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THE PROGRAM OF THE  
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
IN ITS RELATION TO THE NEEDS  
OF YOUNG WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

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By

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. The Statement of the Problem

In this world there are certain things which must be done by the adolescents. Some of them belong to that huge group of human beings which machinery demands for its smooth working, if the industrial organization is to be kept in motion. Economic pressure rather than choice explains their pressure in industry for it is a fact that our culture, **civilization**, and even education are, to a large extent, industrial.

The necessity of adaptation to the factory environment, and of merging unfolding self with the rigid pattern of machine operation, is certain to bring conflict and thereby create needs. Particularly is this true of young women who, because of their more delicate structure, are less able than young men to conform readily to the relentless demands of the factory environment. To meet the needs of young women in industry, the Young Women's Christian Association came into being.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is two-fold: first, to find out what the needs of young women in industry are and second, to trace the evolving program of the Young Women's Christian Association in relation to those needs.

### B. The Importance of the Problem

There is a tremendous shift of environment when a young woman leaves the protection of the grammar, trade, or high school and enters the walls of a factory for a "job". Old attitudes are found wanting and new ones must be built up. The development from a more or less satisfied stage into one of doubt, questioning, and criticism is characteristic of adolescence, and brings with it a period of conflict. But to this natural psychological change there is added at the present time the problem of economic insecurity. Yesterday she had a job; today she has none with no other explanation than "a slack season". The days of enforced unemployment are anxious ones, ever hoping to be recalled for work and handicapped in seeking employment elsewhere because of union affiliation. Union dues mount up, nevertheless, and family and personal needs must be met!

Attempts at social reconstruction are being made but young women are finding that legislation alone cannot bring about a change in human relationships, nor can education insure a society freed from innate selfishness, greediness for possessions, and non-dependability.

What does it all mean? How can adjustments be made? Many homes cannot answer the questions of youth, and the churches, to which a large number of young women in industry belong, do not make an attempt to answer. It is



from the crying needs of the hearts of bewildered young women who are seeking to understand their place in the whole social scheme of life, that there comes a challenge to Christian leadership today to understand their needs and to give them a program of Christian education through which they may find stability and inner peace in the conscious fellowship of God through Christ, amid the conflicts and discouragements that beat against them from every side, and may be challenged withal to whole-hearted service in helping to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth.

In our survey of present programs for meeting the needs of young women in industry we turn to a study of the Young Women's Christian Association which, as a "handmaiden of the church", was a pioneer in its work with young women in industry.

### C. Method of Procedure

#### 1. Delimitation of the Problem

New York City is considered the great sample room of our country not only in industry with its accompanying social problems but also in constructive programs of national organizations to meet the needs of a cross section of humanity. It is to this city, therefore, that we turn for our study of the needs of young women in industry, choosing from the assortment, the ready-made clothing industry, not

only because it employs more young women than any other industry,<sup>1</sup> but because 90% of them are Jewish and Italian,<sup>2</sup> who from their respective churches today are receiving little or no help in meeting their needs through constructive programs of religious education.

The Young Women's Christian Association in the City of New York with its proximity to the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association in the United States offers a unique opportunity to study a metropolitan system of organization with particular interest in its program of work with young women in industry.

## 2. Organization of the Study.

Our approach to the problem in hand will be an historical one. As a background for a better appreciation of the factory environment in the ready-made clothing industry we shall make an historical survey of women in industry in the United States in the three periods: The Rise of Industry in the United States, 1800 to 1900; Organization in Industry, 1900 to 1920; Industrial Reconstruction and Economic Depression, 1920 to the present. Because of the varying environments to be found in the ready-made clothing industry, we shall study the factory system and the unions--the workers' organized reaction,

. . . . .

1. Cf. Selekman, B.M.: The Clothing and Textile Industry in New York and Environs, p. 60.  
76,525 Females in Clothing Trade in New York City-United States Census Bureau-1930, p. 1090.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 67.

historically, that we may better understand how the factory environment has conditioned young women; dividing our study for the sake of emphasis, into its effects on them; physical, social, mental, moral and spiritual.

We shall make an historical survey of the program of the Young Women's Christian Association in the United States as it is related to young women in industry in three periods: Origin and Development, 1858 to 1906; (The International Young Women's Christian Association, United States and Canada, 1871 to 1906, The National Young Women's Christian Association, 1886 to 1905); Confederation and Expansion, 1906 to 1920; Reconstruction and Reorganization, 1920 to 1934. Because a city association is the practical demonstration of the emphasis and trends in the National Association, and because the present program can only be understood in the light of the past, a further study will be made of the national trends and program emphases as they are applied in the New York City Young Women's Christian Association.

In our concluding chapters we shall make a critical analysis and evaluation of the program of the Young Women's Christian Association of New York City in relation to the needs of young women in industry in New York City and consider what future challenge their needs present to Christian leadership.

### 3. Sources for the Present Study.

The primary sources for the study of women in industry are the annual reports of factory inspectors, the reports of Boards of Control in the Clothing industry, United States Senate reports, bulletins from the United States Department of Labor, and personal visitation. Other studies made of women in industry and of the clothing industry, in particular, are listed in the bibliography.

The primary sources for the study of the program of the Young Women's Christian Association as related to young women in industry are the reports of the International Board (United States and Canada), The National Reports (American Committee), the Joint Committee Reports of the Young Women's Christian Association (1905-1906), the National Board Reports, Reports of the National Convention Proceedings, 1906-1934, Annual Reports of Divisions, 1932-1934, The National Periodicals: The Evangel (1883-1906); The Association Monthly (1906-1922); The Woman's Press (1922-1934). With particular reference to the program of the Association in New York City, The Ladies' Christian Union of the City of New York (1860-1891), The Annual Reports of the Young Women's Christian Association of the City of New York (1871-1934), and personal interviews. Other studies in which are found references to the program of the Young Women's Christian Associations in their work with young women in industry are to be found in the bibliography.

CHAPTER II

THE NEEDS OF YOUNG WOMEN IN INDUSTRY,  
A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

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THE NEEDS OF YOUNG WOMEN IN INDUSTRY,  
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A. Introduction

In order that we may better appreciate the actual problems which face young women who leave school at an early age and find "jobs" in factories, we shall consider first the factory environment in general; and second, the influence of this environment upon the personalities of young women as they react to it and as it effects them. We shall make this study first, through an historical survey of young women in industry in the United States; and second, through a typical study, taking the women's ready-made clothing industry in New York City.

B. The Factory Environment in General.

1. The Rise of Industry in the United States, 1800-1900.

The last half of the eighteenth century witnessed a great outpouring of inventive genius in the production of textile machinery which completely revolutionized industry.<sup>1</sup> In the United States repeated attempts were made to build machines, but it was not until 1789 that Samuel Slater

. . . . .

1. Cf. Nearing, Scott and Nellie: Woman and Social Progress, pp. 37-41.

established in Rhode Island the first cotton mill which had all the machinery necessary for spinning. For twenty-five years before this, societies were formed to encourage manufacturing and though they were responsible for only a few so called "manufactories" they did serve to awaken an interest in industrial development.<sup>1</sup>

In order to appreciate the relation of young women to the early factory we must realize that men were primarily interested in agriculture. Land was cheap and agriculture so profitable that men could not be induced to work in factories. Girls and women were just naturally expected to do in the factories the work to which they had been accustomed in the home.<sup>2</sup> The public opinion of the day is reflected in the following accounts:

"In 1710 Mr. William Molineux of Boston petitioned the legislature to assist him in his plan for 'manufacturing the children's labor into wearing apparel and employing young females from eight years old and upward in earning their own support' and the public opinion of the day commended him because in the words of a contemporary, 'The female children are not only useful to the community, but the poor sort are able in some means to assist their parents in getting a livelihood'".<sup>3</sup>

"Hamilton in his famous 'Report on Manufacturers' says that one great advantage of the establishment of manufacturers was the 'employment of persons who would otherwise be idle.' He also pointed out that 'the husband himself would experience a new source of profit and support from the increased

. . . . .

1. Cf. Abbott, Edith: Women in Industry, pp. 35-37
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 37-45
3. Ibid., t., p. 22

industry of his wife and daughters, invited and stimulated by the demands of the neighboring manufactories."<sup>1</sup>

In 1815 a group of manufacturers in a petition to Congress in which they urged the prohibition of the importations of coarse cottons, pointed out that their establishments had given employment to thousands of poor women and children for whom agriculture could supply no opportunity for earning a living.<sup>2</sup> Similarly was this sentiment expressed in the words of the Committee on cotton at the Convention of the Friends of Industry held in New York City in 1831 as they discussed the wages of the thirty-nine thousand females employed in the various factories of the United States:

"This immense sum paid for the wages of females may be considered so much clear gain to the country. Before the establishment of these and other domestic manufactures, this labor was almost without employment. Daughters are now a blessing to the farmer. Many instances have occurred within the personal knowledge of individuals of this Committee in which the earnings of daughters have been scrupulously hoarded to enable them to pay off mortgages on the parental farm."<sup>3</sup>

The Civil War in the middle of the century doubtlessly stimulated industry. One is made aware of this fact from a book on "The Employment of Women", the first of its kind in the United States, written in 1860 by Miss Virginia Penny in which she says:

"At no time in our country's history have so many women been thrown upon their own exertion.....A

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 50.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 52.
3. Op. cit. p. 55, quoted from The Address on Proceedings of the Convention of the Friends of Domestic Industry, 1831, p. 110.



million men on the battlefield and thousands of women formerly dependent on them have lost or may lose their only support."<sup>1</sup>

Miss Penny further gives the following report from the United States Census Department in 1860:

"The whole number, approximately, of females employed in various branches of manufacturing is 285,000. The following are approximations to the average monthly wages of females paid in New York and New England":<sup>2</sup>

|                        |         |
|------------------------|---------|
| Boots and Shoes .....  | \$11.25 |
| Clothing .....         | 12.00   |
| Cotton Goods .....     | 13.30   |
| Woolen Goods .....     | 16.00   |
| Paper Boxes .....      | 14.30   |
| Umbrellas .....        | 13.38   |
| Book Binding .....     | 15.38   |
| Printing .....         | 13.65   |
| Millinery .....        | 17.47   |
| Ladies Mantillas ..... | 16.00   |
| Hoop Skirts .....      | 14.00   |

This report does not reveal the number of hours a day which women were compelled to work but from a survey of industries made by Miss Penny twelve hours seemed to be the average working day.<sup>3</sup>

Tenement workshops and overcrowded factories became prevalent in the last quarter of the century and with the ever-increasing installation of machinery, unskilled labor gradually replaced skilled. Immigrant women, with a willingness to work for less than American women, began pouring into industries and thus lowering the status of all women in industry. By 1900 there were 5,319,912 women in

. . . . .

1. Penny, Virginia: The Employment of Women in Industry, Preface, p. V.
2. Op. Cit., p. 490.
3. Cf. Ibid., Preface, p. X.

industry or 14.3% of all women in the country.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Organization in Industry, 1900-1920.

Among the immigrants who came at the call of industrial America were "intellectuals" so named because they, as educated liberalists, revolted against the status quo. They violently rejected traditionalism in any form, uniting with educated liberalists in this country to stimulate the workers to organize and demand better working conditions.<sup>2</sup> The unit of organization was the trade union known as the "local" which became a part of a larger union, The Knights of Labor, a national organization. After 1891, however, the American Federation of Labor arose in power and influence and gradually supplanted the Knights of Labor.<sup>3</sup> Among the organizers were two factions, the Socialists and the Anarchists who worked together until 1886 when disputes among themselves led to the formation of two separate groups: The Socialist Labor Party, the less radical, and the Pioneers of Freedom, the anarchists. The organization of workers led to the organization of the manufacturers.<sup>4</sup>

As industrialism pressed in upon American life and conditions of labor grew more intolerable, the intense feeling had its outlet in many strikes. The first part of

. . . . .

1. Cf. Nearing: *Woman and Social Progress*, pp. 38-43.

2. Cf. Levine, Louis: *The Women's Garment Workers*, pp. 24-31.

3. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

4. Cf. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 24-31

the twentieth century may be characterized as "darkness and revolt." There were repeated attempts to settle grievances but there were no lasting effects. The doctrine of "joint responsibility and joint control" was preached to the employers' association and to the unions but neither was ready for the idea of "democratic government" in industry.<sup>1</sup> By 1920, however, there was an advance in trade union control and laborers and manufacturers found the method of conciliation helpful in settling disputes and righting grievances. This method assumes that the agreements on both sides express the balance of power and are not to be disturbed by arbitrator's decisions.<sup>2</sup>

The local and international unions were affiliated with the National Women's Trade Union League of America, organized in 1903 with its purpose stated thus:

"To protect the women workers of America from inadequate wage and extreme working hours, through the organization of the workers, and through such legislation as the Minimum Wage and the Eight Hour Day."

"To increase co-operative action among them."

"To create a public opinion that really understands the labor movement."

"To secure definite and accurate information concerning conditions among women and children wage earners leading to legislative action."

"To supply at all times to wage earners assistance in working out their industrial difficulties."

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 105-319.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 320-341.

"The league represents 600,000 women trade unionists in America(1919)."<sup>1</sup>

The National Women's Trade Union League was in turn a part of the American Federation of Labor whose object was to maintain

"An American Federation of all national and international Trade Unions, to aid and assist each other; to aid and encourage the sale of union label goods, and to secure legislation in the interests of the working people, and influence public opinion by peaceful and legal methods in favor of organized labor."<sup>2</sup>

Collective bargaining, which the union organizations made possible was a step forward in bettering industrial conditions. Not much advance was possible, however, before the nation was plunged into war and all its industrial resources were concentrated in war production. A great demand for a vast army of factory workers was created and more than a million and a half women were added to the ranks.<sup>3</sup> Baffling problems presented themselves at the government-controlled industrial centers and the co-operation of organizations which could assist in solving these problems by providing for sane and normal recreation was welcomed by the government. With the signing of the Armistice there came the realization of a foe harder to meet than a foreign

. . . . .

1. Quoted from the National Industrial Conference, Washington, D. C., Oct. 20, 21, 22, 1919; A Handbook for Delegates issued by the Industrial Committee of the Young Women's Christian Associations, pp. 57, 58.
2. Ibid., p. 57.
3. Cf. War Work, The Industrial Committee of the Young Women's Christian Associations, p. 3

one in the solution of the industrial problems created and made apparent by the war. The colossal loss of life for a cause had sobered the nation and had given them a desire to "build a new world" which they realized must be begun by making the nation "safe for democracy."<sup>1</sup>

3. Industrial Reconstruction and Economic Depression-1920-1934.

In the years immediately following the war, programs of reconstruction in industry were introduced and industrial standards advanced for:<sup>2</sup>

1. The eight hour day.
2. No night work for women.
3. One day rest in seven.
4. A living wage.
5. Equal pay for equal work.
6. Child labor.
7. Collective bargaining.
8. Social insurance.
9. Industrial democracy.

The immigration law of 1917 embodying the literacy test, and the quota acts following this, did much to make permanent war-time gains for women.<sup>3</sup> Since the war the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor has been functioning to decide by scientific investigation the best standards for women's employment. One of the problems it encounters is revealed in the following statement:

. . . . .

1. Cf. Study Outlines in the Problems of the Reconstruction Period, edited by the Women's Press, pp. 1-2.
2. Cf. Industrial Standards--A Statement Prepared for Study and Discussion by the Young Women's Christian Associations. 1919.
3. Cf., Wilson, Eleanor: Women at Work in the United States: Department of Labor Bulletin 115, p. 40.

"The psychology of the working woman herself has been one of the major factors in making organization difficult....Until fairly recently women have not generally recognized themselves as permanent industrial workers and they have borne many hardships in the expectation that they would marry and leave the ranks of working women."<sup>1</sup>

There has been much agitation for minimum wage legislation, for standardization in houses of labor, and for social insurance for women in the years since the war and it is, therefore, very significant, that in one piece of labor legislation on June 16, 1933, President Roosevelt signed the National Industrial Recovery Act which put into the hands of the federal government for two years the power to maintain the wage and hour standards for the majority of workers, both men and women; and at the present time (1935) Social Insurance as a form of security for workers against unemployment is before the legislature in the Lundeen and Wagner Bills.

In view of the temporary and emergency measure of the National Industrial Recovery Act in the hour of depression, which in so many instances is being avoided, and in the face of the present period of unemployment, one realizes that no standards are secure. In April 1930 there were half a million women unemployed while in April 1934 there were two million with the cause the same:

"The mass of workers cannot buy back the goods

. . . . .

1. Op. Cit., p. 26

manufactured and production and consumption are thrown out of balance."<sup>1</sup>

But what of the young woman herself? What part has been hers in effecting the changes in industry, and what psychological effects have these changes produced in her? For an answer we turn to a study of the women's ready-made clothing industry in New York City, not only because it employs more women than any other industry there,<sup>2</sup> but because "sewing and needlework have always been considered women's peculiar sphere."<sup>3</sup>

### C. The Influence of the Factory Environment Upon Young Women.

#### 1. The Place of Young Women in the Factory Environment.

In the study of the women's ready-made clothing industry in New York City we shall use an historical approach that we may better appreciate the varied conditions in which young women labor in the present factory system under the advantages and disadvantages of the unionization.

##### a. The Clothing Factory System.

##### (1) The Factory Management.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a third class of people was added to the society of the

. . . . .

1. Op. Cit., p. 45.

2. Cf. Selekman, B.M.: The Clothing and Textile Industry in New York and Its Environs, p.60.

3. Abbott: Women in Industry, p. 216.

upper well-to-do and the lower mass of manual wage earners, namely, those who engaged in "white collar jobs" whose income was not so much above that of the manual laborer but whose standard of living was higher and whose vocations required better clothing. It was this group that created a demand for ready-made clothing which the custom tailor attempted to meet. He was at a disadvantage because he bought only in small quantities and was now compelled to keep on hand a large variety. Realizing the demand for cheaper clothing he began to employ help to make up left-over materials.<sup>1</sup>

There soon came to be recognized three distinct grades of clothing based upon the way the manufacturing was conducted. The best was made in the master tailor's shop; the second best was taken from his shop to the home of a tailor where he was assisted by his wife and daughters; the third grade was given out to contractors to be made up in the homes of the workers or in the contractor's workshop. It was in the production of this last grade that cheap labor came into being and the factory system began.<sup>2</sup>

Since a factory may be defined as a place given over solely to the manufacture of goods, it is clear that the factory existed long before the factory system. In this system, the manufacturer in the ready-made clothing

. . . . .

1. Cf. Pope, Jesse: The Clothing Industry in New York, p.12.

2. Cf. Op. Cit., p. 13.



trade is the owner of both the raw material and the completed garment. He gives out the work to the contractor who has the clothing made up in his own shop or in some cases gives it to a sub-manufacturer. In the latter case, the manufacturer has no control over the place<sup>where</sup> the goods is made up, over the persons employed, or the wages paid. The only way he can exercise supervision is to refuse to give out the materials to a contractor who refuses to measure up to specified conditions. A contractor may be likened to an organizer who goes about among the people securing immigrant labor and who is able to maintain his position because he is able to secure cheap labor. This irresponsible middle man is the chief evil in the contract system.<sup>1</sup>

With the increased demand for clothing in the post-war prosperity, greater facilities were necessary. The manufacturer was uncertain, however, as to just how long the demand would continue and was afraid to expand his work permanently. This uncertainty created a new phase in the clothing industry, namely, "jobbing." The function of the jobber is to assemble the stocks of garments from which the wholesaler buys. The growth of sub-manufacturing accompanied the development of jobbing for the sub-manufacturer produces directly for the jobber and it is in his shop that one finds conditions most undesirable. The

. . . . .

1. Cf. Willett, Mabel: The Employment of Women in the Clothing Trade, pp. 48-51.

"inside manufacturers" conduct manufacturing operations on their own premises and sell their product directly to wholesalers or retailers.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Division of Labor

In 1895 there was introduced into New York City the Boston system which exemplified division of labor. The extreme of this division was seen in one of the leading contractor's shops in New York City in 1900 where thirty-six different processes, carried on by the same number of people, were represented in the manufacture of a coat. This shop turned out a very high grade of work and two thirds of the employees were women. Those who carried on the processes of manufacture were:

1. The fitter, who also cuts the linings, marks the pockets, and puts on tickets.
2. Jacket maker.
3. Canvas baster.
4. Padder of lapel.
5. Bar locker (on pockets).
6. Seam presser.
7. Lining maker.
8. Lining operator.
9. Sleeve maker.
10. Lining presser.
11. Sleeve presser.
12. Collar padder.
13. Shaper.
14. Baster and fuller of stay tape.
15. Lining baster, prepares for machine.
16. Operator
17. Presser

. . . . .

1. Cf. Report of an Investigation of Cloak, Suit, and Skirt Industry of New York City, June 1923 - July 1924 by the Governor's Advisory Commission, Introduction, pp. IV, V

18. Edge cutter.
19. Lining baster for shoulders.
20. Edge baster.
21. Operator for shoulders.
22. Sleeve baster around edge.
23. Collar and sleeve baster prepares for operator.
24. Presser on sleeve.
25. Joiner of collar to lapel.
26. Arm-hole baster.
27. Operator who sews in sleeves.
28. Garment examiner.
29. Collar finisher.
30. Lining finisher around arm-hole.
31. Basting puller.
32. Button hole cutter.
33. Edge presser.
34. Button hole maker.
35. General husheler and hanger sewer.
36. Busheler.

With the single exception of the pocket maker, a highly skilled mechanic, every one of these workers could become proficient in his line within a few months.<sup>1</sup>

While there is still division of labor in the so-called piece work shops which are for the most part non-union, the better shops have operators who make the entire garments on the machines. The cleaning, finishing, examining, pressing, draping, assorting, designing and cutting are done by others. The following is a description of these branches of industry in which at present ninety percent of the laborers are Russian and Polish Jews, and Italians.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Cf. Pope, : The Clothing Industry in New York, p. 70
2. Cf. Selekman: The Clothing and Textile Industry in New York and its Environs, p. 67. (1925)

Cleaners - Young girls just out of school enter the industry as cleaners. Their work is trimming off loose threads and cutting away cloth from under insertion or medallions.

Finishers - These, too, are frequently secured from the ranks of girls just out of school. It is at best only semi-skilled and consists of sewing on hooks and eyes, snappers or buttons, and sewing on the trimming that cannot be put on with the machine.

Examiners - These are usually older girls or women whose judgment with regard to the making of dresses is good.

Pressers - These are young women in the dress and waist shops but in the cloak and suit shops men do the work.

Drapers - These girls put the garment on the form pinning the parts in readiness for the finisher or operator.

Assorters - Girls who do not know anything about the making of a garment may do this work for it is merely the assorting of the pieces of a garment after the cutter has finished.

Designers - This division calls for individual ability and originality. It is distinctly an art and to succeed one must have talent for good lines in garments combined with a practical sense in the application of the fashions, and be able to combine colors artistically.

Cutters - These are men for the most part as many dresses are cut out at one time and large scissors are used.<sup>1</sup>

Cutting machines were introduced about 1875 and are used most  
2  
widely in the cloak, suit and skirt industry.

. . . . .

1. Cf. United States Department of Labor - Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletin, No. 145, p. 163. A Study of the Dress and Waist Industry

2. Cf. Pope, Jesse: The Clothing Industry in New York, p. 26

## (3) Conditions of Labor

With the introduction of the sewing machine in 1846, at first run by foot power but later by electric power, production at high tension became prevalent. Contractors rented loft rooms, put in a few sewing machines, hired their workers as cheaply as possible, and assumed the role of taskmasters.<sup>1</sup> This is revealed in many investigator's reports one of which we quote:

"The length to which the unscrupulous contractors will go to sweat the dollar which they receive from the manufacturer is amazing. Many of them are entirely devoid of conscious honor."<sup>2</sup>

Factory investigation commissions revealed deplorable conditions. The following are statements of their findings which express in most respects the conditions at present (1934) in the sub-contractor's shops visited by the writer.

"Of the 1,738 shops inspected in August, 650 south of Houston Street, 950 between Houston and 34th Street, we find:"<sup>3</sup>

|                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Shops located in loft buildings      | - 1,411 |
| Shops located in converted tenements | - 169   |
| Shops located in stores              | - 734   |
| Shops located in cellars             | - 21    |

"In some of these departments, where from twenty to fifty operators are coralled like so many sheep, there is but one small and narrow door near one end of the department. To this door in case of fire some of the employees must run at least

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1. Cf. op. cit., Pope: pp. 12-25
2. Annual Reports of the Factory Inspectors of the State of New York 1889, p. 42
3. New York State Factory Investigating Commission Reports - 1812, Vol. I, Appendix, p. 217

thirty or forty feet through an aisle of eighteen niches between machines with merchandise and goods piled high in the way."<sup>1</sup>

"45 % of all the establishments inspected by the commission were either in a dirty or a very dirty condition. Only a very small number could be demonstrated as entirely clean shops. The conditions of the toilets in most of the factories was very bad. The flush was usually found to be inadequate and very often the plumbing was out of order. The ventilation of these compartments was usually very poor."<sup>2</sup>

Only eighty-nine out of 2,000 shops investigated in 1911 had lunch rooms provided, which meant that in 1,911 shops lunch was eaten in the workroom which certainly did not promote cleanliness.<sup>3</sup> The writer was in some of these same buildings, no doubt, and certainly there was no sign of any provision for a lunch room.

The lighting facilities are insufficient for basters and finishers who suffer greatly as revealed in one of the many reports on the subject:

"52 % of the factories use artificial light during the daytime, and the light even when sufficient was improperly placed with relation to the workers."<sup>4</sup>

In both sub-contractor's and contractor's shops visited by the writer one row of machine operators had their backs to the windows but the other row faced them with no protection from the glare. The finishers used artificial light or

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1. First Annual Report of the Joint Board of Sanitary Control of the Cloak, Suit and Shirt Industry 1911, p. 52
2. Ibid., p. 71
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 68
4. Op. cit.: New York State Investigating Commission, p. 74

had poor natural light because of their position apart from the machine operators.

Proper seating is still a problem as indicated in the New York State Labor Department's reports where there are suggestions for adjustable chairs with the right shapes of seats, provision for a foot rest, proper relation to supplies, and provision for a sitting-standing principle.<sup>1</sup> The writer observed the use of common kitchen chairs in sub contractor's shops with none of the desirable features mentioned above. In the contractor's shops visited, the workers had containers in which materials could be kept.

There is a large range in conditions of labor from the sub-contractor's shops to the manufacturer's show rooms. Invariably the former are in the back on the top floor of an old building. There is one room with ten or twelve operators, a presser or two, one or two finishers, and the contractor. The work is done in feverish haste in close quarters for the machines are side by side in two rows to have advantage of the electric power. The remainder of the room except for a corner for the presser is filled with boxes, tables of goods, and racks of blouses, skirts, or dresses. The contractor's shops are more desirable, being larger and better ventilated. The entire process from designing to finishing is carried on there. The jobber's

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1. Cf. New York State Labor Department, 1926 Special Bulletin No. 141, p. 32

and manufacturer's show rooms, located in the front of very fine buildings on Seventh Avenue between thirty-fifth and forty-second Streets are most desirable, but as one manufacturer said,

"We couldn't have our shops here, the floor space is too valuable. We design and cut, and send the material to shops downtown or over in Jersey."<sup>1</sup>

#### (4) Hours and Wages

Exceedingly long hours and uncertainty of employment have always characterized the clothing industry.<sup>2</sup> Before 1900 it was the general rule for women to work in all from twelve to fifteen hours a day and receive an average wage of \$6 per week under the piece-work system.<sup>3</sup> The following statistics of 1914 show an increase in salaries and a

| Occupation           | Week Workers  |              |       | Piece Workers |              |       |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------|-------|---------------|--------------|-------|
|                      | Less than \$1 | \$1 - \$9.99 | \$10. | Less than \$1 | \$1 - \$9.99 | \$10. |
| Assorters            | 12            | 72           | 63    | -             | -            | -     |
| Cleaners             | 749           | 1,217        | 40    | -             | -            | -     |
| Cutters              | -             | -            | -     | -             | -            | -     |
| Drapers              | 5             | 57           | 1,195 | -             | -            | -     |
| Embroiderers         | 1             | 57           | 34    | 16            | 32           | 49    |
| Examiners            | 16            | 219          | 585   | -             | -            | -     |
| Finishers            | 155           | 2,399        | 695   | 616           | 861          | 637   |
| Ironers and Pressers | 9             | 108          | 270   | 9             | 13           | 137   |
| Joiners              | -             | 52           | 4     | -             | -            | -     |
| Markers and Slubbers | 2             | 13           | 6     | -             | -            | -     |
| Total                | 949           | 4,170        | 2,972 | 641           | 906          | 889   |

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1. Shop visitation by writer
2. Cf. Pope: Jesse: The Clothing Industry in New York, pp. 39-42
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 72



tendency for week work to predominate in the dress and waist industry of New York City.<sup>1</sup> At the peak of the prosperous years, 1926, the average wage in the clothing trade in New York City was \$24 a week.<sup>2</sup> In the Governor's investigation of the cloak, suit and skirt industry, about the same time, it was found that the average number of full weeks of employment per year is forty for inside shops and thirty-one for sub-contractor's, leaving twelve and twenty-one weeks respectively without work.<sup>3</sup> Since 1930 conditions have been still worse. "It just keeps on being the slack season", said an eighteen year old Italian piece-worker who had been in the clothing trade for four years. Her wage books showed \$4.31 for a week's work and \$1 of that must go for union dues because the shop was behind.<sup>4</sup>

The workers who are in union shops seem to feel a sense of security which other workers do not have. We now turn to a study of the union to determine what organization has meant to the workers in the clothing trade in bettering their conditions of labor, hours of work, and wages.

#### b. The Union - The Worker's Organized Reaction

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1. Cf. United States Department of Labor. Bulletin 145, p. 173
2. Cf. New York Labor Department, 1926 Bulletin 143, p. 23
3. Cf. Selekman, B.M.: The Clothing and Textile Industries in New York and its Environs, p. 56  
Report of Commission 1925
4. Personal Conversation

The first labor organization was formed in New York City in 1879 under the Knights of Labor. Another organization grew out of a strike in 1883 when nearly half of the strikers were women who met in separate halls from men. In 1885 came a "Great Upheaval" against the industrialism which was pressing in upon the workers. Conditions seemed intolerable and the intense feelings had their outlet in many strikes.<sup>1</sup> In the year 1888, Socialists and Anarchists attempted to organize the Jewish immigrants into union. In the year 1889, a wave of prosperity swept the country, greatly affecting the clothing trades. The workers detected the signs of a busy season, became restless under the adverse conditions under which they worked, and turned to the newly formed unions for help.<sup>2</sup> Strike after strike occurred until the "uprising of the twenty thousand", the reaction of the shirt waist makers on November 22, 1909.<sup>3</sup>

"It was the 'largest strike of women ever known in the United States until then'; about 80 % of the workers in the trade were women; 75% of the strikers were young women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five."<sup>4</sup>

On the evening of November 22, Cooper Union was filled to capacity and crowds were directed to other meeting places. For two hours the audience was cautioned to be deliberate

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1. Cf. Levine: The Women's Garment Workers, pp. 32-45

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 154

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 144

4. Ibid., p. 144

to be loyal to each other and to stand by the union until all demands were met. Then, came a climax, for out of the audience a "wisp of a girl in her teens" asked for the floor. There was a grumbling among the strikers but the chairman held that she was a striker and therefore had a right to speak. The girl was Clara Lemlich who spoke from the platform in Yiddish:

"I am a working girl, one of those who are on strike against intolerable conditions. I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in general terms. What we are here for is to decide whether we shall or shall not strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared now."<sup>1</sup>

Instantly the big gathering was giving assent and when a second was called for all rose and took the Jewish oath of faith:

"If I turn traitor to the cause I now pledge, may this hand wither from the arm I now raise".

A social worker described the spirit of the strikers:

"Into the foreground of this great arousing picture came one girl after another as her services were needed. With extraordinary simplicity and eloquence she will tell before any kind of audience, without any false shame or intent glorification the conditions of her work, her wages, and the pinching poverty of her home and the homes of her comrades."<sup>2</sup>

The test of loyalty came when girls were asked to picket on a cold snowy day. They were often mistreated and dragged to the workhouse. From November 22 to December 25, 1909,

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1. Levine: The Women's Garment Workers, p. 154
2. Op. cit., p. 154

723 women strikers were arrested.<sup>1</sup>

The end of the strike, February 15, 1910, was not what might have been expected from its dramatic beginning for girls returned to work without awaiting a settlement in a large number of shops. But the strike awakened the entire community and "revealed woman to herself as few incidents in history have done and in ways never to be forgotten". Women discovered that they must stand together to protect their common interests and join the trade unions in behalf of all working women. Not only was this strike significant in this one phase of industry, but it inspired all women workers to organize their forces to better maintain their rights as workers.<sup>2</sup>

In recent reports we find that the union has made an effort to secure equal division of work among its members during the slack season. It also requires that union workers laid off at the end of the season shall be re-engaged at the beginning of the new season before any new workers are taken on.<sup>3</sup> In an effort to guard against unscrupulous sub-contractors, the union has requested a reduction in the number of shops in the industry from three thousand to near fifteen hundred by

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1. Cf. Op. cit., p. 159

2. Cf. Op. cit., p. 166

3. Cf. Selekman, B.M.: The Clothing and Textile Industries in New York and Its Environs, p. 56  
Governor's Advisory Commission, Appendix, p. 158

a process of consolidation whereby a shop will not be recognized as such unless it employs at least fourteen machine operators and a corresponding number of laborers in other branches of the work. The shop must also have a contract from the union.<sup>1</sup>

During the slack season and unemployment, the union dues of fifty cents a week are hard to meet especially since the union is helpless in finding work for its members during the economic depression.<sup>2</sup>

Through organization young women have attempted to better their conditions of labor but there are still undesirable features to which they are subject, namely, the monotonous, never-ending grind of electrically-powered machinery and the abuses under the jobber-contractor system which are traceable to the terrific tension caused by the uncertainty of style.<sup>3</sup>

Our next interest is to find out how this factory environment reacts on the personalities of young women who are a part of it. In our consideration we shall now turn to the reports of inspectors and to the statements of the young women themselves.

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1. Cf. Report of an Investigation of the Cloak, Suit, and Skirt Industry of New York City, June 1923-July 1924.
2. Personal conversation with workers.
3. Cf. Op. Cit., Selekman, P. 57.

2. The Conditioning of Young Women by the Factory Environment.

We are not unmindful of the fact that any social force from without reacts upon the whole personality, but for the sake of emphasis we have divided our study of the conditioning of young women by the factory environment into the physical, social, mental, moral and spiritual effects.

a. Physical Effects.

"Man's body is intended to be the instrument of his mind, the trained servant of his will....If the body is weak, badly nourished, untrained or diseased, the full activities of the spirit are by so much handicapped and rendered abortive."<sup>1</sup>

Very many girls enter the clothing trade immediately after finishing grammar school or after a year and a half or two years at trade school.<sup>2</sup> It is essential to recognize that the adolescent years are characterized by rapid body growth.<sup>3</sup> In the circulatory system, the heart is actually doubled during adolescence and at about the sixteenth year "its weight bears a larger proportion to the weight of the whole body than at any other time."<sup>4</sup> The lungs, too, increase in size and though the rate of breathing becomes slower, there is an increase in the volume of air inhaled and exhaled.<sup>5</sup> The growth and

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1. Tracy, Frederick: The Psychology of Adolescence, pp.24-25.
2. Personal Conversation and Observation.
3. Cf. Schwab, Sidney T. and Veeder, Boden S.: The Adolescent, His Conflicts and Escapes, p. 11.
4. Ibid., Tracy, p. 29.
5. Cf. Op. Cit., Tracy, p. 30.

development of the muscles at this period are of very great importance which "brings about practical questions regarding posture, muscular co-ordination, fatigue and the like."<sup>1</sup> One of the most important phases of adolescent development is that which takes place in the organs that are concerned with procreation. This development is slow occupying practically the whole period of the teens and eventuating naturally and normally in full power if not retarded by a repressive regime or hastened by excessive excitements.<sup>2</sup>

In adolescence, moderation in anything is hard to observe for likes and dislikes are strong and are not always balanced with a strong will. The physical strength is often over-taxed especially in the nervous excitement of modern social life in great cities, with amusements that run late into the night. As a consequence girls become anaemic and listless at a time when bodily vigor ought to be conserved.<sup>3</sup> Add to this general detriment to health, the regimen of life which may impede the normal development of the heart, proper respiration, the growth and development of the muscles, and perhaps even may hinder the healthy ripening of the organs of procreation because of excessive fatigue and you have a girl robbed of her birthright for a free and full unfolding of life physically.

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1. Op. Cit. Schwab & Veeder, p. 12.
2. Cf. Ibid., Tracy, p. 33.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 35.

The two main evils from which the clothing industry suffered in the past and still suffers, are the seasonal character of the work and the use of the contract system. Both compel the girl to work at a terrific tension.

"No amount of cleanliness and convenience in the work room can offset the injurious effects resulting from long, irregular working hours and nervous strain."<sup>1</sup>

The hours in the better shops have been regulated by the "N. R. A.", through the union, to thirty-five hours a week with Saturday off, but the "speeding-up" process continues. The hours are longer in non-union inside shops, however,<sup>2</sup> which cannot help but have its effect on the heart-growth.

The proper ventilation of the shops has been a problem to inspectors as only natural means are used and windows are few, especially in sub-contractors shops in lofts. Many cases of pulmonary tuberculosis are found among the garment workers.<sup>3</sup> "Workers must be educated up to the practice of keeping windows open."<sup>4</sup>

Closely associated with insufficient air is a lack of proper illumination. In every shop visited one row of machine operators had their backs to the windows but the other row faced the light with no protection from the glare. The finishers, because of their position, far

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1. Report of the New York State Investigating Commission 1912, Appendix, 278.
2. Personal Conversation.
3. Op. Cit., New York State Investigating Commission, p. 71.
4. Report of the Joint Board of Sanitary Control in Cloak, Suit, and Skirt Industry, 1923, p. 10.



removed from the windows, either work in insufficient natural light or have artificial light constantly.<sup>1</sup> Inspectors deplore the fact that employers are so careless about the proper position of lights in regard to workers and protection for the workers from the glare.<sup>2</sup>

Factory inspectors realize the need for better seating facilities. Recommendations have been made for adjustable seats to avoid the cramped and stooped position, and the right shape of seat for the hips. They recognize that

"bad seating causes fatigue, fatigue is responsible for bad posture, bad posture leads to deformities of a sad type least of which are round shoulders, sunken chest, and deviation of the spine."<sup>3</sup>

Regular kitchen chairs were being used in the sub-contractors' shops visited, with no thought of possible adjustment to work.<sup>4</sup> A sitting-standing position has been recommended by factory inspectors but in every shop visited the machines still call for a sitting position.

The harm done to a girl's body in the years when strength should be conserved in anticipation of future demands, is expressed in the report of a factory investigating commission:

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1. Personal Visitation.
2. Cf. Op. Cit., Joint Board, p. 10
3. Op. Cit., Joint Board, p. 49
4. Personal Visitation.

"A woman's body is unable to withstand strain, fatigue, and privation as well as a man's. The nervous strain resulting from monotonous work and speeding up, intensified by the piece-work system, when coupled with excessive length of working hours, can only result in undermining the whole physical structure of the woman, lowering her vitality and rendering her easily susceptible to the diseases that find their prey among factory workers."<sup>1</sup>

The sanitary measures of the shops are important items in the maintenance of health. Even as late as 1922 factory inspectors report:

"Serious agitation to abolish the common drinking cup and common towel which are almost universal in our trade....Toilet facilities are still the most important shop defect.... Very few shops are without dressing rooms, but they are also used as store rooms and are littered with boxes and packages save for the space occupied by the cat.....This is not unfrequent and must be discouraged."<sup>2</sup>

The difficulties in the attempt to better working conditions in the shops are many because of the constantly changing personnel (five thousand new workers are needed each year in New York City<sup>3</sup>) and the indifference of the workers to matters of sanitation and health.<sup>4</sup>

b. Social Effects;

Adolescents have a tendency to contend against individuals rather than against mere ideas, institutions, or social structures. Conflicts are bound to arise in their minds for they have not learned yet that society, as it is,

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1. Report of New York State Investigating Commission, 1912, p. 95
2. Report of the Joint Board of Sanitary Control, 1922, p. 11
3. Cf. Selekman, The Clothing & Textile Industry in New York and its Environs, p. 70.
4. Cf. Joint Board of Sanitary Control, 1920, p. 13.

is poorly organized but, nevertheless, it is necessary to make the best of it and try to iron out the conflicts and at least try to understand conditions as they are.<sup>1</sup> Hear a present-day factory girl express herself:

"Being a strong and fast working girl (that is what the garment industry needs), I was a success. I made a nice wage and could afford to live decently. I had a comfortable room, good clothes, and recreations such as plays, concerts, good movies, and an opera once in a while. This was until 1930. When the first cut in wages came, the workers of the shop (most of them married men afraid of losing their jobs) agreed to it. The boss becoming more powerful wanted us to work longer hours and also on Saturdays. This made me mad. So like Adam in the play "1931", I quit thinking that the next step would be better. I traveled from shop to shop and one was worse than the other. Finally, I realized that it was no use to waste time; all the shops were alike. I remained in one where the workers attracted me because they were class-conscious union workers. When we did not have enough work for a whole week we divided it equally. My wage was small, just enough to exist on; room, food, and a cheap dress which I made myself. All recreations were stopped. The worst part of all, what hurts me most, is that I cannot help my old Mother who lives in Europe and has no other income, but depends on her children in rich America."<sup>2</sup>

The typical budget of a girl making \$6.00 a week, whose home is elsewhere than New York City has been given as follows:<sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. Schwab & Veeder: The Adolescent, pp. 318-319.
2. Women Workers in the Third Year of the Depression, From A Study of Students in Industry at Bryn Maewr Summer School, United States Department of Labor, The Women's Bureau, 1933, Bulletin No. 103, p. 11.
3. Report of the New York Investigating Commission, 1915, Appendix, p. 580.

|                                    |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Half a furnish <del>ing</del> room | \$1.50        |
| Breakfast and dinner               | 2.10          |
| Lunch                              | .70           |
| Carfare                            | .60           |
| Clothes at \$52.00 per year        | 1.00          |
| Total                              | <u>\$5.90</u> |

This budget speaks for itself with a possible ten cents for amusements, newspapers, extra train fare, doctors or dentist bills, etc. This is much below the minimum wage of \$9.00 a week which is set by law at present but is not enforced. An Italian girl's record book of piece work done for the week in the clothing trade where she had worked four years was \$4.31. Of course, she happened to live at home but that doesn't solve difficulties when a girl is the sole wage-earner.<sup>1</sup> Girls tell stories of less food, inadequate clothing, search for lower rents, and cheaper living quarters, taking in boarders and falling behind on rents.<sup>2</sup>

Many girls live "around the corner" from their work to save carfare and lunch money which quite often means an overcrowded tenement district, the monotonous rumble of elevated trains, cheap movies, cheap dance halls, and the vice and crime of congested areas. In most tenement houses there is no place to entertain friends but in the kitchen where the family, the dog and cat occupy the available space.<sup>3</sup>

Nor does work offer an opportunity for social contacts and recreational facilities. The lack of lunch

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1. Personal Conversation.
2. Nelson, Eleanor, Women's Bureau, Women at Work, United States Department of Labor, 1934, Bulletin No. 115, p.47.
3. Personal Visitation and Conversation.

rooms forces girls to stands nearby for part of the time off and the rest of the time is spent in standing around in groups on the street or inside the building in the little available space about the elevators.<sup>1</sup>

In the "ugly shop", as one girl expressed it, there is no chance for conversation at work unless one is not a machine operator and literally yells to be heard above the constant rumble.<sup>2</sup>

The following were answers given to a factory investigator to the question "What do you do in the evenings?"<sup>3</sup>

"Help wash the dishes and go to bed."

"Go to bed right after supper--too tired to go out."

"Sometimes go out Saturday night, but would rather go to bed."

"Tried going to night school, but was too tired to study."

It has been said that "the dead monotony of extreme specialization leads to mental stagnation."<sup>4</sup>

#### c. Mental Effects.

The factory environment of the young woman, as we have seen above, is rigid and unyielding. It is a complex static organization to which the pliable, adaptable young

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1. Personal Visitation of Sub-Contractors' Shops between 11th and 35th Streets.
2. Ibid.
3. New York State Investigating Commission, 1912, Appendix, p. 296.
4. Ibid., 1915, Appendix, p. 1710.

woman is subject.

"Industry by concentrating upon the individual, succeeds in stamping its pattern before any objection to it reaches the level of revolt. The adolescent becomes a part of a machine and as long as he keeps time with it, adjusting his tone and pitch to its note, there is no jarring---Adjustment becomes a matter of constant habit and the adolescent conflicts, whatever their nature may be, are toned down to the level of the worker's existence. It is difficult to see a trace of adolescence in the adolescent worker. This is particularly so in the factory worker."<sup>1</sup>

Not only is initiative stifled but fear holds captive the factory worker of today. While at work there is always the uncertainty that there may be no work the next day or even all that day. In non-union sub-contractors' shops, where illegal methods are pursued, young women work in a state of fear on account of the possibility of a surprise visit from an "N.R.A." inspector. In the visitation of just such a shop, the visitor found no name on the door, nor any indication that the place had been found except by the number. When the door was opened, a bell rang, announcing immediately to all within that somebody outside their ranks had come. A young woman appeared from an improvised little office near the door and when apprised of the visitor's desire to visit the shop, she actually begged her not to remain nor even to ask for the head lady for she was sure she wouldn't approve. Every contractor, without exception, had an antagonistic attitude toward

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1. Schwab & Veeder: The Adolescent, His Conflicts and Escapes, pp. 270-271.

visitors and plainly indicated they were not welcome.<sup>1</sup>

Even in unemployment there is mental anxiety, and further education during leisure time is rarely pursued. This is indicated in the findings of the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Students in Industry, where in 1933, twenty-nine of the one hundred and nine students were from the womens' and children's clothing industry:

"The girls find it necessary to fill the enforced leisure time with other occupations but it is generally found that leisure was not always enjoyed....The workers said that they were too anxious to concentrate their minds on books."<sup>2</sup>

It would seem perhaps that industry was good for a young woman because it encouraged discipline, promptness, accuracy, obedience, and other qualities which one must manifest to hold a "job." But the incentive for the cultivation of these qualities comes from without and is not a conviction from within that they are desirable. It isn't long before the worker slips into the world of preconceived ideas about his environment, and becomes mentally inelastic. The mechanistic world of work soon kills the venturesome spirit and enthusiastic eagerness goes out of life because the young woman is driven into industry before she is ready mentally.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Personal Shop Visitation.
2. A Study of Students in Industry at Bryn Mawr Summer School, 1933, United States Department of Labor Bulletin No. 103, p. 9.
3. Cf. Schwab & Veeder: The Adolescent, His Conflicts and Escapes, pp. 140-144.

d. Moral and Spiritual Effects

As one of the outstanding traits of adolescence, there has been mentioned the tendency to personalize the environment. Too often the ideal heroes and heroines are rudely pushed far into the background where they have influence no longer on conduct or on point of view, and the present-day figures--the captains of industry, men of affairs, accumulators of wealth--are set up as the ideals. The fine moral edge tends to become blunted and the acquisition of material things fills the entire horizon.<sup>1</sup>

Before a minimum wage was established by law, there were many expressions of the relation of young women's immorality to their lack of sufficient earning. This excuse was given by young women in court many times but was felt to be exaggerated. Miss Jane Adams from her book, "A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil," was quoted as follows by a factory investigator:

"A girl prefers to think that economic pressure is the reason for her downfall, even when the immediate cause has been love of pleasure, her desire for finery, or the influence of evil companions."<sup>2</sup>

"Yet love of pleasure," writes the factory inspector, "is a most healthy and normal desire and in cities pleasure does cost money. While a living wage might not assure a girl's virtue, it would remove a very strong contributory if not basic cause."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 146-149.
2. Report of New York State Investigating Commission, 1915, Appendix, p. 1709.
3. Ibid.



It is true that a higher wage offers an opportunity for a higher standard of living with good air and light, proper food and clothing, but there must be something added to give young women an answer to their questions of their own relation to the factory environment and the meaning of life in the face of difficulties into which they are pressed by economic necessity.

"Pleasure, play for me! How can it be? It's either the thunderous clatter and burr of machines when I'm fortunate enough to have a job, or the four walls of a room and misery all about. Just why we should go on living puzzles me."<sup>1</sup>

"No matter how much the philosophy of toil is stressed and no matter how glorious the triumphs of industry may be regarded, there is nothing that can be said that supports the idea that it is a good place for the adolescent under present conditions."<sup>2</sup>

#### D. Summary

Young women have always been a part of industry, and their entrance into the factory was a natural occurrence with the introduction of the machine which did the work to which they were accustomed in the home. The cheap labor of unskilled immigrants gradually replaced the native skilled laborers, introducing a minute division of labor and the sweat shop contract system. It was in rebellion and revolt to the unbearable conditions of labor,

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1. Op., Cit., Appendix, p. 1699.
2. Schwab & Veeder: The Adolescent, His Conflicts and Escapes, p. 139.

that women discovered the advantages to be gained in uniting their forces in a trade union, which offers a sense of security but is helpless and even a detriment, because of the weekly payment of dues, in times of economic depression.

Through the years there has been agitation for legislation on hours of labor, minimum wage, and social insurance. The National Recovery Act signed by President Roosevelt in 1933 brought about federal control of hours of work and wages, and the social insurance bill is even now (1935) before the Congress of the United States. But a study of the factory environment in one branch of industry, the ready-made clothing trade, reveals that legislation cannot effect a change where manufacturers see all life in terms of dollars and cents.

Consequently, there are varying conditions in industry today, but there is one constant in the fact that young women are forced, by the pressure of economic necessity, into a factory world which hinders physical development because of nervous strain and unhygienic atmosphere; which offers an extremely confining world of work with no opportunity for recreation and social development; which leads to mental stagnation due to the dead monotony of extreme specialization; and which, finally, eventuates in a dulling of the finer moral and spiritual qualities because of the materialistic set-up amid the hard facts and the

difficult experiences of days in the factory environment.  
What adequate program exists or may be projected to meet  
these needs of young women in industry?

CHAPTER III

THE PROGRAM OF THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
IN RELATION TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

### CHAPTER III

## THE PROGRAM OF THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION IN RELATION TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

### A. Introduction

In the previous chapter ~~were~~ studied the needs of young women in industry and we were left with the question of the possibility of meeting these needs. We now turn to a study of the Young Women's Christian Association which has pioneered in the projection of a program to meet the needs of young women in industry.

The name, Young Women's Christian Association, is understood by most people to represent the movement-- world, national and local. This is a true conception, for the interweaving of thought and effort during the years has brought about a fellowship so close, that the local association is thought of in terms of the whole and the whole association in terms of the local.

We shall limit this study, however; first, to the National guiding principles and the National program emphases in relation to the needs of young women in industry; and second, to the practical application of these principles and emphases in the program of the Association in New York City.

B. The National Guiding Principles and the Program  
Emphases in Relation to the Needs of Young  
Women in Industry.

With the belief that the present can be appreciated more fully by an understanding of the past, we turn to an historical survey of the National guiding principles and the National program emphases in relation to the needs of young women in industry, dividing our study into the three periods: Origin and Development, 1858-1906; Confederation and Expansion, 1906-1920; Reconstruction and Reorganization, 1920-1934.

1. National Guiding Principles.

a. Origin and Development, 1858-1906.

The date 1858 may be considered as the real beginning of the Young Women's Christian Association in the United States, at which time Mrs. Marshall O. Roberts of New York City called together a group of Christian women of all denominations in the city whose purpose was "to unite their efforts to do good among their own sex."<sup>1</sup> Believing that nothing could be accomplished without the help of God, they organized a weekly prayer meeting to "strengthen each other by mutual words of encouragement and counsel."<sup>2</sup> A constitution was adopted in 1860 and amended in 1866. We

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1. First Annual Report of the Ladies' Christian Union of the City of New York, p. 3.
2. Ibid.

quote from the amended articles concerning the name, purpose, and basis of active membership because of their historical significance:<sup>1</sup>

Article I

"This Society shall be called the Ladies' Christian Union of the City of New York."

Article II

"The object of this Society shall be the temporal, moral, and religious welfare of women, particularly of young women, who are dependent on their own exertions for support, and it shall be the aim of each member of this Society to aid such persons in any way in their power."

Article III

"Any lady may become a member of this Society by paying an annual subscription of one dollar."

In 1866 an organization, similar to the one in New York City, was formed in Boston with the name of Young Women's Christian Association. In 1867 a third organization with the name The Women's Christian Association was formed in Hartford, Connecticut. Women's and Young Women's Christian Associations spread from city to city until in 1871 at Hartford, Connecticut, there was held the first conference to which delegates from Canada came as well as the United States. It was decided then to hold an International Conference of Women's Christian Associations every few years to which delegates from Cana-

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1. Eighth Annual Report, 1866, pp. 5-8.

da and the United States were invited.<sup>1</sup>

In 1872 a few young women in Illinois State University, desiring to unite in Christian fellowship for prayer and Bible study, adopted the name Young Ladies' Christian Union. This organization spread among schools and colleges, until in 1886 the first National Convention was held at Geneva, Wisconsin. A Constitution was drawn up<sup>2</sup> which was amended at the third Convention in 1891, where there were gathered representatives from one hundred eighty-three school associations and forty-one cities to read:<sup>3</sup>

#### Article I

"This organization shall be called The International Association of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada."

#### Article II

"The object of this Association shall be the organization and development of Young Women's Christian Associations for the promotion of the physical, social, intellectual and spiritual condition of young women."

#### Article III

"----active membership, i.e., voting and office

. . . . .

1. Cf. Wilson, Grace: The Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Young Women's Christian Association, pp. 6-7.
2. Cf. Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Ladies' Christian Union, 1886, pp. 7-8.
3. Cf. Proceedings of the Third International Convention of Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada, pp. 110-119.



holding, is limited to young women who are members in good standing in evangelical churches and we hold those churches to be evangelical which, maintaining the Holy Scriptures to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice, do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and who was made sin for us, though knowing no sin, bearing our sins in his body on the tree, as the only name under heaven among men whereby we must be saved from everlasting punishment."

The name American Committee was later given to their administrative board.<sup>1</sup> In 1888, a periodical, *The Evangel*, was issued quarterly, and in 1889, became a monthly publication whose motto was: "Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Zech., 4:6<sup>2</sup>

In 1891 the International Conference of Women's Christian Associations formed an administrative board which they named the International Board of Women's Christian Associations and in 1893 added to it "Young Women."<sup>3</sup>

There were, as one might suppose, misunderstandings between these two organizations concerning their names and also the overlapping of territory. Letters were written between them in an attempt to solve some of the problems which were hindering them and which they felt endangered their effectiveness as Christian organizations because of "secular criticism."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Cf. Op. Cit., Wilson, Grace: p. 8.
2. Cf. *The Evangel*, Vol. I, 1888-1893, Sept. 1889.
3. Cf. International Board Reports, Vol. II, 1891-1905, pp. 1, 135.
4. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Canada withdrew from both organizations to form one of her own in the opening years of the twentieth century, which left the two national organizations. There had been a growing desire for union until in 1905 both organizations felt the time had come. Miss Grace H. Dodge of New York City, an outsider and yet one much interested,<sup>1</sup> was chosen as the chairman of a joint committee on union which had its headquarters at The Montclair, 541 Lexington Avenue, New York City. A new Constitution was drawn up with the following articles regarding name, purpose and basis of membership:<sup>2</sup>

#### Article I

##### Name and Purpose

Section I. Name--The name of this organization shall be the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America.

Section 2. Purpose--The purpose of this organization shall be to unite in one body, the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States; to establish, develop, and unify such Associations; to advance the physical, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual interests of young women; to participate in the world's Young WomensChristian Association.

#### Article II

----active membership, that is voting and office holding, is limited to women who are members of Protestant Evangelical Churches.

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1. Cf. Report of the Joint Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association, 1905-1906, p. 1.
2. Cf. Proceedings of the National Convention, 1906, p. 13.

"Evangelical" was held to be those churches that were entitled to representation in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America under the action taken by the Inter-Church Conference in 1905.<sup>1</sup>

Thus at the close of this first period of our study, provision had been made for one Association in the United States and it is this Association with which we shall be concerned in the remainder of our study.

b. Confederation and Expansion, 1906-1920.

As was indicated at the close of the study in the last period, measures were taken for union which became a reality in 1906 at the first Biennial Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America held in South Church, New York City, December 5th and 6th. The Constitution drawn up by the Joint Committee was accepted and an Executive Committee, the National Board set up headquarters at the Montclair, 541 Lexington Avenue, New York City.<sup>2</sup> The following departments, as recommended by the Joint Committee, were created: City, Student, Industrial, Educational, and Bible.<sup>3</sup> In 1908 the National Board created a new department named The Extension whose object was "to bring the

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1. Cf. Proceedings of the National Convention, 1906, p. 13.  
2. Cf. Op. Cit.  
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 44.

activities of the Association within the reach of industrial workers."<sup>1</sup> There were three sub-divisions of this department: industrial, mill village and country. Miss Florence Simms was made the first industrial secretary. In 1910 she served as chairman of the International Committee on the Social and Industrial Awakening at the Convention of the World's Young Women's Christian Association in Berlin.<sup>2</sup> The resolutions of this committee were adopted by the National Convention of 1911 as follows:

Section XII

"Inasmuch as the utterly inadequate wages paid to thousands of young women throughout the country often hinders the work of the Association as a great preventive agency.....it is recommended:

- a. That the Association shall seek to educate public opinion regarding the need of establishing a minimum living wage and of regulating the hours of labor compatible with the physical health and development of wage earners.
- b. That the Association shall declare its belief in the right of a woman over sixteen years of age in good health, working a full day to earn a living wage which shall insure her the possibility of a virtuous livelihood.
- c. That the Association recognizing the necessity of legislation for the regulation of hours and wages for wage-earners in industry....hereby express its sympathy with the great purpose of determining by law a minimum wage for women.
- d. That the Association, while endeavoring to improve the industrial condition of the working girl, shall point stead-

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1. Cf. National Board Report, 1909, p. 76.
2. Cf. Wilson, Grace: The Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Young Women's Christian Association, p.31.

fastly to a higher standard of faithful service and achievement for the worker and of justice and consideration for the employer."<sup>1</sup>

Closer co-operation was sought with the Federal Council of Churches which adopted a Social platform in 1912.<sup>2</sup> This need for co-operation was expressed at the 1915 Convention:

"Ours is an Association whereby the young women of the churches are banded together to do a work for other young women everywhere, according to the ideals (Social) of the church..... In view of this we have sought a closer relationship with all denominations."<sup>3</sup>

At this same convention there was added to the original purpose an ultimate purpose:

"The ultimate purpose of all its efforts shall be to seek to bring young women to such a knowledge of the Savior and Lord as shall mean for the individual young woman fulness of life and development of character and shall make the organization as a whole an effective agency in the bringing in of the Kingdom of God among young women."<sup>4</sup>

From 1915 to 1920 there were no conferences in response to the government's appeal to help keep railroads free for war transportation. In August 1918, the Young Women's

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1. Proceedings of the National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Association, 1911, p. 108.
2. Cf. Wilson, Grace: The Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Young Women's Christian Association, p. 83.
3. Proceedings of the National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Association, 1915, p. 16.
4. Ibid., p. 59.

Christian Association organized a National War Work Council which had full responsibility of all war emergency work in the United States and abroad. Its aim was the "usual program of the Association." With the signing of the Armistice, adjustments were made to meet the changing conditions, and in October 1919, the Council was dissolved and the National Association began its program of reconstruction.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we bring the history of this period to a close with the realization of a need for a greater fellowship with the churches in an extended effort to bring about better industrial conditions in the United States, made more apparent than ever by the war demands for workers in industry. With this background the Young Women's Christian Association launched forth in a program of reconstruction.

c. Reconstruction and Reorganization, 1920-1934

Just as the first biennial convention in 1906 was a culmination of the preceding years, so the Convention of 1920 marks a high peak in the Association's growing interest in better industrial standards. Emphasis has been laid on the social teachings of Jesus, and there was a growing sympathy and appreciation for labor's desire to share in the profits and management of industry. At the

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1. Cf. Report of the National War Work Council, pp. 3-60.

Convention of 1920, the Young Women's Christian Association adopted the "Social Ideals of the Churches" as its social platform.<sup>1</sup>

There came to the Association a new responsibility of educating for citizenship when women were granted suffrage in 1919.<sup>2</sup> According to the modern educational philosophy, the Association increased this emphasis in its program, stressing the growth of each individual, in the development of personality, as the supreme value in the universe. But the individual was not to be considered apart from his social environment for he grows as he contributes to the group.<sup>3</sup> This has led the Association to stress self-governing groups and programs built around group interests, such as: minimum wage laws, immigration, industrial relations, international relations, marriage and divorce, and responsibilities of citizenship.<sup>4</sup>

Coincident with the new social outlook and the added emphasis on education that has characterized this period of association history, there has come a felt need for changes in purpose and basis of membership.

Held over for study from the 1915 Convention was the suggestion of the Student Group for an alternate basis of active membership instead of the evangelical church

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1. Cf. Proceedings of the National Convention of Y. W.C.A., 1920, pp. 102-103.
  2. Cf. Wilson, Grace: The Religion and Educational Philosophy of the Y.W.C.A., p. 113.
  3. Cf. Proceedings of National Convention of Y.W.C.A.p. 153
  4. Personal interview with Association Secretaries.

membership, which would declare: "It is my purpose to live as a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ". The 1920 Convention passed the amendment suggested by students and which was to affect them only.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, however, suggestion was made for an alternate basis of membership for city Associations. Most interesting discussions followed at the succeeding conventions in 1922 and 1924 when commissions appointed for study reported their findings. In 1926 the proposed amendment was passed and the alternate basis of membership states thus:

"Any woman or girl of the community over eighteen years of age, may become an elector in the Association provided she makes the following declaration: I desire to enter the Christian fellowship of this Association.. I will loyally endeavor to uphold the purpose in my own life and through my membership in the Association!"<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly enough, the Conventions of 1928, 1930 and 1932 discussed the advisability of purpose and this sentiment was expressed: "We need a purpose expressed in words that are easily understood, a purpose that will interpret itself."<sup>3</sup> A Commission was appointed for study in 1931 and authorized to write a new statement of purpose in 1932. This statement was presented and voted acceptable in 1934.<sup>4</sup> This change was felt necessary because the younger membership in the

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1. Cf. Proceedings of National Convention of Y.W.C.A., 1920, p. 165
2. Proceedings of National Convention of Y.W.C.A., 1926, p. 59
3. Proceedings of National Convention of Y.W.C.A., 1932, p. 69
4. Cf. Proceedings of National Conventions of Y.W.C.A., 1928, 1930, 1932-1934. Basis of Membership.



Association, (170,000 young women in industry and business), came from diversity of background, religious tradition, and levels of experience.<sup>1</sup>

"The Commission has formulated a personal basis which asks for commitment to great ideals of living rather than to theological statements of belief."<sup>2</sup>

This new purpose offered by the Association is an alternate basis of membership in Section 2 of Article II - membership of the Constitution and is stated thus:

" . . . . .To build a fellowship of women and girls devoted to the task of realizing in our common life those ideals of personal and social living to which we are committed by our faith as Christians. In this endeavor we seek to understand Jesus, to share his love for all people, and to grow in the knowledge and love of God."<sup>3</sup>

Qualifications for electors:

" Any woman of the community eighteen years of age or over, who accepts this purpose by assenting to the following declaration shall be entitled to membership in the Association: ". . . I desire to belong to this fellowship and to share in the responsibility for the realization of its purpose."<sup>4</sup>

During 1931 changes came about in the set-up of the National Board which are being received throughout the Association program. Instead of departments of work, as formerly, there are now divisions: Laboratory, National

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1. Cf. Proceeding of National Convention, Y.W.C.A., 1934, p. 135
2. Ibid., p. 136
3. Ibid., p. 146
4. Ibid., 1934, p. 146

Services, and Leadership.<sup>1</sup> Departments, as such, are breaking down in local associations in the efforts of a great 'activities program' which unites people on a basis of interest rather than class distinction, and more truly carries with it the idea of a "fellowship in the Association."<sup>2</sup>

We now turn from a study of the present national guiding principles as viewed in the light of the past, to a study of the national program emphases in relation to the needs of young women, as an expression of their national principles.

## 2. National Program Emphases in Relation to the Needs of Young Women in Industry

With the background of the national guiding principles of the Young Women's Christian Association, we are better able to understand and appreciate the present national program emphases in relation to the needs of young women in industry. We shall think of the present program emphases, in the light of the three historical periods in which we have been studying the Association in their relation to the (a) physical, (b) social, (c) mental, (d) moral and spiritual needs of young women in industry. Each of these will be treated respectively in their developing historical emphases, that the present program may be better understood in the light of the past.

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1. Cf. Wilson, Grace: The Religious and Educational Philosophy of Y.W.C.A., pp. 131-132
2. Personal Interviews

- a. Physical - Physical Culture, (1858-1906) Social Hygiene, (1906-1921) Health Education, (1930-1931)

The Health Education emphases of the present has in it the desire of the Association to give more personal health science to the individual as well as teaching facts to groups concerning healthful living. Each of these was a main emphasis of the past in relation to the physical needs of young women in industry and were known in the developing program as physical culture and social hygiene.

(1) Physical Culture, 1858-1906

The gymnasium of the first historical period with its formal exercises was the instrument of the national program emphasis as stated in The Evangel:

"Any agency by which the amount and quality of our service to the Master is increased and developed is Christian; therefore, a gymnasium may be a Christian agency. . . . We do desire that our young women may know how to gain and retain health; to be muscularly strong for the arduous duties. . . We wish them to have an intelligent conception of the meaning of clean, pure, self respecting womanhood, shorn of its common weaknesses and defects."<sup>1</sup>

The training which was given was at a moderate price to exclude no one, and has as its program<sup>2</sup>

- a. correction of bodily defects by prescription work
- b. Teaching the laws of health through regular class suggestions
- c. Furnishing a wholesome recreation and relaxation
- d. Exercising scientifically toward an all-round development.

. . . . .

- 1. The Evangel, 1900 May., p. 72
- 2. Cf. The Evangel, 1904 April, p. 13

The place of physical culture in this period of history is expressed in a statement by Miss Grace H. Dodge, beloved leader of girls who quotes Miss Allice Hopkins in her answer to the question, "What is being done to make women physically strong?"

"We need reverence for the body taught with far more emphasis than it is at present. If we can only get our girls to realize that from the soles of their feet to the crown of their heads their bodies belong to Christ."<sup>1</sup>

(2) Social Hygiene, 1906-1920.

In the second historical period of our study it was factory girls en masse in which the Association was interested primarily. There were so few who came to the Association building for corrective exercises compared with the great number untouched in the factories, that the Association decided to take health suggestions to them in an Extension program. <sup>2</sup> Many employers were receptive to these suggestions for the better health of their workers and assisted materially in providing equipment for physical exercises, games, health talks, and relaxation measures during the noon hour.

The Commission on Social Morality of the Federal

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1. Report of the International Board, 1885, p. 25
2. Cf. The Association Monthly 1911, March. Why Have an Extension Department? p. 20

Council of Churches received the endorsement of the 1915 Convention by an enlistment of the Association resources in a crusade for a wide-spread knowledge of the laws of health and chastity.<sup>1</sup>

Especially was the benefit of the social hygiene emphasis felt in the war-work done by the Association in government-controlled industries, into which thousands of women entered under the pressure of mobilization. Provisions were not adequate for sufficient recreation and the Association sought to remedy this by building centers where the physical needs of young women could be met and instruction given in hygienic dress and recreation. Thirty-four vacation camps were supplied where twenty thousand girls spent a week or two or even week-ends. In some places large cafeterias were supplied where good hot food was available at a reasonable price. In April 1919, the war work Council sent an Industrial Commission abroad to take counsel with European women in regard to standards of work and their joint responsibility for safe-guarding the health of women workers.

A Social Morality Committee also appointed by the war work Council sent out a corps of doctors to lecture on Social Hygiene. From June 1, 1917 to July 1, 1919 11, 273 lectures were given by 183 doctors in 1204 communi-

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1. Cf. Proceedings of Convention, Y.W.C.A., 1915, p. 40

ties to 1,593,303 women and girls.<sup>1</sup>

Social hygiene for women workers of the nation was the national program emphasis of this period.

### (3) Health Education. 1920-1934

This emphasis of the present program includes all that is necessary for one to be at her best. From individual corrective exercises to all forms of social recreation, there is an attempt to release in young women the strength to meet the physical strain of life under present industrial conditions. This was expressed in convention discussion:

"We want women in industry to command the best wages that they can be paid for the work they do, and one way is to make men believe that women believe in themselves enough to stand by their job every day in the year".<sup>2</sup>

Program suggestions are further stated:

"Stress has been laid on the skills of individuals such as golf, horseback riding, swimming which a girl can use by herself in her leisure. An effort has been made to coordinate the program of health activities in health education departments with the club programs of the business and industrial girls, in order to meet their needs at rates which they can pay. Unemployment programs have stimulated game rooms, play nights, and free recreation groups. Social dancing is increasing in classes for mixed groups."<sup>3</sup>

The following action which expresses the Health

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1. Cf. War Work Council of Y.W.C.A., pp. 29-32
2. Proceedings of Convention Y.W.C.A., 1930, p. 90
3. Report of National Board, 1932, p. 29

to her long day of toil and evening finds her worn and weary climbing again the creaking stairs to her poor apartment. What shall she do in the evening?----She is too weary to work and she must have a change. What wonder if she spends the free hours on the street or in places of amusement which are questionable---What can the Christian Association do? It can build them a home--not a boarding-house--with cheerful warmth, baths, public parlors, a library with stimulating books for leisure, morning and evening worship, evening Bible classes and dear cozy prayer-meetings which stimulate and warm the soul, and on the Sabbath, the going in company to church."<sup>1</sup>

From a paper read at a Convention in 1891 on "Working Girls' Homes--Should They Be Self-Supporting?", the responsibility of the Association was particularly stressed in its planning for young women in industry. It was felt that if they under-charged girls it would be doing them a social injustice by indirectly lowering the rate of women's wage. Individual adjustments could be made that would place charity on an individual basis rather than from class to class.<sup>2</sup>

In suggestions for directing the recreational activities of a home we find the following:

"-----Plenty of Home Amusements-----  
Make things as attractive as possible.  
Take suggestions from the girls about what they like best to do----Meet them on the common ground of earnest Christian womanhood, share heartily with them in their amusements and let them fully realize that

. . . . .

1. International Board Report, 1883, p. 23.
2. Cf. International Board Reports, 1891, pp. 59-62.

program emphasis of Health Education was taken at a recent convention:

"Resolved that the Associations in all their group and activity departments place renewed emphasis on a program of play and general recreation----and that this program shall be built to meet present individual needs and be characterized by the participation of the many."<sup>1</sup>

- b. Social--Boarding-Homes and Recreation, (1858-1906); Federal Clubs, (1906-1920); Activities, (1920-1934).

The present emphasis on Activities to meet the social needs of young women in industry is a combination of the program emphases of the other periods. It is Recreation through clubs. The added emphasis on Boarding-Homes in the first period sustains a very close connection with the emphasis on recreation for the boarding-homes furnished the necessary environment for wholesome living and recreation.

(1) Boarding- Homes and Recreation, 1858-1906.

The social need of young women in industry for a comfortable home within reach of her means as an emphasis of the program of the first period is revealed in a paper given at an early convention:

"Look for a moment at the condition of the working woman. In the morning she awakens in a little bare room in a miserable boarding-house--the best her narrow means afford. Hastily dressing, she hurries to her uninviting breakfast, perhaps laid in a cheap restaurant, perhaps prepared by herself in a narrow room. Unrefreshed, she goes out

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1. Report of Convention Proceedings, Y.W.C.A., 1930, p. 53



you not only need their help but value it.---  
Let them sometimes bring their men friends.  
Win their confidence and interest at any cost  
of time and trouble, and by degrees---lift  
the grade of what you offer them, until ere  
long, without knowing it, they will choose  
the best for themselves and lose all taste  
for any other."<sup>1</sup>

(2) Federated Clubs, 1906-1920.

The club was considered the "most flexible activity in the Association."<sup>2</sup> Six things to be considered when studying a given piece of Association work with reference to the organization of clubs were given as follows:<sup>3</sup>

1. What results do we desire to see in the lives of the individuals themselves?
2. What is the point of view of the girls with reference to their needs and ideals?
3. What will such a club mean to the Association, from the standpoint of strength and publicity?
4. What need in the city or industrial center can be presented to this group as a possible object for their organization?
5. What steps are to be used in developing the work so that girls will actually meet a given need, and through the planning and executing of the work, grow as individuals into strong and noble womanhood?
6. The necessity of proceeding from the known to the unknown. Too few are willing to begin at the place and in the manner outlined by the girls themselves.

The club was the unit of organization in the

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1. International Board Reports, 1887, pp. 44-45.
2. The Association Monthly, 1912, April, p. 95.
3. Cf. Op. Cit., p. 95.

Extension Department, whose goal was to bring to the Association, girls and women who work in factories, and to take the Association to them, that by recreation and comradeship new interests might be created and relief from the strain of the day's work made possible. There was also expressed a desire to awaken girls to the affairs of state and the problems in industry that they might have higher ideals for themselves as individuals and as members of society.<sup>1</sup> Leaders felt that club federation was the answer in striving for the goal:

1. "Girls are coming in groups asking to be organized.
2. Comradeship of girls from other factories means much--not winders, finishers, or anything else but happy carefree girlish girls.
3. A new respect for herself is born when she realizes that conditions under which she works may be changed. The strength that comes from unity the federation of clubs brings.
4. Underlying all the machinery of club organization is the one fundamental object--to create women who have a deep respect for themselves and who feel it a responsibility to give to society the best and noblest that is in them. Federation is a great plan; it demands our respect."<sup>2</sup>

The Association felt a new impetus in the federation of industrial clubs. There was fostered a spirit of competition and friendly rivalry as well as co-operation which greatly stimulated the membership of the Association.

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1. Cf. The Association Monthly, 1914, July, p. 217.  
2. Op. Cit., pp. 218-219.

For the first time it seemed that girls from great industries were becoming a vital part of the Association<sup>1</sup> and because of the method of self-government they were helping to promote democracy.<sup>2</sup>

Very often a club was the beginning of a branch association. Employers even went so far, in some cases, as to build club houses to be used not only by the girls in their factories, but by all the girls and women in the neighborhood. These club houses were operated by the Young Women's Christian Association.<sup>3</sup>

Not only was the Association work expanded through extension clubs to reach factory girls, but they through the clubs were becoming articulate concerning their own conditions of labor. Their problems were recognized as a matter of common responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

### (3) Activities, 1920-1934.

The Activities program is a vital spot in the life of the Association today. The unit of organization may be a club or an interest group which meets for recreation and enjoyment. Music, drama, handcraft, and writing have

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1. Cf. The Association Monthly, 1914, September, p. 283.
2. Cf. Proceedings of National Convention of Y.W.C.A., 1915, p. 17.
3. Cf. The Association Monthly, 1912, May, pp. 117-118.
4. Cf. The Association Monthly, 1915, Sept., p. 349.

been rich sources for program material as the "opportunity of the Association for the enrichment of personality through the development of artistic appreciation is more and more recognized!"<sup>1</sup> New and better educational ideas are being applied to the use of materials in many interesting experiments.

Folk festivals are becoming increasingly valuable. They give a new appreciation not only of American folk lore but of other countries as well through the song, dance and drama. International Institutes have emphasized this feature of the Association program for some years but there has been a new emphasis felt in recent years in that there have been needed forms to offset the "frustration caused by the depression and consequent loss of employment."<sup>2</sup> The Association is challenged in these days of enemployment to experiment in the creative use of leisure.<sup>3</sup>

- c. Mental--Industrial Classes, 1858-1906; Social Instruction, 1906-1920; Study Groups, 1920-1934.

At the present time study groups are formed to stimulate thought about social and industrial problems. These groups are the outcome of a growing emphasis through the years on workers' education which was made manifest by

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1. Cf. National Board Report, 1932, p. 36.
2. Cf. Op. Cit., National Board Report, 1932, p. 36.
3. Cf. Proceedings of National Convention, 1930, p. 54.

the organization of industrial classes and later by study groups for workers to discover their industrial problems.

(1) Industrial Classes, 1858-1906.

In the early years of Association history, women who were facing the problems of incapable laborers in the ranks and how to make young women more efficient felt the necessity for industrial classes. These included instruction in: sewing, cooking, nursing, embroidery, fancy work, free-hand drawing, sketching, photography, music, and the common branches. To help girls to realize their need for perseverance and steadfastness in advancing themselves was most difficult for

"It is a painful fact, however, that a large majority of our working women lack steadfastness of purpose and concentration of effort. Hence, with many the best of life is never reached because of its aimlessness, and as a result we have unskilled labor and consequent low wages."<sup>1</sup>

The object of the industrial classes may be stated thus:

- a. Proficiency in the work at hand.
- b. The uplifting of womanhood and the development of Christian character.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Social Instruction, 1906-1920.

In an article entitled "The Association's Relation to Industrial Efficiency" we get this interesting

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1. Proceedings of the International Conference of Women's Christian Associations, 1883, p.40
2. Proceedings of the International Conference of Women's Christian Associations, 1893, p. 24

comment:

"We hear much about the low wages of the working girl and are appalled by the facts that 47% of the girls working in a great city are earning less than a conservatively-estimated living wage. This is one side of a serious individual problem, but there is another side. There are fair standards of efficiency in each occupation by conformity to which on the part of the employees, the employer may expect to receive full value for wages paid. When judged by these standards many girls are not worth the wages they ought to be able to earn." <sup>1</sup>

The article proceeds with the idea that the inward impulse toward education is rarely sufficiently powerful to overcome the weariness of school attendance or the natural craving for excitement as a reaction to the routine of school attendance. If then, industrial girls are to be helped it must come from some outside influence. The Association steps in to fill that need by:<sup>2</sup>

1. Teaching her to know her physical self through everyday hygiene and practical physiology.
2. Teaching her to understand the management of her own earnings so that she may get real value from them.
3. Teaching her home-making arts as an asset to draw upon in the present and still to a greater degree in the future.
4. Teaching her that the elementary subjects are necessary for a foundation if she would build further.
5. Teaching her a need for "personal growth and

. . . . .

1. The Association Monthly, 1911, November, p. 408  
2. Cf. Op. Cit., pp. 408-409.

expansion of horizon, some knowledge of the larger currents of life about her and the refining influence that comes from familiarity with good pictures and books."

While it is true that "working girls" are often too tired for mental effort, it is also true that the very change from their daily routine to study is a rest and a stimulus. The expression of a hard-working girl standing before the photograph of a wonderful Madonna was:

"It seems to me that it would be easy to be good if I could see that every day."<sup>1</sup>

### (3) Study Groups, 1920-1934.

With the vote extended to women, the Association recognized its task of educating for citizenship. One just needs to read the numerous articles in The Women's Press on Education to realize that the stress is on an intelligent public opinion to bring about the necessary legislation. A fact further stressed in present reports and in interviews is that an individual does not develop alone but through co-operative thinking. In the agendas of conventions and summer conferences and even in camp programs, study courses in minimum wage laws, immigration, international relations, marriage and divorce, hours, wages, and education for citizenship are given again and again.<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. Proceedings of National Convention of Y.W.C.A., 1909, p.27.  
2. Cf. Wilson, Grace, p. 98.

"Now what does this call for in the way of plans? This unduly reigning thought-- make Christ the center of the Spiritual department and Spiritualize the Secular departments. It means meetings that are a means to an end and not an end in themselves."<sup>1</sup>

The Association began Extension work in this first period of history in the organization of Bible Classes. An editorial writer of this period, speaking of the Bible Classes said:

"This is preeminently a work for the Association. Never has there been so keen an interest in Bible study. Never was there so large a demand for leaders in systematic study."<sup>2</sup>

It was suggested in an article on "The Physical Department" that the director form a class for Bible study for her pupils, and so "vastly increase her spiritual usefulness and influence."<sup>3</sup> The purpose of the Association as conceived in this period of its history is expressed in a paper given at a Convention of the International Young Women's Christian Associations in 1891:<sup>4</sup>

"Strike out the word Christian from our name and that which it represents from our work and the Association is a Sampson shorn of its strength. For this is the crystallizing element of strength--the element that brings all the others into shape--the element that is the life of the work. The salvation of the whole woman must have its foundation in the salvation of her soul. All that is done for physical, social, mental, and moral nature may

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1. The Evangel, 1891, November, p. 8.
2. The Evangel, 1896, November, p. 4.
3. The Evangel, 1900, May, p. 12.
4. P. 81.



Problems with which the study groups are concerned are the fear psychology installed into workers today and the ignorance of the workers.<sup>1</sup>

The goal of study groups is expressed thus:

"If we are to give our fellow workers at home and abroad a more abundant life, we will have to Socialize religion and Christianize economics."<sup>2</sup>

- d. Moral and Spiritual--Personal Evangelism, 1858-1906; Social Gospel, 1906-1920; Religious Education, 1920-1934.

In the present program emphasis of religious education, not only the development of personality, is considered important, but the need for building the Kingdom of God. "Over and over again there is going on in the Associations the patient struggle to live the good life co-operatively as well as individually,"<sup>3</sup> which combines the two main program emphases of the previous periods in relation to the moral and spiritual needs of young women in industry.

- (1) Personal Evangelism, 1858-1906.

The Young Women's Christian Association began in a prayer meeting and it was ever the thought of the early leaders that all Association activities lead to the one ultimate purpose of soul-winning expressed thus:

. . . . .

1. Cf. Proceedings of Convention of Y.W.C.A., 1924, p. 204.
2. Proceedings of Convention of W.W.C.A., 1924, p. 204.
3. Report of National Board, 1930, p. 122.

for a time seem helpful, but it is not lasting---(the) supreme object is to win young women to Christ. To accomplish this direct Christian means are employed--The Gospel meetings, prayer, Bible Study in general and in training classes and personal work with individuals."

Again the purpose is expressed in articles from the Association's periodical, statements from which we quote:

"The Association was not organized for educational work, nor for physical work, but to bring women to Christ and to develop them as Christians!"<sup>1</sup>

"There is only one thing in the world that lasts; that is the soul. And there is only one work which is enduring; that is soul-saving."<sup>2</sup>

The unity of purpose in the whole program of this first period is expressed in a further statement from the periodical:

"To win young women to Christ  
To build them up in Christ  
To send them out for Christ."<sup>3</sup>

## (2) Social Gospel, 1906-1920.

The fact that personal evangelism as a main program emphasis in meeting spiritual needs of young women in industry was being gradually replaced by a social emphasis in this second period of history is revealed in an article entitled "What Is the Matter with Our Religious Book?" part of which we quote:

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1. The Evangel, 1900, November, p. 20.
2. The Evangel, 1892, February, p. 9.
3. The Evangel, 1904, p. 102.

"-----Encouraging reports come from many cities but the largest Associations of the field, of which most might be expected, carried on the least amount of religious work, proportionately, from which fact may be drawn the conclusion that the cares of their larger boarding and educational departments have interfered with the fuller development of the more spiritual work. One Association put it thus, 'Some of our Secretaries are in no way religious workers!'"<sup>1</sup>

That the main weight of interest in the Association shifted from the personal to the social religious responsibility is made apparent in an article of the period:<sup>2</sup>

"The Industrial field is the battleground of American life today; it is where we are finding the wreckage....We need women to work there who have known life and the world, but have kept their rudders true.---We must see ourselves one with the common life, and the mystery by which all lives in this crowded world touch and interplay. We must extend our work among them on a fearless democratic scale."

The Association considered itself an integral part of the church for the National Constitution linked them with the Federal Council of Churches in North America. There was the hope expressed that more and more the churches would consider the Association an agent through which they would work:<sup>3</sup>

"It is the Association's definite obligation to the Church to make plain to the industrial workers our interest in them and to bring the high ideals of the Church in its social creed

. . . . .

1. The Association Monthly, 1916, March, p. 68.
2. The Association Monthly, 1912, May, pp. 118-119.
3. Cf. Proceedings of the National Convention of the Y.W.C.A., 1913, p. 13.

to the women of the community and the employers of labor."

The consciousness of the social responsibility in relation to the tremendous social movements which influenced women was felt to have old emphasis in the Association from its purpose which was not only "to associate young women in personal loyalty to Jesus Christ, but also to become a social force for the Kingdom of God." This latter phrase of the purpose was defined by the committee on "The Social Responsibility of the Young Women's Christian Association" to be the adoption of the resolutions of the World's Association Conference at Berlin in 1910:<sup>1</sup>

1. "The social significance of the teachings of Jesus Christ--the basis of the right social life of women.
2. The social and industrial problems of the day especially as they are found in (a) physical and economic requirements of working women, (b) the means of amelioration, offered by legislation and private endeavor, for conditions under which women live and work, (c) organization among working women."

With the felt trend away from personal evangelism to the social gospel emphasis we find in the 1915 Convention proceedings a recommendation recorded that board members and secretaries shall be "chosen with reference to their allegiance to the fundamental purpose of the Association." A special course of evangelism, at the request of

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1. Cf. The Association Monthly, 1916, July, p. 262.

the Commission on Character Standards which reported at this Convention, was introduced into the curriculum of the National Training School for Secretaries.<sup>1</sup>

(3) Religious Education, 1920-1934

For an understanding of the religious emphasis of the present, we must recall, from our study of the National Guiding Principles of this period, that the constituency of the membership is changed from what it was in the first two periods. The evangelical basis of active membership is no longer rigidly enforced but anyone may become a member of the Association who will accept the purpose which has been undergoing a similar change. In a discussion of the change of purpose at a recent convention the following statements reveal the conflicting views of two girls in the membership:

"Yesterday I saw your new purpose, and I saw you put just the name Jesus. I thought that perhaps you put it that way because you meant in Jesus, Jesus Christ. But one of your students said: 'We want to be perfectly honest. We want to put Jesus only, because Christ means Savior and we do not understand about the Savior; we have not had enough experience.'"<sup>2</sup>

The feeling seems prevalent among leaders of religious thought in the Association that "religion has not fitted its phraseology to the great industrialized and socialized world in which we are set----there is a growing sense

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1. Cf. Proceedings of National Convention, Y.W.C.A., 1915, p.43.  
2. Proceedings of the National Convention, Y.W.C.A., 1928, p.86.

of unreality in the expression of religions among the younger members."<sup>1</sup>

This is further expressed in the statement:

"We need a purpose expressed in words that are easily understood, a purpose that will interpret itself."<sup>2</sup>

The religious education emphasis of this period is expressed thus:

"In religious education, the Association reflects both the trends of modern educational thinking and the religious situation in the country today....The only thorough-going question in the Association is, "Does it work?" The past ten years have been significant in our religious development chiefly as years in which the Association has been growing in its contact with and understanding of modern life and has been searching for a new method of approach to religion in terms of modern life and modern educational method."<sup>3</sup>

The leadership of the Association recognizes that the country is in a "transition stage religiously as well as politically and economically; that there is need for a fresh study of methods of religious education as well as of Christianity as a philosophy of life."<sup>4</sup> We are called to remember that

"The ultimate test of Christian faith is in the life of action and that moral integrity is an important factor in the attainment of intellectual truth. Just as far as the Asso-

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1. Proceedings of the National Convention, Y.W.C.A., 1930, p.138.
2. Ibid., p. 153.
3. Proceedings of Convention, Y.W.C.A., 1928, pp. 78-79.
4. Cf. Proceedings of Convention, Y.W.C.A., 1930, p. 124.

ciation is true to its purpose to make Jesus' way of life effective in human society and is willing to pay the cost of this, just so far may we hope that it will promote 'for the individual young woman fulness of life and development of character and will be an effective agency in bringing in the Kingdom of God among young women.'"<sup>1</sup>

We bring to a close this part of our study in the present national program emphases in relation to the physical, social, mental, moral and spiritual needs of young women in industry with the realization that the past is truly reflected in the present and the present is the inevitable outcome of the past.

Our study would not be complete, however, if we did not see the national program emphases at work in a local Association. For this study we now turn to the Young Women's Christian Association in New York City.

C. The Program of the Young Women's Christian Association in the City of New York.

To complete the presentation of the program of the Young Women's Christian Association in relation to the needs of young women in industry, we turn from a study of the national guiding principles and program emphases to a study of their application in a local association--the Young Women's Christian Association in the City of New York. We shall consider first, a brief history of the Association

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1. National Board, Y.W.C.A., 1930, p. 124.

in its origin and expansion; and second, the program of the Association in relation to the needs of young women in industry: physical, social, mental, moral and spiritual.

1. A Brief History of the Young Women's Christian Association in the City of New York.

a. Its Origin.

The Ladies' Christian Union of the City of New York, the first organization of its kind in the United States, was formed in 1858 and became a part of the International Women's and Young Women's Christian Associations in the United States and Canada in 1871. From the Ladies' Christian Union grew a branch association which organized under the name "The Young Ladies' Christian Association" in 1871<sup>1</sup> but changed to "The Young Women's Christian Association" in 1876.<sup>2</sup> It is this organization with which we shall be further concerned. Something of the motives which prompted the young women to organize are revealed in one of their reports to the International Board of Women's Christian Associations:

"In the Young Women's Christian Association of New York no one can be an active member who does not serve regularly upon at least one of the standing committees or hold herself in readiness to do so.....The active membership

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1. Cf. Annual Report of the Young Ladies' Christian Association, 1871, p. 1-6.
2. Cf. Report of the Young Women's Christian Association, 1912, p. 17.



is confined almost exclusively to young persons, married or single; for the association was formed with special reference to opening a field in which young ladies, who had leisure and means at their command, could engage in systematic Christian work in behalf of their less favored sisters.... The work is exclusively devoted to the aid of young women who are dependent upon their own exertions for their support; all the privileges offered by the Association are freely open to them and they are known by the general term of 'applicants.'<sup>1</sup>

In 1912, in the interests of the metropolitan plan of organization, this Association shared its name and charter and became known as the Central Branch of the Young Women's Christian Association of the City of New York.<sup>2</sup>

b. Its Expansion.

With the adoption of the city plan, other Associations which had been functioning as separate units became a part of the whole Association of New York City. Through the years new branch associations have been added and new centers of work developed until at the present time there are "nineteen geographical spots where this program takes place."<sup>3</sup>

The Central Branch, located at 610 Lexington Avenue since 1917, is an activities center on the East Side housing a complete program which includes physical

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1. International Board Report, Vol. I, 1881, p. 87.
2. Cf. Annual Report of the Central Branch of the Y.W.C.A. in the City of New York, 1912, p. 17.
3. Cf. Annual Report of the Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York, 1933, p. 15.

education, social activities, clubs, a cafeteria, an employment bureau, personal service and room registry offices for the whole Association, and the Ballard School with classes in one hundred subjects.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of an industrial community, the West Side Branch which was opened in 1891<sup>2</sup> is the next oldest work in the city. It is located at 501 West 50th Street and is the activities center for the West Side. The program consists of educational classes and health and social features as well as the Craft Students' League. The West Side branch has always been noted for its community service work.<sup>3</sup>

At West 137th Street there is the Harlem branch which has a program of general activities--culture, health, and social--a residence, and a trades' school for colored women which is a very vital part of this branch. Harlem has gained a national reputation for being the best equipped Association for colored women in the country.

The International Institute, begun in 1911 to help foreign born women to learn English, to find employment, and to receive friendship in a strange land, is located at 341 East 17th. More than sixty nationalities are represented among the women who come to the Institute

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1. Cf. Ibid., Report of Personal Visitation.
2. Cf. Annual Report of the Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York, 1928, p. 7.
3. Cf. Ibid., 1933, p. 15.

for counsel in personal problems and to join the social and recreational groups under the leadership of nationality workers.

In addition to the residences connected with the International Institute and the West 137th Street Branch, there ~~are~~ the Margaret Louisa Apartments for business women, Spelman Hall, Tatham House, Central Club for Nurses, and The Studio Club, an art center.

Four camps for summer vacationing offer additional opportunities to young women.<sup>1</sup> In general, one might say the Young Women's Christian Association in New York City is a service organization which aims to:

- House young women.
- Find employment for young women.
- Provide a better health program.
- Prepare young women to be self-supporting.
- Provide educational opportunities.
- Provide social contact.
- Provide vacation and week-end camps.
- Help young women with their personal problems through social agencies, and a medical and psychiatric clinic.<sup>2</sup>

To discover how these aims are met we turn to a study of the local program.

2. The Local Program as Related to the Needs of Young Women in Industry.

The present program stresses consideration of

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1. Cf. Annual Report of the Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York, 1933, pp. 15-16.
2. Cf. Annual Report of the Y. W. C. A. of the City of New York, 1931, p. 3.

the girl herself as a whole person, and there is a readiness to place the Association's resources at her disposal. Gradually the departmental idea of work is breaking down and girls are no longer labelled with reference to their work such as business, college, home, or industrial, but come to the Association activities in response to felt needs.<sup>1</sup>

The whole program is worked out under two divisions: Services and Activities. The former includes Employment, Room Registry, Personal Service, Food Service, and Residences. The latter includes Education, Physical Education, Clubs, Interest Groups, and Special Events.<sup>2</sup>

Though the program of the "whole Association is for the whole girl," nevertheless for the sake of emphasis, we shall consider the program in relation to the needs of young women in industry which needs are physical, social, mental, moral and spiritual.

a. The Program in Relation to Physical Needs.

Attractive folders announce the program of the Health Education Department in which is included:

Gymnastics

Gym and Sports

General Gym

Reducing Gym

Advanced Gym--Apparatus, Tumbling.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Op. Cit., 1931, p. 10.

2. Cf. Annual Report of Y.W.C.A. of New York, 1930, p. 10.

THE ACTIVITIES PROGRAM OF THE CENTRAL BRANCH Y.W.C.A., NEW YORK CITY 1934

ACTIVITIES DIVISION.

CLUBS, INTEREST GROUPS, SOCIAL GROUPS, SPECIAL CLASSES

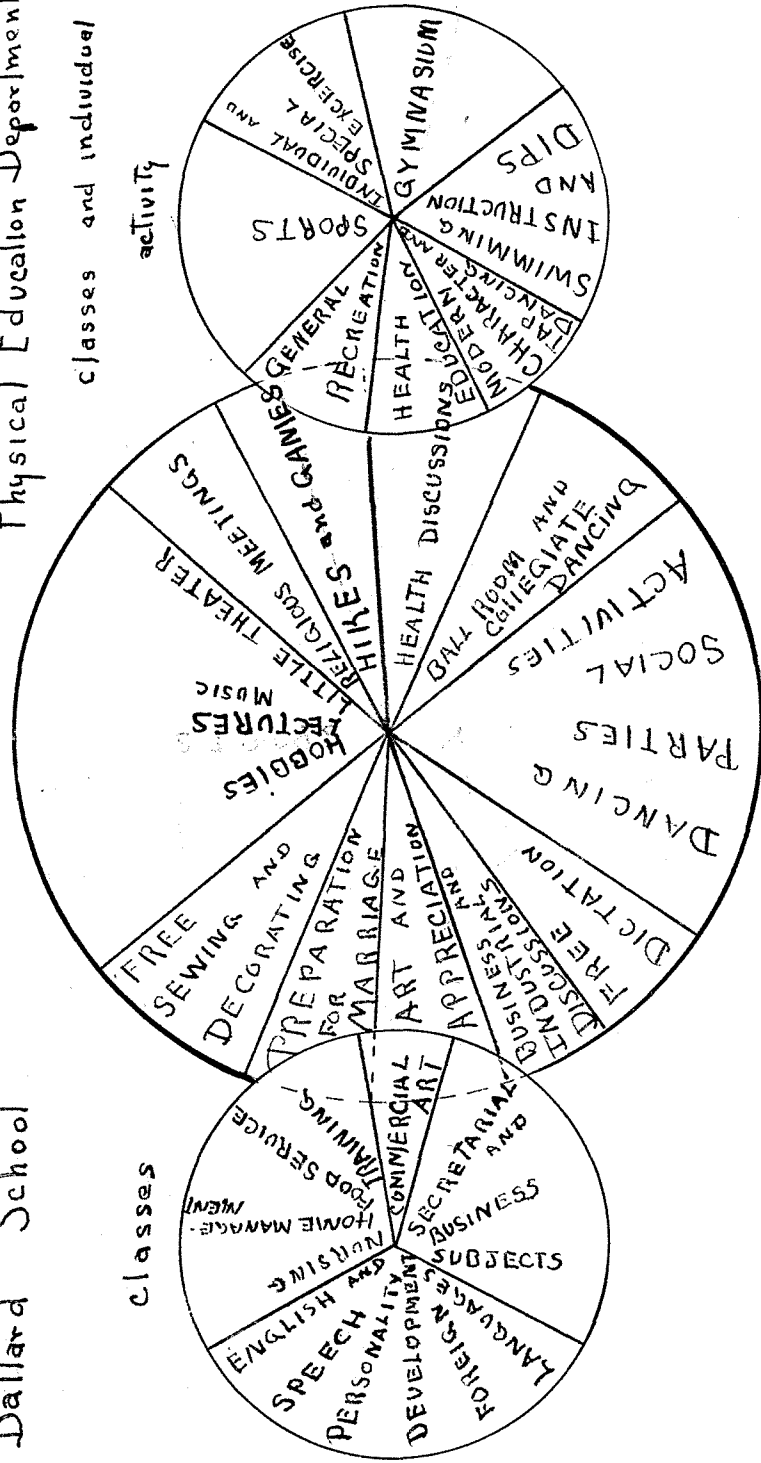
Ballard School

Physical Education Department

classes and individual

classes

activity



Individual Activity

Special Exercise  
Rhythmics for Body Balance

Dancing

The Modern Dance  
Character Dancing  
Tap Dancing  
Repertory  
Rhythmic and Folk Dancing

Sports

Tennis  
Badminton  
Golf  
Fencing  
Sports Club  
Horseback Riding and Ice Skating  
Play Night and Splash Party

Swimming

Girls in industry are always found in teams or in group activities, and rarely in individual sports. Tap dancing is exceedingly popular with them. Because of unemployment they do not enter the health activities where fees are required, but they do enjoy the free dancing, and opportunities in the gymnasium.<sup>1</sup>

b. The Program in Relation to Social Needs.

On the Association bulletin boards outside and inside, in the lobbies and on literature tables, attractive posters and literature announce coming social events such as "Membership Dances, A Delightful Soiree (ball-room dancing), and Bridge Clubs." Then, if one might feel she is not equal socially for these occasions, there are

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1. From Personal Interview.

classes for the development of "Personality" and "Social Usage."<sup>1</sup>

The Activities given above are planned for those who have "jobs" for there are fees attached, but for the unemployed there are afternoon opportunities for creative arts, for classes in shorthand and typing, and for social contacts in dancing and bridge.<sup>2</sup>

There is no extension work being done in factories at present through personal visitation or in factory activities. The general publicity committee for the whole Association does distribute literature in factories which the employer may give out if he chooses. Many girls have their first acquaintance with the Association that way, while others are brought through individual contact of the girls themselves.

There are interest groups for discussion in which are found girls who work in factories taking their place with business, college, and home girls. One group of just such a personnel became interested in international relationships through an International Arts and Crafts exhibit at the "Y". They have been lead into a study of the life, customs, and contributions of many nations. This series of discussions will end with a dinner in the near future at which a representative from another country

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1. Cf. "Spring Tonic" Sheets of Activities at Central Branch 1935.
2. From Personal Interview.

will speak on the country's contribution to modern thought and economic life.

Free opportunities are offered girls for learning folk songs and dances from many lands.

Then, there are neighborhood clubs and clubs built up by the girls themselves which offer educational and social opportunities. During the course of the year, clubs meet together for lectures on such topics as Health, Marriage, Trends in Science, and Social Security. Opportunity for questions is given at the close of these lectures which help girls to clarify their problems.

One cannot enter the Association buildings without feeling "Activity" in the very atmosphere.

c. The Program in Relation to Mental Needs.

A variety of classes are offered to girls at moderate cost such as:

Amateur Photography  
Tips on Trips  
Astronomy  
Music  
Art Shows  
Article Writing  
Short Story Writing  
Piano Lessons  
Little Theatre  
Book and Authors' Night  
Chorus singing  
This New York

. . . . .

1. Central Branch Literature, 1935.



d. The Program in Relation to Moral and Spiritual Needs.

Besides the religious values gained from discussion on such topics as "The Purpose of the Association," and "A Philosophy of Life," there are "brief Chapel services every Tuesday and Thursday mornings in the auditorium from 9:00 to 9:25. The following is an announcement for Sunday afternoons:

"New comers are welcome every Sunday at the Sunday Afternoon Club. Lantern talks followed by a discussion period are announced for March and April. On March 24th, Dr. Harry Taylor will show movies of England and Italy. Come at 4:30 P.M."<sup>1</sup>

The Young Women's Christian Association of the City of New York offers a program of activities as diverse as the interests of girls can be, yet a "co-ordinating bond runs through this program in which---(the) members participate--the bond of education--cultural, vocational and avocational."<sup>2</sup>

D. Summary

The Young Women's Christian Association is a fellowship of girls and women--local, national, and international. The Association in the United States began in a prayer meeting in New York City in 1858 because of the members' desire "to unite their efforts to do good among their own sex." Their program of work included opportuni-

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1. Central Club Literature, 1935.
2. Annual Report of the Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York, 1930, p. 10.

ties for physical development , the provision of comfortable homes and wholesome recreation, and the organization of classes where skills could be developed with ever one ultimate purpose in mind--"to seek to bring young women to such a knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord as shall mean for the individual young woman fulness of life and development of character."

Associations were formed in schools and colleges as well as cities with a common purpose but divided into two organizations in both of which Canada was included. At the withdrawal of Canada in the beginning of the twentieth century, the two national organizations sought union. This was effected in 1906 when the Young Women's Christian Association of the United States of America came into being with an executive committee, the National Board, whose headquarters were in New York City.

In the midst of the deplorable conditions in industry manifested by strikes and general unrest in the period 1906-1920, the Association received an enlarged vision of its possibilities for service and there was added to the original purpose the statement "to make the organization as a whole an effective agency in the bringing in of the Kingdom of God among young women." It was found necessary to take the Association to young women in industry in an extension program by which in factories at noon-time, and in further contacts in industrial neigh-

borhood centers, the needs of young women were met. The program included teaching social hygiene, forming clubs based on felt needs, and helping girls to be aware of their own responsibility in raising the status of their sex in industry, with the inspiration of Jesus' social teachings permeating it all.

The post-war years brought new problems to the Associations for more young women than ever before had entered the ranks of industry and were forced to work as human machines at a terrific rate of speed under the pressure of the profit motive. As a consequence the needs of young women were greater than ever before and the Association launched forth on a reconstruction program of education from 1920 to the present in an endeavor to meet their needs. The program included health education, activities, and study groups with a growing conviction that the ultimate purpose through all activity is "to make Jesus' way of life effective in human society." To this end the Young Women's Christian Association has been "searching for a new method of approach to religion in terms of modern life and modern educational method."

In our study thus far, we have presented the needs of young women in industry and the program of the Young Women's Christian Association in relation to these needs. We now come to a critical analysis and evaluation of the program of the Young Women's Christian Association in relation to the needs of young women in industry.

CHAPTER IV

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAM OF  
THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
AS RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

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In our presentation of the needs of young women in industry and the program of the Young Women's Christian Association as related to these needs, we have used an historical approach that in the light of past developments the present needs and program may be more clearly understood. The question to which our study thus far leads is, "Does the present program of the Young Women's Christian Association meet the needs of young women in industry?"

"The Young Women's Christian Association is an educational institution," and because it is free to use informal methods it realizes that it has latent within it opportunities for great service to the world and therefore great responsibilities. With the recent emphasis on adult education, there being no limit to learning, and the shift from a material-centered to a person-centered program in education, the Young Women's Christian Association has an unprecedented opportunity because of its set-up, equipment, and vital contact in a community "to be one of the great educational forces in the country."

Though we do consider the whole personality of a young woman as an essential viewpoint in every presentation

of her needs and the program projected to meet these needs, and though we do realize that any attempt to strictly classify the needs or the program related to them is fertile because of the very nature of personality, yet, for the sake of emphasis, we shall consider an analysis of the present program as it is related to the needs of young women in industry in the four-fold manner we have used thus far in our study. There will be an analysis of the Health Education, Activities, Study Groups and Religious Education programs.

A. A Critical Analysis of the Health Education Program

Young women are caught in the wheels of an industrial civilization and are identified with the machines they operate. Constant pressure and speeding-up measures because of competition and the profit-motive, work physical havoc in the lives of young women. The physical properties such as ventilation, illumination, and sanitation are inadequate; the maintenance of one position either standing or sitting is unquestionably detrimental to health; and a nervous strain from incessant labors and the constant roar and pounding of machinery is inevitable! On the other hand, employers are hardened to any suggestions of improvement in the status quo because of the ignorance and indifference of young women to proper conditions of sanitation and health. How then are these physical needs met?

Health as we have seen in our study has always been a major interest in the program of the Young Women's Christian Association. At first, activities buildings were provided with proper ventilation and sufficient equipment for an attractive and comfortable environments. Later gymnasiums were added, and still more recently, swimming pools.

In this desirable atmosphere with professionally-trained directors of health education, it has been possible in informal classes and lectures to teach constructively the facts of health and social hygiene. The Association recognizes that young women must know their physical selves in order to intelligently secure the necessary additional health benefits which their work-environment does not provide. One way that the Association is helping young women is by following up those who have had a standard medical examination.<sup>1</sup>

Recreation is also a part of the health education program. But when a girl is worried about the uncertainty of her work or her lack of it, of what avail is all the recreation that can be offered?

The Association is well equipped for the best methods of education to be applied in the interests of health , and yet there is something lacking. How shall young women be led to desire clean and pure bodies as

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1. Cf. Report of National Board, Y.W.C.A., 1932, p. 29.

physically fit as it is possible to make them? Under the nervous strain of our age, the girl in industry takes a cigarette to calm her tired nerves and as she sits in her club or interest group in the Association discussing the last dance or planning for the next bridge she must needs smoke. Does the knowledge that she is poisoning her own body and hazarding the well-being of the next generation mean anything to her? If she knows the facts, why does she continue to smoke? Knowledge of health laws is not enough to insure their being obeyed. How can right attitudes be created? What power is offered? Toward what goal is health education striving? With these questions uppermost in our minds let us turn to the next phase of our analysis, the activities program.

B. A Critical Analysis of the Activities Program.

The factory environment, as we have seen, offers little opportunity for social contact. Each girl labors swiftly with no time for conversation during the working hours. The noon hour, without a lunch or recreation room in many factories, fails to give the opportunity for forming friendships or engaging in competitive sports and games. The membership dances offer opportunity for acquaintance with men who have come by invitation, and with girls from various walks of life. This social function is considered the leavening factor in breaking down class distinctions and divisions. There are many more social op-



portunities such as game nights, roller skating parties, gym parties, and swimming parties in all of which girls in industry do participate.

The self-governing club or discussion group offers an opportunity for personal expression, and the girl who is just another cog in the wheel at work may become a leader of her group through encouragement and her participation in club activities. Among the social features, the girls make plans for the entertainment of their boy friends at dances or bridge parties given in the social recreation room at which time there are many opportunities for the leader to bring up questions of social standards.

Through numerous activities, diversified as the interests of the girls themselves, the social needs of young women in industry are being met. But what is the center around which they all revolve? What lifts the social standards to a higher plane and insures their remaining there?

There are study groups in the clubs as well as study interest groups to which we now turn for analysis.

### C. A Critical Analysis of the Study Groups Program

The Association offers many fine opportunities for study, such as in music, poetry, drama, art, folk songs and dances, discussions on life philosophy and problems, and current topics of city, national, and international

interest. We have seen in our study of the factory girl that the very monotony of work produces mental stagnation. Then, too, the weariness at the end of the day is not conducive to study. But it has also been suggested that very often a change, though it taxes one's mental powers, offers a rest and a stimulus.

Through discussions in study groups the horizons of young women are pushed back and they are lifted out of their little world with its perplexing problems into a view of world conditions with all the distracting elements: where greed and the selfish lust of a few persons are seeking to lead nations into war; where schemes of government are being tried at a great price to humanity; where nations in the interests of building a new social order have forgotten God. What, after all, is to be a young woman's attitude toward the world situations in which she finds herself as well as the every-day occurrences in her immediate environment? Does she take it all as a matter of course? Does she despair of better conditions? How can right attitudes be assured in her relationship to the world? We now turn to the critical analysis of the religious education program which is related to the young woman's moral and spiritual needs.

#### D. A Critical Analysis of the Religious Education Program.

The Association has labored earnestly through the

years to bring about changes in the environment of young women in industry by educating public opinion that legislation might be effected. But what of the employer who refuses to measure up to legislative requirements, and a girl who needs a "job" and must work under hard conditions? Has she any equipment to meet the discouragements that surround her?

There are religious values gained through discussion groups on the Purpose of the Association, through posters at Christmas time, and through Easter meditations by way of poster suggestions and Lenten talks on Sundays preceding Easter. There are discussions on religion as such, and the Association feels that if a girl expresses the best she knows about God and Jesus and is sincere it doesn't really matter what attitude she may have because of her background and previous training. There is a tendency on the part of leadership to be uncertain as to the way to interpret religion in modern terms to fit modern life. There are suggestions that further study must be made before one can be articulate. But what of the young woman? Her mind, as a later adolescent, is filled with doubts and questionings. Is there no certainty, no assurance for her? Must she wait until the answer is worked out through further study? What of her spiritual needs today? What of her attitude toward God, Christ, and the development of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth?

E. Summary

The Young Women's Christian Association is an educational force in the United States, and its program might be adequate to meet the needs of young women in industry if education could be considered sufficient. But in our critical analysis of the program we find that education emphasizes the need for a strong and healthy body, but it offers no power to help the young woman to make the health laws effective in her life. Education can raise high social standards for play as well as work, but it offers no power to girls who would strive toward raising their own social standards and maintaining them. Education may present new visions and add new attainments, but it offers no power for mental repose in the midst of distractions and discouragements. Education can present God and Jesus with the social teachings He brought to the world, but it is powerless to effect a love for God, a surrender of life to Christ, and a determination to make His will dominant on earth. Education is not sufficient of itself.

There must be added to the program of the Young Women's Christian Association in its relation to the needs of young women in industry the realization of a dynamic which furnishes with the goal toward which to strive the power necessary to achieve it.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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A two-fold purpose has dominated this study: first, to find what are the needs of young women in industry, and second, to investigate the evolving program of the Young Women's Christian Association in relation to these needs. An historical approach was used in the study of both, in determining the present needs of young women in industry and the present program of the Young Women's Christian Association in relation to these needs.

This study was based on an historical survey of young women in industry in the United States in the three periods: The Rise of Industry between 1800-1900; Organization in Industry between 1900-1920; and Industrial Reconstruction and Economic Depression between 1920-1934; and on an historical survey of a typical industry, namely, the women's ready-made clothing industry in New York City, with particular interest in factory management and workers' unionization. We classified the needs of young women in industry for the sake of analysis into physical, social, mental, moral and spiritual needs.

Young women, it was found, are considered a part of the machines they operate in this industrial civilization where competition is keen and the profit motive prevails. Proper physical development is hindered by insuf-

ficient ventilation, illumination, and sanitation and by the confining conditions of work done under a speeding-up process in which nervous strain and resulting fatigue are inevitable. Little provision is made for the undesirable factory environments, no lunch nor recreation rooms available in many factories, and no extra wages to spend for amusements and recreations in the days of economic depression. The extreme specialization and monotony of machine operating leads to mental stagnation and hinders further pursuit of learning in the slack as well as the busy seasons. The fear psychology instilled into workers by manufacturers who use illegal methods presents many mental problems which in turn react on the physical and moral well being of the young woman. Most of the young women employed are later adolescents to whom life presents many problems in morals and religion. Under the spur of the captains of industry and in these negative environments, there is a tendency to lose the finer ideals of life and to put in their place materialistic idols and detrimental habits.

Having determined the needs of young women in industry, we turned to a study of the program of the Young Women's Christian Association as related to these needs. This study was made by an historical survey: first, of the National Guiding principles of the Association through the three periods of history into which we divided its history: Its Origin and Development, 1858-1906; Its Confederation

and Expansion, 1906-1920; Its Reconstruction and Reorganization, 1920-1934; and second, of the National program emphases in relation to the needs of young women in industry. It was found that the present program emphasis is a combination of those of the previous periods:

Physical Culture, Social Hygiene, and Health Education; Homes and Recreation, Federated Clubs, Activities; Industrial Classes, Social Instruction, Study Groups; Personal Evangelism, Social Instruction, Religious Education.

These present program emphases were seen in their application in the Young Women's Christian Association in New York City.

With the completed study of the needs of young women in industry and the program of the Association to meet these needs, our next purpose was to make a critical analysis of the program as related to the needs of young women in industry. In this analysis we found that the Young Women's Christian Association was an educational institution with exceptional opportunities because of its formal and informal educational program, but that this program is not adequate to fully meet the needs of young women in industry. Splendid opportunities are offered for physical development, social contacts, mental stimulation, and moral and spiritual education, but the power to make the program effective in the lives of young women is lacking.



It might be said of the Young Women's Christian Association what Christ spoke to the Ephesian Church, "You have left your first love". The controlling purpose which empowered and unified the Association's program was stated thus:

To win young women to Christ,  
 To build them up in Christ,  
 To send them out for Christ.

Gradually, due to a new interest in reconstructing existing social conditions in industry, the program emphasis shifted from personal evangelism to "making the Association a social force for the extension of the Kingdom of God." With the change in administrative membership due to admitting as voters and policy framers those who were not Christian, the wedge was made and the cleavage from Christ has become more and more apparent, until some in the Association are saying that all of the program is "religious".

The Young Women's Christian Association should be as it is an educational institution, but it should be Christian in truth and purpose which means that it will have only one objective, its original one, namely, "to associate young women in personal loyalty to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord," Who alone can meet all their needs. Jesus Christ will then send them out in power to effect the present objective,

"to build a fellowship of women and girls devoted to the task of realizing in our common life those ideals of personal and social living to which we are committed by our faith as Christians."

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