

to those interested in advertising history is a chapter comparing advertising in small town and large city newspapers to explore the changing relationship between suppliers of consumer goods and their rural customers. Blanke analyzes over four thousand ads from selected newspapers to map the types of businesses which used newspapers to advertise as well as the possible consumers they hoped to reach.

More broadly, Blanke's work touches on a number of larger themes in American culture and demolishes old stereotypes about farmers as insular, backward-looking and reactionary. Midwestern farmers had a strong belief in community, but they were canny capitalists, not romantic yeomen farmers. Blanke demonstrates that in many ways Midwestern farmers grappled with the problems of "modern" consumerism years, if not decades, earlier than scholars of either urban shoppers or Populists have indicated. His work complicates the model of cultural diffusion in which ideas move swiftly from city to countryside, and rightly suggests that attention must be paid to regional variations in American consumer behaviour.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears, eds., *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1940* (New York, 1983), xi.

Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion During World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

In director William Wellman's classic western, *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1942), a posse, enraged over the reported murder of a local rancher, seizes and hangs three cowboys without benefit of a trial. Satisfied with their "justice," the returning posse encounters the local sheriff, who brusquely informs them that the rancher remains alive, if seriously wounded, and that he has captured the persons responsible for the shooting. Slinking away to the town saloon, the shame-faced posse members listen to the character played by Henry Fonda read from a letter scribbled hastily by one of the mob's victims.<sup>1</sup>

While the film, made in the midst of World War II, does not discuss the issue of dissent during wartime, it does touch upon the all-too-ready capacity of a majority to tread upon minority rights. The question of whether a democracy can fight in a major war without stifling the right of dissent has been controversial in

United States history. Free speech often becomes restricted during wartime, as evidenced by the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts by a hysterical Federalist Congress in 1798 and Abraham Lincoln's abrupt suspension of the writ of habeas corpus during the Civil War.

First Amendment rights suffered their sharpest blow, however, during the U.S. involvement in World War I. Committed to making the world "safe for democracy," Woodrow Wilson's administration perceived criticism of American involvement as a dire threat to its utopian goals. Federal government officials thus prosecuted and even deported hundreds of socialists and pacifists who simply exercised their rights of free speech and assembly.<sup>2</sup> Even civil libertarians such as U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes sometimes defended the governmental right of suppression. Among the dire results of this governmental overreaction was the rise of young bureaucrat J. Edgar Hoover, whose zealous pursuits of "anti-Americans" foreshadowed his later efforts as head of the FBI.

Scholars Paul L. Murphy and Richard Pollenberg have conducted the most searching examinations of this shameful time in U.S. history. Examining the era from a legal perspective, Murphy argued that the federal government's suppression of dissent resulted from the myopic vision of Progressivism. Having "perfected" U.S. society through pre-war reforms, progressives such as Wilson saw criticism of the war effort as a direct assault upon their defense of democracy overseas. Pollenberg, in contrast, concentrated on what he perceived the clash of cultures in the 1919 Abrams Supreme Court case. The critical viewpoints of socialists and other dissenters collided, according to Pollenberg, with those of a nativist elite intent on preserving traditional values.<sup>3</sup>

Now Kathleen Kennedy, assistant professor of history and director of Women's Studies at Western Washington University, has contributed to the historiographical discussion. Her book is a useful, although limited, examination of how gender influenced the U.S. government's prosecution of women charged under the Wartime Emergency Laws from 1917 through 1919.

Kennedy's introduction makes it clear that although she finds Murphy and Pollenberg essential, gender has been ignored as a factor in examining the civil liberties situation during World War I. "I argue," she continues, "that issues of gender appropriate behavior appeared regularly in women's confrontations with legal authorities" (xv). Kennedy is certainly correct that scholars have not used gender as an analytical tool; Murphy and Pollenberg never considered how governmental authorities used standards of maternity as a prosecutorial tool. But her argument is one that is only partially confirmed in her examination of three women convicted during the war: Kate Richards O'Hare, Emma Goldman, and Rose Pastor Stokes.

O'Hare's case provides the strongest support for Kennedy's argument, as Kennedy admits: "[o]f all the federal wartime cases, [this case] most explicitly

raised questions about the meaning of motherhood and its role in constructing women's political identities" (38). For example, O'Hare and her defenders capitalized on the fact that the fiery Socialist possessed a large family and acted as a "happy wife and mother" (24). Kennedy skillfully interweaves direct quotations from contemporary sources and her own analysis to provide a convincing portrayal of O'Hare using her maternal instincts to contradict the federal government's accusations of disloyalty.

Kennedy's argument falters in part, however, when she turns her gender-centered analysis to Goldman and Stokes. While female protestors undoubtedly confronted a patriarchal system intent on defending the war effort, the complexity of historical causes must also be taken into account. The women in Kennedy's case analyses did not come from "non-white" backgrounds, so race does not enter into the equation. But issues of class and ethnicity become paramount in discussing Emma Goldman. It is hard to imagine such a strident socialist using terms such as "family" and "children" in her defense against government persecution. Goldman's radicalism came from more than maternal instincts, if any – it arose from her Marxist beliefs. In addition, Goldman's Eastern European Jewish background provided ready ammunition for governmental authorities claiming that Goldman represented "anti-Americanism." As one historian quoted by Kennedy comments, "[J. Edgar] Hoover had identified the source of evil as those who were different in appearance, culture, and belief – groups who were alienated from the old truths and pieties of nostalgic America."<sup>4</sup> Thus class and ethnicity doomed Goldman to governmental prosecution and eventually deportation from the United States. Sullivan's gender-centered argument for Goldman's prosecution convinces most when she examines the deportation of Goldman and her companion, Alexander Berkman, in 1919. By using Goldman's previous marriage to argue that she could not be a U.S. citizen, J. Edgar Hoover and his allies used gender as a tool to erase Goldman as an influence in civil discourse. Rose Pastor Stokes's case presents a similar dilemma. A Polish emigrant, Stokes based her opposition to the war on grounds of free speech and her ingrained socialist beliefs. As Kennedy herself points out, "Stokes did not link this odyssey to gender" (67).

Kennedy's analysis stands on firmer ground when she discusses alleged subversion in the context of politics and professionalism in Chapters 5 and 6 of her book. The use of one's sexual history to prove "anti-Americanism" is effectively portrayed in the case of Agnes Smedley. When Smedley refused to cooperate with federal authorities against her fellow protestors, authorities reportedly threatened to use her sexual relationships with Indian nationals as a way of destroying her credibility (86). Although Kennedy does not pursue this matter further, a depressing parallel between this threat and the later alleged connections between sexual "perversion" and anti-Americanism during the Cold War era forms in the mind of the informed reader.

The most interesting case in Kennedy's book is Marie Equi's. A medical doctor and unrepentant lesbian who performed abortions and supported birth control, Equi became an all-too-ready target for governmental prosecution when she allegedly called U.S. soldiers "dirty, contemptible scum" in a June, 1918, speech (97). Equi's case starkly demonstrates what happens to social dissenters who pursue their beliefs aggressively during wartime. Simmering resentments surface in the form of accusations of "anti-Americanism," with authorities throttling unpopular opinions.

Kennedy also successfully portrays the use of "patriotic motherhood" by governmental authorities against women defendants. Quotations from primary sources skillfully show the extent federal prosecutors used the ideal of a woman patriotically allowing her sons to fight in European trenches to condemn their opponents. "This is a nation of free speech," one prosecutor melodramatically intoned at O'Hare's trial, "but this is a time of sacrifice, when mothers are sacrificing their sons, when all men and women who are not at heart traitors are sacrificing their time and hard-earned money for defense of the flag" (22). As Kennedy perceptively notes of this tirade, "Without mothers who were willing to sacrifice their sons for the state the nation could not wage war" (22). Thus anti-war opposition from women seemingly endangered the nation's fighting efforts, no matter how minor.

Kennedy's writing style remains clear and crisp throughout the book. Her command of primary sources, particularly the papers of her agents, impresses. Despite some flaws, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens* stands as an important contribution to the historiography about the U.S. Left and civil liberties repression during World War I.

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<sup>1</sup> This book review was written just two days before the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Although I have not made changes to reflect these recent incidents, I believe that the discussion here has become even more pressing in a time of war.

<sup>2</sup> An excellent description of this process can be found in Frances Early, *A World Without War: How U.S. Feminists and Pacifists Resisted World War I* (Syracuse, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> See Paul L. Murphy, *World War I and the Origin of Civil Liberties in the United States* (New York, 1979) and Richard Pollenberg, *Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, The Supreme Court, and Free Speech* (New York, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> Richard Gid Powers, *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York, 1987), 81-91, quoted in Kennedy, 40.