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# DO YOUR BIT *to* KEEP HIM FIT

SUB-COMMITTEE FOR CIVILIAN COOPERATION  
IN COMBATING VENEREAL DISEASES  
COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE



*How You Can*  
**DO YOUR BIT**  
*to*  
**KEEP HIM FIT**  
*to Fight*

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Published by  
Sub-Committee for Civilian Cooperation  
in Combating Venereal Diseases  
COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

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Mobilization of American Military Forces

**T**HIS WAR has called upon the Nation to face many new problems, and many old problems from new points of view.

The world has tried for centuries to solve the old problem of prostitution and its corollary, venereal disease. The greatest obstacle in the solution of this problem has been human nature itself—human nature that has been so blind, so inefficient, so apathetic that it has not only made few really constructive efforts to stamp out this menace but has even tabooed discussion of it and clouded its terrible results by the use of veiled language.

The time has now come when this age-old problem must be faced honestly and solved, in some measure at least, for the immediate purpose of this war.

The European countries waited so long before making any real attempts to solve this problem as it related to their soldiers that at the end of the first year and a half

Permanent Organization  
for Combating Venereal Diseases  
**THE AMERICAN SOCIAL HYGIENE ASSOCIATION**  
105 West 40th Street, New York



of the war they found the strength and efficiency of their armies undermined and wasting away as the result of wholesale infection by gonorrhea and syphilis. In many cases, before preventive measures were taken, more men were incapacitated for service from these causes than from bullets, shrapnel, gas and hand grenades put together, the proportion in some instances being as high as 30%.

Then these governments woke up. They started a real fight. And, slowly but surely, they have been winning.

The first thing they did was to begin the education of their soldiers in the results of these diseases. Then they established a system of prophylactic treatment for those who had been exposed. They established hundreds of venereal disease dispensaries where infected persons could procure scientific treatment. They patrolled the zones surrounding the training camps. Finally, they got their fight into the newspapers. They made people talk about it, and use frankly the terms which they had hitherto spoken only in whispers. Local committees for civilian co-operation were established in every community and a great campaign was begun against all the sources of these diseases.

Our own Government is the only one

among the belligerents which has grappled with this problem at the very beginning.

Drastic measures are already being taken in the training camps to protect our soldiers. The territory for five miles beyond the camps has been cleaned up and is stringently policed. Dispensaries for prophylaxis and the treatment of infected persons have been established. It is astounding how few of our soldiers know that diseases like certain forms of apoplexy, locomotor ataxia, the most terrible form of rheumatism, blindness, paresis or softening of the brain, and insanity result from syphilis or gonorrhea. For their enlightenment, lectures are being held in all the encampments.

The Government and the War Department have thus honestly and actively faced the problem so far as it comes within federal jurisdiction.

## Where Your Work Is Needed

**B**UT OUTSIDE the policed zones lie thousands of square miles of territory easily accessible to the soldiers during their leisure hours. In this territory are hundreds of towns and cities like yours to which our troops must look



for recreation and amusement. They will take what you offer them, and if there isn't enough of the right sort, many of them will undoubtedly drift into the so-called "Red Light" districts or fall prey to the hordes of street-walking prostitutes who are probably even now crowding like vultures into your community.

Briefly, therefore, the task set for you is to assume active responsibility for the elimination of all sources of disease in your own community.

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## Is There a Red Light District in Your Community?

**N**O MATTER how many facilities are provided for amusement and entertainment, if a "Red Light" district, or, as it is sometimes called, a "segregated district," exists in your community, it is bound to take its toll of victims.

Your first step, therefore, in the work of keeping our soldiers free from venereal diseases and fit to fight is clear. **The Red Light district must be wiped out!**

Not only do such districts form festers in the vitals of the community during peace times, but in war they form

a nucleus around which gather the additional prostitutes whose object is primarily to prey upon the soldiers.

Such districts place temptation within easy reach. They employ scouts to advertise their whereabouts. They provide every conceivable allurement which can be designed to catch the soldier off his guard at a time when his absence from home and his desire for the companionship of women make him most susceptible. And their inmates are practically all diseased.

For these reasons it is obvious that these districts form the greatest single source of disease with which we have to contend. Once they are stamped out, a long step will have been taken toward the protection of our soldiers as well as toward the protection of the community itself. **Such districts can exist only with the consent of the cities and communities and their elected officials.** Their elimination is, therefore, up to persons like yourself, who feel a deep sense of responsibility and sincere loyalty to the cause for which we are fighting in this war.

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## Dealing With the Free Lance Prostitute

The elimination of segregated districts may result to some extent in scattering



some of their inmates into other sections of the community unless care is taken to provide also for this contingency.

Fear of such a result has been one of the greatest obstacles to the elimination of the districts themselves, but it has been proved time and again that if a prostitute is compelled to ply her trade clandestinely, instead of openly in a district set apart for the purpose, the percentage of her victims must be much smaller.

Furthermore, it is not nearly so difficult as is generally supposed to deal with these individuals. All of them are well known to the police and a thorough follow-up after the closing of the segregated district will succeed in weeding out most of them.

The police need not be harsh towards them. The department's social workers and matrons, co-operating with your committee, and your local health department and civil administration, can care for them in several ways.

The first thing that is absolutely necessary is to see that each one receives careful and scientific medical treatment, as practically all of them will be found to be diseased. They should be compelled to remain under treatment until cured; otherwise they will carry their infection

to another community and the work you have done will be largely discounted. The expense to which your community will be put in this way may perhaps seem out of proportion to your responsibility, but this is a national movement for common defense, and you will find that other communities are working with you and cheerfully bearing their share of the burden.

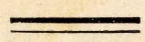
Some of these women will be found to be incorrigible. If possible, they should be sent to a house of correction or some other place of detention which will prevent their remaining at large.

Others, if tactfully approached, will be found willing to accept legitimate salaried employment and every effort should be made to supply them not only with such positions, which are now plentiful, but also with decent and cheerful places to live where their lives can be so pleasant as to weaken the lure of the streets. In many cases it will be possible to help them re-establish their relations with their families, and efforts should be made to eliminate any feeling of hesitancy among the families in accepting their daughters back.

This work will require close personal attention and a very large human sympathy. It should be approached not in the spirit of the one-sided reformer,



but in a spirit of informal and common-sense constructiveness. You will find people who will tell you that it is useless, that it has been tried hundreds of times before and has failed. They speak without knowledge of the facts. Reconstruction of the moral fiber and character of prostitutes has **succeeded**, when it has been undertaken in the right spirit. In the work which we have assumed for this war, such reconstruction will be found to be not only necessary, but of permanent value.



## Have Your Local Hospitals Established Venereal Disease Dispensaries?

**I**T IS probable that at present there is no venereal disease dispensary at your local hospital.

The hospitals all over the country, with a few notable exceptions, have failed to face this problem. Most of them will not accept venereal disease cases. Most doctors dislike to treat such cases. In the absence, therefore, of both dispensaries and reliable doctors to whom they can go, infected persons, both men and women, are compelled either to hide their disease until its advanced stages, or to

patronize quacks and fakes who rob them and whose ministrations often do permanent and incurable injury.

The third most important step in your campaign must, therefore, be the establishment of a real venereal disease dispensary.

When it is ready for service, its existence must be made known through the newspapers or through the distribution of literature, and it must be made clear that all treatments will be confidential and that the names of patients will not be revealed. Your local health department ought to be of great assistance in this work.



## Entertainment Must Be Provided for the Soldier

**S**IMULTANEOUSLY with this work of destroying the positive menace of the "social evil," much constructive work must be done towards providing suitable entertainment facilities for the soldiers.

Many of these facilities will be provided automatically. Your moving picture men, for instance, your theatrical managers, the proprietors of your billiard rooms and bowling alleys will all find it profitable to cater to the desires of the soldiers.



But there are dozens of other facilities, which the stimulus of profit does not concern, that can be thrown open with very little extra expense.

Your Y. M. C. A. with its gymnasium, reading rooms and swimming pool, ought to be open for the soldiers' use without charge.

Your library should set aside special alcoves for them where stationery and writing materials should be provided free.

Church recreation rooms and public schools should be utilized to their fullest extent for musical entertainments and dancing.

Attractive and inexpensive sleeping quarters should be provided for those men who stay away from camp over night.

These things must be offered in such a spirit as to make the soldiers feel perfectly free to accept them without obligation. The men should be welcomed into the community wholeheartedly and there should be no suggestion of a reform spirit as the motive for such a welcome. You will find that the soldiers at our training camps come from every walk of life, but, as a general rule, you will find them all fundamentally little different from your own sons and those of your neighbors, and if your community treats them

accordingly you will be gratified by their splendid response.

## You Will Need the Support of Your Community Officials and Newspapers

THE TASK which has been set before you in this pamphlet is an intensely interesting one, but is fraught with difficulties.

In many communities local officials are known to be unsympathetic toward movements of this sort either for financial or political reasons. It is up to your community, if opposition should be offered, to force compliance and co-operation with your wishes. Most civil officials, however, will see the advantages, both temporary and permanent, in a movement of this sort and will give their hearty support to it.

You may find that the editors of your local papers feel some hesitancy about discussing the subject of prostitution and venereal diseases in their columns for fear of offending their readers. They must be made to feel that their readers want this kind of discussion and are not afraid to face a problem of such far-



reaching significance. They must be made to realize also that if they carry the advertising of so-called "specialists in men's diseases," they are helping to obstruct our work and to further all the evils of this most insidious form of medical quackery. The central committee will cooperate with the American Social Hygiene Association in supplying the papers with all the general information and statistics they require.

Valuable assistance can be rendered by the churches, commercial and civil organizations and social clubs. Material for talks will be furnished without charge upon application.

If you find that you need specific information on any particular phase of this problem as it relates to national preparedness for this war, write at once.

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“*A healthy and efficient  
body is the first requisite  
of an efficient soldier.*”