Week 3 History Resources and Lnks

With the push for suffrage behind them, women's interest in politics declined.  After the war, people wanted to return to "normalcy."  The coalition of female reformers seemed to fall apart.

Conservatism and fear began to grip the nation.   Many women, anxious that the U.S. Communist Party might overthrew the federal government, joined far-right organizations.  Fears about immigrants and radicals produced many political anxieties.  Women who were anti-suffragists or Prohibitionists became members of anti-communist and xenophobic groups like the KKK.  The National American Woman Suffrage Association became the League of Women Voters and focused on educating citizens about issues.  The National Woman's Party headed by Alice Paul worked for an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution.  The League of Women Voters came out against it, believing its passage would be disastrous for women because it would eliminate protective legislation for women.

Although Progressive reform was no longer popular, one piece of Progressive legislation was passed: the Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921.  The act provided federal funds to help reduce infant and maternal mortality.  States received matching dollars to create health care centers and send nurses to homes.  The program did not last long, because of its association with Bolshevism.  By 1929, the funds were cut.

America also underwent a Moral Revolution in the Twenties, which changed sexual rules for women.  The flapper, a symbol of this change, was a liberated woman who smoked, drank, cut her hair short, and wore seductive clothes.  Even though women were freer in a sense, they were playing with the same hand they had always held--things had not changed that dramatically in the lives of women.

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