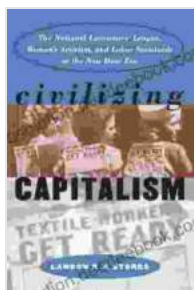


The National Consumers League: Women's Activism and Labor Standards in the New Gilded Age

The National Consumers League (NCL) was a pioneering organization founded in 1899 by a group of women activists, including Florence Kelley and Josephine Shaw Lowell, to advocate for improved labor standards and consumer protection. The NCL played a pivotal role in shaping the Progressive Era's labor reforms and remains an influential force in the fight for workers' rights and consumer safety today.

Origins and Mission

The NCL emerged at a time of great social and economic change in the United States. The rapid industrialization and urbanization of the New Gilded Age led to widespread poverty, inequality, and exploitation of workers, particularly women and children. The NCL was founded with the mission to address these pressing social problems through consumer activism and government regulation.



Civilizing Capitalism: The National Consumers' League, Women's Activism, and Labor Standards in the New Deal Era (Gender and American Culture) by Landon R. Y. Storrs

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 3041 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 408 pages



The NCL's philosophy was based on the belief that consumers had a moral responsibility to use their purchasing power to support ethical businesses that treated their workers fairly. The NCL promoted the idea of "consumer citizenship," arguing that consumers could use their influence to create a more just and equitable society.

Campaigns and Successes

The NCL launched a series of successful campaigns to improve labor standards and consumer protections. One of its most notable achievements was the establishment of the National Consumers League seal of approval. This seal was awarded to businesses that met the NCL's standards for fair wages, reasonable hours, and safe working conditions.

The NCL also played a key role in the passage of child labor laws, minimum wage laws, and maximum hours laws. It also advocated for workers' compensation and other forms of social insurance. The NCL's investigations of the meatpacking and garment industries helped to expose the appalling working conditions and safety hazards that workers faced.

One of the NCL's most tragic victories was the passage of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire safety laws following the deadly fire in 1911 that claimed the lives of 146 workers, mostly young immigrant women. The NCL's tireless lobbying efforts helped to ensure that factory owners were held accountable for providing safe workplaces for their employees.

Women's Activism

The NCL was founded and led by women activists who were committed to social justice. Many of these women were members of the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL), which advocated for the rights of working women. The NCL provided a platform for women to use their voices and influence to improve the lives of all workers.

Florence Kelley was one of the NCL's most prominent leaders. She was a tireless advocate for child labor laws and worked closely with the WTUL to organize garment workers. Josephine Shaw Lowell, another NCL leader, was a social reformer who dedicated her life to improving the living conditions of the poor and working class.

Legacy and Impact

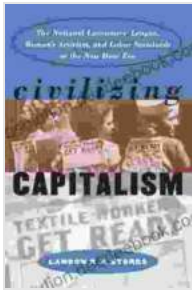
The NCL's legacy is immense. Its advocacy for labor standards and consumer protections helped to shape the social and economic landscape of the United States. The NCL's seal of approval remains a respected symbol of corporate responsibility, and its principles of consumer citizenship continue to guide activists and policymakers today.

The NCL continues to be an active organization, working to protect consumers and advance social justice. It is a testament to the enduring power of women's activism and the importance of consumer engagement in creating a fairer and more equitable society.

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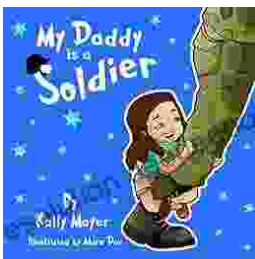
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