in battle."[50]

Domesticated as an extension of maternal and feminine instincts, participation in war production promised women opportunities to discharge not so much their public responsibility as American citizens but their private obligations to family members and loved ones.[51] The theme of personal patriotism thus invested a civil purpose in the women's employment decisions to draw them into the wartime work force without compromising the nurturing and supportive roles they were expected to fill. Pleading with American women to

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[50] Office of War Information, News Bureau, News release, "Womanpower Report," 14 April 1944, 4, Entry 90, Box 587, OWI Records.

[51] A study by Robert Westbrook of the circulation of pin-ups as a morale booster in World War II suggested that the privatization of political obligations also figured prominently in the mobilization of men. Reflecting the inherent difficulty in liberal political theory to legitimate the sacrifices demanded of citizens in wartime, American propaganda relied on appeals to private interests and personal obligations to motivate the public to join the war effort. As Westbrook showed, popular pin-ups not only served as surrogate objects of sexual desire for soldiers but more importantly represented American women as icons of male obligation. He argued that the articulation of the relationship between men and women in pin-ups revealed a crucial aspect of the American conception of the ideological foundation of the war that drew on "the moral obligation prescribed by prevailing gender roles." Westbrook, "'I Want a Girl, Just Like the Girl That Married Harry James': American Women and the Problem of Political Obligation in World War II." *American Quarterly* 42: 4 (December 1990): 587-614.

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"help out" with the war effort, the patriotic appeal of the womanpower campaigns underlined the temporary nature of public approval and institutional support for working women to contain their expectations of employment opportunities within the context of national mobilization. Based on the need of a militarized economy rather than a moral ground, the nominal commitment of the government to eliminate prejudice against minority and women workers easily capitulated to changing demands of labor during reconversion. In the end, the labor recruitment of American women briefly improved the conditions for female employment but failed to generate substantial ideological momentum to sustain long-term changes.

The shifting needs of female labor in the process of national mobilization posed many challenges to existing gender roles. This study has focused on how the wartime press addressed the conflict between work and home that still looms large today when most women are no longer "just a housewife" as their mothers and grandmothers would have described themselves during the war. The analysis of news has sought to reveal precisely how the gender assumptions underlying that self identification and public perception of women in the war era not only informed but also reasserted themselves in the collective effort to redefine the meaning of women's work in the home and the labor market. Future research on news representation of women in other sectors of the wartime society including military service and volunteer work would certainly enhance our understanding of the ways in which prevailing notions of differences between men and women energized the expansion of women's civil responsibility and at the same time contained it within acceptable terms of gender expectations.

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The redistribution of women's resources in the war effort reaffirmed rather than challenged the value placed on their domestic commitment. Promoted by the daily press, the ideology of patriotic domesticity encouraged women to participate in war activities on the home front and at the same time reiterated their auxiliary status by reinforcing the priority of the war front, which was primarily identified with men. News about women's war effort in the black press, however, called into question the relevance of the mainstream discourse on female patriotism to minorities, underscoring race identification as a competing form of political consciousness in the mobilization of black women. Anchored in domestic values, the dominant prescription of women's political obligations in wartime indicated a widening, rather than narrowing, gender gap in the American conceptualization of citizenship. Fully recognized as a public service to the nation, the war effort of men was rewarded with economic and social privileges that enabled many veterans to advance in postwar society. The war contribution of women, on the other hand, was relegated to the domestic sphere as ultimately a service motivated by private concerns rather than public interests. Understood in the framework of personal and familial obligations, the participation of women in the war effort yielded little political resources to expand the boundary of female citizenship beyond the pursuit of domestic comfort in the postwar home.

Conclusion

The analysis of media responses to government propaganda in this study brings into question the image of Rosie the Riveter as the dominant representation of American women in the war era. During the war, movies and songs with titles such as "Rosie the Riveter," "Swing Shift Maisie," and "We're the Janes Who Make the Planes" registered the fascination

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of the public with the new image of women popularized by government propaganda on the need for women in war production. Over time, the industrial heroine, who embodied the patriotic spirit of Americans in the fight for democracy, became enshrined in the collective memory of World War II. Most recently in 1999, she spearheaded the United States Postal Service's advertising campaign for the "Celebrate the Century" stamps as the preeminent icon of the war decade. Renewed with a unisex sense of aesthetics, her almost brawny physique with accentuated biceps visualized the wartime liberation of American women from conventional norms of femininity in a stride toward greater equality. In our own era of shifting gender definitions, the progressive view on history suggested by the image of Rosie the Riveter continues to frame representations of wartime society. The collective reconstruction of the past invokes Rosie the Riveter as a symbol for the progressive influence of the war on the status of American women. The interpretation underscores the popular perception of World War II as what historian Michael Adams termed "The Best War Ever."[52]

Embroiled in the myth about the war years as the "golden years," the image of American women defying gender stereotypes to meet new challenges in the worldwide struggle between democracy and totalitarianism certainly has great cultural appeal. A critical examination of editorial patterns in journalistic narratives of the war showed, however, that the current popularity of Rosie the Riveter reflected the salience of changing gender norms in contemporary recollection rather than in the historical context of national mobilization. Although recruitment propaganda celebrated women's war contribution in taking up men's

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[52] Adams argued that in contemporary imagination, World War II has been transformed into a golden age of national strength and solidarity when Americans united for the good war. See Michael C. C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

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work, the wartime public perceived the role of women in the war effort through the prism of rather conventional gender expectations. Prevalent concerns with the impact of increasing employment for women on the integrity of family life compromised full endorsement of the government's womanpower drive. Despite the effort of the OWI to dramatize women's part in the battle of war production, the media encouraged women to relate to the war mainly through their responsibility in maintaining the consumer household. War information for women distributed through news channels and advertising outlets integrated their private obligations and civic responsibility by emphasizing the political purpose of women's work in procuring and provisioning for their families. The preference of advertisers to address their war messages to the American housewife further biased the press toward promoting the domestic aspect of women's war effort. As much as women increased their participation in the labor market, it was their roles as mothers and homemakers that received the most acknowledgment and validation in the process of national mobilization.

In the wartime press, Rosie the Riveter was overshadowed by Mrs. Philip L. Crowlie, the official representative of American women selected by the Office of Price Administration to personify their patriotic spirit. In the spring of 1943, Crowlie, a housewife from Huron, South Dakota, emerged in the spotlight of media attention as the "No. 1 woman in the OPA." Before going to the capital, she had mobilized women in her community to relieve wartime food shortages.[53] For her war effort and twenty years of homemaking experience, the

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[53] The appointment of a South Dakota housewife as the spokeswoman for the OPA was quite a sensation for the time as suggested by the great attention given to the event through front-page play and wire service coverage. See for example, "Housewife Takes Over," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 April 1943, 6 (S); "Dakota Housewife to Aid OPA on Women's Viewpoint," *New York Times*, 6 March 1943, 1 and 10.

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government hired her to help secure women's support for its food programs. The press touted Crowlie as a patriotic activist, who "looked just like your next door neighbor." Apparently she represented not only the true voice of the average women as the publicity emphasized, but also the ideal role model with whom American women could surely identify as they strove to meet the demands of the war effort in their homemaking routines. The ideology of patriotic domesticity set the cultural parameter through which the press interpreted the meaning of women's work in relation to the war. In the face of unsettling social changes threatened by the wartime migration of women into the work force, the media's emphasis on women's war effort in the domestic realm reinforced familiar and comfortable gender roles.

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APPENDIX: NEWSPAPERS SAMPLED IN THE CONTENT ANALYSIS

New York Times and *Chicago Daily Tribune*

Monday, July 20, 1942
Tuesday, August 18, 1942
Wednesday, September 30, 1942
Thursday, November 19, 1942
Friday, January 15, 1943
Saturday, February 20, 1943
Sunday, March 28, 1943
Monday, May 10, 1943
Tuesday, June 15, 1943
Wednesday, July 28, 1943
Thursday, September 9, 1943
Friday, October 1, 1943
Saturday, December 11, 1943
Sunday, January 23, 1944
Monday, March 20, 1944
Tuesday, April 11, 1944
Wednesday, May 31, 1944
Thursday, July 6, 1944
Friday, September 1, 1944
Saturday, October 7, 1944
Sunday, November 19, 1944

Chicago Defender and *New York Amsterdam News* (all Saturday City Edition)

July 25, 1942
August 22, 1942
October 3, 1942
November 21, 1942
January 16, 1943
February 20, 1943
March 27, 1943
May 15, 1943
June 19, 1943
July 31, 1943
September 11, 1943
October 2, 1943
December 11, 1943
January 22, 1944
March 25, 1944

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April 15, 1944
June 3, 1944
July 8, 1944
September 2, 1944
October 7, 1944
November 18, 1944

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