

Cultures du progrès
Cultures of Progress

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Introduction: Cultures of Progress 3

J. DAVID HOEVELER

Philosophy and Progressivism in Wisconsin:
John Bascom at the University, 1874-1887 12

EVELYNE
PAYEN-VARIÉAS

Sciences économiques et cultures de gestion
dans la période progressiste: l'administration
des affaires à la Harvard Business School,
1908-1917 27

DOROTHY SUE COBBLE

U.S. Labor Women's Internationalism
in the World War I Era 44

RICHARD HUTSON

William S. Hart's *Hell's Hinges*
in the Progressive Era 59

AMBRE IVOL

Réflexions d'un intellectuel de gauche :
Howard Zinn et le(s) progressisme(s)

Interview with Howard Zinn:
"Identifying oneself with progressive
values is a default choice" 76

SOPHIE DJIGO

L'Homme sans qualités
et le « dixième caractère » :
Musil lecteur d'Emerson 94

COMPTES RENDUS 108

U.S. Labor Women's Internationalism in the World War I Era

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Après la Première Guerre mondiale, des ouvrières américaines s'associèrent à leurs homologues d'autres pays pour élaborer des normes internationales concernant le droit du travail. Encouragée par des militantes françaises et anglaises, l'American Women's Trade Union League convoqua en 1919, à Washington, un Congrès International des Travailleuses. Cet article analyse les propositions législatives concernant les femmes et le droit du travail formulées à cette occasion, mais aussi, plus tard, par l'organisation à laquelle le Congrès donna naissance, la Fédération Internationale des Travailleuses. Il s'attarde aussi sur les difficultés rencontrées par ces militantes pour donner forme à une politique internationale progressiste, et sur l'importance historique de cette expérience internationaliste.

In the immediate aftermath of the First World War, in the midst of a whirlwind of international institution-building and law-making, hope swelled among progressive reformers in the U.S. for the triumph of what Akira Iriye has called "global consciousness," or a sense of the mutual global interdependence and shared interests of all peoples (Iriye 6-7). This hope was particularly strong among labor women in the Women's Trade Union League of America (WTUL), a multi-class social feminist reform organization which, since 1903, had sought to solve the problems of low-

U.S. LABOR WOMEN'S INTERNATIONALISM IN THE WORLD WAR I ERA

income women through fair labor standard legislation and trade union organizing (Boone; Jacoby).¹ It was this domestic reform vision that the leaders of the American WTUL now wanted to bring to the world. In 1919, with the encouragement and counsel of British and French labor women, the WTUL issued a call for an International Congress of Working Women, a ten-day gathering of labor women from around the world to be held in Washington. They hoped to transcend differences of nation, culture, and ideology and formulate a set of international worker rights and entitlements that would benefit working women everywhere. At odds with many in the U.S. labor movement who eschewed internationalism and favored more protectionist policies with workers outside the U.S., they believed in international solidarity and argued that enacting "universal industrial justice" through international law and trade unionism was the only basis for a lasting peace among nations and peoples.²

In this essay, I focus on the efforts of U.S. labor women to forge an international "labor sisterhood" through the 1919 International Congress of Working Women and the subsequent organization it spawned, the International Federation of Working Women (IFWW), in existence from 1919 to 1924.³ Given space constraints, I pay primary attention to their internationalist vision, the global labor and gender policies they advocated, and the cultural dynamics of the transnational politics in which they participated.⁴ In so doing, I hope not only to broaden our understanding of Progressive Era liberal internationalism by more fully incorporating the intellectual and political practices of non-elite actors, but also to extend our histories of U.S. labor internationalism and women's internationalism.

At times, U.S. labor has expressed a fiercely nativist and self-interested form of nationalism that excluded others and demeaned the capacities and cultures of non-Americans. The largest U.S. labor organization in the Progressive Era, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), for example, sought an "American Standard of Living," which in part was defined in opposition to "coolie" or Chinese labor (Glickman). Moreover, the AFL's pursuit of a restrictionist and ethnic-based immigration policy was among its top legislative priorities in the early twentieth century (Collomp). This side of U.S. labor's political culture is inescapable.

Yet there is also a long history of solidarity across national boundaries and of transnational reform efforts by U.S. labor activists to raise the living standards of all workers. Such impulses were evident in the 1830s and 1840s, in tandem with the rise of global anti-slavery and anti-slave trade networks and the growing Chartist and Owenite movements; they found international institutional expression decades later with the founding of the First and Second Internationals in which more "scientific socialist" theories predominated. This rich vein of labor internationalism, particularly the

revolutionary traditions of labor solidarity associated with the socialist, anarchist, and communist internationals, has been well documented (Hooten and van der Linden; Frank). Yet the progressive traditions of *liberal* internationalism among U.S. workers, men and women, have received less attention.⁵ And despite the flourishing scholarship on U.S. women's internationalism (Rupp; Sinha *et al.*), the transnational activism of *labor* women's organizations also has yet to be fully chronicled.

The Postwar Reform Moment

In the aftermath of World War I, internationalist labor in Europe and elsewhere re-grouped, pinning its hopes on the Paris peace talks. A flurry of labor conferences ensued, some more inclusive than others, each issuing labor policies to be considered as part of the treaty deliberations. Among the most crucial of these proposals were those of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The AFL, under the leadership of Samuel Gompers, called for a "Bill of Labor Rights" which included a commitment to such principles as "labor is not a commodity," "no involuntary servitude," and "freedom of association," as well as the eight-hour day and no international commerce in products of child labor. Much of the AFL language later appeared almost word for word in Section XIII of the Treaty of Versailles, setting up the International Labor Organization (ILO), the League of Nation's cooperative body charged with formulating international labor policies (Gompers; Riegelman; Lorenz).⁶

Labor women, like men, also wanted a voice in the postwar peace conferences and a role in formulating the newly-emerging international labor policy. In the U.S., the WTUL delegates at the 1917 Kansas City convention called on working women of all countries to gather at an international conference at the war's end to articulate their desires; they also unanimously endorsed the proposal presented by a visiting French feminist and labor activist, Madame Gabrielle Duchene of the Syndicat Général de la Chemiserie Lingerie, to insist that there be labor clauses included in the peace treaty that would apply to all signatory nations (Henry 212-214; Lubin and Winslow 20-21).

Once the Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918, labor women from Europe and elsewhere set up camp in Paris in hopes of influencing the peace deliberations. The American WTUL sent two of its leaders, Mary Anderson and Rose Schneiderman, to intercede with the Labor Commission set up by the Peace Conference. Their proposals included labor standards drawn up by the WTUL's Committee on Social and Industrial Reconstruction: abolition of child labor; compulsory education of children up to age eighteen; an eight-hour day and forty-four-hour week; equal pay for equal work; no night work for women; equal opportunity for women in employment training; and social wages for maternity, old-age, and unemployment. They also

brought two amendments prepared by British labor women insisting upon greater representation of women at the Labor Conference and in the ILO. Unfortunately, owing to travel delays and problems with passports, they arrived after the Labor Commission deliberations had ended. Yet they presented their proposals personally to President Wilson and urged him to take steps to ensure women's inclusion in the upcoming International Labor Conference (ILC), the first formal gathering of the ILO. In addition, while in London, they spent time with Britain's Margaret Bondfield and solidified plans for an international labor women's conference. Once home, at the WTUL conference in Philadelphia in June 1919, they helped draft the call for an International Congress of Working Women, to coincide with and influence the upcoming ILC, a gathering which included women as advisors but not as voting delegates. "Women had no direct share in the terms of the Peace Treaty [or] in the labor platform," declared Margaret Dreier Robins, President of the American WTUL. "It is a man-made peace."⁷ The 1919 Congress would formulate its own international labor standards and lobby for their adoption by the male-dominated ILO. The American WTUL would host the Congress, it was decided, and pay the travel costs of many of the international visitors (Henry 212-228; Lubin and Winslow 21-23; Anderson 116-133).⁸

The 1919 Delegates Gather

Over two hundred women convened in Washington for the 1919 Congress, held from October 28 to November 6. Those in attendance reflected the dense concentration of global trade union membership at the time in the U.K., the U.S., and Western Europe, but delegates and visitors came from nineteen different countries, including India, Japan, Argentina, Cuba, Canada, Serbia, Spain, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.⁹ Among the U.S. delegation were WTUL President Robins, a woman of independent wealth and political influence; Russian Jewish immigrant Rose Schneiderman, a leader of the massive 1909 strike of New York City garment workers and president of the New York branch of the WTUL; and Swedish immigrant Mary Anderson, a former shoe-worker and labor official, who in 1920 would be President Wilson's appointee as director of the U.S. Women's Bureau (Payne; Anderson). The British labor movement sent Mary Macarthur, the brilliant working-class orator, political strategist and labor organizer, and her fellow union official and political protégée Margaret Bondfield, who in 1923 became a member of Parliament and in 1929, under Ramsey McDonald, the first woman in the British cabinet, serving as Minister of Labour (Soldon; Bondfield). From Sweden, Kerstin Hesselgren, who in 1922 became the first woman elected to the Lower Chamber of the Swedish Parliament; from Norway, Betzy Kjelberg, also to serve in Parliament; from France, Jeanne Bouvier, a Lyon silk worker,

Parisian dressmaker, and leader of the Clothing Union, who in 1921 became Secretary of the Bourse du Travail, and from Japan, Tanaka Takako, among the more influential interwar Japanese feminists (Buchert; Bouvier; Takako).¹⁰ Renowned U.S. social reformers such as Jane Addams addressed the labor delegates as did Wilson's Secretary of War Newton Baker. Eleanor Roosevelt attended as a volunteer, and offered her services, when needed, as one of the many who translated conference speeches and debate into English and French, the two official languages of the conference.¹¹

Almost all of the official delegates were affiliated with the dominant labor organization of their nation. Most of these unions had previously been active in the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), established first among European unions in Copenhagen in 1901 as a general international organization of trade unions. The IFTU, in conjunction with other voluntary groups such as the cross-class International Association for Labor Legislation, had been among the few to push for international labor standards before the war (Lorenz). These efforts had borne some fruit, specifically the 1906 Berne multinational agreement limiting night work for women and prohibiting the use of white phosphorous in the manufacturing of matches, but deep divisions within the labor standards movement remained. Many less industrialized countries, for example, rightly accused the U.S. and other more industrialized nations of using labor standard reform as a protectionist ploy, a way of protecting wealthier countries from cheap labor competition. Finding a way of crafting multi-national labor standards that could benefit all seemed far in the future once war intervened in 1914. European socialist parties and trade unions alike abandoned their universalistic principles. Now, in the war's aftermath, internationalist dreams revived.

Chairing the 1919 Congress, Margaret Dreier Robins captured the spirit of hope in her opening remarks. "The experiences of these five years have cut deep into the heart of life. At times it seemed as though destruction stood triumphant, but today a shift of values is in process." She continued with a call for women to "assume their full responsibilities" and "meet the challenge" of rebuilding the social and industrial order. "There can be no compromise with the exploitation of women, with unemployment or with poverty." Although "we are gathered here from many lands," she concluded, we must and "we will go and find the hidden treasures of fellowship and understanding."¹²

Finding Common Ground

Over the course of the next ten days, delegates hammered out an extraordinary set of resolutions that they subsequently sent to the ILC. The pamphlet enumerating the resolutions, published by the Congress in English and French, opens with a "preliminary" request to amend the ILO

U.S. LABOR WOMEN'S INTERNATIONALISM IN THE WORLD WAR I ERA

Constitution to raise the number of delegates from each nation from four to six and require that at least two be female. The Congress then lists its ten resolutions: an eight-hour day and forty-four-hour week, limits on child labor, maternity benefits, prohibitions on work at night and in hazardous occupations, new policies on unemployment and emigration, an "equal distribution of the raw materials existing in the world," an end to the Russian Blockade, and the establishment of a "permanent bureau" with its office in the U.S. to continue the work of the 1919 Congress.¹³

Agreement among the delegates to these resolutions did not come easily. Debate was agonizingly slow, with considerable confusion over the meaning of particular words, long waits for translation into multiple languages, and many differences of opinion. Delegates spent two days debating work time, for example, with Britain's Macarthur incensed that Hesselgren, the Swedish delegate, rejected the five-day week because "we would have lots of people running wild during Saturday." To laughter and applause, Macarthur retorted, playing a class card that swayed the audience to her side: "I am prepared to leave it to other classes in the community to talk about the evils of leisure. I have sufficient confidence in the working people of the world to feel that when they get the leisure they will possibly make much better use of it—and certainly not worse—than the more privileged sections of the community have done." Robins, ever the mediator, reframed Hesselgren's point and secured group consensus by coupling shorter work time with support for "the mental and spiritual development not only of boys and girls but men and women."¹⁴

The prohibition of night work discussion threatened to bog down as well. Numerous delegates spoke against the proposal of Norway and Sweden that the 1906 Berne agreement prohibiting night work for women be rejected. In the course of the discussion, Robins, from the podium, urged Rose Schneiderman, her own fellow U.S. delegate, to think a little less parochially. When Schneiderman accused the Nordic delegates of perpetuating a false "equality," adding that the "equality of women to kill themselves by night work is no equality to us," Robins admonished her: "That [kind of equality] is not what they are talking about; they have succeeded in prohibiting night work for men as well as women."¹⁵ Finally the Congress accepted Bondfield's proposal that the Congress adhere to the 1906 Berne agreement limiting night work for women, but add that night work *also* be prohibited for men.

Other topics provoked strenuous debate as well. Nevertheless, delegates reached consensus on every issue except maternity insurance. As a result, the Congress included a majority as well as a minority report on maternity benefits in their published set of resolutions. It is important to note that the Congress unanimously endorsed the *need* for an ILO convention on maternity insurance and a bureau within the ILO to advise nations on

maternal health programs. Moreover, after Bouvier presented medical evidence from "feminist associations in Paris," delegates united in recommending six rather than four weeks of work leave before and after childbirth (Bouvier 126-133). But, much to Robin's chagrin, the women differed "quite sharply" on *other* issues related to "the care of mothers and babies." Which women would be entitled to social wages for mothering? How much monetary allowance would mothers receive and for how long?

The answers delegates gave were at times surprising. The U.S., for example, in a departure from its present-day policy of limited or no social wages for mothers, sided with France, Britain, Sweden, and Norway in favoring the more generous and inclusive maternity provisions, and against other nations, including Canada, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, who represented the minority position supporting smaller benefits for fewer women. "We are trying to get away from the stigma of receiving care by the mother for the birth of her child," Robins explained. "We want it understood that all mothers, whether they are working or receiving money for their work, or whether they do not need to work, are entitled to this care and protection." Although many labor women activists in the Progressive Era and in the decades following agreed with her assessment that mothers of all classes should be included among those deserving state provision, their perspective was not to prevail (Skocpol; Cobble). Increasingly, U.S. social provision after the Progressive Era would be based on employment status. In contrast to the U.S. position articulated by Robins, delegates favoring a less universal system wanted it to be limited to mothers from the poor and working classes. They did not express fears that a less universal, more needs-based policy would stigmatize mothers. Additionally, they pointed to the economic distress in their countries and the impossibility of paying generous maternity provisions as reasons to limit benefits.¹⁶

Political differences over the ILC resolutions were not the only barriers to crafting a labor "sisterhood." When the Congress sought to create a permanent organization and elect vice-presidents representative of the "world's peoples," confusion reigned as delegates attempted to divide the "world's peoples" into "racial" groups. After an initial agreement on the need for a VP to represent the "Slav Races" and the "Latin Races," the conversation broke down over whether the "Scandinavian Races" were also "Teutonic," and hence could represent the "Central Powers." The issue was finally settled the next day. The Congress decided on four VP slots: one each for "Anglo-Saxon," "Slavic," "Scandinavian," and "Latin," with a fifth slot left open for the "Central Powers," who would represent themselves. Margaret Bondfield's impassioned speech helped convince the crowd to add the fifth slot and end the debate over where to draw "racial" lines. "Germany must come in," she implored, if "the movement is to be really international."

We must "build our international women's movement on the recognition that all the old divisions that have made us enemies will find no place with us." Only then can we establish a true "sisterhood of nations."

Yet many of the "world's peoples" were not represented by the five vice-presidencies. Nor were they to be included in Bondfield's "sisterhood of nations." In response to a query from an Italian delegate on the possibility of Japanese representation, Bondfield drew the line: "I cannot see that it is possible to include an oriental representative in view of the fact there is no organization at present." Yet she asked that the minutes reflect "our great desire that at the next convention an organization of working women would be *so far advanced* in the oriental countries, in India, Japan, China, and Egypt, as to secure the representation of working women from those countries (emphasis mine)." The motion carried and the delegates applauded their new "sister-hood of nations," albeit at least partially based on the racist thinking and cultural ethnocentrism of the day.¹⁷

Alice Henry, the Australian-born labor educator who penned the first history of the Congress in 1927, recognized some of the limits of the "internationalism" of many of the women as well. "Very few, either delegates or onlookers, had reached the international viewpoint, though all sincerely intended to think and to speak and to vote as world citizens." Yet Henry revealed the limits of her "internationalism" when calling attention to "an astonishing program [...] presented by the Polish delegates, not at all what would have been expected from *such simple women* (emphasis mine)." Her work remains important, however, in part for its appreciative discussion of the proposals for regulating emigration and unemployment made at the Congress by the Polish delegates and others (Henry 216-219).

Indeed, some ninety years later the emigration resolutions put forward at the Congress still seem worth serious consideration. Not only did the Congress end up agreeing with the Italian delegate who insisted that "immigration is a direct consequence of unemployment" and not, as some have argued, a cause of unemployment; but they also tread a middle path between so-called "free" or unregulated immigration and the restrictive, nativist policies gaining ground in the U.S. and other countries. The Congress declared that "it is in the highest interests of the workers of all countries that emigration be regulated and protected" and that such regulation should be carried out by the workers themselves. Transnational "Labor Treaties" regulating the flow of migrants should be negotiated between all the governments concerned and the trade unions of the various countries. In addition, "foreign workers," the Congress believed, should receive "equal wages" and "equal rights" to social legislation with "native born workers." Polish delegates, aware of the bitter and violent 1919 U.S. Steel Strike and incensed by the treatment of Polish immigrant strikers and their denial of basic rights by the U.S. courts, made the strongest

case for protections for foreign workers. The U.S. labor women did not disagree. They sided with their labor "sisters" from abroad on this issue, departing markedly from the immigration policies proposed by many in the U.S. labor movement and in the U.S. Congress, which in 1924 enacted into law highly restrictive immigration rules (Collomp; Ngai).¹⁸

"Sisterhood" was most vividly expressed at the Congress when delegates bonded in their anger at being excluded from what they called "the men's international conference," and, in Bouvier's words, "not sitting with full authority on all questions affecting labor." After the announcement that their eight-hour day, forty-four-hour week resolution had been delivered to the ILC, prolonged laughter greeted Robins's droll comment that "whether we alter their judgment or not depends on their agreeing or disagreeing with us." Delegates also applauded freely when speakers such as Mary Van Kleeck, later to head the Russell Sage Foundation, argued that women must "share in the affairs of the community" and "take a share in industry itself." Not one to mince words, Van Kleeck continued: "We are tired of the autocratic use of economic power and of seeing economic power used by a few [...] instead of for the benefit of the many."¹⁹

The conference concluded on a high note of fellowship and good will with the delegates determining to meet again and form a permanent organization. Madam Loschi, the Czechoslovakian delegate, summed up the feeling of the group: "what we have done here [...] is not only an economic business. We have prepared something better than that. A new fellowship is born here between all nations and between all races, which will bring forth a new sisterhood, and go far towards establishing a common ideal." Robins echoed her sentiments. These have been "unforgettable days," she declared. "That women should act in the affairs of the world and to have a part in the control and standardization of industry" was the task we set ourselves. "It is right that we should organize politically; it is right that we should organize economically. There are [now] deeper forces binding us together and we have found some of those hidden treasures that we went out to seek when we began our Congress."²⁰

Indeed, the Congress had accomplished much of what it set out to do: over a ten day period, labor women overcame many of their differences and forged a set of progressive internationalist policies that they believed would empower and protect workers across the globe. Yet as Robins predicted, the impact of their resolutions on the ILC deliberations was hard to gauge. On the one hand, the ILC was "duly respectful" of the resolutions sent by the women's Congress, thus "setting the precedent for later, more formal relations with nongovernmental organizations" by the ILO (Henry 215; Lubin and Winslow 27). The ILC also approved the right of mothers to maternity benefits and to six weeks of leave, after Margaret Macarthur and other women advisors at the ILC vigorously defended the proposals in speeches to the

U.S. LABOR WOMEN'S INTERNATIONALISM IN THE WORLD WAR I ERA

assembled ILC delegates (Baker 229-232). On the other hand, the Congress's proposals for mandatory female representation in the ILO and for a separate ILO bureau to advise on maternal policies made little headway; neither did their request to extend night work prohibitions to men (Wikander). In addition, the ILC set its labor standards lower than those desired by the Congress, opting for a forty-eight-hour work week, for example, rather than a forty-four-hour work week (Lubin and Winslow 26-28). Nevertheless, labor women had acted "in the affairs of the world" and made clear their determination to assert the rights of women and of workers in the new world economic and political order that was being created. A renewed internationalist spirit and a sense of reform possibilities across nation and culture had emerged.

The Legacy of the IFWW

But the forces binding international labor women together were not yet strong enough to sustain a permanent organization. At a second gathering, held in Geneva in 1921, delegates pursued their lofty ambitions: "to unite organized working women" that "they may resolve upon the means by which the standard of life of working women throughout the world may best be raised." Yet the group divided over such fundamental issues as who could join the organization. The British women fought hard to include all working-class women, meaning housewives as well as wage-earners; they also wanted to let in working-class women active in labor parties as well as trade unions as was true in the Women's Joint Standing Committee in Britain. They met resistance from the U.S. delegation and others who feared that the IFWW would be impossible to sustain if it lost sight of its trade union identity. Finally a compromise was found. The Federation would take in trade union affiliates with women members; but it also would accept working women's organizations whose aims and principles were in the "spirit" of the IFTU, now re-constituted in Amsterdam.

The third IFWW conference, the 1923 Vienna Conference, was painful and contentious for all involved. IFWW members could not reach agreement on how best to relate to the male-dominated labor movement. The U.S. delegation sought a more autonomous labor women's organization, which, like the American WTUL, would exist separately from the larger male-dominated labor movement. Others, including the British and many of the European delegates, desired a closer affiliation with the IFTU, an organization that no longer included the AFL. This latter view prevailed, and by 1924, the IFWW had been absorbed into the IFTU, where it would devolve into a low-level committee with few funds or participants.²¹

The organizational unraveling of the IFWW and the ideological tensions between the U.S. and the British delegations over whether to pursue

a "gender-conscious" or a "class-conscious" strategy, to use Robin Jacoby's categories, has dominated the scholarship on the IFWW (Jacoby; Van Goethem). Yet such a focus on the demise of the IFWW as an institution misses much of the significance of this early experiment in internationalism. Although short-lived, both the 1919 Congress and the IFWW influenced the lives of the women who participated in profound and lasting ways, enriching them emotionally and intellectually. For many, the bonds of friendship forged in 1919 persisted across national boundaries, across cultures, and across space and time. The formal organization had ended but a resilient transnational network of internationally-minded labor women survived. The trans-Atlantic connections between the U.S. women and their counterparts in the U.K. and Nordic communities were especially strong. In the U.S., as the country turned toward isolationism and conservatism in the 1920s, U.S. labor women sustained their internationalism through frequent letters and visits with their labor sisters abroad. They also participated in the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), a branch of the Pan-American Union, and as unofficial U.S. observers at ILO conferences. When America finally joined the ILO in 1934, Mary Anderson and Frieda Miller, another former IFWW participant, served in the first official U.S. delegations.²²

Yet no account of the IFWW and its significance would be complete without pointing to the ideas and policies advanced by these labor women. Best characterized as "social justice feminists," they emphasized the pursuit of women's economic and social rights as well as their civil and political rights (Sklar, *et al.*; Cobble). Many at the 1919 Congress, including the U.S. women, had not achieved full suffrage rights in their own country, but they insisted unequivocally on the right of women to equal participation in the new international governance bodies being established. They also urged the male-dominated labor institutions of the era to take the needs of working women, including mothers, more seriously, and to reconsider their policies regarding night work and other woman-only protective laws. It would be decades later, after much organizing by working women and their allies, before the ILO and the international labor movement would see the pursuit of gender equity and social rights as integral to the labor rights agenda (Lubin and Winslow).²³

Finally, attention to the often distinctive and sophisticated ideas articulated by this group of labor reformers broadens our understanding of what constituted Progressive Era internationalism. Theirs was a liberal internationalism but not one that can or should be conflated with unregulated markets, corporate paternalism, or elite diplomacy. They wanted to minimize the effect of international economic and industrial competition upon labor and they sought to democratize industry as well as government. Peace among nations, they believed, would only come through "universal industrial justice" and industrial self-government. To accomplish these goals, they turned to

U.S. LABOR WOMEN'S INTERNATIONALISM IN THE WORLD WAR I ERA

international law, international labor federations, and ultimately, to inter-governmental bodies like the ILO. They were convinced that the market had to be subordinated to human needs and, as increasingly asserted today, that labor rights are "human rights." This may be socialism, Mary Anderson once said to Margaret Dreier Robins, her long-time Republican friend, but so be it.²⁴

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U.S. LABOR WOMEN'S INTERNATIONALISM IN THE WORLD WAR I ERA

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NOTES

1. The American WTUL was modeled in part on the British WTUL, founded in 1874.
2. Quote from "The Call," issued by the American WTUL, 1919, Folder 2, International Federation of Working Women Records, 1919-1923 (hereafter IFWW), Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA (hereafter SL).
3. For quote, Margaret Dreier Robins, "Welcoming Address," Folder 2, IFWW, SL.
4. Unfortunately, in this short essay, I will not explore the relationship of the IFWW to other women's organizations nor discuss the fraught alliance between the AFL and the WTUL.
5. Some exceptions include Lorenz, Ruotsila, Rodriguez Garcia. There is, of course, a large and critical literature on how the AFL and the AFL-CIO intervened in other countries to prevent communism and help bolster U.S. government policy. That is a well-known narrative that I do not contest here.
6. Labor leaders outside the U.S. shared Gompers's concerns for protecting labor rights and standards but many objected to his tripartite, voluntarist vision of the ILO. He also faced opposition from within the U.S. See Van Goethem; Ruotsila; McKillen.
7. "The Call" 1919 and Robins, "Welcoming Address," Folder 2, IFWW, SL.
8. Folders 80-82, Mary Anderson Papers (hereafter MAP), SL.

NOTES

9. The initial call went to 44 countries. Germany declined the invitation, citing the lateness of its receipt.

10. I am grateful to Pascale Voilley for translating passages of Bouvier's memoir and to Yoshiko Uzawa for locating and translating material by and about Tanaka Takako.

11. "First Congress – Stenographic Reports," (hereafter Reports), parts 1-13, Folder 3, IFWW, SL. On Eleanor Roosevelt: "International Congress of Working Women," ed. Allida Black *et al.*, *Teaching Eleanor Roosevelt* (Hyde Park, NY: Eleanor Roosevelt Historic Site, 2003). <http://www.nps.gov/archive/elro/glossary/int-congress-work-women.htm> (accessed October 3, 2008).

12. Robins, "Welcoming Address," Folder 2, IFWW-SL.

13. "Resolutions Adopted by First International Congress of Working Women," Washington, D.C., Oct 28 to Nov 6, 1919, Folder 2, IFWW, SL.

14. Reports, parts 3-4, Folder 3, IFWW, SL.

15. Reports, parts 9-10, Folder 3, IFWW, SL.

16. Reports, parts 7-9, Folder 3, IFWW, SL.

17. Reports, parts 12-13, Folder 3, IFWW, SL.

18. Reports, part 13, Folder 3, IFWW, SL.

19. Reports, part 1, Folder 3, IFWW, SL.

20. Reports, part 12, Folder 3, IFWW, SL.

21. Folders 4-7, IFWW-SL; Folders 67, 80-82, MAP, SL; Margaret Bondfield Papers, TUC Library, London (hereafter MBP,TUC).

22. MAP, SL; MBP, TUC; and Frieda Miller Papers, SL, for example.

23. Ironically, despite the centrality of U.S. activists in the early history of the ILO, the U.S. currently lags behind other industrial nations in the number of ILO conventions it has ratified. Of the 187 active ILO conventions, the U.S. has ratified 14, including just two of the eight conventions the ILO describes as "core" or fundamental to the human rights of workers. See <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/oir/ilo.htm>, accessed 28 September, 2009.