Chapter Four

From Useful to Useless
Moral Conflict over Child Labor

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Where do we go from here—where?
—We remnants of the throng that started with us
Shall we keep on—
Or drop off on the way, as they have done?
They're earning money now, and make us feel
But useless children in comparison.
Why can't we, too, get into something real?
—from "Eighth Grade," by F. B. W., 1923

The 1900 U.S. Census reported that one child out of every six between the ages of ten and fifteen was gainfully employed. It was an undercount: The total figure of 1,750,178 excluded many child laborers under ten as well as the children "helping out" their parents in sweatshops and on farms, before or after school hours. Ten years later, the official estimate of working children reached 1,990,225. But by 1930, the economic participation of children had dwindled dramatically. Census figures registered 667,118 laborers under fifteen years of age. The decline was particularly marked among younger children. Between 1900 and 1930, the number of children ten to thirteen years old in nonagricultural occupations alone decreased more than six fold, from 186,358 to under 30,000.[1]

The exclusion of children from the marketplace involved a difficult and prolonged battle lasting almost fifty years from the 1870s to the 1930s. It was partly an economic confrontation and partly a legal dispute, but it was also a profound "moral revolution."[2] Two groups with sharply conflicting views of childhood struggled to impose their definition of children's proper place in society. For child labor reformers, children's early labor was a violation of children's sentimental value. As one official of the National Child Labor Committee explained in 1914, a laboring child "is simply a producer, worth so much in dollars and cents, with no standard of value as a human being. . . . How do you calculate your standard of a child's value? . . . as something precious beyond all money

standard."[3] On the other hand, opponents of child labor reform were just as vehement in their support of the productive child, "I say it is a tragic thing to contemplate if the Federal Government closes the doors of the factories and you send that little child back, empty-handed; that brave little boy that was looking forward to get money for his mother for something to eat."[4]

The child labor conflict is a key to understanding the profound transformation in the economic and sentimental value of children in the early twentieth century. The price of a useful wage-earning child was directly counterposed to the moral value of an economically useless but emotionally priceless child. In the process, a complex reassessment of children's economic roles took place. It was not just a matter of whether children should work or not. Even the most activist of child labor reformers were unwilling to condemn all types of child work, while their opponents were similarly reluctant to condone all child labor. Instead, their argument centered over conflicting and often ambiguous cultural definitions of what constituted acceptable work for children. New boundaries emerged, differentiating legitimate from illegitimate forms of economic participation by children.

It was not a simple process. As one perplexed contemporary observer noted: "To work or not to work—that is the question. But nobody agrees upon the answer. . . . Who among the controversialists is wrong? And just what is work anyway? When and where does it step across the dead line and become exploitation?"[5] Child work and child money were gradually redefined for the "sacred" twentieth-century child into primarily moral and instructional tools. While child labor laws regulated exclusively working-class children, the new rules for educational child work cut across classes, equally applicable to all "useless" children.

The Useful Child: From Family Asset to Social Problem

In recent studies, economists and historians have documented the vital significance of child labor for working-class families in the late nineteenth century. Using extensive national data from the 1880s and 1890s, Michael Haines concludes that child labor "appears to have been the main source of additional support for the late nineteenth-century urban family under economic stress."[6] In her analysis of U.S. Federal Population Census manuscripts for Philadelphia in 1880, Claudia Goldin found that Irish children contributed between 38 and 46 percent of the total family labor income in two-parent families; German children 33 to 35 percent, and the native-born 28 to 32 percent. Unlike the mid-twentieth century when married women entered the labor force, in the late nineteenth century a child, not a wife, was likely to become the family's secondary wage earner.

To use children as active participants in the household economy of the working class was not only economically indispensible but also a legitimate social practice. The middle class, with its own children in school, still wistfully admired the moral principle of early labor. As late as 1915, one observer recognized:

"There is among us a reaction to be noted from the . . . overindulgence of our children and a realization that perhaps more work and responsibility would do them good. . . ."[7] Even children's books and magazines, aimed at an educated middle-class audience, "hymned the joys of usefulness," praising the virtues of work, duty, and discipline to their young readers. The standard villain in these stories was an idle child.[8]

Child labor as a morally righteous institution was not a nineteenth-century invention. American children had always worked. In his classic study of family life in Plymouth Colony, John Demos suggests that by the time children turned six or eight, they were expected to assume the role of "little adults," engaged in useful tasks in their own homes, or apprenticed elsewhere.[9] Laws governing the poor in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries similarly reflected prevalent Puritan views on the virtue of work by providing employment for dependent children.

Industrial work created different job opportunities for young children in the late eighteenth century. Employers welcomed their nimble "little fingers" for the "gigantic automatons of labor saving machinery."[10] Indeed, the first workers in the American spinning mill set up in Rhode Island by Samuel Slater in 1790, were nine children between the ages of seven and twelve. By 1820, young boys and girls constituted 55 percent of the operatives employed in Rhode Island's textile mills. An enthusiastic writer for *Nile's Register* eagerly anticipated the pecuniary payoffs of child labor for local economies: "If we suppose that before the establishment of these manufactories, there were two hundred children between seven and sixteen years of age, that contributed nothing towards their maintenance and that they are now employed, it makes an immediate difference of $13,500 a year to the value produced in the town!"[11]

Rapid industrialization multiplied job opportunities for children in the late nineteenth century. Official estimates show an increase of over a million child workers between 1870 and 1900. One-third of the work force in the newly developed southern textile mills, for instance, were children between the ages of ten and thirteen, and many even younger.[12] For working-class families, the employment of children was part of what historian John Modell calls a limited "defensive" mode of family cooperation, "an attempt to pool risks in what was experienced as a very uncertain world."[13] Particularly for nineteenth-century urban families dependent on daily wages, the unemployment, sickness, or death of the main family earner constituted a major threat. The middle-class father could afford to purchase financial protection from life insurance companies; as early as 1851, over $100 million of security was bought. Although cheaper industrial insurance became available to the working-class after the 1870s, it only provided limited burial coverage. Mutual aid groups and voluntary associations offered some institutional protection, yet Modell concludes that, for the working class, it was the "individual coresident family that, as budgetary unit, adapted in the face of uncertainty."[14]

The useful child, therefore, provided a unique economic buffer for the working-class family of the late nineteenth century. But by 1900, middle-class reform-

ers began indicting children's economic cooperation as unjustified parental exploitation, and child labor emerged for the first time as a major social problem in the United States. The occasional attempts to regulate the work of children earlier in the century had been largely ineffective and unable to galvanize public opinion. Existing state laws were so lax and vague as to be unenforceable. In fact, they were not even intended to put children out of work. Instead, early child labor legislation was primarily concerned with assuring a minimum of education for working children. The pioneering Massachusetts statute of 1836, for instance, required three months' schooling for young factory laborers. As late as 1905, a *New York Times* editorial contested the "mistaken notion that the advocates for the restriction and regulation of child labor insist that children under fourteen everywhere shall not work at all and shall be compelled to attend school practically all the time." The true aim of the earlier movement was to determine "the amount of labor and the amount of schooling that would be reasonable." In fact, nineteenth-century child welfare organizations were more concerned with idle and vagrant children than with child laborers.[15]

Child labor only gradually achieved national visibility. In 1870, for the first time, the U.S. Census provided a separate count of adult and child workers. Bureaus of Labor Statistics were organized in ten states between 1869 and 1883, producing and distributing data on child workers. Child labor became an issue in the press. Poole's Index to Periodical Literature lists only four articles under child labor between 1897 and 1901. Between 1905 and 1909, according to the *Readers' Guide to Periodicals*, over 300 articles were published on child workers. Child labor rapidly established itself as a priority item in the political agenda of Progressive social reformers. Organizational growth was impressive. The first Child Labor Committee was formed in 1901; by 1910 there were twenty-five state and local committees in existence. A National Child Labor Committee was established in 1904. These groups sponsored and indefatigably publicized exposés of child labor conditions. Child Labor committees were assisted by the National Consumer's League, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and the American Federation of Labor. The emerging Socialist Party also directed much attention to the issue of child labor. For instance, in 1903, Mother Jones, the well-known union organizer, led a dramatic "March of the Mill Children," from the Philadelphia area, through New Jersey and into New York, in order to expose the evils of child labor. By 1907, an article in Hearst's influential *Cosmopolitan* assured its readers that child labor would soon take its place "with all the institutions of evil memory—with bull baiting, witch-burning, and all other execrated customs of the past."[16]

Why did twentieth-century child labor lose its nineteenth-century good reputation? What explains the sudden vehemence and urgency to remove all children from the labor market? Most historical interpretations focus on the effect of structural, economic, and technological changes on child labor trends between the 1870s and 1930s. The success of industrial capitalism is assigned primary responsibility for putting children out of work and into schools to satisfy the growing demand for a skilled, educated labor force. Rising real incomes, on the other

hand, explains the reduced need for children's wages. As the standard of living steadily improved between the late nineteenth century and the 1920s, child labor declined simply because families could afford to keep their children in school. Particularly important was the institutionalization of the family wage in the first two decades of the twentieth century, by which a male worker was expected to earn enough to forgo the labor of his wife and children. Stricter and better enforced compulsory education laws further accelerated the unemployment of children.[17]

In his analysis of changes in the youth labor market, Paul Osterman contends that children were "pushed out of industry" not only by the declining demand for unskilled labor but also by a simultaneous increase in its supply. The tide of turn-of-the-century immigrants were children's new competitors. For Osterman, compulsory school legislation was the result, not the cause, of a changing youth labor market: "Since firms no longer required the labor of children and adolescents, those pressing for longer compulsory schooling were able to succeed."[18] Joan Huber similarly points to a conflict of interest between age groups created by the new economic system. In an agrarian economy, as in the early stages of industrialization, the labor of "little work people" was a welcome alternative that freed men for agriculture. But by the turn of the century, the cheap labor of children threatened to depress adult wages.[19]

Demand for child laborers was further undermined by new technology. For example, in late nineteenth-century department stores, such as Macy's and Marshall Field's, one-third of the labor force was composed of cash girls or cash boys, young children busily involved in transporting money and goods between sales clerks, the wrapping desk, and the cashier. By 1905, the newly invented pneumatic tube and the adoption of cash registers had usurped most children's jobs.[20]

The issue of child labor, however, cannot be reduced to neat economic equations. If industrial technological developments combined with the increased supply of immigrant unskilled workers inevitably reduced the need for child laborers, why then was their exclusion from the work place such a complex and controversial process?

The Child Labor Controversy

The history of American child labor legislation is a chronicle of obstacles and defeats. At every step of the battle that lasted some fifty years, the sustained efforts of child labor reformers were blocked by an equally determined, vocal, and highly effective opposition. Until 1938, every major attempt to pass national regulation of child labor was defeated. The two groups were divided by conflicting economic interests and also by opposing legal philosophies. Yet, the emotional vigor of their battle revealed an additional, profound cultural schism. Proponents and opponents of child labor legislation became entangled in a moral dispute over the definition of children's economic and sentimental value.

Child labor legislation was first resisted on a state level. Although by 1899

twenty-eight states had some kind of legal protection for child workers, regulations were vague and enforcement lax. The typical child labor law, which only protected children in manufacturing and mining, often contained enough exceptions and loopholes to make it ineffective. For instance, poverty permits allowed young children to work if their earnings were necessary for self-support or to assist their widowed mothers or disabled fathers. As late as 1929, six states retained such an exemption. Legislative progress in the early twentieth century was further undermined by a lack of uniformity in state standards. Progressive states became increasingly reluctant to enact protective legislation that put them at a competitive disadvantage with states where employment of a cheap juvenile force was legal or else minimally regulated.[21]

The struggle for national regulation of child labor began inauspiciously in 1906 with Indiana Senator Albert Beveridge's dramatic but unsuccessful attempt in the U.S. Senate to create a federal law to end what he termed "child slavery." The threat of federal regulation only served to consolidate the opposition. In 1916, when Congress finally passed the first federal law banning the products of child labor from interstate and foreign commerce, opponents promptly challenged the new law in court, and two years later the bill was declared unconstitutional. A second federal law was passed in 1919, only to be again dismissed three years later by the Supreme Court as an unconstitutional invasion of state power.

The toughest battle began in 1924 after Congress approved a constitutional amendment introduced by reformers that would authorize Congress to regulate child labor. The campaign against state ratification of the amendment was staggering: "The country was swept with propaganda. It appeared in newspapers and magazine articles, editorials, and advertisements, in enormous quantities of printed leaflets, and in speeches, at meetings, and over the radio. The proposed child labor amendment was one of the most discussed political issues of the year."[22] The opposition effort succeeded; by the summer of 1925, only four states had ratified the amendment and thirty-four had rejected it. Briefly revived in 1933, the amendment again failed to secure sufficient state support. Effective federal regulation of child labor was only obtained after the Depression, first with the National Industrial Recovery Act and in 1938 with the Fair Labor Standards Act, which included a section on child labor.

What accounts for this catalog of obstacles? Why weren't child labor reformers able to easily dazzle legislatures or swiftly persuade the public with the justness of their cause? In large part, resistance to legislation was engineered by powerful interest groups. After all, in 1920 over 1 million children between the ages of ten and fifteen were still at work. From the start, southern cotton mill owners refused to forgo the profitable labor of their many child employees.[23] Child labor reform was often depicted as a dangerous northern conspiracy to destroy the recently expanded southern industry. Mill owners were eventually joined by farmers and other employers of children. Not surprisingly, the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Farm Bureau Federation were two leading forces against the 1924 constitutional amendment. A different type of opposition was

based on political and legal principle. In this case, the target was federal regulation. Conservative citizen organizations and even prominent individuals, including the presidents of Columbia University and Hunter College, actively crusaded against the federal child labor amendment because it challenged states' rights.[24]

It would be inaccurate, however, to caricature the child labor dispute simply as a struggle between humane reformers and greedy employers or to reduce it to a technical dispute over the relative merits of state versus federal regulation. The battle involved a much wider range of participants, from clergymen, educators, and journalists to involved citizens, and included as well the parents of child laborers. At issue was a profound cultural uncertainty and dissent over the proper economic roles for children.

In Defense of the Useful Child

In a letter to the editor of the *Chicago News*, a Reverend Dunne of the Guardian Angels' Italian Church bitterly criticized the 1903 Illinois child labor law as a "curse instead of a blessing to those compelled to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow." The priest ridiculed a law that transformed the noble assistance of a working child into an illegal act: "He must not attempt to work; he must not dare to earn his living honestly, because in his case . . . that is against the law."[25] From the early skirmishes in state legislatures to the organized campaign against the 1924 constitutional amendment, opponents of child labor legislation defended the pragmatic and moral legitimacy of a useful child. As a controversial article in the *Saturday Evening Post* asserted: "The work of the world has to be done; and these children have their share . . . why should we . . . place the emphasis on . . . prohibitions . . . We don't want to rear up a generation of nonworkers, what we want is workers and more workers."[26] From this perspective, regulatory legislation introduced an unwelcome and dangerous "work prohibition": "The discipline, sense of duty and responsibility, . . . which come to a boy and girl, in home, on the farm, in workshop, as the result of even hard work . . . is to be . . . prohibited."[27] The consequences would be dire: "If a child is not trained to useful work before the age of eighteen, we shall have a nation of paupers and thieves." Child labor, insisted its supporters, was safer than "child-idleness."[28]

Early labor was also nostalgically defended as the irreplaceable stepping stone in the life course of American self-made men. The president of the Virginia Farm Bureau, fondly recalling his early years as a child laborer, insisted on the need "to leave to posterity the same chance that I enjoyed under our splendid form of government."[29] Similarly upholding children's "privilege to work," a writer in the *Woman Citizen* speculated if "Lincoln's character could ever have been developed under a system that forced him to do nothing more of drudgery than is necessitated by playing on a ball team after school hours."[30] Overwork, concluded the article, was a preferable alternative to overcoddling. Child work was even occasionally defended with theological arguments: ". . . The Savior has said, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work . . . May not the child follow the foot-

steps of the Savior . . . ?" If labor redeemed, regulatory laws served the interests of Hell, by making of idle young people the devil's "best workshop."[31]

For working-class families, the usefulness of their children was supported by need and custom. When parents were questioned as to why their children left school early to get to work, it was often "perplexing" for the mother to assign a reason for such an "absolutely natural proceeding—he's of an age to work, why shouldn't he?' " As one mother who employed her young children in homework told an investigator: "Everybody does it. Other people's children help—why not ours?"[32] Studies of immigrant families, in particular, demonstrate that the child was an unquestioned member of the family economic unit. For example, in her study of Canadian workers in the Amoskeag Mills of Manchester, New Hampshire, Tamara Hareven found that the "entire family economy as well as the family's work ethic was built on the assumption that children would contribute to the family's income from the earliest possible age."[33] While generally older boys were more likely to become wage-earners, boys under fourteen and girls were still expected to actively assist the family with housework, childcare, and any income obtained from odd jobs.[34]

Government reports occasionally provide glimpses of the legitimacy of child labor: A mother boasting that her baby—a boy of seven—could "make more money than any of them picking shrimp"; or an older sister apologizing for her seven-year-old brother who was unable to work in a shrimp cannery "because he couldn't reach the car to shuck."[35] Work was a socializer; it kept children busy and out of mischief. As the father of two children who worked at home wiring rosary beads explained: "Keep a kid at home, save shoe leather, make better manners."[36]

Child labor legislation threatened the economic world of the working class. In 1924, one commentator in the *New Republic* predicted the potential disruption of traditional family relationships: "The immemorial right of the parent to train his child in useful tasks . . . is destroyed. The obligation of the child to contribute . . . is destroyed. Parents may still set their children at work; children may still make themselves useful, but it will no longer be by right and obligation, but by default of legislation. . . ."[37] Many parents resented and resisted this intrusion. A 1909 investigation of cotton textile mills reported that "fathers and mothers vehemently declare that the State has no right to interfere if they wish to 'put their children to work,' and that it was only fair for the child to 'begin to pay back for its keep.' "[38] In New York canneries, Italian immigrants reportedly took a more aggressive stand. One study reports a quasi-riot against a canner who attempted to exclude young children from the sheds: "[He was] besieged by angry Italian women, one of whom bit his finger 'right through.' "[39] Parents routinely sabotaged regulatory legislation simply by lying about their child's age. It was an easy ploy, since until the 1920s many states required only a parental affidavit as proof of a child worker's age. For a small illegal fee, some notary publics were apparently quite willing to produce a false affidavit.[40]

Middle-class critics also opposed child labor legislation in the name of family autonomy. Prominent spokesmen such as Nicholas Murray Butler, president of

Columbia University, warned that "No American mother would favor the adoption of a constitutional amendment which would empower Congress to invade the rights of parents and to shape family life to its liking."[41] An assemblyman from Nevada put it more succinctly: "They have taken our women away from us by constitutional amendments; they have taken our liquor from us; and now they want to take our children."[42]

In Defense of the Useless Child

For reformers, the economic participation of children was an illegitimate and inexcusable "commercialization of child life."[43] As one New York City clergyman admonished his parishioners in 1925: "A man who defends the child labor that violates the personalities of children is not a Christian. . . ."[44] The world of childhood had to become entirely removed from the world of the market. Already in 1904, Dr. Felix Adler, first chairman of the National Child Labor Committee, insisted that ". . . whatever happens in the sacrifice of workers . . . children shall not be touched . . . childhood shall be sacred . . . commercialism shall not be allowed beyond this point."[45] If the sacred child was "industrially taboo," child labor was a profanation that reduced "the child of God [into] the chattel of Mammon."[46]

The persistence of child labor was attributed in part to a misguided economic system that put "prosperity above . . . the life of sacred childhood."[47] Employers were denounced as "greedy and brutal tyrants," for whom children were little more than a "wage-earning unit," or a profitable dividend.[48] Any professed support of child labor was dismissed as convenient rhetoric: "A prominent businessman who recently remarked that it is good for the children to work in industry is a hypocrite unless he puts his own children there."[49]

Reformers sympathized with the financial hardships of the working-class, yet, they rarely understood and seldom condoned working-class economic strategies. Instead, parents were depicted as suspect collaborators in the exploitation of their own children. "If fathers and mothers of working children could have their own way, would they be with the child labor reformer or against him?" was a question asked in *The American Child*, a publication of the National Child Labor Committee.[50] Others were more forthright in their indictment: "Those who are fighting for the rights of the children, almost invariably, find their stoutest foes in the fathers and mothers, who coin shameful dollars from the bodies and souls of their own flesh and blood." A child's contribution to the family economy was redefined as the mercenary exploitation of parents "who are determined that their children shall add to the family income, regardless of health, law, or any other consideration."[51] As early as 1873, Jacob Riis had declared that ". . . it requires a character of more disinterestedness . . . than we usually find among the laboring class to be able to forego present profit for the future benefit of the little one."[52] At the root of this harsh indictment was the profound unease of a segment of the middle class with working-class family life. The instrumental orien-

tation toward children was denied all legitimacy: ". . . to permit a parent . . . at his or her will to send a child out to work and repay himself for its maintenance from the earnings of its labor, or perhaps . . . make money out of it seems . . . nothing short of criminal."[53] Child labor, "by urging the duty of the child to its parents," obliterated the "far more binding and important obligation of the parent to the child."[54] This "defective" economic view of children was often attributed to the foreign values of immigrant parents, "who have no civilization, no decency, no anything but covetousness and who would with pleasure immolate their offspring on the shrine of the golden calf."[55] For such "vampire" progenitors, the child became an asset instead of remaining a "blessed incumbrance."[56]

Advocates of child labor legislation were determined to regulate not only factory hours but family feeling. They introduced a new cultural equation: If children were useful and produced money, they were not being properly loved. As a social worker visiting the canneries where Italian mothers worked alongside their children concluded: "Although they love their children, they do not love them in the right way."[57] A National Child Labor Committee leaflet warned that when family relations are materialistic, "It is rare to find a family governed by affection."[58] By excluding children from the "cash nexus," reformers promised to restore proper parental love among working-class families. "It is the new view of the child," wrote Edward T. Devine, editor of *Charities and the Commons*, a leading reform magazine, "that the child is worthy of the parent's sacrifice."[59]

Thus, the conflict over the propriety of child labor between 1870 and 1930 in the U.S. involved a profound cultural disagreement over the economic and sentimental value of young children. While opponents of child labor legislation hailed the economic usefulness of children, advocates of child labor legislation campaigned for their uselessness. For reformers, true parental love could only exist if the child was defined exclusively as an object of sentiment and not as an agent of production.

NOTES

1. For child labor statistics: See "Children in Gainful Occupations at the Fourteenth Census of the United States" (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924); Grace Abbott, *The Child and The State* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938) I: pp. 259–69; Raymond G. Fuller, "Child Labor," *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (1930): pp. 412–24.

2. A. J. McKelway, "The Awakening of the South Against Child Labor," *Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference on Child Labor* (New York: 1907), p. 17.

3. Josephine J. Eschenbrenner, "What Is a Child Worth?" National Child Labor Committee, No 236, p. 2.

4. Representative Sumners, cited in *The American Child* 6 (July, 1924):3.

5. Elizabeth Fraser, "Children and Work," *Saturday Evening Post* 197 (Apr. 4, 1925):145.

6. Michael R. Haines, "Poverty, Economic Stress, and the Family in a Late Nineteenth-Century American City: Whites in Philadelphia, 1880," in Theodore Hershberg, ed., *Philadelphia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981): p. 265; Claudia Goldin, "Family Strat-

egies and the Family Economy in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Role of Secondary Workers," ibid, p. 284.

7. Editorial, *Journal of Home Economics* 7(Aug. 1915):371.

8. Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America 1850–1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 131.

9. John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 140–1. See also Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 66.

10. *Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage-Earners in the United States*, VI (Washington, D.C., 1910), p. 48.

11. Niles' Register, Oct. 5, 1816, cited by Edith Abbott, "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America," *American Journal of Sociology* 14 (July 1908): 25. See also *Report on Woman and Child Wage-Earners*, pp. 49, 52; Stanley Lebergott, *Manpower in Economic Growth* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), pp. 48–51; Robert H. Bremner, ed., *Children and Youth in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971) I: pp. 145–148. On child labor in nineteenth century England and France, see Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, & Family* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978). Employment in the early American mills apparently was not restricted to the children of the poor, but included the "children of farmers, mechanics, and manufacturers, in good pecuniary circumstances." Bagnall, *Samuel Slater and the Early Development of the Cotton Manufactures in the United States* (1890), cited by Forest Chester Ensign, *Compulsory School Attendance and Child Labor*, Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1921.

12. Fuller, "Child Labor," *IESS*, p. 419; Bremner, ed., *Children and Youth in America* II, p. 601.

13. John Modell, "Changing Risks, Changing Adaptations: American Families in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," Allan J. Lichtman and John R. Challinor, eds. *Kin and Communities* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), p. 128. On the importance of the family as a work unit in the early stages of industrialization, see Neil J. Smelser, *Social Change and the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959). Michael Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) and Tamara Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) demonstrate the survival of the family as a work unit in the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries.

14. Ibid.

15. See "Child Labor and the Teachers," *New York Times*, July 8, 1905, p. 7, and Joseph M. Hawes, *Children in Urban Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

16. Edwin Markham, "The Smoke of Sacrifice," *Cosmopolitan* 42 (Feb. 1907):397. See Philip S. Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), pp. 283–89. For a history of the National Child Labor Committee, see Walter I. Trattner, *Crusade for the Children* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), and for an excellent account of child labor reform in New York State, Jeremy Felt, *Hostages of Fortune* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1965).

17. On the effect of rising real income on the reduction of child labor, see Claudia Goldin, "Household and Market Production of Families in a Late Nineteenth Century American City," *Explorations in Economic History* 16 (1979):129. On the development of child labor and compulsory school legislation, see Ensign, *Compulsory School Attendance and Child Labor*, and Miriam E. Loughran, *The Historical Development of Child-Labor Legislation in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1921).

18. Paul Osterman, *Getting Started: The Youth Labor Market* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1980), pp. 60–71. For additional economic explanations of the decline in child labor both in the United States and in nineteenth century England, see Allen R. Sanderson, "Child Labor Legislation and the Labor Force Participation of Children," *Journal of Economic History* 34(Mar.1974):298–99, and Clark Nardinelli, "Child Labor and the Factory Acts," *Journal of Economic History* (Dec., 1980): 739–53.

19. *Niles' Register* (June 7, 1817):226; Joan Huber, "Toward a Sociotechnological Theory of the Women's Movement," *Social Problems* 23 (Apr. 1976):371–88.

20. Osterman, *Getting Started*, pp. 56–59; Selwyn K. Troen, "The Discovery of the Adolescent by American Educational Reformers, 1900–1920," in Lawrence Stone, ed., *Schooling and Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 239–51.

21. On early child labor legislation, see William F. Ogburn, *Progress and Uniformity in Child-Labor Legislation* Ph.D. diss. (New York: Columbia University, 1912); Loughran, *The Historical Development of Child Labor Legislation; Report On Condition of Woman and Child Wage-Earners in the United States* VI; Elizabeth H. Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation in the Southern Textile States* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1939).

22. Elizabeth Sands Johnson, "Child Labor Legislation," in John R. Commons, ed., *History of Labor in The United States, 1896–1932* (New York: Macmillan, 1935), p. 446. For an excellent interpretation of the legislative aspects of the child labor controversy, see Stephen B. Wood, *Constitutional Politics in the Progressive Era* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968) and Thomas George Karis, *Congressional Behavior at Constitutional Frontiers*, Ph.D. diss. (New York: Columbia University, 1951).

23. Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, p. 57.

24. The child labor amendment was also attacked as a Communist plot designed to nationalize American children. See Anne Kruesi Brown, "Opposition to the Child Labor Amendment Found in Trade Journals, Industrial Bulletins, And Other Publications for and By Business Men," M. A. diss. (Chicago, 1937); Katharine DuPre Lumpkin and Dorothy Wolff Douglas, *Child Workers in America* (New York: Robert McBride & Co., 1937), chapters 12, 13; "The Child Labor Amendment," *University of Texas Bulletin* No. 2529 (Aug. 1, 1925); Tom Ireland, *Child Labor* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1937).

25. Reprinted in *Charities* 11(Aug. 8, 1903):130.

26. Fraser, "Children and Work," p. 146.

27. Iredell Meares, "Should the Nation Control Child Labor?" *Dearborn Independent*, Nov. 8, 1924. Reprinted in "The Child Labor Amendment," pp. 146,148.

28. Letter to the *New York Chamber of Commerce Bulletin* XVI, No.5 (Dec. 1924):50, cited in Brown, *Opposition to the Child Labor Amendment*, pp. 35–36.

29. Letter to the *Manufacturers Record*, LXXXVI, No.15(Oct. 9, 1924):91 cited in Brown *Opposition to the Child Labor Amendment*, p. 34.

30. Mrs. William Lowell Putnam, "Why the Amendment Is Dangerous," *The Woman Citizen* 9(Dec. 27, 1924):12; "The Twentieth Amendment," The Forum 73(Feb. 1925):281.

31. "What the Child Labor Amendment Means," in Abbott, *The Child and the State* I, p. 546; Lumpkin and Douglas, *Child Workers in America*, p. 219.

32. *Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage-Earners* VII, p. 43; Mary Skinner, "Child Labor in New Jersey," U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau Publication No.185 (Washington, D.C., 1928).

33. Tamara K. Hareven, "Family and Work Patterns of Immigrant Laborers in a Planned Industrial Town, 1900–1930," in Richard L. Ehrlich, ed., *Immigrants in Industrial*

America (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), p. 63. On the relative importance of class versus ethnicity in determining the use of child labor, see John Modell, "Patterns of Consumption, Acculturation, and Family Income Strategies in Late Nineteenth-Century America," in Tamara K. Hareven and Maris A. Vinovskis, *Family and Population in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978); Goldin, "Household and Market Production of Families"; and Miriam Cohen, "Changing Education Strategies Among Immigrant Generations: New York Italians in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Social History* (Spring 1982):443–66. Until the 1920s, black children were less likely to be employed in the labor market than were immigrant children. See Elizabeth Pleck, "A Mother's Wages: Income Earning Among Married Italian and Black Women, 1896–1911," in Michael Gordon, ed., *The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective*, 2d ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978).

34. *Report On Condition of Woman and Child Wage-Earners* VII, p. 158; Goldin, "Household and Market Production," pp. 118–19.

35. Viola I. Paradise, "Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in Oyster and Shrimp Canning Communities on the Gulf Coast," U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau Publication No.98 (Washington, D.C., 1922), pp. 11, 17.

36. "Industrial Homework of Children," U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau Publication No.100 (Washington, D.C., 1924), p. 23.

37. "Child Labor, The Home and Liberty," *The New Republic* 41 (Dec. 3, 1924): 32.

38. *Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage-Earners* I:p. 353.

39. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 193.

40. Sands Johnson, "Child Labor Legislation," p. 429; Felt, *Hostages of Fortune* pp. 22–23.

41. *New York Times*, Dec. 7, 1924, p. 19.

42. Cited in *The American Child* (Apr. 1925):6. Strong Catholic opposition to the Child Labor Amendment was also partly based on the perceived threat to parental authority. See Rev. Vincent A. McQuade, *The American Catholic Attitude on Child Labor Since 1891* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1938).

43. J. W. Crabtree, "Dr. Pritchett, Dr. Butler and Child Labor," *School and Society* (Nov. 8, 1924):585. Opponents of child labor invoked a variety of different arguments, from the physical and moral hazards of early employment to the economic inefficiency of employing young children. My discussion focuses on those arguments between the 1870s and 1930s, which centered on the changing definition of children's economic and sentimental value.

44. Quoted in *New York Times*, Feb. 2, 1925, p. 21.

45. Quoted in "The Nation and Child Labor," *New York Times*, Apr. 24, 1904, p. 6.

46. Felix Adler, "Child Labor in the United States and Its Great Attendant Evils," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* XXV(May 1905); Charles K. Gilbert, "The Church and Child Labor," in *The American Child* 9 (Aug. 1927):4.

47. A. J. McKelway, "The Evil of Child Labor" *Outlook* 85(Feb. 16, 1907):364.

48. Davidson, *Child Labor Legislation*, pp. 65–6; Elinor H. Stoy, "Child-Labor," *Arena* 36(Dec. 1906):586; "Education, Psychology, and Manufacturers," *The American Child* 8(Nov. 1926):2.

49. Quoted in *New York Times*, Feb. 2, 1925, p. 21.

50. "Potters' Clay," *The American Child* 8(Jan. 1926):3.

51. Marion Delcomyn, "Why Children Work," *Forum* 57(Mar. 1917):324–25.

52. Jacob Riis, "The Little Laborers of New York City," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* XLVII(Aug. 1973):327.

53. Letter to the Editor, *New York Times*, Nov. 4, 1910, p. 8.

54. Alice L. Woodbridge, "Child Labor an Obstacle to Industrial Progress," *Arena* 10 (June 1894):158.

55. Editorial, *New York Times*, Dec. 17, 1902, p. 8.

56. Mrs. A. O. Granger, "The Work of the General Federation of Women's Clubs Against Child Labor," *Annals of the American Academy* 25(May 1905):104; A. J. McKelway, "The Leadership of the Child," ibid. 32(July 1908):21.

57. Quoted in Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community*, p. 190.

58. "The Cost of Child Labor," *National Child Labor Committee* 5(New York:1905):35.

59. Edward T. Devine, "The New View of the Child," *Annals of the American Academy* 32(July 1908):9. Reformers, however, recognized the need to subsidize nonworking children in families that could prove their financial need. In 1905, Child Labor Committees instituted a scholarship system in several cities to compensate needy families who kept a child in school, with a weekly payment equivalent to the child's forgone income. Apparently, most scholarships went to the children of widowed or deserted women.