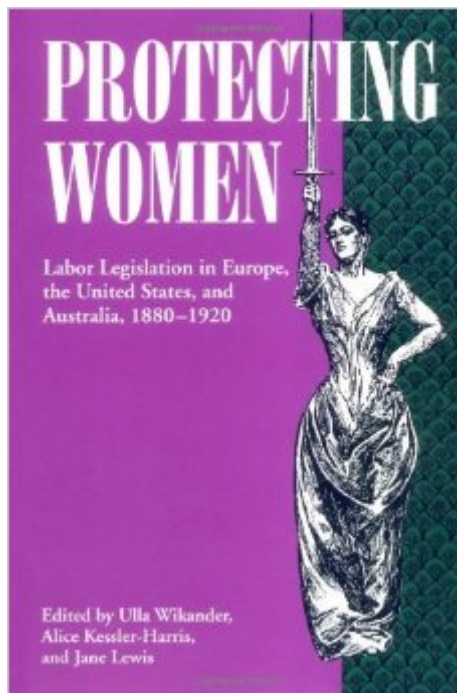


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Protecting Women: Labor Legislation In Europe, The United States, And Australia, 1880-1920



Synopsis

Enacted in almost every industrial country a century ago, protective legislation directed toward women provoked bitter controversy, pitting men against women, women against women, and elected officials against political parties. Strong conflicts arose over what constituted 'protection.' Does this kind of legislation help preserve women's capacities to mother, or is it intended to preserve men's jobs? Does protective legislation help achieve workplace equality? Does it give the state the right to intrude into private family life and, if so, how far? In this international collection, thirteen historians explore the origin and array of protective labor legislation directed at women. The authors analyze ideologies, attitudes, and effects of legislation across women's classes, among employers and workers' organizations, and in both bourgeois and socialist feminist groups. Their essays raise profoundly disturbing questions and provide startling insights as to why the debates that originated more than a hundred years ago are still unresolved. The contributors are from Australia, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States.

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