Female and national self-determination: a gender re-reading of ‘the apogee of nationalism’*

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ABSTRACT. This article offers a gender re-reading of the international history of the post-First World War peace process, a period when nationalism is said to have reached its ‘apogee’, when national self-determination and mutual cooperation between nations in the form of a League of Nations defined liberal aspirations for a democratic new world order. It was also a period when international women’s organisations emphasised female self-determination as both a national and international issue. Juxtaposed, these two aspects of the history of the peace of 1919 shed light on the importance of sex difference to the idea of national self-determination and to the overlapping constitution of the national and the international as spheres of political agency and influence in the early twentieth century.

For a generation of scholars, feminist analyses of so-called ‘High Politics’ have shown us how the theorisation of nationalism has relied upon ungendered historical narratives which reinforce depictions of nationalism, nation-building and national identities as having ‘universal’ and sex-neutral significance. They have reminded us that if nations are ‘imagined communities’, then that imagining has gender dimensions. In 1993, the editors of a special issue of the review Gender and History on ‘Gender, Nationalisms and National Identities’ pointed out that women and men may imagine such communities, identify with nationalist movements, and participate in state formations in very different ways’ (Hall et al. 1993: 159). A more recent special issue of Gender and History dedicated to ‘Feminisms and Internationalism’ specified that the imagining of nations also occurs in international domains. Significantly, the international has been an important site of activity for women eager both to create a ‘feminine’ political space

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alternative to the masculine space of nations, and to be incorporated into
national imaginaries on an equal basis with men (Sinha et al. 1998: 345–57).
Yet traditional ‘High Politics’ international history has been among the
most resistant to the implications of gender analyses – let alone the history
of feminism – for historicising nationalism.

The focus of this essay is on gender, nations and nationalism in the
international history of the period immediately prior to and including the
post-First World War peace process. This was a time when the ‘imagining’
of national communities around the principle of nationality preoccupied
and reshaped the sphere of international relations. Reform-minded Euro-
pean liberals were particularly enamoured with the principle of nationality,
and with the democratic virtues of the concomitant idea of national self-
determination. At this time, their aspirations for a democratic new world
order were most commonly defined by the prospect of national self-
determination among the states of the old Habsburg and Ottoman empires,
and mutual cooperation between states in a League of Nations. According
to Eric Hobsbawm (1991: 130), this triumph of the ‘nineteenth-century
principle of nationality’ during and after the First World War marked ‘the
apogee of nationalism’. However, it was also a time when European
feminists from the Entente and Central Powers struggled to define an
international arena in which they could validate the status of women as
national subjects. Women from international organisations such as the
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the
International Council of Women (ICW), and the Allied Women Suffragists
fought for female suffrage in conjunction with the right to determine their
own nationality and to exert their ‘feminine’ influence on international
relations. As I will argue, the marginalisation of this history by mainstream
historians of the peace process is in itself significant for considering the
place of gender in the international history of ‘the apogee of nationalism’.

In a 1990 review of international history, Rosemary Foot (1990: 616)
argued that

[t]here are two main ways in which the gender issue is being tackled ... an attempt
to recapture women's experiences in order to fill out an incomplete record of the
past or - perhaps a more difficult task - the production of new perspectives and
knowledge that has involved rethinking what is important in the past.

In this essay I do not only want to show that women ‘were there’ in 1919,
even though in the context of the mainstream historiography of the peace
process this is a radical claim. My aim in introducing women and the
history of feminism into the traditional arena of international history is to
highlight the ways in which gender more generally and the history of
feminism (specifically First World feminism) are implicated in the history of
nationalism. More specifically, I want to initiate an examination of the
extent to which sexual difference was intrinsic to prevailing conceptualisa-
tions of ‘the principle of nationality’ and national self-determination
encouraged by the peace process.
The first section of this article is devoted to sifting out explicit references to sex difference in planning by diplomats, 'experts' and politicians representing the victorious Entente powers for the new 'national' world order. The second section concentrates on a different kind of evidence, the efforts of a 'European' (or 'white') female elite, mainly from the Entente countries but representing major international organisations, to articulate the relevance of sexual difference to the new ideal of nation-based democracy, particularly their emphasis on female self-determination as the corollary of the democratisation of nations. Finally, I reflect on what a gender history of the post-First World War peace process can tell us about the different relevance for men and women of the democratic virtues of the principle of nationality and the idea of national self-determination as they were nationally and internationally conceptualised and put into practice in the early twentieth century.

I

One of the reasons why the historical question of the significance of sex difference to the peace process of 1919 has not been put by historians might be the relatively few gender specific references in the written records of the peace as they have been retained and stored by the three major powers at the time, Britain, the United States and France. On the whole, their various national archives record the peace of 1919 as if it were an exercise in the scientific evaluation of the limits of national borders (decided by the Entente political elite and their teams of experts); as if the application of the principle of nationality was sex-neutral; and as if international relations had little or nothing to do with gender. The archives indicate that negotiators and delegates rarely distinguished between the significance of their procedures and resolutions for men and women. Although, at this time, the 'Woman Question' had long been on political agendas throughout Europe, a 'Sex War' was implied in the transformations in gender roles brought about by the war, and female suffrage remained a contested prerogative, there is little evidence in these archives of gender-specific concerns. Yet during the peace process the phrase 'both sexes' made its way seemingly unobtrusively into the constitutions of the new states sanctioned by the peace brokers, and into the plebiscite process of 'self-determination' that was intended to decide the most problematic of the new national borders. In an interwar history of the use of plebiscites in the peace process, Sarah Wambaugh (1933: 477), a technical expert to the League of Nations secretariat who also had connections with international women's organisations, remarked that '[t]he principle of women's suffrage in all the plebiscites' appeared to have been adopted by the Entente powers at Paris as 'a matter of course'. Wambaugh's tentative explanation for the introduction of equal suffrage in the plebiscites was offered in the absence of extant
records of the process by which any decisions regarding the place of women in the national new world order were taken.

The largest archival depository from the peace conference, the more than 258 cubic feet of records of the ‘American Commission to Negotiate Peace’, which includes the records of the American team of experts brought together by the United States government in 1917 as ‘The Inquiry’ (its major task was to research the territorial or border controversies that might be provoked by the exercise of the principle of nationality at the peace conference), sits in microfilm in the United States National Archives in Maryland. These archives can be accessed through a subject card index compiled at the end of the peace negotiations and filling over more than 100 weighty boxes. Although a quick search of this index under ‘M’ for ‘Men’ is futile, the category ‘Women’ yields a handful of entries. One of these directs the researcher to an interchange between members of the Inquiry in 1918, before their arrival in Paris, regarding women’s anticipated place in the process of national self-determination. In a discussion of the possibility of holding a plebiscite in Alsace-Lorraine, Edward Krehbiel (1917), an advising American historian, predicted that if women were included in the plebiscite the outcome would favour France over Germany, since ‘in each district more women than men are French speakers (mothertongue) even though by far more men and women are German speakers’. Krehbiel was circumspect in his recommendations, but his suggestion that giving women the chance to vote in a plebiscite in Alsace-Lorraine might be advantageous to the Entente, was immediately quashed by his supervisor, James Shotwell, an historian from Columbia University and chairman of the National Board for Historical Services, a wartime adjunct of the American Historical Association. Shotwell (1917: 8) declared that ‘[t]he question of women voting is irrelevant. Neither the French nor the Germans are accustomed to woman suffrage and it would be foolish to propose it in this kind of a special election’. Shotwell’s dismissive response indicates that not even democratic-minded peace negotiators and experts expected that women would vote in any plebiscites held in the postwar period, or that any international decision-making regarding women’s political status should override national precedents.

The subject card index of the ‘American Commission to Negotiate Peace’ also links ‘Women’ to a secret meeting held on 13 February 1919 by the Council of Ten in the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs building, on the Quai d’Orsay. One of a series of regular gatherings of the major powers deciding the parameters of the peace, this particular meeting included Woodrow Wilson (president of USA), Arthur Balfour (British foreign secretary), Georges Clemenceau (French prime minister), Vittorio Orlando and Sidney Sonnino (the Italian premier and foreign minister), Baron Makino (the Japanese foreign minister), the Maharaja of Bikaner, and a number of government ‘experts’ and secretaries. The minutes of the meeting
reveal that Wilson asked permission ‘to make a statement on the question of women representation [sic]’:

He [Wilson] had recently received a visit from a group of ladies, representing the suffrage associations of the Allied countries who had assembled here in Paris, under the Chairmanship of Mrs Fawcett of Great Britain. These ladies had brought him a resolution, and had asked him to bring it to the notice of the Conference. The resolution contained a proposal to the effect that a Conference of women should be appointed to consider the conditions of children and women throughout the world. He sincerely desired to give effect to the views expressed by the representatives of the Suffrage Associations of the Allied countries. He wished, therefore, to enquire whether the Conference would agree to the appointment of a Commission consisting of one representative of each of the five Great Powers and four representatives of the Smaller Powers to report on the conditions and legislation concerning women and children throughout the world, and to determine whether any international relations should be issued. This Commission to be entitled to invite the suffrage associations of the Allied countries to nominate some of its members to attend in an advisory and consultative capacity. (Secretary’s notes of a conversation held in M. Pichon’s Room at the Quai d’Orsay 13th February 1919)

Shotwell, present at the meeting as a member of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, recollects in his published diary that at this point Wilson’s tentativeness was palpable. Wilson, Shotwell (1937: 179) claims, ‘hardly knew whether they would think he was justified’ in bringing to the Council’s attention the ‘problems of especial interest to women’. That tentativeness may have been justified since, as Shotwell records, Wilson was quickly interrupted by Clemenceau who cried out, ‘Ah, it’s the suffrage?’. Much to Shotwell’s bemusement, after Wilson’s exposition of the women’s demands, each of the ‘Council’ members ‘seemed to feel it was his duty to say something’. Clemenceau suggested the problem be shunted to the Inter-Allied Commission on International Labour Legislation, ‘he had no objections to offer an enquiry being carried out into the conditions of woman and child labour: but he would strongly object to any enquiry being held into the political status of women’. When President Wilson pointed out that ‘the women were chiefly interested in the latter question’, Balfour replied that ‘he had long been in favour of women suffrage, but he felt considerable alarm at the thought that the Peace Conference should extend its activities to a consideration of that question’. Sonnino pointed out that the Inter-Allied Commission on International Labour and Legislation had already enquired into matters relating to women and children, with the exception of the Suffrage question. He, personally, was in favour of women suffrage, but he did not think it would be good politics to take up this question at the present moment. He thought interference by the Peace Conference would hardly lead to good results.

Baron Makino remarked that there had been a suffrage movement in Japan, but it was insignificant. The Maharaja believed that this request would present difficulties ‘in all oriental countries for reasons which it would be
unnecessary for him to explain at the present moment'. In the face of the
shared Eastern and Western anxiety about the women's demands, and the
shared assumption of the national dimensions of women's political status,
Wilson (himself only a late convert to women's suffrage, see McFarland and
Nevin 1974) agreed not to press the matter and withdrew his proposal.

As far as some of the members in the American Commission were
concerned, the question of women's political place in the new world order,
like the meaning of nationality and its implications for conceptions of
citizenship, required little discussion. A few weeks after the secret meeting
of the Council of Ten, David Hunter Miller (26 Feb. 1919), a legal expert
advising on the terms of the peace, agreed with other Commission members
who had called for a study of the 'definition and description of nationality
and citizenship, double citizenship, nationality of vested citizenship in the
Western hemisphere, naturalisation in the western hemisphere, citizenship
of inhabitants, ceded territory and married women', that this study should
be discontinued, since there was nothing 'particularly new in the data
collected'. Although the records of that data were not kept, and the older
standing views on these questions were implied rather than displayed, the
nature of the study itself is evidence that the status of 'married women' in
particular was involved in the implementation of the 'principle of
nationality'.

These three isolated examples of the historical problem of sex difference
in the peace process raise as many questions as they answer about where
women were situated in relation to the principle of nationality, and to the
newly remade international sphere of national representation. They do
however underscore the importance of women's marital status to their
political status, and indicate that while it was acceptable to consider women
and labour as an international problem, the determination of women's
political status, in general, was distinguished as a responsibility and
prerogative of national sovereignty and nationally defined historical
precedents or traditions, not to be interfered with by international institu-
tions. Yet, as even Clemenceau and Wilson recognised, women's organisa-
tions intervened in the peace process with the aim of presenting the problem
of the political status of women in nations as an issue of international
relevance, equal in importance to other issues being dealt with internation-
ally at the peace talks which had been organised, ostensibly, in the interests
of a more democratic national new world order. The proposals of the
representatives of the Suffrage Associations of the Allied countries (also
known as the Allied Women Suffragists) for international consideration of
the 'political status' of women, and the Council of Ten's dismissive view of
them, could be interpreted as both exceptional and inevitable in the postwar
climate. However, when the meagre sources of the various nationally based
peace archives are read alongside the records of international women's
organisation, there is more substantial evidence of the efforts women made
to have the peace conference consider what was sometimes called 'female
self-determination’ alongside national self-determination, and to use the international sphere to press their ambitions for change in their political status within nations.

II

In contrast to the paucity of gender studies of international history, at the end of the twentieth century, there is no lack of feminist historical narratives about early twentieth-century international women’s organisations from Europe and the trans-Atlantic which attempted to mediate peace during the First World War, or lobbied the League of Nations once the war was over. Leila Rupp’s careful history of international women’s movements – the International Women’s Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), the ICW and the WILPF – and Carole Miller’s recent work on inter-war feminists and the League of Nations, recognise that these international movements took shape around shared views of sexual, racial and national difference. Miller (1991: 65) warns that ‘whenever the themes of women and international affairs or women and the League of Nations were raised for discussion, there was brought into play an elaborate set of assumptions about the category of women’. Indeed, we have seen in the example of the Council of Ten that the ‘assumptions about the category of women’ provided a trans-national basis of masculine consensus. At the same time, Miller (1994: 220) also argues that ‘feminists’ international work was intended to bolster national campaigns to advance the status of women, and as such was not as detached from national goals as has been previously suggested’. Rupp (1997: 2, 110) is able to show that members of the international women’s movement themselves ‘reproduced the dynamics of global power relations’ and displayed ‘conflicting conceptions of the relationship between nationalism and internationalism’. Rupp (1997: 111, 123, also 51, 75, 85–8) portrays these women as involved in, on the one hand, ‘setting out national goals, validating national autonomy, and defining what constituted a nation and a national section’, and, on the other hand, affirming a ‘common belief in the twentieth-century spirit of internationalism’. These histories have gone some way to describe how, in a period that saw increasing emphasis on nationality as a feature of citizenship, women negotiated existing discourses of sexual and national difference by forming international organisations which attempted to side-step the limits of women’s agency within nations, to launch challenges to those limits from an international base, and to reconceptualise the international as a more ‘feminine’ sphere. Here I examine more specifically the structural features of those discourses of difference as they were insinuated into the meanings and privileges of nationality, national self-determination, and internationalism.

Negotiations by women of discourses of sexual and national difference, their attempts to occupy an international space in 1919, occurred within the
context of an historical legal, social and cultural incompatibility between
female autonomy and nationalism, or female and national self-determina-
tion. In 1916, the American feminist Katharine Anthony (1916: 3) reflected
that women’s ‘international unconscious’ was shaped in relation to the
accepted rule that woman was ‘without a country’.³ In the course of the
nineteenth century, European states reinvented as nations had retained or
introduced legal codes that denied women’s direct participation in the
political domain – whether expressed as the vote or nationality rights – in
the interests of popular or ‘national’ sovereignty, the same interests which in
theory promised representation to all individuals that constituted the people
or nation (see Sluga 1998). In France, the Napoleonic code of 1804 had
made the nationality of a married woman legally subject to that of her
husband, a situation that remained fundamentally unchanged until after the
First World War (Llewellyn-Jones 1930: 129). From 1870 English women
who married foreigners lost their nationality, even though Common Law
had previously imposed nationality on both men and women born in
England as an irrevocable ‘obligation’ (Bicknell 1935). British law now
deprived English women who married foreigners of their nationality,
promoting the idea that women had no intrinsic claim to their own
nationality. In the federated German nation, women were not only
forbidden (until 1908) to engage in political organisations or express political
views, women marrying foreigners could not retain their nationality.

By the late nineteenth century, representations of women’s difference
legitimated masculine agency and subjectivity, and designated the capacity
for self-determination as contrary to women’s feminine nature. These
representations were consistent with earlier philosophical discursions of
women’s difference from men that evoked specifically national contexts of
political agency and autonomy – thus in 1807 Fichte urged the self-
determination (Selbstbestimmungsrecht) of German national will, but
dismissed the possibility that women could ‘posit their own desire, will it,
and act upon it’ (Hull 1996: 410). In the fin-de-siècle the political significance
of such representations was compounded by their new scientific authority
and cultural urgency. The disquiet exhibited in most European nations
about the impact of declining population growth on national ‘virility’ (see
Quine 1996) only exacerbated the difficult relationship of feminism to
nationalism. Critics of feminism, and even some supporters of female
suffrage, explicitly feared that female self-determination – commensurate
with the exercise of will by women – would result in both the neglect of
women’s maternal duty to the nation, and – by creating more masculine
women – the dissipation of the virility of the nation and its men. The
widespread influence of the idea that women’s self-determination fundamen-
tally conflicted with national interests is well-illustrated in the argument put
in 1914 by the American liberal-democrat Walter Lippmann (later one of
the key members of the Inquiry, and, eventually, a critic of the peace
process) that in the existing context of strained relations between men and
women in national politics, 'rights', such as the vote, would not be enough for women to achieve real emancipation. Lippmann (1914: 202) was concerned about the particular vulnerability of women's political status to nationalist ideals, and to the commonplace association of the assertion by women of their will or rights as individuals with rampant sexuality and the decline of the bourgeois family, the bulwark of national identity.

During the First World War, international women's organisations attempted to draw the attention of male liberals and radicals campaigning for a new (postwar) world order to these contradictions and to the view that the equal status of women in nations was important for bringing about a more pacific and democratic international order. They also explicitly supported a 'Wilsonian' agenda for a nation-based peace as a corollary of their aims. The most significant examples of this conjunction of internationalism, nationalism and feminism occur in the history of the wartime peace groups that eventually coalesced as the WILPF. In early 1915, the United States' Woman's Peace Party led by the indomitable Jane Addams adopted a programme extending the principle of 'self-government' – a concept that differed from self-determination but resonated its political and national nuances – to women 'as human beings and the mother half of humanity' (Degen 1939: Appendix F). A Woman's Peace Party pamphlet argued that women's distinctive contribution to the nation meant that the role of women

in the settlement of questions concerning not alone the life of individuals but of nations be recognised and respected. We demand that women be given a share in deciding between war and peace in all the courts of high debate; within the home, the school, the church, the industrial order, and the State. (Woman's Peace Party pamphlet n.d.)

At the celebrated Hague International Women's Congress held in 1915 to encourage mediation as a means of ending the war and attended by women from both the Entente and Central Powers, the United States' Woman's Peace Party executive and members became the core of the International Women's Committee for Permanent Peace (IWCPP). By joining with other nationally based peace groups, they consolidated a tradition of international pacifist and feminist organisation and provided a 'universal' framework for their overlapping feminist, pacific and national ideals. At the 1915 Hague International Women's Congress, the politically and culturally heterogenous members of the IWCPP resolved (not without some dissension) to support a platform which included: the creation of a League of Nations to arbitrate international law and monitor international disputes; 'respect for nationality'; 'the right of the people to self-government'; and the enfranchisement of women (International Congress of Women 1915). Late in 1915, a delegation from the Congress led by Addams – newly installed as the president of the IWCPP – delivered the Hague resolutions to Wilson, an act intended to signal the seriousness with which its members took their
international intervention, and their views of the place of women not only in nations, but in international relations in the anticipated postwar order. Confident of their distinctive feminine influence, the IWCPP followed their visit to Wilson with other high-profile delegations which targeted the Entente, Central Powers and neutral governments. The Hungarian feminist Rosika Schwimmer, one of the chief organisers of the Hague Congress and formerly secretary of the IWSA, argued that the governments visited by these delegations considered women 'as the moral power to which they could defer without humiliating themselves' (Schwimmer, 28 Sept. 1917).

The activities of women's organisations mirrored a general trend in female political activism incited by the war, as described in 1916 by Helena Swanwick, an executive before the war of the British National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and, by 1916, president of the newly formed British branch of the IWCPP:

Women have been used to think foreign politics outside their scope. In spite of this, some women had thought a good deal about them. The suffrage agitation had set very many thinking, and the outbreak of the war gave a great impulse to study. A great number of books on diplomacy and on economic and strategic questions connected with international relations have lately appeared and have been eagerly read by women in addition to older historical works. Enormous numbers of study circles have been formed by the Workers' Educational Association, the Association for the Study of International Relations, the Union of Democratic Control, the Women's International League and the Women's Cooperative Guild, and a large proportion of the students have been women. (Swanwick 1971: 30)

As Swanwick's examples suggest, during the war, liberal and socialist feminists who allied themselves with the fervour for a new world order, also associated themselves with men and mainly male organisations busily promoting similar platforms of national self-determination and the creation of a League of Nations. Swanwick pursued the correspondence between female and national self-determination by assuming key positions in both the IWCPP and the British Union of Democratic Control [UDC]. The UDC – a breakaway Labour group – was particularly concerned to bring foreign policy and diplomacy under democratic control, to establish a democratic international government body, and to promote the self-determination of nations. It exerted considerable influence in the United States through contact with Colonel Edward House and Walter Lippmann, who oversaw 'The Inquiry'. In 1915 the UDC even added to its political platform a resolution supporting the equal citizenship of men and women as a necessary foundation for its other aims. For Swanwick, this resolution reflected the high profile of 'women's suffrage agitation' when the war broke out and women's wariness of 'professions of democratic principles which did not, in practice at least, extend to women' (Swanwick 1924: 56).

That women's inclusion in planning for the postwar peace by men could not be taken for granted, and that feminists focused on bringing this point to the attention of men who would be influential in the shaping of a more
democratic postwar order, is also evident in the letters written by Millicent Garrett Fawcett – the president of the British National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies who broke with Swanwick and other pacifist feminists over their opposition to Britain's involvement in the war. Fawcett wrote to high profile intellectual figures and British Foreign Office advisers urging them to voice support for women's rights as well as the principle of nationality. Two of the most notable recipients of these letters were Gilbert Murray of the UDC and Robert Seton-Watson, editor of the UDC rival *The New Europe*, the main organ advocating nationality and national self determination as the basis of the peace process, and a *victoire intégrale* (a complete victory – it implied opposition to a peace by mediation) (see Fawcett 1916).6 The French national archives also offer the striking case of the members of the *Groupe d'Action des Femmes* who, by October 1917, had infiltrated the weekly dinners of the Paris branch of the French League for a Society of Nations. Irma Perrot, Mme Leper and Anna Leal – all employees of the *Postes* and members of the *Association Professionelle des Agents des PTT* – interrupted the diners' discussions of internationalism, patriotism, the rights of man and the League, with their views of feminism and patriotism. Whereas liberals advocated a *Victoire intégrale*, these women defended a *feminisme intégral*, or a new world order in which a principled answer to the Woman Question was as important as the principle of nationality and the formation of a League of Nations (Lettre de Ligue pour une Société des Nations basée sur une constitution internationale 31/10/1917).7

Feminist intervention in the preparations for postwar democracy sometimes involved imaginative reconceptualisations of the relationship between women and nations. Provoked by the ways in which the ostensibly sex-neutral language of will and citizenship, identity and popular sovereignty implied a masculine British citizen (Swanwick 1913: 51; Swanwick (1971: 4; see also Blom 1995: 82–94) proposed that there were mental links between repressed nations – the colonised peoples of India and Ireland in particular – and women. (Such analogies did not secure the unqualified support of British feminists for the national self-determination of either India or Ireland.) Swanwick (1971[1916]: 5) also stressed the correspondence between 'pugnacity in men' and women's lack of political power, and emphasised women's distinctive point of view 'towards this matter of peace and war'. Similarly, her UDC colleague, the eloquent feminist A. Maude Royden (1915: 142) argued that feminine influence was such that the woman's movement amounted to the antithesis of militarism and the success of the woman's movement had led to 'a nobler conception of Empire' based on consent and moral law. Some UDC men took up the idea that feminist prescriptions for gender equality which transcended the physical inequality between men and women within nations provided a model for relations between nations of unequal strength. In a volume dedicated to 'a lasting settlement', Charles Roden Buxton (1915: 52) proposed that
We must do in the international sphere what the woman’s movement demands that we shall do in the national sphere – recognise that inferiority in physical strength shall be no reason for any kind of disability. Just as inter-individual war, or the possibility of it, precludes the equality of women with men, so international war, or the fear of it, precludes the equality of small nations with large.

Even Seton-Watson (1917–18), an antagonist of the UDC, compared *The New Europe*’s ideal of international relations in the postwar period to a superior form of femininity, suggesting that women could stand ‘for that spirit of sympathy and comprehension upon which intercourse between the nations must be founded’. But he failed to mention that the woman who inspired this comparison, his good friend Elsie Inglis (a Scottish doctor who led a contingent of nurses into Serbia on behalf of Seton-Watson’s ideals), was also a feminist who had corresponded with him during the war about the ideals for a new Europe they might share, gently reminding him that planning for a new Europe should not ignore the principle of female suffrage (Inglis 1916).

Once the Entente powers initiated the peace process in 1919, international women’s groups consolidated their attempts to influence the new world order. During the war, the ICW and the IWSA had temporarily abandoned their demands for suffrage in the cause of national patriotism. With the war over, they regrouped as the Allied Women Suffragists and began to capitalise on their support of women’s patriotic participation in the Entente’s war effort. In the second week of February 1919, the French branch of the Allied Women Suffragists organised a conference at the Lyceum Club in Paris, to coincide with the male peace conference being held in that same city. With Carrie Chapman Catt, the president of the IWSA, unable to attend, the conference was presided over by the leaders of the national branches of the new Allied Women’s Suffrage Association: Millicent Fawcett represented Britain, Mme De Witt Schlumberger and Mme Brunschweig, France (Women at the Peace Conference 1919: 71–2). At this conference the participants drew up resolutions for presentation to Wilson. As we saw earlier, they demanded that ‘a commission of women of the Allied nations composed of delegates nominated by their respective countries ... would inquire and report on the claims of women, which it would then present to the Peace Conference’. Those claims were specified as the ‘conditions and legislation concerning women and children throughout the world’, and categorised as Labour, Hygiene, Morals, Suffrage, Law and Peace.

Similar resolutions for women’s involvement in the peace process and in setting the terms of the peace were reiterated at the Labor and Socialist International Conference also held in February 1919, but in the more neutral Swiss city of Berne, rather than Paris. The women attending, some of them members of the IWCPP, decided to hold a special meeting under the auspices of the IWCPP’s Swiss branch (Snowden 1919: 73–4). This meeting was organised with the assistance of Rosika Schwimmer, who by
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this time had been appointed 'plenipotentiary' to Switzerland by Hungary's shortlived liberal and pro-Wilson postwar government, making her the world's first female diplomat. The Berne gathering resolved to support a democratic League of Nations, and emphasised that women should be participating in the peace conference at Paris. It also demanded enfranchisement for women and equal rights in employment and social service. In the following weeks the international executive of the IWCPP began to put into action the plan formulated at the 1915 Hague congress 'to hold its next meeting at the same time and in the same place as the peace conference of the governments' (Degen 1939: 217). Confident that their Hague resolutions had inspired Wilson's Fourteen Points (even though Wilson never explicitly referred to the place of women in the postwar order), between 12 and 17 May 1919, the IWCPP organised their own conference, again choosing a 'neutral' city for symbolic reasons, Zurich. It was at this meeting, attended by 150 women from 16 countries, that the IWCPP became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, or the WILPF (La Ligue International de Femmes Pour la Paix et la Liberté 1915–1929; and Degen 1939: 225). Opening intentionally on the same day as the terms of the Versailles Treaty were made public, the conference provided an important forum for criticisms of the punitive nature of the treaty, and the exclusivity of the League of Nations (see Rupp 1997: 213). Nevertheless, the WILPF's criticisms were in many ways a logical extension of Wilsonian ideals, not in contradiction of them. The meeting's resolutions encompassed points similar to those proposed by the Allied Women Suffragists, but the WILPF resolutions were more broad-ranging, just as they transcended identification with the wartime alliances of the 'Great Powers'. The WILPF championed national self-determination and the creation of a League of Nations that could supervise the world economy, plan for the necessities of life, control mandates, and grant equal suffrage and the complete political, social and economic equality of women with men. They also demanded an end to the blockade against the conquered states and the famine it was generating (International Congress of Women May 1919). Their 'Woman's Charter' included specific provisions for female suffrage and the right of women to vote in plebiscites to decide disputed national territory, and urged that 'a married woman should have the same right to retain or change her nationality as a man' (Macmillan 1919: 17–19). A WILPF delegation including Jane Addams, Charlotte Despard and Chrystal Macmillan, Gabrielle Duchene, Rosa Genoni and Clara Ragaz, went to the official Paris talks armed with these proposals, determined to claim a place for women in the national reshaping of Europe, and in the new international sphere that was taking form (see Randall 1972: Introduction).

None of these provisions was unambiguously accepted or confirmed in the peace process. If anything, the reception of the women by individual governments was, in the historian Mary Degen's words, 'subdued' (Degen 1939: 237). The Allied Women Suffragists fared best in their attempts to
Influence proceedings. Nearly a month after Wilson first broached the issue of women's representation in the peace process, a request from the 'Suffrage Association of the Allied Countries' was again considered at a similar meeting of the Council of Ten, but without Wilson present. The delegates acknowledged that the 'group of ladies' had asked to form part of the commissions investigating the terms of the peace. They agreed in this instance to offer them the opportunity to have a number of their representatives heard by the Commissions for International Labour Legislation and the League of Nations (Secretary's notes of a conversation held in M. Pichon's Room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, 11th March 1919). There is further evidence that labour was the most accessible of the 'international' forums for women's organisations in the nation-based peace archives which document representations by women at the International Labour Legislation Commission. The Commission's discussion of labour regulations and legislation to cater for women's difference - questions of equal pay, the physical impact of work on their reproductive capacities - suggests a consensus among the Great Powers about the appropriateness of 'international' legislation to make uniform women's labour status within nations. But it was the League of Nations which the international women's organisations saw as the fitting symbol of their attempts to garner a place in the national and international spheres of the new world order.

The records of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace show that in April 1919 members of the Allied Women Suffragists forwarded to the president of the United States, and to the Commission for the League of Nations, a 'memorial' with the ICW letterhead, asking that women be allowed to play a part in the permanent commissions organised by the League of Nations 'with the same right or entitlement as men' - au même titre que les hommes - as part of the Bureaux and official delegations, arguing that individuals as well as 'peoples' had a right to self-determination - 'disposer librement d'eux-mêmes' (Conseil International Des Femmes, April 10, 1919; see also De Witt Schlumberger, 6 Jan 1919). The Allied Women Suffragists also staked their place in the international sphere by invoking the authority of 'the people' of the nations which were to be represented in the League of Nations:

Considering that no-one can believe themselves authorised to speak in the name of the peoples while women, who represent half humanity, are excluded from the political life of nations.

Considering that those women who are deprived of suffrage are without influence over the government of their country; it is profoundly unjust that they cannot intervene in the decisions which lead to war or peace, decisions which determine a future, the consequences of which they have to submit to without having taken responsibility for those consequences. (my translation)

The Allied Women Suffragists were not alone in demanding a place in the international domain of the new world order. By 1919 a majority of
women's organisations regarded the League of Nations as their particular cause, and as their special political organ. Such was the optimism regarding the space created by the League of Nations for the participation of women in international affairs that in 1920, the journalist Constance Drexel (n.d.: 5), herself a supporter of the WILPF, wrote in a draft article intended for The Times 'there is now no further doubt that women have been given the right of creating a leading part in the new world organisation. What will they do with it?'

Although feminist histories of the League of Nations show there was little agreement among the women's movements regarding the best means of having a voice in 'the new world organisation' – whether through participation in the main body of the League or by creating a special women's branch; by engaging in broad international concerns or by addressing 'women's issues' – many women looked to the League of Nations to offer them the political representation their own nations did not provide. As Rupp (1997: 211) describes, international women's organisations did win an official hearing before the commission on the League of Nations, where ... they called for the admission of women into all permanent bodies of the League, the granting of woman suffrage 'as soon as the civilisation and democratic development of each country might permit', the suppression of the traffic in women and children, and the establishment of bureaus of education and hygiene.

Some feminists viewed the League of Nations as a means by which women could represent their nations. Women (unsuccessfully) demanded places not only in the League of Nations' bureaucracy and what they considered the appropriately 'feminine' department of 'Social Questions', they keenly (and still unsuccessfully) sought representation on all its Commissions, including the Permanent Advisory Commission for Military, Naval and Air Questions and the Permanent Commission on Mandates (International Women's Suffrage Alliance 18/2/1921). British, French, Czech and Italian suffrage and peace groups, representatives of both the IWSA and the WILPF, lobbied the League of Nations' Council demanding a female representative on the Permanent Commission on Mandates, the newly conceived system by which imperial powers could maintain colonial territories as a form of 'protectorate' while still professing support for the principle of nationality and their democratic intentions. These women's groups argued that women with colonial experience could more effectively than men oversee the maintenance of racial purity in protectorates. The Lombard branch of the Comitato Internazionale Femminile Per Una Pace Durevole (an adjunct of the IWCPP formed in 1915) described European women familiar with the tropical regions as better able to supervise relations between white men and black women in Africa, and to prevent the abuse by white men of indigenous women and their meticci (half-caste) children (Comitato Internazionale Femminile Per Una Pace Durevole n.d.). In February 1921, the
London branch of the IWSA wrote to the Council of the League recommending that at least one woman sit on the Permanent Commission on Mandates because '[s]uccess in administration must lie in developing what is already good in a race, and since women are the prime guardians of its traditions, we believe the addition of a suitable woman representative would be of essential and immense value to the Commission':

In all countries inhabited by races of different colours the relations between the men of the governing race and the women of the other are a source of difficulty, and often an actual hindrance to good understanding. Unfair pressure may be put on men themselves through their family life, while again, questions of variation in standards of morals and customs call urgently for the representation of the woman’s standpoint. (The London International Woman Suffrage Alliance to the Council of the League February 1921)

Women would exercise their ‘distinctive contribution’ to nations in the mediation and defence of morals and (racial) cultures. If this was a ‘nobler conception of empire’, then it was to ensure women’s place in the international sphere as the overseers of the colonialisms of respective European nations.

It would be misleading to suggest that these international women’s organisations and their ‘European’ leadership were alone in representing the interests of ‘women’ at the peace process. Despite the links between the European women and Third World women in international women’s organisations, particularly in support of nation-based rights for women, their strategies often could not help but be at odds. Ironically, European women agitating for places on the Permanent Commission on Mandates had more in common with their male nationals than with the colonised women participating in national lobby groups to challenge the role of imperial nations. Kumari Jayawardena has shown how political agitation and action on the part of Egyptian women, for example, began with their participation in the nationalist movement against the British after the First World War (Jayawardena 1986: 52). By contrast, for ‘European’ women, the international sphere being shaped by the ‘Great Powers’ became a base from which their particular aims might be realised. Those aims were entangled in the denial of national self-determination to non-European states, support for the imperial role of their own nations in what they considered to be ‘backward’ societies, and the maintenance of racial purity within Europe. In an address to the WILPF in London in April 1920, Helena Swanwick (1920) was ready to blame white men for their treatment of black men and women in the colonies and to insist that the introduction by the French of coloured troops into the Rhine demilitarisation zone contravened the League of Nations covenant which did not allow natives of mandated territories to be used for military purposes outside their own countries. However, her concern was not only with the effect on the ‘natives’, but the threat to British colonial possessions raised by the prospect
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of a militarised Africa. At the same time that Swanwick somewhat uncomfortably rejected being construed as a racist, she was most perturbed by the consequences of bringing into close conjunction in Europe what she called the black and white races, arguing that in the interest of 'good feeling between all the races of the world and the security of all women', it was best if 'primitive peoples' were not brought into Europe.

The vehement activities of the international women's organisations mask to some extent the different positions women in Europe took regarding women's appropriate national role. One North American women's anti-suffrage group even warned the peace negotiators against giving women the vote because any change in the political status of women was the prerogative of nations (Bulletin of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace 1 March 1919). There is no question, however, that women made explicit the issue of sexual difference implicit in the peace process, or that sexual difference was also used by women as a rationalisation for their participation nationally and internationally, or that European women invoked and employed national and racial hierarchies in their attempts to delineate a new international order that included them. Adding women to the history of the peace process reminds us both of their exclusion, and of the considerable 'ideological work' women undertook in order to alter their situation. It also draws our attention to the relatively unspoken masculinity of the international sphere forged in the peace process and the principle of nationality that underlay its design.

III

During 'the apogee of nationalism', attempts to exclude women from the processes of the peace—whether physically, or through the construction of women's rights as a 'domestic' or national concern rather than a universal principle—were neither consistent nor explicit. For example, Sarah Wambaugh has shown that, technically, 'both sexes' were to be included in the plebiscite process, but that in the cases of Vilnia, Chile and Peru, League representatives excluded women because in these places women did not already have the right to vote (Wambaugh 1933: vol. I, 477). Records of the Plebiscite Commissions provide evidence that although the phrase 'both sexes' came to describe the right of women to participate in all League of Nations' supervised plebiscites, in all cases the 'option' of a married woman was legally her husband's.

The precarious status of married women in relation to the principle of nationality was legally reinforced in the decade after the end of the war—a period when the creation of new states and new regulations for international travel made the privilege of nationality fundamental for free movement and the political participation of citizens. Fifteen European states, including all the new European states, introduced new laws requiring that female
nationals marrying an alien lost their nationality. If the husband’s nation did not allow alien wives to unconditionally assume the nationality of their husbands, the married woman became stateless. Further, there was no correspondence between the right of nationality for married women and other manifestations of individual citizenship, such as suffrage. Even when women in the new European states and in the former colonial societies (but not in key Entente states) did gain the vote in the postwar period, the inherence of the right to citizenship evaded them in other forms. In Britain women over the age of 30 were granted the vote in 1917, and universal suffrage was instituted in 1928. However, the right of British women to retain their nationality upon marrying a foreigner was legislated only in 1948. The view of the implicit masculinity of nationality put in the interwar period by a British government lawyer — that nationality ‘in so far as it is transmissible or inheritable through generations is only inheritable through the male line and not through the female line’ — persisted as ‘one of the great principles of English law’ (Dowson 1923: 4). At the same time, arguments against the retention of nationality by married women were usually grounded in concern for ‘family unity’, and for the nationality of the children of ‘mixed marriages’. In France the issue of the nationality of married women was taken up more sympathetically, but for nationalist reasons — to ensure that the children of French women marrying foreign men, because of a shortage of French male partners, would be able to become French nationals. In 1927 French married women were finally given the right to retain their nationality upon marrying a foreigner, but women generally were not granted any complementary individual right to political representation or ‘self-determination’ (see Sauteraud 1919; LeNoble 1921).

Even the Cable law introduced in the United States in 1922 to improve the condition of stateless women was limited in its recognition of women’s equal right to nationality (Cott 1987: 39).10

The League of Nations’ Covenant provision that all positions within the League should be open to women and men made it seem that the wartime agitation of international women’s organisations had borne some fruit. Within the League of Nations’ institutional structure, women were to be employed on the same basis as men, and were the object of special conferences and lobbying. In practice, however, the only woman who held a post of high responsibility, Dame Rachel Crowdy (renowned for her ‘warwork’ and in charge of ‘Social Affairs’) was never given official director status. As the main site in the interwar period of ongoing agitation by international women’s organisations for international consideration of prostitution and the traffic in (white) women children, and the universal recognition of married women’s right to nationality, the League’s history also intersected closely with the history of feminism and nationalism. Yet, throughout the interwar period, the question of married women’s nationality was surveyed and commented on, but could not be enforced. The powers of the League’s Advisory Commission for the Traffic in Women and
Children to even discuss the abolition of state-regulated prostitution were seriously challenged, particularly by Leon Bourgeois (the great proponent of a League of Nations) and the French government. They argued that such issues were 'exclusively national, interior, and not international', they were questions of 'unique relevance to territorial authority' and of a state's 'nationality itself' (Bourgeois 1922: 60–2).

Although the ILO and League of Nations were regarded as appropriate domains for female participation and for introducing 'international' legislation involving women, in general, women's demands for equal participation and democratic rights, often categorised as 'self-determination', were treated differently from the demands of men, and those of ethnic groups and nations. Women agitated for those same features of democratic representation or 'self-determination' that were being put forward as important for (only ostensibly ungendered) nationals, but their activities were not perceived, invited or documented as internationally significant in the same ways as all-male lobby groups seeking recognition for their particular version of national self-determination. The more that nationalist groups agitated for political representation, the more recognition they gained for what negotiators and experts referred to as a heightened and evolved sense of nationality or national self-consciousness. National lobby groups were regarded as politically mature when they made demands for democratic representation at an international level. The women who organised collectively to demand rights in terms similar to those of the nationalities were, at the most, only tolerated. Advocates of national self-determination and the creation of a League of Nations, like Seton-Watson, were made aware by close female friends of the correspondence between the situation of 'subject' nations and of women, and of the need for the new world order to encompass rights for women, but they did not make public references to the place of women in the new world order. In the case of the UDC, the historian M. Swartz (1971: 57, 58) argues that after women's equality was made part of their manifesto, the 'woman question' became no more than a footnote to the UDC's main concerns. Colonel House's own wartime diary reveals a fundamental dismissiveness towards female actors in international relations, rather than any recognition of the 'moral power' that Rosika Schwimmer believed men recognised in women. In an entry for 21 November 1915, House (1915: 296) tells us Jane Addams and Rosika Schwimmer paid him a visit, as he records, 'to get the President to appoint a peace commission jointly with other neutral nations to sit at the Hague and to continue making peace proposals until accepted'. Rather than argue, House preferred to '[get] them into a controversy between themselves which delights me since it takes the pressure off myself'. For House, the pacifism of these women compromised the possibility of American military intervention in the war. But the demands of the IWCPP/WILPF were so intrinsically Wilsonian in spirit – and closely linked to the pacifist, national and international demands of groups like the mainly male League to Enforce
Peace supported by Wilson – that House’s dismissiveness seems churlish. Women like Addams and Schwimmer were among the most enthusiastic supporters of the League of Nations’ movements and national self-determination in this period. Schwimmer in particular was among the most politically informed of activists (male or female); she had even translated Wilson’s ideas for Hungarian and German audiences. If in 1915 these women confronted House with issues of more relevance to international relations than the Woman Question, he was made aware of the question of sexual difference from other quarters. In June 1917 Mrs Norman de R. Whitehouse (1917), then chair of the New York State Woman Suffrage party, wrote to House ‘I know the war absorbs all of everyone’s interest and attention, and I wish it were not my particular duty to have to say constantly to everyone, but you must think of Woman Suffrage too.’

House, like the ‘experts’ gathered around him, ignored this imperative. The position of organised women was different from that of organised national groups precisely because their concern was gender and not racial or cultural or religious ‘ethnicity’, and because gender had a specific place in the early-twentieth-century re-invention of Europe along ethno-national lines. The exclusion of women and their uncertain national status in the inter-war period reflected available and prevailing representations of femininity and women’s ‘selves’ in relation to nations – that is, the specific contribution of women to the status of the imagined national community. While it seems to have been acceptable to represent ‘woman’ as an abstract superior ‘spirit of sympathy’ or feminine morality as exemplary for imagining relations between nations and an ideal international sphere, contemporary science, philosophy and politics placed at issue women’s general capacity for self-determination, and set in conflict the assertion of women’s ‘selves’ and the national good. The imperatives of the war further rendered women’s ‘intrinsic’ maternalism their most significant national role, and a significant means of underscoring the virility and stability of nations. Ethnic lobbying reinforced the principle of national sovereignty, while feminist demands were regarded as potentially subversive of that sovereignty. Even liberal-minded reformers sympathetic to women’s difficult position were prone to depict female self-determination as antagonistic to the social good and national well-being, specifically because, they argued, by endowing women with absolute legal and political rights as individuals it placed at threat maternalism and middle-class birthrates (Hobson 1917).

Although the outbreak of war intensified the engagement of international women’s organisations with the difficult juxtaposition of women and nations, these organisations too most commonly drew on conventional representations of sexual difference – of the especial maternal inclination of women to protect their race, or of the pacific qualities of femininity – rather than assert the liberal tenets of individualism, to subvert the idea that women had no national or international political functions (Sluga 1998: 87–111). According to Mary Louise Degen (1939: 328):
the necessity of arguing for woman's rights led Miss Addams as well as other suffragists to give much thought and stress to those specially developed feminine traits of intellect and moral sentiment which, even if they did not make women superior to men, at least gave them opportunity for a distinctive contribution to social reform.

We do need to recognise, however, that within the rubric of women's special contribution to the social good, articulations of the relationship between women and nations had distinctive permutations. In 1916, 'Remember', the editor of the French feminist newspaper *Feminisme Integral* who criticised population policies as demeaning of women, began a campaign for the transformation of French law to allow women to retain their nationality upon marrying foreigners, arguing not for women's right to choose their nationality, but to be able to remain French and pass on their French nationality to their children as a national duty (Remember 1916: 1; it was on the basis of this priority that Remember disliked the international women's organisations). Some French feminists were critical of Remember's emphases on national duty rather than individual rights, but even 'individualist' feminists could support the idea that women had a particular aptitude for overseeing national demographic concerns. In 1919 the WILPF's 'Feminist Committee' itself reinforced the association between feminism, paternalism and nationalism by stipulating that its 'national sections' should study 'population problems' since women had 'special responsibility' for birth-rates ('Report of the Feminist Committee', 1919).

Women's place in the new national and international order was also delimited by pointedly negative representations of woman's difference and national roles – sometimes women were excluded on the basis that they were (in the abstract) too traditional, at other times too subversive. In a review of Krehbiel's analysis of the prospect for a plebiscite in Alsace-Lorraine, James Shotwell (1917: 8) questioned the relevance of women to plans for postwar democratisation by maintaining that 'women probably hold to old traditions longer than men. For an analogy consider the feeling in the southern [United States'] states to-day.' Alternatively, for some critics, the 'internationalism' (unconscious or otherwise) of the IWCPP/WILPF in particular, allied them with bolshevism; and bolshevism symbolised the dangers of feminism. 'The New Europeans' led by Seton-Watson, the National Council of French Women and the Union of Russian Women in Switzerland, imagined Bolshevik Russia as a place where the overthrow of marriage and the institution of 'free love' characterised an essential social disorder ([n.a.] October 1918 – January 1919: 70). Degen argues that in some North American circles the WILPF was labelled a 'separatist' organisation – in the sense that class-based movements were seen as separatist or anti-national – because of its failure to condone women's patriotic involvement in the war and its reconceptualisation of the gender order, even if not sexual difference. Thus, despite Rosika Schwimmer's active support for the Wilsonian principles of the peace, American
diplomats undermined her position as Hungarian plenipotentiary (even though appointed by a liberal pro-Wilson Hungarian government) because she was a woman, and Schwimmer was branded a Bolshevik partly because of her wartime involvement with the WILPF (and partly because she was a Jew from Central Europe). The Council of Ten’s acknowledgment of the Allied Women Suffragists suggests that they were regarded as less threatening than the WILPF because they had been ready to merge their interests with the national cause, and with the Entente powers exclusively during the war (Degen 1939: 222–3). But in the personally organised records of André Tardieu (the French peace delegate and overseer of the peace process) which can be found in the French Foreign Affairs Archives (Tardieu n.d.), the written interventions of the Allied Women Suffragists and the WILPF are classified together in a relatively slight file labelled ‘feminisme’, and grouped with documents on ‘bolshevisme’, ‘socialisme’ and ‘églises’ (churches).

Helena Swanwick has remarked in her autobiography of the war and postwar period, ‘men were in all places of power. They alone were diplomats and foreign ministers and financiers and the manufacturers of munitions and editors and leader-writers’ (Swanwick 1935: 246). In 1935 she reflected that at the end of the war ‘[women] still, in the mass, thought a weak version of men’s thoughts’. However, there is evidence (much of it from Swanwick herself) of the self-consciously ‘feminine’ interventions of women and women’s organisations in bringing about a peace and influencing the national bases of that peace. Women participated on the fringes of the peace process by appropriating the language of nationalism and the concepts of ‘peoples’ and ‘self-determination’. They tried to shift imaginative representations of the place of women in nations by highlighting the equivalence between questions of national and sexual difference. While nationalists rehearsed historical and geographical narratives to authenticate their national identities, women prominent in internationalist feminist organisations identified themselves with nations desiring and deserving recognition and the right of ‘self-determination’, and narrated the national (and international) significance of their female difference, demands for autonomy and their maternal selves. Men more able to influence the peace were aware of the demands of women’s organisations for direct political representation in new and old nations, and in the realm of international relations, and of the extent to which the decisions and decrees made at the peace had different consequences for men and women. Charles Roden Buxton’s UDC ‘Memorandum on Territorial Claims and Self-Determination’ (1919: 74) included the acknowledgement that ‘[n]ot the state only, but society as a whole, follows the curious plan of recognising the existence of women only now and then’. In the specific context of the principle of nationality and the ideal of national self-determination, women’s rights were vulnerable to the less equivocal images of the masculinity of national identities and nationality. In Public Opinion (Lippmann 1947[1921]: 216,
146), a study motivated by the inadequacies of the Wilsonian programme, Walter Lippmann argued that the reason why women had unequal status in their claims to nationality was because ‘[g]enealogical tables exhibit a deeper prejudice’: ‘Unless the female line happens to be especially remarkable descent is traced down through the males. The tree is male. At various moments females accrue to it as itinerant bees light upon an ancient apple tree.’

Despite occasional exceptions, the attempts by prominent feminists during the war and after to more firmly anchor their aspirations for female self-determination in the nation, the concrete examples of regressive state laws in regard to married women’s nationality, and the institutional and intellectual history of the relationship between women and nations, all suggest that in both national and international domains the political and national status of women was overdetermined rather than random. It is significant that when compelled to consider the status of women in the new world order, key political leaders and experts involved in the peace process insisted that, except for labour and the League of Nations, sexual difference was an issue of ‘domestic’ or national significance, linked to precedents established within nations. Their views suggest that, at the least, there was a trans-national consensus during the peace process that women did not automatically exercise the right of self-determination within nations, and that the ascription of female political self-determination to the realm of an international ‘principle’ potentially jeopardised the autonomous identity and sovereignty of nations. During ‘the apogee of nationalism’, the status of women was most consistently regarded as a test of the status of national sovereignty, while the rights, privileges and representation of imagined ethnicised and racialised communities, remained, silently, masculine prerogatives. There are still many historical questions to be asked about the significance of sexual difference to the history of nationalism of this period, and about the gendered redefinitions of national citizenship that coincided with the postwar reconstitution of the national and the international as political spaces. Until gender is taken up as a matter of course by historians of nationalism and international relations, the preferences for masculinity and the forms of sexual difference inscribed in the theories and practices of nationalism will continue to be exercised, even in epochs and events where they appear to be absent.

Notes

The archives examined for the purposes of this article include the records of the Inquiry and American Commission to Negotiate Peace at the United States National Archive; the Peace Conference 1919, Public Record Office, London; and the Conference de la Paix and Papiers d’Agents held at the archives of the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris.

1 Krehbiel was professor of European History at Stanford; his major assignments with the Inquiry concerned possible plebiscites in Western Europe (Gelfand 1963: 53–4)
2 By contrast, Jo Vellacot has argued that specifically feminist internationalist organisations such as the International Allied Suffragists 'at no point ... expressed] a wish to be heard on questions of international power, whether military, economic or political' (Vellacott 1993: 30).

3 This image of women being without a country was further popularised by Virginia Woolf in her 1930s essays, *Three Guineas*.

4 Jo Vellacott has argued that at the Congress 'women were demanding to be heard and given a share in political power, not as mere apprentices to the male system, but seeking an opportunity to bring a new set of values to bear in the most important areas' (Vellacott 1987: 94).

5 Other women in the UDC included Mrs Phillip Snowden, Mrs Charles Trevelyan, Lady Margaret Sackville and Mrs Morel.

6 On Swanwick's urging the UDC attempted to gain the cooperation of the British National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS, associated with the IWSA). Much to Swanwick's chagrin, the gesture was rejected by Millicent Garret Fawcett, who stalled the NUWSS' suffrage campaign in consideration of the patriotic responsibilities of wartime.

7 *Feminisme Integral* evoked the title of a feminist newspaper published during this same period by a Mme Remember.

8 Women's charters were common to this period. The 'Congres de l'Humanité' led by a man, proposed that the Conference for Peace and the League of Nations should accept that recognition of the equality of the sexes is more important than the recognition of equality of races (Hersant 1919: 2).

9 The British and French records of peace yield the same examples of these representations as the American archives, see Public Record Office London, Foreign Office 608 'Peace Conference, 1919' and Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris.

10 In the United States the 1922 Cable Act stipulated that a woman citizen of the United States would not lose her 'citizenship' (here this implied nationality) upon marriage to a foreigner, and that a woman marrying a United States citizen would only be 'naturalised' if she was eligible for citizenship (Llewellyn-Jones 1930: 128, 132).

11 After the war, Whitehouse went as part of an American delegation to Switzerland where she acted as Director of Public Information; gathering intelligence for the peace process.

12 This Bolshevik taint foiled her postwar attempts to gain American nationality, even though she was a longtime resident in the United States.

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