Antimilitarism, Citizenship and Motherhood: the formation and early years of the Women's International League (WIL), 1915 – 1919

Abstract

This article examines the concept of motherhood and peace in the British women's movement during the Great War. It does so by focusing on the Women's International League (WIL) – the British section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Drawing on the WIL papers, the article shows how a section of the movement continued to lobby for female representation during the war alongside its calls for peace. WIL referred to the social and cultural experiences of motherhood, which allowed it to challenge the discourse on gender and to build bridges between women of former enemy nations. This case study examines how maternalist rhetoric influenced feminism and sheds light on how British women attempted to enter the political sphere by linking women's maternal experience to their demands for citizenship.

In April 1915, approximately 1200 women from 12 nations gathered at The Hague, united in the belief that 'the women of the world must come to that world's aid'.[1] Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, a former suffragette who turned her attention to the cause of peace upon the outbreak of war, argued that the Hague Congress 'opened a new chapter in the history of the world-wide women's movement'.[2] A 'significant minority' of British suffragists supported the aims of the anti-war Congress and formed the British Committee of the International Women's Congress in February 1915 to coordinate their efforts to travel to The Hague.[3] Approximately 180 British women from suffrage, social reform and labour backgrounds responded to the invitation from Dutch feminists, but only three—Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, Kathleen Courtney and Chrystal Macmillan—avoided the wartime travel restrictions and reached the event, held from 28 April to 1 May 1915. On their return to London, they co-founded the Women's International League (WIL), the British national section of—what would become known as—the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).[4] By May 1919 British WIL had 4000 members in 50 local branches.

The organisation was largely made up of suffragists and combined radical feminist claims to citizenship with calls for peace and international law.

This study of British WIL will shed fresh light on the historical debate surrounding British feminism during the First World War. It examines demands for women's citizenship and peace during the Great War and in its immediate aftermath. The view that the war was a 'watershed' has been quite common, reflected in the argument that the conflict heralded dramatic improvements in the lives of women.[5] More recently, however, this perspective has been increasingly questioned.[6] Susan Kingsley Kent claims that the women's movement lost its radical edge during the Great War as it seemingly accepted traditional notions of difference between the sexes and reaffirmed the notion of separate spheres; yet she overlooks the prevailing influence of maternalism on feminism before 1914.[7] The relationship between maternalism and feminism has a complex history, which this article will highlight. Women's activism was both aided and constrained by gendered assumptions about women's roles. For example, 'caring' work and philanthropic efforts permitted some middle-class women access to the public sphere, yet romanticised versions of motherhood placed burdens on working women.[8] Furthermore, women's international humanitarian relief work could contribute to ideas about empire-building whilst upholding maternal ideals. The latter aspect has recently been illustrated by Emily Baughan's research on the Save the Children Fund, which was co-founded in 1919 by WIL member Dorothy Jebb Buxton and her sister Eglantyne Jebb.[9] Although WIL was not a relief association, such work influenced the feminism and pacifism of those members who undertook humanitarian efforts before, during and after the Great War.[10]

WIL's roots were entangled with the suffrage campaign, which had argued for equality on the dual grounds that men and women shared a common humanity and that recognition of women's roles would balance society.[11] A leading group of suffragists resigned from the Executive Committee of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) during the war, considering their support for peace to continue 'the principle for which our long fight has been waged', based on the 'essential duty of women to uphold the ideal of moral force in human affairs'.[12] These suffragists were involved in the foundation of WIL in 1915. The example of WIL thus illustrates how a prominent section of the British women's movement remained active during and beyond the Great War. As the

article will show, feminists asserted women's 'moral force'—often linked to maternal roles—as an integral part of their ideology and methodology in the campaign for women's rights and peace, which represents continuity with the maternalist rhetoric of the pre-war women's movement. WIL stressed the impact of war on women, whilst underlining that feminism was unequivocally opposed to militarism. Furthermore, this article will reveal how feminists of WIL used their understanding of war to demand female citizenship. The discourse of motherhood allowed WIL to operate in the realm of international politics—a traditionally male domain—to demonstrate that women had a valuable contribution to make to the public sphere. Finally, the article will consider the association's humanitarian and political campaign against the allied blockade in 1919, demonstrating that maternal rhetoric could unite women from former enemy nations and that women had much to offer to international relations.[13]

Feminist Attitudes to Militarism

Martha von Tilling, the protagonist in Bertha von Suttner's pacifist novel *Die Waffen Nieder!* based her revulsion to war on her experience as a mother.[14] Suttner, the first female recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace, expressed a gendered response to the issues of war and peace that inspired many of the delegates to the 1915 congress.[15] War had long been a concern of the women's movement: the International Council of Women's (ICW) standing committee on peace and arbitration was formed in 1899, coinciding with both the first peace conference at The Hague and outbreak of war in South Africa. Motherhood and its relationship to war, nation-building and the British Empire became a highly politicised issue during the conflict of 1899–1902: Emily Hobhouse, a leading critic of the Boer War, and Millicent Garrett Fawcett, president of the NUWSS, produced contrasting reports on the impact of the war. Both women employed gendered arguments about military conflict and penetrated the male sphere of international politics, thus preceding WILPF's similar campaigns.[16]

A discourse of nationalism, imperialism and patriotism in the context of the Boer War permeated feminist rhetoric.[17] Anna Davin's influential work demonstrates that a 'powerful ideology of motherhood emerged' from the late nineteenth-century and that concerns over the birth rate at the turn of the century had imperialist implications for

maternal responsibility.[18] The Great War reinvigorated concerns for non-combatants and the question of child welfare, as the crude demand for 'cannon fodder' increased, with obvious implications for women's patriotic duty.[19] The use of maternal rhetoric during the 1914–1918 war was complex; it was employed by both patriots and feminist-pacifists alike.[20] Patriotic propaganda evoked images of mothers' national service and imperial visions of women as 'mothers of the race'.[21] Yet, WIL also used maternal rhetoric alongside its radical opposition to militarism, adopting a language of motherhood in relation to the loss of human life.

For example, Catherine Marshall, the first Honorary Secretary of WIL, condemned militarism as an 'outrage on motherhood' as she considered war to be a waste of women's work in raising sons.[22] Marshall resigned her post as an Honorary Secretary of the NUWSS in March 1915, a month after attending meetings in Amsterdam with German, Belgian and Dutch feminists to plan the women's peace congress.[23] Marshall was amongst the wave of leading suffragists who resigned from the NUWSS Executive Committee when the organisation refused to support the pacifist aims of the congress. Jo Vellacott has documented the divergence between the patriotic Fawcett and the anti-war suffragists, who went on to found WIL.[24] Fawcett promoted support of the war effort to legitimise the Union's claim to the franchise, whereas Marshall believed the best way to 'serve our country, and the best way in which we could continue to serve the cause of Women's Suffrage' was to promote peace. Marshall saw the campaign for a just settlement of the war as 'the natural and almost inevitable development' of the work of the suffrage movement.[25] Her commitment to democracy and peace, which motivated her work for suffrage and involvement with WIL, is also reflected in her leadership of the No-Conscription Fellowship during the war as she campaigned to protect the rights of Conscientious Objectors. Likewise, WIL Chair Helena Swanwick was highly critical of war, which she described as a 'silly, bloody game of massacring sons of women'. Although many of WIL's members never had children—Swanwick 'was indeed glad I had none' during the war—the organisation condemned war as a devastating loss of human life; not just sons, but husbands, brothers and friends.[26]

Many women, whether they opposed or supported the war, used maternalist arguments alongside their claims for equal rights. WIL asserted that motherhood was more

than simply a biological function and the association linked the social status of mothers to its radical feminist pacifism. Yet, WIL did acknowledge that not all women were opposed to the Great War: Maude Royden, a member of WIL's Executive Committee, wrote that her belief that women were innately more pacifist than men had 'been severely shaken, if not altogether destroyed' during the war.[27] Female patriotic support and pro-war propaganda frequently emphasised women's roles as mothers of the nation. WIL too used maternal rhetoric during its formative years; illustrating that both patriotic and pacifist feminists were deeply influenced by prevailing discourse on maternal duty and the nation. However, some scholars have concluded that the movement's use of maternalism signalled a decline in its claim to equality.[28]

Maternal rhetoric informed WIL's feminist-pacifist strategy alongside more radical feminist campaigns and its wider concern with the subjugation of women. Laura Beers has demonstrated that women's historical experience of oppression influenced WIL's interpretation of war and international relations.[29] Militarism, as the pinnacle of patriarchal oppression, reduced women to mere 'breeders and slaves'.[30] Swanwick's 1915 pamphlet on *Women and War* argued that 'men make wars, not women', driven by a masculine thirst for honour and domination; while Hobhouse described women as 'chief sufferers from war's curse'.[31] War was portrayed as a direct threat to the progress of feminism, meaning that 'militarism and the woman's movement cannot exist together'.[32] Carol Miller, Leila Rupp and Jo Vellacott have portrayed WILPF as the most ambitious international women's organisation of the interwar years due to its radical feminist critique of international relations and its campaign to raise the status of women.[33]

WIL's feminist pacifism was by no means confined to the rhetoric of maternal duty. Its members controversially referred to the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, as 'the horrible violation of women which attends all war'.[34] The organisation also objected to the wartime repression of civil liberties that influenced women's lives. Feminists challenged the unequal moral standard enshrined in regulation 40D of the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA), which reintroduced police powers to conduct compulsory medical examinations on prostitutes over fears of the spread of venereal disease. Helen Ward, a member of WIL's Executive Committee, described the procedure as 'insidious menaces to the freedom of women'.[35] The regulation did not subject men to the same examination, thus feminist

protest against 40D mirrored the movement's earlier opposition to the controversial Contagious Diseases Act.[36] Similarly, activists highlighted the direct impact that aerial technology and disruption to food supplies had upon women as non-combatants on the home front.[37] Dismissing the popular argument that men were 'fighting for hearth and home', Swanwick claimed that 'security as a result of militarism is an illusion'.[38] Feminist pacifists also utilised women's non-combatant status to give voice to their antimilitarism. Free from patriotism bound up in expectations of military service, WILPF argued that women could freely oppose war and enter a political space beyond masculine defined boundaries.[39] Challenging the militarist threat to the home, WIL used women's experiences, including motherhood, to contest the political status quo. The organisation argued that female maternal roles and prolonged subjugation provided women with a unique understanding of war and peace.

Historians of the British peace movement, however, have too often dismissed WIL's pacifism as incoherent and historians of feminism have rarely analysed the unique nature of WIL's feminist pacifism and its radicalism.[40] In a pamphlet published by the antimilitarist Union of Democratic Control (UDC), Swanwick wrote that pacifists would only be successful when they recognise a 'woman's claim to freedom'.[41] Her writing demonstrates the intricacies of feminist pacifism, which, considered the movements for peace and women's rights as intimately connected, yet at times seemed to suggest that women possessed an innate natural pacifism. Whilst veering close to essentialist claims about female nature, she also asserted that 'we women are pacifists at heart, but we have been too much passivists'.[42] To Swanwick—whose ideas deeply influenced WIL—peace was an active quality, tied to a progressive vision of internationalism and women's rights.[43] As committed pacifists, a number of WIL's Executive Committee also joined other anti-war associations in protest against the Great War: for example, Catherine Marshall effectively led the NCF and Swanwick was the only woman on the UDC's Executive Committee. WIL also supported NCF and UDC campaigns, sharing their opposition to conscription, militarism and secret diplomacy. WIL, however, deemed their own status as a feminist pacifist association to be unique, as there was 'none which makes just the connection that we do between feminism and the abolition of war.' [44] Rather than subsume its feminism to join forces with other anti-

war groups or sacrifice its calls for peace to concentrate on the campaign for women's suffrage with the NUWSS, WIL saw the campaign for women's rights and peace as one.[45]

Citizenship to Balance Militarism

During the war, the concept of British citizenship was tied up with notions of national duty and service in the armed forces.[46] Vilified for their unpatriotic stance, pacifists and conscientious objectors eschewed expectations of service; the press scorned the 'peacettes' in 1915 for their participation in the 'German' congress.[47] For the majority of suffragists and suffragettes, national loyalty expressed through their support for the war effort legitimised their claim to citizenship rights. [48] Ideas about gender, patriotism and pacifism were complex. Many women conformed to their roles as 'mothers of the race', whereas some female patriots, including those who distributed white feathers to 'shirkers' or wore military uniforms, disrupted traditional notions of feminine passivity.[49] In contrast, male anti-militarists, pacifists, Quakers and conscientious objectors subverted conventional concepts of masculinity and patriotic service.[50] Much of the literature on female service during the war, however, seems to confirm contemporary assumptions that pacifism and patriotism were mutually exclusive.[51] Nonetheless, WIL did not consider itself to be unpatriotic. Feminist pacifists advocated that it was their duty, as women, to protect society from the destruction of war by securing peace. Swanwick questioned jingoistic, anti-German patriotism, asserting that 'it is not necessary for a man to hate other countries because he loves his own'; rather she considered herself a patriotic anti-militarist and internationalist.[52] Drawing on popular discourse of service to the family and nation, Marshall stressed that it was women's duty to ensure that 'the sacrifices our men are making shall not have been made in vain'.[53] WIL also questioned whether a 'defensive' war could protect the home as claimed by anti-German propaganda.[54] In so doing, WIL both adhered to, and challenged prescribed gender roles, thus creating a space for women's contribution to the political sphere.

Wartime upheaval reopened the parliamentary debate on the terms of the British franchise, creating an opportunity for suffragists, including WIL members, to renew their calls for voting rights.[55] WIL claimed that 'there would be great injustice in confining an extension of the franchise to sailors and soldiers'; the devastation of war illustrated that

'never before was the need so great for the enfranchisement of the whole people, and especially of women'.[56] It thus highlighted both the innate value of women's votes and their wartime national loyalty. Like the more 'patriotic' suffragists, WIL used the language of national service to demand female citizenship.[57]

Moreover, leading WIL members challenged anti-suffragist 'physical force' claims. Opponents of female suffrage had long used women's (lack of) physical strength and their omission from the armed forces to deny the extension of the franchise.[58] The 'physical force' debate had further implications for imperial and international relations, as the claim implied that political power was maintained through physical means, ensuring the dominance of stronger nations over smaller states; creating a survival of the fittest competition.[59] Swanwick and Royden argued that this preference for physical strength created unnecessary rivalry and an uneasy system of shifting alliances with 'the eternal necessity of war'.[60] WIL linked 'physical force' to both the oppression of women and small states, campaigning for 'an assertion of moral force as the supreme governing force in the world'—moral force was linked to progress, democracy and equality, which would create peace.[61] Swanwick went further: she dismissed the exclusion of women on the grounds of 'physical force', arguing that, as child bearers, women possessed a positive form of physical force.[62] Feminist pacifists, therefore, contributed to an ongoing discussion among suffragists and anti-suffragists on the 'Woman Question', in particular reference to female maternal roles and their contribution to society.[63] They also linked militarism and female oppression, whilst promoting the value of 'moral force'.

WIL's position within the suffrage movement subverted traditional notions of citizenship based on militarism, using women's position as mothers and non-combatants to justify both their opposition to war and demands for greater equality, which has often been overlooked in the history of the British suffrage campaign.[64] Despite her work on the organisation, Jo Vellacott represents the formation of WIL as an irrevocable split within the suffrage movement, rather than an ongoing development of existing feminist theories on militarism and female subjugation.[65] She also overlooks the ongoing cooperation between WIL and the suffrage movement, particularly at the local level. For example, the Manchester branch of WIL worked closely with suffrage organisations throughout the war years.[66] WIL was represented in the suffrage deputation to Lloyd George in March 1917 and continued to

work for equal suffrage in the 1920s alongside the NUWSS's successor, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.[67] That said WIL did represent a different strand of thought within the women's movement, which—although present in the movement before 1914—found its own voice during the Great War.[68] Feminist pacifists employed the language of service to underscore the valuable contribution that women could make to both national and international politics.

One of the most defining features of WIL was its commitment to internationalism. Unlike other international women's organisations—including the ICW and the International Women's Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), which created loose coalitions of existing national women's associations—WILPF was a truly international organisation from the beginning, encouraging its members to form branches in their home countries. Members of WILPF's International Executive Committee were elected as individuals, rather than as national representatives, and the Executive had powers to act without the consultation of national branches.[69] For WILPF, the principles of peace and feminism would best be achieved internationally, and both its feminism and pacifism reflected pronounced transnational commitments. Many delegates at the 1915 Congress saw themselves as citizens of the world, claiming to 'advance a step further and think for the whole world'.[70]

At the international level, feminist pacifists worked beyond the traditional confines of their gender, demonstrating that women were capable of international political work. After the 1915 Congress, two envoy groups travelled across Europe to present their plan for continuous mediation to government ministers. The envoys reported positively that officials in both neutral and belligerent nations 'apparently, recognized without argument that an expression of the public opinion of a large body of women had every claim to consideration in questions of war and peace'.[71] The mission demonstrated that women were able to traverse the lines of war to facilitate diplomacy, arguing that it was their duty to articulate the popular will for mediation.[72] Although the aims of the envoys were not realised, and war continued until the declaration of the Armistice in 1918, the delegates demonstrated that women could operate within the international political sphere.[73] At the second international congress of women, held between 12 and 17 May 1919 in Zurich, WILPF's Feminist Committee produced a Women's Charter outlining a wide-reaching programme for women's rights. Although post-war restrictions prevented the congress from being held in

Paris as planned, a WILPF delegation presented the peacemakers with their strategy for a permanent peace. This lobby group included two British representatives, Charlotte Despard and Chrystal Macmillan. WILPF subsequently was one of the first international associations to condemn the Treaty of Versailles. The peace settlement, it argued, would breed tension within Europe and overlooked the need to emancipate women to secure progress and peace.[74] The Women's Charter also linked peace with feminist concerns, such as the endowment of motherhood, trafficking, prostitution and the moral standard—campaigns with pre-war origins. Notably, the Charter urged for the 'recognition of women's service to the world, not only as wage-earners, but as mothers and home-makers', underlining that the empowerment of women in traditional gender roles would be 'an essential factor in the building up of the world's peace.'[75]

WIL's Response to the Aftermath of the Great War

Founded on the resolutions of the 1915 congress, WILPF was committed to securing women's rights and peace through international law. Maintaining a transnational network, however, was difficult; it relied on global travel, regular correspondence and meetings but, most importantly, a strong sense of a shared identity in order to transcend nationalism. Leila Rupp has demonstrated that international women's organisations, including WILPF, asserted a 'collective identity' through an assumption that women shared certain characteristics. [76] One of the ways WILPF created a sense of 'we' was its use of female identity, including women's experience of motherhood, described by Hobhouse in 1915 as the 'perfect unanimity of motherhood that seeks but to save the life it has given the world'.[77] The demonstration of transnational unity based on motherhood, or as 'protectors of true civilisation and humanity' may have simply been a rhetoric device.[78] For most, it was the organisation's unique and radical combination of feminism and pacifism that drew women to its ranks. Yet, the use of maternalist discourse demonstrates the prevailing influence of maternalism on feminism at the international level, which is demonstrated through one of WIL's post-war campaigns.

In the immediate aftermath of the Great War, WIL responded to a call from its feminist colleagues in famine-stricken Germany and Austria. The association coordinated a gendered campaign that aimed to reconstruct relations between women of former enemy

nations. In 1919, reports reached Britain of famine in Central Europe caused by the Allied blockade. WIL responded by raising funds to send rubber teats to German women who were struggling to feed their babies. The rubber teat campaign was a highly gendered operation that aimed to provide practical and moral support for 'enemy' women in relation to their experience of motherhood. WIL worked with the Red Cross in Britain and Frankfurt to distribute over one million teats in Germany, which they sent with 'a message of goodwill from the senders to their German sisters'.[79] The blockade became a central concern for WIL in the immediate aftermath of the war, particularly because of its impact on children. In response to pleas for assistance from the Austrian section of WILPF, Ethel Williams, a British WIL member, visited Vienna in 1919 and reported on the famine for WIL's publication *Towards a Permanent Peace*. She condemned the Allied blockade as it caused malnutrition and rickets amongst children in the city, urging the British Government to 'remember that such warfare is directed against children'.[80]

WIL, however, had conflicted attitudes to the provision of aid. Although many of its members participated in relief work during the Great War—including Kathleen Courtney, who worked in Salonika and Corsica—WIL did not organise wartime relief work, opting to focus on political campaigns for peace. Swanwick argued that 'if we abandoned that, we should indeed be surrendering to the age-old notion that women had no concern in public life except to wipe up the mess made by men'.[81] Swanwick believed that relief work could prolong the war and confine women to traditional gender roles, whereas other WIL members found relief work compatible with their feminist pacifism. Nonetheless, WIL's foray into the provision of humanitarian relief in 1919 highlights the organisation's focus on the transformation of public attitudes to 'break(ing) down the barriers of hate, in the name of a common humanity'.[82] WIL's opposition to the blockade also aimed to create a platform for women in the reconstruction of Europe that 'went beyond the humanitarian', as its members focused on the politics of international relations.[83] On 6 April 1919, WIL held a demonstration in Trafalgar Square to campaign against the blockade. WIL's Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, Barbara Ayrton Gould of the Fight the Famine Council and representatives of the Women's Co-operative Guild addressed the 10,000-strong crowd. WIL evocatively portrayed the blockade as 'extermination which begins with the children' and appealed to women, as mothers, to assist mothers in former enemy nations.[84] WIL thus

continued to adopt a highly gendered discourse, making particular reference to women's roles as mothers—a role shared by women from all nations. Significantly, WIL's concerns were focused on the plight of children. The child became a symbol of the loss of innocence and hope for a new internationalism for humanitarian associations like the Save Children Fund in the aftermath of the Great War.[85] WIL used maternal rhetoric combined with its radical feminism to demand that women be heard in discussions about the blockade and post-war reconstruction in the interest of permanent peace.[86]

In 1919 WILPF assembled in Zurich 'in the consciousness of our common responsibility in order to seek a common solution and a common deliverance through our united efforts'.[87] WIL's commitment to internationalism, women's rights and a peaceful reconstruction of society provided the organisation with a clear collective identity, which was often expressed through women's experiences of motherhood. However, WIL's feminism was rooted in the ideas of Western suffrage movements. Its leaders were well-educated, white and middle-class, which obviously influenced their particular vision of motherhood. WILPF struggled to expand beyond the 'West' and the organisation's relationship with empire remained complex.[88] Although the group's use of maternalist rhetoric decreased after 1920, WIL's campaigns for women's rights during the interwar period included dynamic debates over protective legislation for women in the workplace, the endowment of motherhood and the provision of birth control, which also related to the female experience of motherhood. Notwithstanding its obvious limitations, WILPF attempted to create a transnational feminist pacifist association through its shared aims and rhetoric. Transnational maternal unity was a particularly effective rhetorical device used by the organisation to bridge the divides between women of belligerent nations in the aftermath of war. WIL's response to the blockade also aimed to demonstrate the role that women could play in international politics.

Writing in 1915, Helena Swanwick described 'two pieces of work for the human family (that) are peculiarly the work of women: they are the life-givers and the home-makers'.[89] This article has examined how feminist pacifists were both influenced by maternalism and used maternal rhetoric to further their goals during the Great War. This case study of the Women's International League is instructive for a broader understanding of the women's movement during wartime, as it highlights the continuities between pre-

war and interwar feminist ideas about citizenship and motherhood, in relation to the nation and international political sphere. Ultimately, this article has demonstrated how a significant section of the women's movement saw feminism and antimilitarism as inextricably linked. Feminism continued to be influenced by prevailing gender discourse on women's roles as mothers, whilst the movement attempted to challenge women's exclusion from the public sphere. WIL confronted anti-suffragist arguments that blocked women's route to citizenship by highlighting the positive physical and moral force inherent within women's roles and experiences. They argued that women's understanding of war and their duty to 'foster life and to protect the helpless' would allow them to make a unique contribution to the making of peace and the reconstruction of international society after the Armistice.[90] Moreover, WIL also used maternalist pacifism to convey their loyalty to both the nation and international law. Between 1915 and 1919 WIL members were united through their wartime experiences as women: as unenfranchised non-combatants and as mothers.

[1] Emily Hobhouse (1915) *Bericht-Rapport-Report* (Amsterdam: International Women's Committee of Permanent Peace). Swarthmore College Peace Collection (SCPC), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Collection (DG043), Part II: WILPF International Office, Reports of the International Congresses, 1915 – 1998, Reel 141.1.

[2] Emmeline Pethick Lawrence (1915) *Towards Permanent Peace*, p. 17. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Papers, 1915 – 1978, Reel 16.

[3] Alison Fell & Ingrid Sharp (Eds) (2007) *The Women's Movement in Wartime, International Perspectives, 1914-19* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), p. 12.

[4] The International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace (ICWPP) changed its name to WILPF at its Congress held in Zurich from 12 to 17 May 1919. In keeping with the association's own use of acronyms, in this article I use WILPF to refer to the international organisation and WIL to distinguish the British national section.

[5] For example, women's wartime work led to an assumption that the Great War had an emancipatory effect on women: Arthur Marwick (1965) *The Deluge: British Society and the First World* War (London: Bodley Head); see also Gail Braybon & Penny Summerfield, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars* (London: Pandora Press, 1987).

[6] Gail Braybon (2003) *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914-18* (Oxford: Berghahn Books); see also David Monger (2014) Nothing Special? Propaganda and Women's Roles in Late First World War Britain, *Women's History Review*, 23(4), pp. 518-542.

[7] Susan Kingsley Kent (1988) The Politics of Sexual Difference: World War I and the Demise of British Feminism, *The Journal of British Studies*, 27(3), p. 232; Harold Smith (1990) *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar); Ann Taylor Allen (2005) *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe 1890 – 1970, The Maternal Dilemma* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan); Eileen Yeo (1999) The Creation of Motherhood and Women's Responses in Britain and France, 1750 – 1914, *Women's History Review*, 8(2), pp. 201 – 218. For a more positive account of the British women's movement after the Great War see Adrian Bingham (2004) 'An Era of Domesticity'? Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain, *Cultural and Social History,* 1(2), pp. 225-233.

[8] Jane Lewis (1984) *Women in England, 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf); Joy Damousi & Marilyn Lake (1995) *Gender and War, Australians at War in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

[9] Laura Beers (2016) Advocating for a Feminist Internationalism between the Wars in Glenda Sluga & Carolyn James (Eds) *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics since 1500* (NY: Routledge); Emily Baughan (2013) 'Every Citizen of Empire Implored to Save the Children!' Empire, Internationalism and the Save the Children Fund in Inter-war Britain, *Historical Research*, 86(231), pp. 116-137; Heather Jones (2009) International or Transnational? Humanitarian Action during the First World War, *European Review of* History, 16(5), pp. 697-713; Bruno Cabanes (2014) *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

[10] Dorothy Jebb Buxton's experience of the Balkan Wars influenced her support for WIL and SCF. Similarly, Kathleen Courtney worked in Salonika and Corsica during the war. Hilda Clark and Edith Pye set up a maternity hospital in France in 1914 before becoming active in WIL.

[11] Les Garner (1984) *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty, Feminist Ideas in the Women's Suffrage Movement 1900 – 1918* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses); Melanie Phillips (2004) *The Ascent of Woman: A History of the Suffragette Movement and the Ideas Behind It* (London: Abacus).

[12] Margaret Ashton, Letter to the Secretaries of Societies and Federations of the NUWSS, 14 April 1915. Women's Library, WILPF/4/1.

[13] For more on the international women's movement see Carol Miller (1994) 'Geneva—the key to equality' interwar feminists and the League of Nations, *Women's History Review*, 3(2), pp. 219-245; Leila Rupp (1997) *Worlds of Women, The Making of an International Women's Movement*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press); Ellen DuBois & Katie Oliviero (2009) Circling the globe: International feminism reconsidered, 1920 to 1975, *Women's Studies International Forum*, 32(1); Francisca De Haan, Margaret Allen, June Purvis & Krassimira Daskalova (Eds) (2012) *Women's Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present* (London: Routledge); Marie Sandell (2015) *The Rise of Women's Transnational Activism, Identity and Sisterhood Between the World Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris).

[14] Bertha von Suttner (1908) *Lay Down Your Arms, The Autobiography of Martha von Tilling* (London: Longmans Green & Co; first published 1889), p. 48.

[15] Regina Braker (1995) Bertha Von Suttner's Spiritual Daughters, The Feminist Pacifism of Anita Augspurg, Lida Gustava Heymann and Helene Stocker at the International Congress of Women at The Hague, 1915, *Women's Studies International Forum*, 18(2), pp. 103-111.
[16] Rebecca Gill (2013) *Calculating Compassion: Humanity and Relief in War, Britain 1870-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
[17] Heloise Brown (2003) *'The Truest Form of Patriotism' Pacifist Feminism in Britain, 1870 – 1902* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
[18] Maternal duty was stressed by authorities as a key factor in maintaining racial superiority within the British Empire and wider world: Anna Davin (1978) Imperialism and Motherhood, *History Workshop*, 5, pp. 9-65; Ellen Ross (1993) *Love and Toil, Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
[19] Davin, Imperialism and Motherhood.
[20] Susan R. Grayzel (1999) *Women's Identities at War, Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press).
[21] Yeo, The Creation of Motherhood.
[22] Catherine Marshall (1915) Women and War in Margaret Kamester & Jo Vellacott (Eds) (1987) *Militarism versus Feminism: Writings on Women and War* (London: Virago Press), p. 40.
[23] The four other British representatives at the preliminary meetings in February were: Chrystal Macmillan, Theodora Wilson, Kathleen D. Courtney and Emily Leaf. ICWPP (1915) *Towards Permanent Peace, A Record of the Women's International Congress*. WILPF Papers, Reel 16.
[24] Letter from Millicent Garrett Fawcett to Secretaries of Federations and Societies, 23 April 1915. Women's Library, WILPF/4/1; Jo Vellacott (2007) *Pacifists, Patriots and the Vote, The Erosion of Democratic Suffragism in Britain during the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan); see also Angela K. Smith (2005) *Suffrage Discourse in Britain during the First World War* (London: Aldgate).
[25] Catherine Marshall, Letter to the Executive Committee, 09 March 1915. Women's Library, WILPF/4/1. Kathleen Courtney, Alice Clark, Isabella Ford, Katherine Harley, Margaret Ashton, Emily Leaf, Helena Swanwick, Maude Royden and Cary Schuster also tendered their resignation to the NUWSS Executive Committee, March/April 1915.
[26] Helena Swanwick (1935) *I Have Been Young* (London: Victor Gollancz), p. 246. Notably, the loss of her brother and fiancé led Vera Brittain to condemn war. She became a WIL vice-president in the late 1930s.
[27] Royden, *War and the Woman's Movement*, p. 6.
[28] Richard, J. Evans (1987) *Comrades and Sisters, Feminism, Socialism and Pacifism in Europe 1870-1945* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books); Susan Kingsley Kent (1993) *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press).
[29] Beers, Advocating for a Feminist Internationalism.
[30] Helena M. Swanwick (1915) *Women and War* (London: Union of Democratic Control), p. 7. SCPC, CDGB GB, Swanwick, Box 1.
[31] Ibid; Hobhouse, *Bericht-Rapport-Report*.
[32] A. Maude Royden (1915) *War and the Woman's Movement* (London: George Allen & Unwin). Women's Library, 7AMR.
[33] Miller, 'Geneva—the key to Equality'; Rupp, *Worlds of Women*; Vellacott, *Patriots, Pacifists and the Vote*.
[34] Women's Peace Party (1915) *Report of the International Congress of Women* (USA: Roy G. Harper), p. 11. WILPF Papers, Reel 16.
[35] Helen Ward (1929) *A Venture in Goodwill, Being the Story of the Women's International League, 1915 – 1929* (London: WIL), p. 23.
[36] Vellacott, *Pacifists, Patriots and the* Vote.
[37] Susan R. Grayzel (2012) *At Home and Under Fire, Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
[38] Swanwick, *Women and War*, p. 7.
[39] Jane Addams (2003) Factors in Continuing the War in Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch & Alice Hamilton (Eds) *Women at The Hague, the International Congress of Women and its Results* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press; first published 1915).
[40] Martin Ceadel asserts that 'the W.I.L. was doctrinally too confused ever to become important': Martin Ceadel (1980) *Pacifism in Britain, 1914-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 61. Anne Wiltsher, Jo Vellacott and Jill Liddington have researched WILPF, but have not analysed in depth the organisation's decision to maintain a separate feminist-pacifist organisation, see Anne Wiltsher (1985) *Most Dangerous Women, Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War* (London: Pandora Press); Vellacott, *Pacifists, Patriots and the*

Vote; Jill Liddington (1989) *The Long Road to Greenham, Feminism, Pacifism and Anti-Militarism in Britain since 1820* (London: Virago).
[41] Swanwick, *Women and War*, p. 5.
[42] Helena Swanwick (1919) Evening Speech, *Report of the International Congress of Women, Zurich*.
[43] Vellacott, *Pacifists, Patriots and the Vote.*
[44] Helena Swanwick (1920) A Regiment of Women, *Monthly News Sheet* (January), p. 2.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Lucy Noakes (2006) *Women in the British Army: War and the Gentle Sex, 1907-1948* (London: Routledge); Marilyn Lake (1994) Between Old Worlds and New: Feminist Citizenship, Nation and Race in Caroline Daley & Melanie Nolan (Eds) *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press).
[47] *Daily Mail* (03 May 1915), p. 3.
[48] Nicoletta Gullace (2002) "*Blood of Our Sons*", *Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan).
[49] Lucy Noakes (2008) Playing at being soldiers? British women and military uniforms in the First World War, in Jessica Meyer (Eds) *British Popular Culture and the First World War* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers).
[50] Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons*.
[51] Vellacott, *Patriots, Pacifists and the Vote*; Paul Ward (2001) Women of Britain Say Go: Women's Patriotism in the First World War, *Twentieth Century British History*, 12(1), pp. 23-45.
[52] Swanwick, *Women and War*, p. 9.
[53] Marshall, Women and War*.*
[54] Swanwick, *Women and War*, p. 2.
[55] Millicent Garrett Fawcett, Order of Deputation (March 1917). Women's Library, 6B/106/7/MGF/90A/WWI.
[56] WIL (1916) *Monthly News Sheet* (August), p. 4.
[57] Martin Pugh (2000), *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan); Sandi E. Cooper (1991) *Patriotic Pacifism, Waging War on War in Europe, 1815-1914* (USA: Oxford University Press).
[58] Brian Harrison (1978) *Separate Spheres, The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain* (London: Croom Helm); Melanie Faraunt (2003) Women Resisting the Vote: a case of anti-feminism? *Women's History Review*, 12(4), pp.605-621.
[59] Swanwick rejected Darwinist theories of competition, which confined women to the role of 'breeder'. Swanwick, *Women and War*; see also Anna Davin, Imperialism and Motherhood.
[60] Swanwick, *Women and War*, p. 5.
[61] Royden, *War and the Woman's Movement.*
[62] Swanwick, *Women and War*, p. 4.
[63] Julia Bush (2007) *Women Against the Vote: Female Anti-Suffragism in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); the suffrage movement contributed to a shift in perceptions of women, see Maroula Joannou & June Purvis (Eds) (1998) *The Women's Suffrage Movement, New Feminist Perspectives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
[64] Despite Jill Liddington's seminal text, much remains to be understood about feminism and anti-militarism: Jill Liddington, *The Road to Greenham Common*. Martin Pugh is dismissive of WIL, claiming its significance was limited: Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain*, p.10.
[65] Vellacott, *Pacifists, Patriots and the Vote*; Brown, *'The Truest Form of Patriotism'.*
[66] Women's International League, Special Conference of Representatives of Woman Suffrage Associations in Manchester, 24 November 1915, Manchester Branch Minute Book, 1915-1919. LSE Archives, WILPF/BRAN/1/1; Alison Ronan (2011) Fractured, fragile, creative: A brief analysis of wartime friendships between provincial women anti-war activists, 1914 – 1918, *North West Labour History*, pp. 21-30.
[67] The deputation included Charlotte Despard and Mary Macarthur, members of WIL's Executive Committee. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *Order of Deputation* (March 1917); WIL was a member of the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee (1927) *Equal Political Rights for Men and Women.* Women's Library, 5ERI.
[68] Swanwick, *Women and War*, p. 13; Royden, *War and the Women's Movement.*
[69] WIL (1919) *Towards Peace and Freedom*. WILPF Papers, Reel 17.
[70] Hobhouse, *Bericht-Rapport-Report*, p. x. This also mirrors the Hungarian feminist, Rosika Schwimmer's infamous remarks in 1929: 'I have no sense of nationalism, only a cosmic consciousness of belonging to the human family', WILPF (1929) *Pax International* (July), p. 2. WILPF Papers, Reel 111.
[71] Emily Greene Balch (1915) At the Northern Capitals, in Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch & Alice Hamilton (Eds) *Women at The Hague,* p. 52. See also Lela B. Costin (1982) Feminism, Pacifism, Internationalism and the

1915 International Congress of Women, *Women's Studies International Forum*, 5(3), pp. 301-315; David S. Patterson (2008) *The Search for Negotiated Peace: Women's Activism and Citizen Diplomacy in World War I* (London: Routledge).

[72] Aletta Jacobs, Chrystal Macmillan, Rosika Schwimmer, Emily G. Balch & Jane Addams (1915) *Full Text of the Manifesto, Issued by Envoys of the International Congress of Women at The Hague to the Governments of Europe, and the President of the United States* (New York, 15 October). WILPF Papers, Reel 16.

[73] They met with the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of the Great Powers; the King of Norway; the Presidents of Switzerland and the United States; and the Pope. Ibid.

[74] WILPF (1919) *Report of the Second International Congress, Zurich, 12 – 17 May*. WILPF Papers, Reel 17.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Leila Rupp & Verta Taylor (1999) Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement: A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism, *Signs*, 24(2), pp. 363-386.

[77] Hobhouse, *Bericht-Rapport-Report,* p. x.

[78] Lida Gustava Heymann (1915) Women of Europe, When Will Your Call Ring Out?, *Jus Suffragii* (February), p. 232.

[79] WIL (1919) British Section Report, *Report of the International Congress of Women.*

[80] Ethel Williams (1919) A Visit to Vienna*, Towards Peace and Freedom,* p. 10. WILPF Papers, Reel 17.

[81] Swanwick, *I Have Been Young,* p. 315.

[82] WIL (1919) In Aid of Germany's Starving Babies, *Monthly News Sheet* (February), p. 3.

[83] Vellacott, *Pacifists, Patriots and the Vote*, p. 184.

[84] WIL (1919) Demonstration at Trafalgar Square, *Monthly News Sheet* (May); A number of WIL's leading members were involved with the creation of the Fight the Famine Council and Save the Children Fund, including Dorothy Jebb Buxton, Maude Royden, Marian Cripps (Lady Parmoor), Kathleen Courtney and Mosa Anderson, see Clare Mulley (2009) *The Woman Who Saved the Children, A Biography of Eglantyne Jebb Founder of Save the Children* (Oxford: Oneworld Publishers).

[85] Michael Barnett (2011) *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (London: Cornell University Press), p. 86.

[86] WIL delegates corresponded with President Wilson during his time at the peace talks in Paris. Telegram from President Woodrow Wilson (May 1919). WILPF Papers, Reel 17.

[87] Clara Ragaz (1919) Address of Welcome, *Report of the International Congress of Women, Zurich.*

[88] Antoinette Burton (1994) *Burdens of History, British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press); Angela Woollacott (2006) *Gender and Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan); Sandell, *The Rise of Women's Transnational Activism.*

[89] Swanwick, *Women and War*, p. 2.

[90] Jane Addams (1915) Presidential Address, *Bericht-Rapport-Report.*