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Activism and International Thought: The Women's International League of Peace and Freedom and the Problem of Statelessness in the Interwar Period

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This article examines the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) as an important site of women's international theorizing on the normative problem of statelessness in the League of Nations era. The problem of statelessness covered several issues connected with the loss of nationality, a new condition of human vulnerability associated with the dissolution of four empires after World War I. It opened up a series of questions about the Versailles system, where the ethical value of sovereignty was assumed, rather than examined for its consequences for individuals. WILPF developed programs of political and epistemic activity on global and local fronts that explored what it might mean to approach the statelessness question in terms of a transnational public interest, as opposed to the state interest privileged by the Versailles order. The article argues that WILPF's international thought is distinctive for the symbiotic relationship that exists between WILPF women's transnational activism and their theoretical conceptualization of the international. This is illustrated through an analysis of Jane Addams's thought, which provides a crucial link between late-nineteenth-century American pragmatism and the early twentieth-century progressive internationalism exemplified by WILPF. WILPF's interwar advocacy on the statelessness question shows how knowledge production and theory building were done in ways that are quite different to the mainstream neo-positivist idea of theory today, and which need to be included as part of our historical understanding of the origins of the twentieth-century field of international relations.

Cet article envisage la Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté (WILPF) tel un important vivier de théorisation féminine internationale sur la problématique normative d'apatridie à l'époque de la Société des Nations. La question de l'apatridie englobait plusieurs problèmes inhérents à la perte de nationalité, nouvelle vulnérabilité humaine créée par la dissolution de quatre empires après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Elle a fait apparaître un éventail de questions concernant le système de Versailles, qui présupposait la souveraineté de la valeur éthique, sans l'évaluer au vu de ses conséquences au niveau individuel. La WILPF a élaboré des programmes d'activité politique et épistémique, tant au plan mondial que local, qui s'intéressaient à la question d'apatridie pour son intérêt public transnational, par opposition à l'intérêt national privilégié par l'ordre de Versailles. L'article affirme que la pensée internationale de la WILPF se distingue par la relation symbiotique qu'elle illustre entre le militantisme transnational des femmes de la WILPF et leur conceptualisation théorique de l'international. Il démontre cette relation au moyen d'une analyse de la pensée de Jane Addams, qui établit un lien essentiel entre le pragmatisme américain de la fin du dix-neuvième siècle et l'internationalisme progressiste du début du vingtième siècle représenté par la WILPF. Grâce au plaidoyer d'entre-guerres de la WILPF sur la question d'apatridie, nous constatons que la production de connaissances et l'élaboration de théories s'effectuaient de façons assez différentes du néopositivisme qui domine actuellement la théorie, mais aussi qu'elles doivent s'insérer dans notre compréhension historique des origines du domaine des RI du 20e siècle.

Este artículo presenta a la Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad (WILPF, por sus siglas en inglés) como un emplazamiento importante de la teorización internacional de las mujeres sobre el problema normativo de la apatridia en la era de la Sociedad de Naciones. El problema de la apatridia contempló varias cuestiones relacionadas con la pérdida de la nacionalidad, una nueva condición de la vulnerabilidad humana asociada con la disolución de cuatro imperios después de la Primera Guerra Mundial. Esto abrió una serie de preguntas acerca del sistema de Versalles, donde se asumió el valor ético de la soberanía, en lugar de considerarlo en función de sus consecuencias para los individuos. La WILPF desarrolló programas de actividad política y epistémica en los frentes mundiales y locales que estudiaban lo que podría significar abordar la cuestión de la apatridia desde el punto de vista de un interés público transnacional, en contraposición al interés estatal privilegiado por el orden de Versalles. El artículo argumenta que el pensamiento internacional de la WILPF es distintivo porque ilustra una relación simbiótica entre el activismo transnacional de las mujeres de la WILPF y su conceptualización teórica de lo internacional. Esto se ilustra a través de un análisis del pensamiento de Jane Addams, que proporciona un vínculo crucial entre el pragmatismo estadounidense de finales del siglo XIX y el internacionalismo progresista de principios del siglo XX, ejemplificado por la WILPF. La defensa que lleva a cabo la WILPF sobre la cuestión de la apatridia en el período de entreguerras muestra cómo la producción de conocimiento y la construcción teórica se realizaron de maneras que son muy diferentes a la idea general neopositivista imperante en la teoría hoy en día, y ambas deben incluirse como parte de nuestra comprensión histórica de los orígenes del campo de las RRII del siglo XX.

Introduction

In 1915, 1,500 women from twelve nations convened in war-torn Europe as an international congress to protest against war and to advocate for continuous mediation conducted by neutral states to end World War I (WWI). They also agreed to meet again at the time of the peace settlement. The International Congress of Women at the Hague was followed by another at Zurich in May 1919, which issued the first public criticism of the League of Nations Covenant by an international body (Balch 1938, 10). While the women could not endorse the League of Nations, despite having called for a society of nations at the Hague Congress, they held fast to the belief that transnational interdependencies required

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governance. Therefore, at Zurich, they decided to create a permanent organization with an international executive and national sections—the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)—and set out an agenda to reform the League of Nations.

This article sheds light on WILPF's advocacy in relation to a range of cross-border political issues having direct and adverse consequences for individuals. By the end of WWI, millions were left stateless, and the unprecedented scale of this condition brought the international problem of human protection into high relief for WILPF. However, the kind of international coordination required to tackle this problem clashed with the sovereign prerogative of states to determine nationality laws and control borders. WILPF saw statelessness as a condition of human precarity that posed the question: who or what is global governance for? Should states, and only states, be the subjects of moral–political concern within the international or should individuals also be the direct concern of institutions of global governance? The article examines WILPF women's activism on this issue of statelessness, on the one hand, and its interconnection with theoretical ideas held by WILPF on the character of "the international," on the other.

There is limited scholarly discussion in international relations (IR) of the theoretical contributions of historical international activists and much less of women's peace activists (with the notable exceptions of Tickner and True 2018, Ashworth 2021, and Confortini 2021). Through a case study of WILPF's inquiry and activism in connection with statelessness, the article argues that the interwar women of WILPF did indeed theorize the international. While they were not scholars of IR in a narrow academically professional sense, WILPF women experienced the international in their daily lives, thought deeply about its effects, and were led to take action to address the patterns of transnational harm, like statelessness, that they identified within it. They engaged in active empirical inquiry into the problems of statelessness that was joined to an examination of the theoretical assumptions underlying failing international practices. There is little point in asking, "which came first, WILPF's idea of the international or its activism?," or in trying to place WILPF women into a category of *either* activist *or* theorist. Rather, my examination of WILPF's thought and action in relation to statelessness demonstrates the vital interconnection between theorizing and activism.[1] The "to and fro" between advocacy and theoretical conception, paired with an experimental attitude adopted from WILPF President Jane Addams's feminist pragmatism, was central to WILPF's ways of working, from its conceptualization of the international to its advocacy on statelessness that linked the local to the global.

Of course, neo-positivists in IR today *do* try to make a strong activist/theorist distinction, and they do not value attempts at knowledge building that place this symbiotic relationship at their center, nor do they value any "theory" it might produce.[2] However, it is worth noting that WILPF was engaged in a form of theoretical conceptualization that resonates with Hans Morgenthau's idea of theory, especially his view that the "reformer" is a "'forward-looking' theoretician" whose "scheme of reform provides an explicit theory of what international relations ought to be, derived from an explicit and implicit theory of what international relations actually are" (Guilhot 2011, 263). WILPF's experimental attitude took the form of speculative thought about an alternative idea to the nation-state domain of discourse on which international practice rested. WILPF's alternative conceptualization centered the international on a principle of transnational public interest, as opposed to state interest. They saw the international problem of statelessness as the crucible in which the normative value of "the international" so conceived could be trialed on both local and interpersonal levels, as well as global and intergovernmental.

Many of the women who went on to form the core of WILPF grasped the complex of transnational harms associated with statelessness through first-hand experience of their human toll. During the war, these women served in Europe as relief workers, assisting in the resettlement of refugees; they organized and personally distributed food aid and they pressured the Allied Powers to remove its economic blockade that was starving those living in the defeated countries. On another continent, American members of the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace (ICWPP), a temporary organization that resulted from the 1915 Hague Congress until WILPF was formed in 1919, served in the settlement house movement in cities such as Chicago, New York, and Boston. They lived among recent immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe, gaining awareness of conditions in the region direct from individuals forced to flee political persecution and economic hardship. Their experience of working in these communities of mixed nationalities also led to academic works of sociology (Residents of Hull House 1895; Deegan 1988; Balch 1910) by women who would later take important roles within WILPF, International Presidents Jane Addams and Emily Balch.

WILPF facilitated public conversation, study, and debate on issues of statelessness and the kind of governance it required, leading us to reconsider the public domain within which theoretical engagement occurs. Statelessness was debated not only within academe, among lawyers, politicians, and League officials, but also within a wider international public sphere (Case 2018, 3). New "private international organizations" (PIOs) shaped international public discourse and operated as a conduit between publics and the global governance conducted by official bodies such as the League of Nations. Individuals addressed letters directly to the League and the Permanent Court of Justice, petitioning for assistance with respect to harms associated with the precarious status of their nationality, but they also turned to PIOs such as WILPF for advice and for routes of redress with respect to the same.[3] WILPF's international advocacy on statelessness, minorities, and other related issues involved lobbying of the League of Nations and publicizing key cases. It also involved the facilitation of experimental cross-frontier social exchange among women who shared postwar hardships and were at the risk of violence associated with rising nationalist antagonisms. This raises a crucial issue about how publics play a role in the development of international theory: WILPF believed that feminist-relational engagement of this kind was crucial to gathering knowledge of the socio-historical and political problems inherent within the dominant discourse of states and was vital to building moral concern for collective humanity.

WILPF made notable early contributions to international understanding of statelessness. Before the concept came

[1] Within scholarship on Black Intellectual History, understanding of the vital interconnection between theorizing and activism is commonplace (Tinson 2017; Aldridge, Bynum, and Stewart 2021; Gyamfi 2021), as it is in Black Women's Intellectual History (Bay, Griffin, and Savage 2015; Fraser and Griffin 2020).

[2] Following Jackson (2011), "neo-positivism" refers to positivism as it is employed in IR today, the definitive work of which is King, Keohane, and Verba (1994).

[3] *Women's International League Monthly News Sheet* (1919), November IV: 8, 3.

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into legal usage in 1921, WILPF identified a raft of problems associated with statelessness: peoples who were forced to flee due to the deprivations of war, forced deportations, state refusals of repatriation, minority oppression, starvation, or disease. They worked to build a sense of urgency about the rising tide of human vulnerability connected with state action and inaction on these issues. Such problems featured in WILPF publications and in WILPF correspondence to the League of Nations even before its Assembly room doors opened in Geneva. WILPF organized the first public, international conference on the subject in 1930, involving other PIOs specializing in its social, economic, and political effects. Most importantly, WILPF believed that statelessness spoke to the facts of the practical need to grapple with the premise of ethical sovereignty at the core of the Versailles system and examine its human consequences.

The article begins by setting out the category of statelessness and WILPF's theoretical framing of statelessness as an international problem. The local and global fronts on which WILPF pursued knowledge and advocacy in relation to statelessness will be addressed, as well as what made WILPF's position distinctive: the belief that improved international management of statelessness requires knowledge production and input by women and other publics with direct experience of nationality questions. WILPF's 1930 international conference, "The Problem of Statelessness," is featured in the second section to demonstrate the full range of resources that WILPF brought to its advocacy on the issue. However, understanding those resources would not be complete without reference to the political thought of Jane Addams, WILPF's International President from 1919 to 1929 and Honorary President of WILPF until her death in 1935. Her relational epistemology and ethos of social democracy are foundational to WILPF's conceptualization of the international and its statelessness advocacy. It will be explored in the third section of the article.

Yet, a question needs to be asked before continuing. Why focus on an interwar organization of white, upper middle-class women seeking coordinated responses to the problem of statelessness from a "humanist" position within an imperial historical context? Apart from raising international awareness of the conditions of statelessness and contributing to a counter-cultural idea of the international, WILPF was unique among women's international organizations for its anti-racism (Rupp 1996, 17) and contributed to "chronologies and networks of anti-colonialism" (Jerónimo 2020, 883). WILPF women were early seekers of what we know today as intersectional praxis (Sarvasy 2015; Woehrle, Patrick, and Maney 2016), and its motto—"unity in diversity"—had an intention that Sullivan (2006, 171) might refer to as transactional as opposed to assimilationist. However, the prospect remains that WILPF's alternative culture of the international perpetuated a hierarchical and racialized international order, despite its will to extend social inclusion globally irrespective of class, race, and gender. A standard of civilization operated within the logic of Minorities Treaties and the new and expanded states of the Eastern and Central European compelled to sign these treaties were seen through a racist lens of "Balkanism" (Todorova 2009). As Sullivan writes, "[i]t is all too easy for white people's good intentions to address racism in responsible, antiracist ways to reenact the very white privilege that they wish to undermine" (Sullivan 2006, 167). Such re-enactments are likely to have surfaced in WILPF's outreach to women in Eastern and Central Europe.

WILPF and the Problem of Statelessness after World War I

Stoeck v. Public Trustee, a case of English municipal law, acknowledged the condition of statelessness for the first time in 1921. Mr. Justice Russell of the Chancery Division ruled that Prussian-born Stoeck, who obtained discharge of his Prussian nationality before coming to live in England, was not a German national and thus not an enemy of the state subject to penalties in accordance with the Treaty of the Peace. Judge Russell opined that Stoeck was a "stateless person" and could not see "why an international lawyer or any one else should close his eyes to such a possibility."[4] By the late 1920s, those working in the intergovernmental arena could no longer do so themselves, when "statelessness" joins the international legal and political lexicons used by Government and League of Nations officials and PIOs, such as WILPF, interested in international problems associated with the loss of nationality.

Statelessness first appeared as an international legal category applying to a limited range of persons, notably those with Imperial Russian citizenship and denationalized by the Bolshevik regime. However, the turbulence associated with postwar conditions in the successor states of the former Hapsburg empire led to the concept's expansion (Siegelberg 2020, 65)[5]. Across 1923 and 1924, momentum built within the League of Nations toward finding areas of coordination among national legal systems on the issue. The first major step was the creation by the League Assembly of a standing Committee of Experts on the Progressive Codification of International Law in 1924. This was followed in 1927 with the Assembly's decision to convene a diplomatic conference on the development and codification of international law in three areas, which included nationality. When the conference at The Hague concluded in April 1930, only one Convention was agreed, and it concerned nationality; it included two protocols on statelessness calling for its prevention in stipulated circumstances. Nevertheless, while there was notable legal and political movement on statelessness, no fundamental questioning of sovereign prerogative on matters of nationality was engaged. Sovereign control over nationality was in 1930 essentially the same as what it was in 1921, when Justice Russell wrote that such questions "must be determined by the municipal law of that country and control" (Stoeck v. Public Trustee 1921). WILPF, on the other hand, believed that the traditional prerogatives of sovereign states should be challenged and did so, questioning those prerogatives where they contributed to the transnational problem of statelessness.

Statelessness was one of a number of international problems resulting from the renegotiated sovereign practices of the new Versailles international order (Smith 2018), and WILPF worked to keep the needs of affected individuals and groups in public view with respect to them. WILPF made a resource of the international public sphere, in much the same way that many WILPF women had done previously when seeking political self-rule as internationally networked suffragists before WWI or as peace activists during the war (Vellacott 1993). They continued in this immediately after the war, pressing claims for transnational social justice with respect to individuals in a nascent international governance structure that prioritized the rights of states. In nationality questions, WILPF recognized hard cases par excellence

[4] http://www.uniset.ca/naty/maternity/19212Ch67.htm. Accessed December 13, 2022.

[5] See Siegelberg (2020) for a comprehensive historical account of the legal/political status of statelessness.

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confronting the dominant culture of the international and, as a response, engaged in inquiry and advocacy with respect to statelessness on two fronts: global and local.

Globally, WILPF fixed on the League of Nations as the only organization with the capacity and remit to coordinate the management of solutions to international questions such as statelessness. WILPF experimented with an alternative norm of transnational public interest as counterweight to the principle of sovereign equality operating as the standard of good governance in a Versailles system managed by the League of Nations. Where nationality questions were central to a region's politics, WILPF experimented in intercultural exchange and efforts in shared knowledge production among women with direct experience of the conditions generating statelessness. Locally, WILPF engaged in interpersonal relational activity that challenged the "social body" of the international as a nation-state-based one.[6]

WILPF advocacy on the first front was informed by two core beliefs: first, that intersocietal conditions generating statelessness needed regulation through governance by the League of Nations and, second, that League governance must be responsive not only to states and order between states, but also to the needs of individuals and justice for collective humanity. On the second front, there was two-way information exchange and transnational interaction between women. Local women affected by questions of nationality, where WILPF operated in Eastern and Central Europe, shared information with WILPF representatives about living conditions and antagonisms in their region. WILPF representatives created links between groups of women experiencing similar conditions of uncertainty and who wanted to organize politically to seek amelioration of those conditions. In addition to facilitating their organization as peace groups, WILPF shared a more general political picture of the statelessness landscape gained through their representations to state governments and League Officials. On offer too was WILPF's capacity to act in an intermediary role transmitting information of local hardships and conducting international lobbying on behalf of individuals and groups impacted by nationality questions.

WILPF's considerable knowledge of the working practices of the League of Nations and its direct engagement with those on the frontlines of nationality politics lent WILPF valuable epistemic authority on matters of statelessness, which it went on to leverage when it held an international conference among PIOs and academic experts on statelessness to be discussed in the second section. WILPF's Eastern and Central European peace missions and the conferences it organized regionally to facilitate cross-border exchange enlarged the network of women participating in a cosmopolitan experiment toward an alternative international culture. The subsections set out how, both globally and locally, WILPF served in part as a *knowledge community*, generating information about a range of nationality questions and publicizing that knowledge, and also as *advocates* for those suffering the indiscriminate consequences of living in a bordered world of sovereign states. Of course, there is the possibility that WILPF replaces the hegemonic discourse of sovereignty with one of collective humanity, reflecting the position and bias of white Anglo-American and Western European WILPF women participant in civilizational discourses of the time. Indeed, such discourses lent the original WILPF membership capacities and entitlements to generate and lead activity that resulted in peace missions, international conferencing, and summer schools, all of which were grounded in a WILPF-generated idea of the international. In the third section, the article will return to this point, arguing that WILPF's understanding of transnational public interest is sure to have been complicated by unexplored ambivalences within its anti-racism.

WILPF's Statelessness Advocacy on the Global Front

WILPF started lobbying the League of Nations on matters of statelessness early. Even before the first meeting of the Assembly in November 1920, WILPF addressed letters to the Secretary General Eric Drummond starting in April 1920 on matters including the repatriation of prisoners of war, the right of asylum, and the traffic in women and children in Asia Minor.[7] From the First Assembly, communications to the Secretariat from WILPF continued from December 1920 through December 1922 on the use of blockade, nationality and marriage laws, famine in Russia, reconstruction assistance for Austria, and the protection of minorities in Turkey, which also called for Armenians to have a national home.[8]

In these communications, WILPF was identifying the loss of nationality as an international problem in need of an international commission of neutral experts and non-state parties. On December 9, 1920, WILPF's Secretary-Treasurer, Emily Balch, raised the matter of the status of women who marry men of different nationalities in a letter to the Secretary General:

> The hardships and uncertainties resulting from the present legal status are a matter of common knowledge and do not need to be insisted upon. The cases of persons who, as a result of the lack of harmony in the legislation of different countries, or for other reasons, have no claim to citizenship in any country, who have therefore no consular protection, no authority to whom to apply for a passport, no political status whatever, is very considerable.[9]

More than this, Balch added that women married to enemy aliens during the war "became liable to expatriation, internment and other measures directed at enemy aliens" and asked for the League of Nations to consider the appointment of an International Commission on Marriage Laws, with an equal number of men and women serving, at its Second Assembly.[10] Further, in 1921, at WILPF's International Congress in Vienna and before the League's Second Assembly, WILPF formed its own "Committee on Nationality and Marriage Laws" reporting to the International Executive, which funneled information on to its National Sections for work in their capitals, as well as fueling its Geneva-based advocacy. WILPF also played a part in the coordination with other international women's organizations of advocacy at the League on nationality and marriage laws (Miller 1992).

The above captures WILPF's broad understanding of the political conditions threatening connections between individual and homeland, and as pressures in the politics of majorities and minorities grew in the 1920s, WILPF forms related committees on "Minorities" and on "Eastern Europe." The remit of the Committee on Nationality and Marriage

[6] According to Poovey (1995), a "social body" represents the homogenizing features of a culture and the organization of knowledge therein. WILPF is seeking to challenge the international as a "social body" steeped in the hegemonic discourse of state sovereignty.

[7] See, respectively, LNA R1703/7336/5213, R1551-39-7523-7523, and R638/12/4631/4631.

[8] See, respectively, LNA R289/10/9422/16, R1273/9443/9443, R657/12/14182/16677, R347/10/23394/11730, and R1617/21034/807.

[9] LNA R1273/9443/9443.

[10] LNA R1273/9443/9443.

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Laws was extended and rebranded as the "Committee on People without Nationality" in 1929. It was this Committee that generated the idea for an international statelessness conference following on from the League of Nations Codification Conference at the Hague in 1930 and placed pressure on the League of Nations to take up the issue of statelessness as a matter for coordinated international management. It also disseminated knowledge WILPF collected from a second, local front of its work on statelessness to a wider international public.

WILPF's Statelessness Advocacy on the Local Front

WILPF's efforts to influence international policy on these questions were powerfully informed by its knowledge production activity with Eastern and Central European women who were impacted by conditions related to statelessness. WILPF contributed to the growth at this time of what Akira Iriye labels "cultural internationalism," defined as focused intellectual cooperation "to link countries and peoples through the exchange of ideas and persons, through scholarly cooperation, or through efforts at facilitating cross-national understanding" (Iriye 2000, 3). WILPF saw its information gathering and intercultural exchange activities with women in the region as an experiment in growing international life, of reciprocal interaction potentially generative of a culture of transnational public interest to work against the dangers of rampant nationalism.

WILPF women traveled to areas of Central and Eastern Europe and conducted outreach with women where the threat of violence between majorities and minorities or other forms of precarity forcing individuals to flee existed. In the period between 1920 and 1934, at many as ten peace missions with itineraries involving multiple locations per trip took place across the Balkans and Baltics.[11] On two occasions, WILPF national sections brought together majority and minority populations in frontier districts to air grievances. WILPF's Danish and German sections did so in Flensburg–Soderburg in September 1926, and its Polish and German sections did the same in Beuthen–Kattowitz in May 1927.[12]

The motivation for carrying out these trips, as described by Minorities Commission member, Mrs. Ester Beskow of Sweden in her 1926 Report to the International Executive, was based on the understanding that

> [N]one of us can fully realize the bottomless depth of psychical and spiritual need, especially where majorities and minorities live together … The best laws and the best form of administration, however important and necessary they may be, can not solve the problems. Good will within the nations themselves must be created.[13]

Collaborative, relational work with women in these regions began early too. Emily Balch reported to WILPF's International Congress in Vienna in July 1921 that she visited Prague, Agram, Belgrade, Sofia and Bucharest, and Budapest over April and May, making "many new connections and to strengthen old ones, and I hope that in the end it will prove its usefulness in the growth of our work in South Eastern Europe" (WILPF 1921, 51). The detail of the work intended was proposed as a Congress resolution by WILPF's "Committee on Pacifism in Practice" and given the label of "Peace Mission Work," which was voted in and assigned its own Committee in July 1921. The aim was to "take up intensive peace work in frontier districts where hatred resulting from the great war and its evil consequences threatens to make permanent peace impossible" (WILPF 1921, 111). This work was to be conducted on both sides of a frontier and was supposed to "support the work and organization of local peace societies, direct influence on educators and teachers of young people" as well as bringing in international speakers and providing economic support. Committee Chair for Peace Mission Work, Matilda Widegren of Sweden, said in presenting the proposal, "I should like to call it Peace Missionary Work" with the belief that "[a]s a rule it must be a very quiet work, and big meetings and press propaganda are out of the question" (WILPF 1921, 112). Widegren thought that the most critical thing was that WILPF seek to "influence parents and educators" in the belief that on closer examination felt hatreds may be recognizable as "fear, misunderstanding, pessimism, or lack of knowledge, all things that we can help" (WILPF 1921, 112). Patterning WILPF's activity after Christian missionary work, Widegren said that intelligent and knowledgeable women were of course needed, "but that is not necessary, what is necessary is that they should be full of love and unselfishness."[14] The women would, however, be asked to study languages, learn the "history and psychology" of the relevant nations, and spend time at WILPF's Geneva headquarters and WILPF's International Summer Schools to advance their knowledge of international politics and experience of intercultural exchange.

The most interesting feature of the WILPF Committee papers is how they described the nature of this activity. Crucially, they used the language of "personal work" in ways that resonated with the relational epistemology of Addams's pragmatist method, on which more will be said in the article's third section. In reporting to WILPF's Prague Congress in 1929, the Minorities Commission spoke to how "deeply impressed" they were by "what may be called *personal work* directed to helping to promote a better feeling between different races with a State … the relations between people within a State are too intimate for effective supervision from outside" (WILPF 1929, 133). Indeed, on Mosa Anderson's return in 1928 from a peace mission to Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, over which three new peace groups were formed in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Lublyana, Hilda Clark wrote to fellow Minorites Commission member Benny Cederfield, "I feel sure that our best help to the future improvement of the Minorities situation will be though such groups."[15]

Addams herself combined a social democratic ethos with this relational epistemology, in line with her wide participatory model (Fischer, Nackenoff, and Chmielewski 2009, 14). WILPF aimed to be attentive to the social needs of all irrespective of sex, class, and ethnicity in the regions it visited, and sought to draw upon the epistemic resources of those directly experiencing conditions generating statelessness. Reporting to the Minorities Commission after her peace mission to Estonia and Latvia in 1925, Matilda Widegren writes that in future reconciliation work, it will be important for visitors to stay as long as they can and be "in personal contact with persons of different classes and conditions," but also that "the most vital question is to get connection with the peasants and working men who as a rule do not understand

[11] A precise number is difficult to provide, since what Balch (1938) labels a peace mission is wider and includes fact finding, which Widegren below does not.

[12] WILPF International, "Minorities Commission Reports: 1924–1929."

[13] WILPF International, "Minorities Commission Reports: 1924–1929."

[14] Widegren concludes, "… Let us take up [Christian missionaries'] humble and glorious work" (WILPF 1921, 113).

[15] WILPF International, "Minorities Commission Reports: 1924–1929."

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German and English."[16] Moreover, the WILPF International Summer Schools were animated by the idea that everyone impacted by international problems had resources to bring to their amelioration. These Schools were also held in locations on or near frontiers in order to facilitate cross-border cultural and knowledge exchange; for example, the 1931 International Summer School was held in Löwenberg Silesia on the subject, "The German and Polish Problems and the International Peace."[17]

WILPF's Experiment in International Conferencing

WILPF's Committee on People without Nationality, established in 1929, was chaired by Regine Havas and included Anna Aszkanazy and Ellen Wilkenson as serving members, and Rosika Schwimmer as advisor. As the new Committee was drafting its first report to WILPF's International Executive, the conflict of nationality laws was an agenda item at the League of Nations's Hague Codification Conference. WILPF was not hopeful for the prospects of its discussion. The Committee reported that the only solution looking forward, as they saw it, was a new international agreement; "[j]udging however by the preparations we cannot even hope a real attempt will be made to attack the question where it is most desperate, as the Conference wishes to avoid political discussions."[18] Thus, the Committee proposed that WILPF convene a conference of unofficial organizations interested in the subject to discuss proposals, raise public awareness, and apply pressure on the League to take more radical action. Eight organizations joined WILPF in its Geneva conference on "The Problem of Statelessness," held as the 11th Assembly was in session and discussion of the League's recent Hague Codification Conference was anticipated.

Committee member Aszkanazy and Emma Cadbury of the Friends Service Council were women experts who were called upon to address the conference. At the end of WWI, 400,000 refugees from the regions of the former Hungarian empire fled to Vienna (Siegelberg 2020, 66). Aszkanazy was born in Vienna and lived there until she herself was forced to flee the Nazi Reich. She took a deep interest in the hardships suffered by refugees in her native city and undertook a careful study of their conditions. Cadbury, who served with the Friends Service Council for over a decade in Vienna, assisted refugees there and had close ties to Quaker WILPF women, Hilda Clark and Edith Pye. Clark and Pye organized the Friends War Victims Relief Committee early in WWI and then went to Vienna in 1919 on news of the refugee crisis, establishing a help mission there and working with Cadbury. In Cadbury's conference speech, she argued that statelessness reveals

> the moral effect on those who have to carry out unforeseen results of the provisions, or lack of provision, of the Peace and Minority Treaties which were meant to obviate these very difficulties. It seems possible for officials to refuse citizenship at their own will, to persons whom they deem undesirable for political, racial, economic or other reasons, and there is no redress … There is even danger to those who would help the unfortunates.[19]

Thus, the legal–political subjecthood of those without nationality remained precarious, even where nationality was extended to individuals through the Minorities Treaties. Aszkanazy too offered sharp commentary on the League's minorities regime : "[t]he fact is that the arbitrary attitude to the nationality question would never have attained its present state if the League of Nations had ever, even once, taken a more severe line with the Succession States."[20] Aszkanazy underlined the seriousness of the problem, saying "*[s]tatelessness is inherited by the children and handed on to future generations.*"[21]

The conference resolved to seek agreement from the League of Nations on the following proposals: (1) that each person had an entitlement to nationality and none should lose citizenship rights "unless and until he has acquired those of another country," nor lose citizenship where he has "principal residence, without any voluntary act on his part," and (2) a commission should be appointed by the Council of the League of Nations to address the problem of statelessness.[22] In addition, the conference commended to WILPF the task of pressing the League of Nations for an intergovernmental conference on the matter.

Mary Sheepshanks (WILPF's International Secretary), Cadbury, Aszkanazy, Clark, Havas, and Miskolczy-Meller all met the British delegation to the League Assembly on September 10, urging them to support the appointment of a League of Nations commission on statelessness.[23] WILPF also corresponded on September 20 with Assembly delegates serving on Committee 1, tasked with reviewing the report of the Hague Conference. In that correspondence, Sheepshanks noted the final act of the Codification Conference when the body unanimously agreed that states should "make every effort to reduce so far as possible cases of statelessness," and pressed that the League of Nations work to secure international settlement on the matter.[24] For the information of the Assembly Delegates, Sheepshanks included firsthand information of hardships related to statelessness collected by WILPF members in Eastern and Central Europe, and she enclosed a Conference pamphlet with its speeches and resolutions therein. Sheepshanks closed her letter by writing of the "urgent duty" on Commission members to take practical steps toward an international solution to statelessness.[25]

When the discussion WILPF anticipated on the Hague Conference Convention in the 11th League Assembly was postponed, the Co-Chairman of the WILPF conference, Mrs. Miskolczy-Meller, wrote to Secretary-General Avenol in January 1931 requesting a meeting between herself, her Co-Chairman Sheepshanks, and Avenol. Upon informing Avenol of the conference of PIOs convened by WILPF on statelessness, Miskolczy-Meller then spoke to the complexity of the problem, pointing out the number of League commissions drawn into inquiries on statelessness—the Legal Department, the Commission on Transit and Communications, the Minorities Commission and the 5th Commission—and urged the Secretary-General to see this as an urgent matter requiring international coordination.

WILPF was granted a meeting with Secretary General Avenol and Hugh McKinnon Wood of the Legal Section on February 5, 1931. In memoranda exchanged prior to the meeting, Ludwig Thorwald de Krabbe, member of the

[16] WILPF International, "Minorities Commission Reports: 1924–1929." Widegren proposes that WILPF urgently seek funding to send local students to a high school abroad at Helsingør or to a Quaker college in Birmingham, UK.

[17] WILPF International, "Summer Schools," UCB Swarthmore Accession.

[18] WILPF International, "Committee on People without Nationality, 1930," Swarthmore Accession.

[19] LNA R3589/25612/19667, "The Problem of Statelessness," 19.

[20] LNA R3589/25612/19667, "The Problem of Statelessness," 4–5.

[21] LNA R3589/25612/19667, "The Problem of Statelessness," 5.

[22] LNA R3589/25612/19667, "The Problem of Statelessness," 26.

[23] R2165/4/7833/35792.

[24] R2165/4/7833/35792.

[25] R2165/4/7833/35792.

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Secretariat's Information Section, warned Avenol that "[a]ll the steps taken on this subject in the States have shown that such nationalization is at present completely impossible."[26] McKinnon Wood's memo to Avenol confirmed elements within the analysis of Aszkanazy and Cadbury from the WILPF Conference, saying that the "actual gravity of this problem is due to the alteration of frontiers under the peace treaties, the operations of nationality provisions of those treaties, and the action of various states there under."[27] However, with respect to their proposal of coordinating nationality laws, he wrote that "[s]tates will not take on this international obligation to rationalize them. The Hague Conference couldn't even manage this in the case of children."[28] Thus, in the interview with WILPF, Avenol and Wood communicated that "the Secretariat could not be optimistic as to the possibility of its receiving an international solution in the near future."[29] McKinnon Wood remarked in an internal memorandum on the conference materials submitted by WILPF that he agreed a statelessness conference under League auspices would be "an excellent way of dealing with the problem if … governments would be brought to see the situation as sufficiently scandalous to justify the exercise of pressure in this direction."[30] He also noted that the merit of statelessness as a rubric was that the Minority states might feel less criticized and targeted, increasing the possibility for an agreement by linking the minorities question with the plight of refugees within a broader international problem.

The "international" conceived on the premise of the sovereign political and territorial rights of states would only grow stronger after the World War II (Siegelberg 2020). However, prior to that, WILPF succeeded in creating pressure and ruptures in routinized responses from the League of Nations on the statelessness question. In this instance, Secretariat officials were compelled to think less in the default discourse of sovereignty, and were made to consider alternative outcomes that were less closely aligned with the private interests of states and brought human protection forward as a consideration. WILPF's whiteness, of course, had an important role to play in this success. Social networks that linked British WILPF women to the League of Nations' British-led international bureaucracy and the financial resources of their class too enabled their statelessness advocacy.[31]

WILPF as Activists and Theorists of the International

The article to this point has brought evidence to light of WILPF as international lobbyists holding considerable epistemic authority on nationality questions recognized both within the PIO community and the League of Nations Secretariat, and how this expertise honed in relational activity among those negatively impacted by the politics of nationality. However, the significance of WILPF on the argument presented here is that the organization's international thought is distinctive for the symbiotic relationship between its activism and its theoretical conceptualization of the international. In this section, the article's focus is reversed in order to demonstrate the ways in which WILPF's international theorizing echoes throughout its statelessness advocacy. WILPF engaged in thought about the values at work within the Versailles order, taking the lead of WILPF's International President, Jane Addams, who had been thinking about cosmopolitanism and an idea of world social citizenship (Sarvasy 2009) well before the peace settlement revealed a renegotiated sovereign state practice riddled with contradiction.

IR theory after WWI is traditionally seen as the foundational moment in the development of IR as an academic discipline. Interpretations of this foundation are typically framed within the idea of the "First Great Debate," a framing contested of late by new scholarship that highlights the importance of groups of intellectuals who do not fit neatly into its realist/idealist dichotomy (Long and Wilson 1995; Morefield 2005; Schmidt 2012; Getachew 2019). The discipline is also being challenged by a literature that examines the effects of racial and imperial hierarchies on how IR is conceptualized (Long and Schmidt 2005; Hobson 2012; Vitalis 2015). Other scholarly projects (Ashworth 2008; Owens and Rietzler 2021; Owens et al. 2022) recover the important role that women played in the development of early IR theory up unto the 1970s, but which was almost completely erased in mainstream histories of the field thereafter.

WILPF's activism in relation to statelessness points to another possible form of intellectual contribution to IR—one generated from examination of the dynamic connection between theorizing and activism—that merits consideration in how we understand the historical origins of the IR discipline in the twentieth century.[32] WILPF women were committed to being "out there" in the world, directly involved with concrete political problems and the individuals suffering from them, and they engaged in the theoretical conceptualization of that world too. Their intellectual activity does not correspond to a neo-positivist view of theorizing grounded in a supposedly detached and unpolitical form of "scientific" enquiry. WILPF was a political organization. However, the very circumstances of their activism compelled WILPF women to engage critically with the dominant discourse of the time that presented the "international" as a society of sovereign states, the governance of which was realized through official organizations of state representatives, such as the League of Nations. In this respect, and particularly interesting in thinking about the twentieth-century arc of IR theorizing, is how Morgenthau's contribution to the Rockefeller Foundation's 1954 Conference on Theory supports an argument for the connection between activism and theoretical conceptualization. One might say that WILPF identified a pattern of practical concerns—statelessness being one—that WILPF understood to be "specific instances" of a general proposition that yields "not only a guide to understanding, but also an idea for action," lending IR theory a "normative element" according to Morgenthau (Guilhot 2011, 266). Today, Morgenthau's view of theory aligns with widely held views of the academic enterprise and knowledge production in IR, views such as the idea that "wagers make worlds," with each method having its own philosophical ground on which to stand (Jackson 2011, 222) and that knowledge production includes speculation on what international practice might otherwise be in forms of normative, critical, and postcolonial theory.

[26] LNA R3589/50/25612/19667, "Minute Sheet," January 29, 1931.

[27] LNA R3589/50/25612/19667, Memorandum to Avenol, January 29, 1931.

[28] LNA R3589/50/25612/19667, Memorandum to Avenol, January 29, 1931.

[29] LNA R3589/50/25612/19667, "Record of Interview," February 11, 1931, by McKinnon Wood.

[30] LNA R3589/50/25612/19667, "Notes on Papers Left by Mrs. Sheepshanks on February 5th, 1931."

[31] For example, Hilda Clark was the daughter of William Stephens Clark, the shoe manufacturer, and a close family friend, General Jan Smuts, provided her with early information on famine conditions in Austria, which took her there in 1919 (Sandra Stanley Holton 2004).

[32] Black Intellectual History, referenced in footnote 1, is a model of such a contribution.

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In their activism on statelessness, WILPF was experimenting with a normative vision of IR rooted in a democratic moral concern for the transnational public interest of collective humanity, one closely associated with the American pragmatist philosophical tradition of which Jane Addams was a central classical thinker along with Charles Pierce, William James, and John Dewey.[33] At this point, the article engages the theoretical vision informing WILPF's practical vision, highlighting the importance of Addams's pragmatism as intellectual background to WILPF activism. Also addressed will be inevitable shortcomings within the feminist relational methodology at the core of her pragmatism and at work in WILPF's peace missions, principally its situatedness in an imperial world suffuse with relations of domination. The overwhelmingly white, middle class, West European and American identities of WILPF women were a source of their political influence and socioeconomic position to engage in the work they did, which requires that questions be asked about forms of exclusion as well as inclusion within the alternative "international" WILPF was seeking to construct.

WILPF's Concept of the International and Its Pragmatist Contouring by Addams

Within WILPF's activism on statelessness is an idea of the international conceived democratically, a moral community of humankind, imparted by Jane Addams's pragmatist philosophy and its lived practice in the settlement house she cofounded in an immigrant neighborhood of Chicago. This concept of the international has two particularly noteworthy features. First, it is an attitude toward being in the world cultivated through education and activism, and one that involves a moral commitment to engaging in diverse social relations. All persons impacted by transnational forces hold responsibilities for seeking social intelligence about the international and sharing in personal work toward growing understanding of this moral community through intercultural exchange. It is this orientation to meeting others who are different from us and a method for doing so—via cooperative activity—that lays the seedbed for an alternative "international" to that of a state-centric, Versailles order. Second, these relations have an experimental quality. That is, our best practical judgments as to what cooperative activity toward democracy as a way of life requires that this value be tested as a basis for action within international practice.

Social activism was the testing ground of Addams's pragmatism and her cosmopolitanism. A key claim of Addams's pragmatism, like John Dewey's, was that our best practical judgments are realized through making our social interdependencies visible and orchestrating coordinated social activity among those feeling their effects. They believed the outcomes of this coordinated activity would be more workable to the extent that all affected by social indeterminacies have an opportunity to seek knowledge in relation to them and to influence and participate in the solutions tried. According to their pragmatism, any principle that might be articulated in connection with problem-solving will emerge from the problem's context, that is, within the material conditions of the environment concerned and in any cooperation that is possible among persons understood to be shaped by diverse sets of experiences. Theirs then was a democratic method; however, the difference in Addams's pragmatist method from that of Dewey's rests in what pragmatism joined with activism brings into focus—directed attention to what motivates individuals to take up an attitude of responsibility toward pursuing knowledge and action with respect to transnational social harms and their amelioration (Cochran 2021).

Addams's method as manifested in WILPF's international advocacy was also experimental and future-oriented. WILPF conceived of the international as a sphere of human activity that should be examined for *what it is and what it might otherwise be*. In theorizing it, WILPF attended to how the "is" and the "ought" meet, guided by ideas and discourse in common use among those experiencing the effects of international indeterminacy like that associated with the loss of nationality or imperial governance. WILPF's position on the Minorities and Mandates systems of the League of Nations is interesting here on this point.

While the Versailles system was premised on an international order of formally equal sovereign states, individuals were offered a measure of international subjecthood in these new international management regimes. Both were designed to perform checks on the governance provided by Minority states and Mandatory powers, which included a petitioning mechanism through which individuals could register complaints in connection with that governance. While expressly designed for the new and expanded states of Eastern and Central Europe (the Minorities System) and the former territories of Imperial Germany and the Ottoman Empire (the Mandates System), WILPF imparted ethical significance to an unrealized potential within these systems—the idea of making all persons subjects of international democratic political concern—and actively lobbied League of Nations officials and governments to *universalize* these international management regimes; that is, all state

[33] In it not until the 1990s that Addams is recognized as a classical contributor to American Pragmatist philosophy (see Seigfried 1993, 1996, 1999). Arguably, being both a woman and a social activist were roadblocks to this recognition for Addams.

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members of the League of Nations would owe responsibilities for minority protection, not just those that signed Minorities Treaties, and all member states with colonial possessions would deliver on the same securities that were owed Mandated territories by Mandatory Powers as set out in Article 22 of the Covenant, including progress toward their self-determination. However, WILPF did not leave it to the "ought" and gave much thought to the "is," believing that great power interests in and ethnic and race prejudices toward those living in the states and territories subject to these systems would not give way easily. Thus, their political work at the global level was seen as necessary but not sufficient. What the "international" might otherwise be was *lived* for Addams and WILPF in experiments of feminist relational activity and intercultural exchange like those to be found in the 19th Ward of Chicago and for WILPF in its peace missions.

Alonso (1993, 205) writes that the greatest influences on Addams's international activism were her education and life experience, the most profound piece of which is Hull House, a living community for settlement workers and Chicago's working-class immigrants, who banded together to meet needs for food, work, protections in that work, and access to education. The immigrant experience held important insights for Addams with respect to the changed environment that industrialization and new functional cross-border interdependencies unleashed in America's Progressive Era. As Addams wrote in *Newer Ideals of Peace*, new immigrants to America, "through the pressure of a cosmopolitan neighbourhood," are "really attaining cosmopolitan relations through daily experience" (Addams 1907b, 18), not perfectly or with any future guarantees but in a way that creates "a strange hope" in the possibility of "a new vital relation" linking the individual to humanity as a "new patriotism" (Addams 1907b, 19).

What philosophers failed to apprehend in this moment, according to Addams, was a newfound concern for human welfare, "a universal determination to abolish poverty and disease, a manifestation so widespread that it may justly be called international" (Addams 1907b, 24–25). It is the immigrant experience that revealed to Addams a "humble internationalism … founded not upon theories," but upon actually existing nurturing interactions linking individuals globally through "a thousand kindly deeds" (Addams 1916, 132). Addams's model of the international is to be found in the immigrant experience: a prospective human unity shaped by transcultural exchange and mutual aid capable of growing democratic life beyond nation-state boundaries. Addams opened Hull House in the belief that "the dependence of classes on each other is reciprocal" (Addams 1892, 226). When WWI broke out, a related belief with respect to *nationality* manifested itself and the methods of Hull House were transposed onto the international and its problems when the American ICWPP convened a "Conference on Dependent Nationalities," organized by Hull House residents Grace Abbott and Addams.

The idea of reciprocity was central to Addams's experimentalism along these lines. According to Sullivan (2003, 45), what Addams means by a reciprocal relationship is that "each side takes something and benefits from the other." In the 1916 Conference on Dependent Nationalities, Addams's idea that "the dependence of classes on each other is reciprocal" was put into action when the American ICWPP decided to convene a conference of American immigrants of the relevant ethnicities and nationalities that would be of concern in a future peace settlement, with a view to offering an opinion on what might be practically workable. Similar to the idea and effort invested in that experiment, as discussed in section "WILPF's Statelessness Advocacy on the Local Front," WILPF engaged peace missions in Eastern and Central Europe with the belief that reciprocal relations of mutual benefit were vital to explore. WILPF drew upon local women's knowledge to inform its understanding of how to promote peace and social justice internationally, and WILPF believed that it had resources to offer women in this region, assisting them in organizing for peace locally and feeding back information on their experiences of issues related to statelessness through WILPF's Geneva advocacy and international conferencing.

However, WILPF's participation in these peace and fact-finding missions—the assistance and representation they offered women of the Eastern and Central Europe—must have been complex and not without "ambiguous implications" (Confortini 2012, 86).[34] Civilizational discourses and global forms of racial thought marked Eastern and Central Europe as a semi-periphery not on par with Western Europe. The Minority Treaties imposed by the Allied and Associated Powers in the Paris Peace Conference on the new and expanded states of this region reflect this worldview. The only sovereignty on offer was a compromised sovereignty that exchanged League of Nations minorities oversight for state recognition. As a British diplomat writes in 1915, the "confused experiences and training of the races and states of the Balkans" means the "[n]ationalism in Eastern Europe is naturally more prone to war-like expression than in Western Europe for it is in an earlier stage of development" (as quoted in Todorova 2009, 128). In the response of the Paris Peace Conference President and Prime Minister of France to the Minority Treaty objections of Polish Prime Minister Paderewski, Clémenceau writes that there is an established precedent of minority clauses in important treaty moments of the public law of Europe, for example, the 1878 Congress of Berlin (Temperley 1921, 432–33). However, there is also an idea of civilizational progress against which Poland and its fellow Minority Treaty states were measured and read as lacking, locked in primordial time as evidenced by historical cycles of ethnic and religious violence to which they would only return if not for careful management on the part of the Great Powers. The historical women of WILPF may have directly challenged the Powers' selective application of the Minorities System, but are they themselves free of this conceit? Further research on WILPF and questions related to their statelessness advocacy and international thought needs to reckon with the unreflective habits of cultural and political superiority that the majority of WILPF women will have possessed given their social position within the civilization core of American and Western European whiteness. The next section considers how this discussion might begin.

Evaluating Addams's Method and WILPF's Statelessness Advocacy on the Local Front

Despite Addams's focused attention on how relationships involving different classes, nationalities, and races are infused with unequal power relations, a critical literature asks whether Addams in fact achieved what she intended by reciprocity. Lisak (1989, 8–9) argues that Addams navigates unity and diversity through an assimilationist logic in which immigrant culture is overtaken by a white, American middle-class one. While Sullivan (2006, 171) argues that Lisak

[34] In the case of a WILPF fact-finding mission to Palestine in 1931, Confortini finds more than "ambiguous implications." The report by Swedish member, Elizabeth Waern-Bugge, is clearly racist toward Arabs (Confortini 2012, 86–87).

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has missed something important—the notion of *transaction* within Addams's understanding of reciprocal relations and the difference that makes—Sullivan writes that Lisak is not altogether mistaken about there being a problem here. Unconscious habits of racial prejudice will obtain in sociohistorical contexts of racist social practice, despite the best of intentions—including those of Addams, says Sullivan (2006, 171–74).

Addams set a high bar for what she intended by "transaction." She wrote that in the extension of charity, "it is the feeling with which you give a piece of bread or the feeling with which you take it which determines whether the transaction shall be a pauperizing one … You cannot do it unless you really know people, and unless your feeling is genuine" (Addams 1897, 345–46). Such feeling can only be won, according to Addams, through engaging wider sets of social interaction beyond one's immediate and familiar relations. In failing to seek sympathy of feeling in this way, Addams believed that "we not only tremendously circumscribe our range of life but limit the scope of our ethics" (Addams 1907a, 10). Reciprocal relations are a moral responsibility for Addams, a responsibility WILPF took up in its peace missions. What might careful consideration of standards of civilization and globalized forms of racial thinking involve were the interwar women of WILPF to engage it?

It begins with understanding that this feminist organization is a "cultural product of a particular historical period" (Ramazanoglu quoted in Burton 1991, 46). As discussed, the new and expanded states of Eastern and Central Europe were placed under a form of international tutelage (Spanu 2020) that was conditional on criteria set by the victorious, older, and imperial European states. To recognize WILPF's own relationship to racist and imperial cultures would mean taking seriously the stickiness of unreflective habit. WILPF would have to have reflect carefully on the barriers to its conscious will to engage in sympathetic, relational understanding, starting with their presumption that going into Eastern and Central Europe to cultivate these engagements was legitimate. Western European and American women with economic resources and cultural capital assumed helping positions, and it is worth noting that only women from helping positions addressed WILPF's 1930 Statelessness Conference. What civilizational prejudice is at work in this choice and within other activities of feminist relational outreach to the women of Eastern and Central Europe, either through peace missions or their International Summer Schools in the region? More historiographical attention to this is required and a turn to relevant correspondence, diaries, and reporting of peace missions and summer school activity would be important resources to explore.

Conclusion

The difference that is WILPF's thought and advocacy on statelessness is unmistakable in two respects. First, WILPF brought a radical social ethics to human protection that translated a problem of order and "high politics" into one of human recognition as well. Statelessness was a matter of social justice within the international—of *seeing* individuals who lacked nationality and the precarity of their position in a bordered world. Second, WILPF understood that bolstering a transnational public interest in human protection within global governance required the formation of an internationalist counterculture to challenge the dominant domain of sovereign state discourse.[35] WILPF sought to facilitate international interaction generative of a politics of recognition for individuals suffering conditions related to statelessness were set in motion on levels global and local: lobbying of the League of Nations, international conferencing, conducting peace missions, and holding International Summer Schools in relevant areas.

The bracketing of transnational public interest and "forgetting" of individuals in statelessness politics required direct challenge to the state-based normative order. WILPF maintained a sustained critique of the notion of a homogeneous culture of international society centered upon the principle of national sovereignty. Their considered insistence on the value of publicness, a principle oriented toward respect for the international moral–political subjecthood of individuals, gave their advocacy the quality of an emancipatory politics. While normative change over the interwar years on this score was not marked, WILPFs advocacy had an impact beyond that noted in records of the League's Minorities Section.[36]

WILPF's efforts to ameliorate the vulnerabilities of the stateless through the personal work of its knowledge production and lobbying of the League of Nations have important points of contact with our contemporary era. At the heart of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees' Global Action Plan to End Statelessness (2014–2024) is their #IBelong Campaign, which draws upon the concept of "belonging" to humanize this condition of international precarity, performing in ways like the "personal work" WILPF sought to affect. There is also the concept of "human security," entrenched in the theory and practice of international security in the United Nations, which understands the inequities suffered by vulnerable groups of individuals to be sources of insecurity capable of unleashing transnational threats. Thus, in the concept of human security, both state power and transnational public interest meet and WILPF's distinctive approach to the broad rubric of statelessness is recognizable today. The question that remains for thinking about the ways in which international problems of collective humanity are theorized and acted upon by WILPF and others in the hierarchical international society of the past and the contemporary era is how to engage conscious and sustained reflection on the whiteness operating therein and to attend to its de-privileging.

Supplementary Information

Supplementary information is available at the *Global Studies Quarterly* data archive.

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[35] See Frost (1996) on state sovereignty as a dominant domain of discourse within international relations.

[36] Section member, William O'Sullivan-Molony, in his "Report on the Activities of Various International Organizations with Respect to Minorities up to the End of 1930," identifies WILPF among the top five organizations working on minorities and statelessness questions. R2165/35792/7833.

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