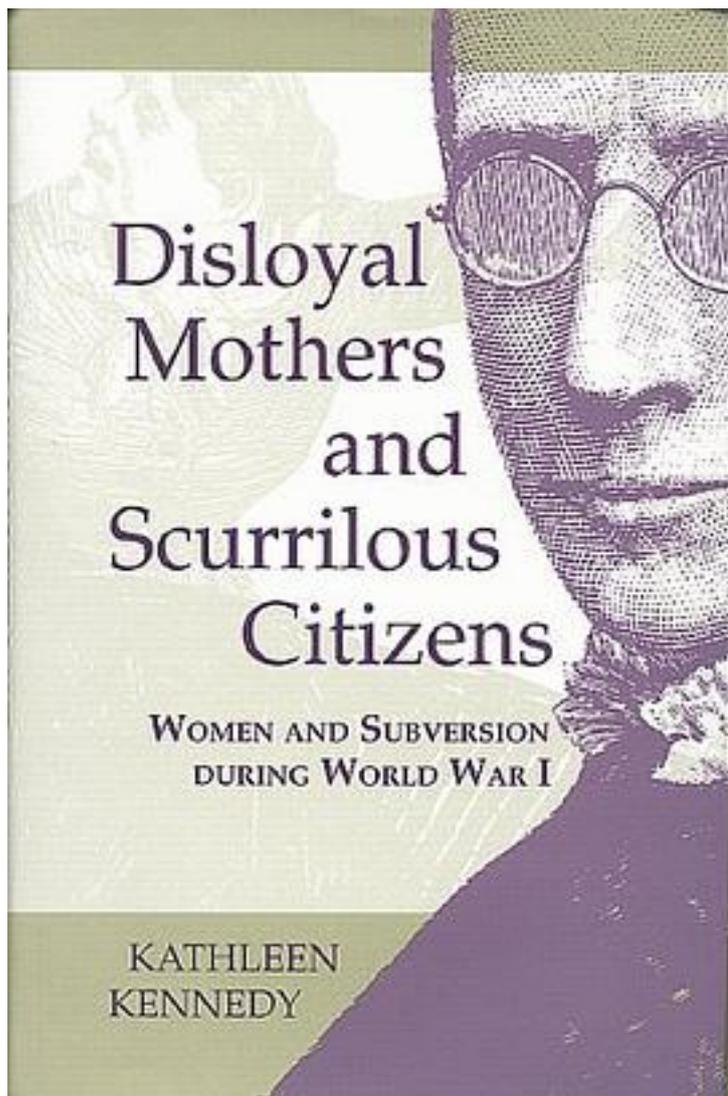


Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens



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著者:Kennedy, Kathleen

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This study focuses on the arrests, trials, and defences of women charged under the Wartime Emergency Laws passed soon after the United States entered World War I. Often members of the political left whose anti-war or pro-labor activity brought them to the attention of federal officials, these women made up ten percent of the approximately two thousand Federal Espionage cases. Their trials became important arenas in which women's relationships and obligations to the emerging national security state were contested and defined. Kennedy builds on recent scholarship that locates women's politics and gender as central to early twentieth-century state building and suggests another dimension-how wartime legal system and its attendant definitions of loyalty, patriotism, and subversion gendered citizenship. Like social welfare, anti-radical politics raised questions about the state's role in defining motherhood and social reproduction. As this study shows, state authorities often defined women's subversion as a violation of their maternal roles. Yet, with the notable exception of Kate Richards O'Hare, those women charged with sedition did not define their political behaviour within the terms set by maternalism. Instead, they used liberal arguments of equality, justice and democratic citizenship to argue for their right to speak frankly about American policy. Such claims, while often in opposition to strategies outlined by their defence teams, helped form the framework for modern arguments made in defence of civil liberties.

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