

503 Trust Bldg.,
June 19, 1917.

Mr. Raymond B. Fosdick, Chairman,
Commission on Training Camp Activities,
War Department,
Washington, D. C.

My Dear Mr. Fosdick:

The following item of information, which comes to us from a member of our Board, will interest you:

"Mr. Robt. Spence, from Tyler, wrote his wife, (he went to El Paso last Monday night to get a new position in rail-roading) that all the rooms in El Paso were taken by women from restricted areas that had been broken up. That several encampments near El Paso had been cleaned up, and the "cleanings" were paying as much as \$25.00 per week to get a spare room in El Paso. He can't pay much so he said he was still hunting."

The thing the keeps, and will keep, any "clean up" campaign from being entirely and permanently successful is there has never been devised a human method of dealing with the women from the closed districts.

San Antonio closed the District June fifth, and from Austin and Gonzales (nearby towns) I have positive assurance that many came right there; of course other small nearby towns are in the same fix. When San Antonio closed the District, we are advised that they had eighty-five diseased women in the hospital camp treating them for return to the District; when it was forced on the authorities to close up, they turned these women out of the hospital, "bag and baggage," homeless, friendless and money-less, to carry their frightful menace of disease where they would.

Waco reports forty new houses being built or contracted for in the Restricted District, to be recruited from the San Antonio women. The people on the Border report similar conditions.

Mr. Raymond B. Fosdick, Chairman - 2

Now, Mr. Fosdick, cannot the Government devise some way to handle this question from this side also? One of the women at the Joint Conference, Mrs. Laura B. Hart, made the suggestion that we memorialize the President and ask him to "conscript" these women and give them employment, and the attached resolution was formulated but came in too late for action by the Conference. I am sending it only by way of suggestion, for truly until we devise some way of taking care of these women our problem will not stay solved.

Very truly yours,

Enc.

President.

MFC-EHL

WAR DEPARTMENT
COMMISSION ON TRAINING CAMP ACTIVITIES
WASHINGTON

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June 23, 1917

Mrs. Minnie Fisher Cunningham,
503 Trust Building,
Galveston, Texas.

My dear Mrs. Cunningham:

Thank you very much for your letter of June 19th. It raises very perplexing questions. (Personally, I do not know what we can do with the women who are taken out of these districts. The idea that they can be "conscripted" for government service is hardly practicable, for I know of no service that they would be in a position to render. We must remember, of course, that there is not a fixed number of prostitutes in the United States who go from one city to another as conditions are opened or closed. A policy of repression diminishes the number of prostitutes because the profession becomes financially unprofitable. If all the cities of Texas closed their red light districts, the result would be the diminution in the number of prostitutes following the trade, because there would not be enough other cities outside of Texas to take care of them.

I appreciate, of course, that this does not answer the direct question which you had in mind; namely: What shall we do with the prostitutes who have been driven from the districts? It is something to which we are giving earnest thought, but at the present time I must confess that we have no specific policy to recommend.)

Very truly yours,

Raymond B. Fosdick
Chairman.

RBF:WJA

306 Trust Bldg.,
July 10, 1917.

Mr. Raymond B. Fosdick, Chairman,
Commission on Training Camp Activities,
Washington, D. C.

My Dear Mr. Fosdick:

Your letter of the 23rd to hand, and discouraging contents noted! Well, at least, if we cannot conscript the able bodied prostitutes for war work, we ought to be able to quarantine the diseased ones in hospitals for treatment. The foolishness and inhumanity of San Antonio's action in regard to the diseased ones in that hospital camp will live in my memory as (I hope) high water mark for "Man's inhumanity to man.

We are maturing some very definite plans of service, and I want to lay them before you:

First. In every town in the state which is to have, or already has an army camp, our Suffrage Associations are forming a Camp Mothers' Committee to be composed of women representing every walk of life. These committees are to help in every way possible to make the soldiers' life more normally human. They will compile lists of the homes which are open to soldiers, and introduce the soldiers into them where desired; they will distribute reading matter, put on entertainments, and generally work out some way of keeping the men in touch with decent women and home life. We very much desire a headquarters of some kind at or near each camp, which can be kept open all of the time by the Committee and which will serve as a place for visiting mothers to stay in the day time to be near their sons.

Do you think this could be arranged for us by the Government, if we will agree to keep it open and always have someone's our best women there to meet and talk to soldiers who feel the need of "hearing a woman's voice?"

Second. In the other towns in the state, we are forming similar committees which will help the nearest towns in various

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ways. Getting up "boxes," sending magazines, sending chantequas of local talent to the camps, (these may be unconsciously funny but the camps I visited on the Border last fall would have welcomed with open arms the dreariest of performances,) and in many other ways that will develop as we get into the work.

We have three field workers out speaking and have an office force of five working on this "job," and public sentiment is responding to our appeal in a very gratifying way. Texas is properly humiliated whenever and wherever she finds out the conditions as they have existed? And she wants to do better.

I have read with interest your bulletin Prostitution and the Police. It is a very helpful light on some of the problems before us. We are hopeful of not only helping surround the camps with the desired protection but of organizing a Social Hygiene Association which will carry the good work of "clean up" into all towns.

Very sincerely yours,

Chairman,
Texas Woman's Anti-Vice Committee.

MFC-BHL