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Letter From William H. Zinsser to Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson, September 25, 1917

William H. Zinsser

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SUB-COMMITTEE FOR CIVILIAN COOPERATION
IN COMBATING VENEREAL DISEASES

ADDRESS REPLY TO 105 WEST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK

September 25, 1917.

Mr. Huntington Wilson,
% J. R. Clark,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Wilson:

It may have come as an amazing shock to you to learn that the European armies have lost the services of more men through venereal diseases than from any other one cause.

You will be greatly interested, therefore, in knowing that the United States is the first of all the warring countries to have outlined and put into practice a definite prevention policy such as that briefly described in the enclosed folder.

The conditions surrounding our mobilization and training camps will depend almost entirely upon the attitude of the communities near which these camps are situated. If these communities abet or condone open or clandestine prostitution, venereal diseases will make terrific ravages among our soldiers.

The only means of preventing this lies in promoting a sane, intelligent, constructive campaign of education among the citizens of these communities, looking towards effective suppression of all sources of temptation.

Such a campaign among thirty-two large districts, each within a fifty mile radius of the cantonments, will cost a good deal of money, but its results should be of vital and immediate value to the Nation as well as permanently valuable to the communities themselves. As you will see from the enclosed folder, the Government is already doing all that lies within its jurisdiction in this matter. The success of the Government's entire plan depends largely upon the success of this Civilian Committee.

That is why we come to you for financial assistance -- and to you because of your deep interest in the Social Hygiene Movement.

May we count on your generous help? The need is immediate. We must do our best work NOW, before evil influences have taken hold with too tight a grip.

Very earnestly yours,


Chairman of the Sub-Committee.