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Love as moral Imperative and gendered anti-war Strategy in the International Women's Movement 1914-19

A rhetoric of love and shared humanity was consciously chosen by some of the pacifist women active during and after the First World War. This was used to counteract the discourse of hate that dominated belligerent (and even some neutral) nations at this time, and it was absolutely central to the vision of a feminist peace developed by women's groups working to oppose the war, notably within and between members and branches of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom [WILPF] after 1915. Members of this international pacifist organisation included active suffragists such as Chrystal Macmillan and Kathleen Courtney of Great Britain; Aletta Jacobs of the Netherlands; Rosika Schwimmer of Hungary and Anita Augspurg, Lida Gustava Heymann and Helene Stöcker of Germany, and American peace activists and social reformers Emily Greene Balch and Jane Addams, who was elected president. Their vision rested on a discourse of shared female victimhood, with the emphasis on women as both victims and potential agents of radical change.

Using the insights gained by scholarship in the history of emotions, this article will explore the gendered ways in which members of the WILPF performed, evoked and described emotions of friendship, love and sisterhood in order to create, consolidate and reflect emotional communities during and in the aftermath of WW1 within and beyond their own national contexts. In the majority of belligerent nations the majority of the women's organisations engaged in patriotic war service and rejected WILPF members' anti-war activism as sentimental and naive. This article will argue that they deployed articulations of love at all stages of the war and its aftermath as both a moral imperative and a powerful,

gendered strategy of resistance that was central to their claim to greater political influence at home and abroad.

This article will first outline gendered emotional cultures during WW1 and identify the concepts that will be especially helpful in teasing out these emotional strategies. It will then focus on expressions of love and hatred and on claims to strong emotions as a contested arena between nationally-minded and anti-war feminists as illustrated by the case of Germany, and a more comprehensive account of the use of emotional strategies within the WILPF between its founding in 1915 and the first post-war conference in 1919.

Gendered Emotional Cultures in the First World War

War is a time of intense emotional responses and often involves the expression of heightened emotion using elevated language.[1] Emotions are mobilized and manipulated in the cause of war: their public performance can be used as a form of statecraft to convey an impression of strength to the enemy or to foster social cohesion within a threatened nation. There is an expectation of national cohesion and a suspension of differences during wartime, and this is accompanied by greater policing of emotional expression. Authorities, whether civilian or military, recognize that collective morale can be upset by public expressions of opposition to

[1]See Michael Roper, 'Slipping out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History,' *History Workshop Journal* 59, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 57-72; Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle. Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2009) and Christopher M. Clark, *Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin, 2012) [particularly 358-356].

war or displays of uncontrolled grief and despair at war losses, and take steps to control public discourse and ensure that emotions are appropriately managed and expressed.[2] Public discourse reflected in and reinforced by press coverage often circulates around diametrically opposed emotions of love (for the national community, its leaders and the soldiers fighting to protect it) and hatred (for enemies both within and without). The expression of these emotions is legitimised by the war and become expected exchanges. In terms of communications between nations, the exchange of insults, public displays of strength and expressions of hatred and contempt for one another are a form of national posturing that during wartime took the place of diplomacy.

The gendering nature of war that in 1914 determined different roles for men and women also applies to their emotional response and the way these inner feelings were to be expressed. Women's history scholars have looked at expressions of love and affection between women within the organised women's movement, while social movement theory has explored the importance of friendship in networking.[3] Leila Rupp in *Worlds of Women* explores the role of

[2] On managing grief in the German context, see for example Claudia Siebrecht, 'Imagining the absent dead: rituals of bereavement and the place of the war dead in German women's art during the First World War' *German History*, 29, no.2, (June 2010): 202-223; Claudia Siebrecht, 'The female mourner: gender and the moral economy of grief during the First World War' in Christa Hämmerle, Oswald Überegger and Birgitta Bader-Zaar (eds.) *War in a gender context* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2014), 144-162.

[3] Friendship is discussed in Mineke Bosch with Annemarie Klostermann, *Politics and friendship: Letters from the International Women's Suffrage Alliance 1902-1942*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990); Eva Schöck-Quinteros, Anja Schüler, Annika Wilmers,

emotional practice in Chapter 5 "Forging an International 'We'", a topic she returns to in an important article with Verta Taylor in 2002.[4] In this the authors examine the role of gendered emotion cultures in the construction of a collective identity within the international women's organisations using rituals of reconciliation, expressions of personal affection and the template of family and motherly love.[5] Using the insights gained by study of the history of emotions by scholars such as Ute Frevert, Jan Plamper, William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein and Monique Scheer,[6] this article will explore the gendered ways in which women involved

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Kerstin Wolff (eds) *Politische Netzwerkerinnen. Internationale Zusammenarbeit von Frauen 1830-1960* (Berlin: trafo, 2007); Kathryn Kish Sklar, Anja Schüler & Susan Strasser (eds), *Social Justice Feminists in the United States and Germany* (Itacha and London: Cornell University Press, 1998). Emotions in politics are discussed in Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, , Francesca Polletta, *Passionate Politics Emotions and Social Movements* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[4] Verta Taylor and Leila J Rupp, 'Loving Internationalism: The Emotion Culture of Transnational Women's Organisations 1888-1945' *Mobilization; An International Quarterly* June 2002 Vol 7 No. 2 141-158.

[5] Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women. The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 107-129.

[6] Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History – Lost and Found* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011). Online. Accessed February 2019 http://books.openedition.org/ceup/1496; Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions. An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (the WILPF) used, evoked and described emotions of friendship, love and sisterhood to create, consolidate and also reflect emotional communities, and specifically how they mobilized a discourse of love to assist them in achieving their aims during and in the aftermath of WWI.[7] Although nationally-minded women also evoked emotions of love and hatred to create coherence within their communities, the focus will be on the WILPF as the most prominent of the international anti-war groups who between 1915 and 1919 worked together to develop and articulate a comprehensive statement of woman-centred peace. The WILPF emerged from the Women's International Congress held at The Hague in April-May 1915, at which 1,136 women from 12 combatant and noncombatant nations met to discuss ways of mediating between the warring

2001); Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and is that what makes them have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion.' *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (May 2012): 193-220; Jan Plamper, William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein and Peter Stearns, 'The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns' *History and Theory* 49, no. 2 (May 2010): 237-265.

[7] For histories of WILPF see Gertrude Bussey, and Margaret Tims, *Pioneers for Peace: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1965* (London: WILPF, British Section, 1965); Anne Wiltsher, *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War* (London: Pandora Press, 1985); Catia Confortini, *Intelligent Compassion: Feminist Clinical Methodology in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

sides, stopping the war and finding non-violent ways of resolving future conflict.[8] From this the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace was formed, with national branches in both belligerent and neutral nations. The women met again in Zurich in 1919, where under the new name of WILPF they responded to the terms of the Peace Treaty and the humanitarian challenges of the post-war period, setting out a radical framework for countering the mindsets of war and creating the conditions for a sustainable peace.[9] Their activities are well-documented: many members of the national branches remained active in the cause of suffrage and communicated their ideas through the international journal *Jus Suffragii*.[10] We also have official records of the discussions at the two International Congresses held in 1915 and 1919 as well as individual accounts by leading figures such as

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[8] For an account of the Congress see Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, Alice Hamilton, *Women at the Hague. The International Congress of Women and Its Results* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press (2003) [1915]) and Annika Wilmers, *Pazifismus in der internationalen Frauenbewegung (1914-1920): Handlungsspielräume, politische Konzeptionen und gesellschaftliche Auseinandersetzungen* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2008);. See also WILPF, *Report of the International Congress of Women, The Hague – the Netherlands April 28th to May 1st 1915* (n.p: Women's Peace Party, 1915). https://archive.org/details/internatcongrewom00interich/page/n1 Online accessed January 10, 2020, 20.

[9] See WILPF *Rapport du Congrès International de Femmes Zurich Mai 12-17, 1919* (Geneva: Ligue International de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté, 1919), 154-156.

[10] See Sybil Oldfield, 'Mary Sheepshanks edits an Internationalist Suffrage Monthly in Wartime' *Women's History Review* 12, no.1 (March 2003) 119-131.

the American Jane Addams, the Hungarian Rosa Schwimmer, Germans Lida Gustava Heymann and Helene Stöcker, British delegates such as Helena Swanwick, and Aletta Jacobs of Holland.[11]

The article does not break new ground in the history of emotions, but rather uses the frameworks put forward within existing scholarship for discussing and understanding emotions in history to tease out how the WILPF used emotional practices and a discourse of love to retain cohesion under the hostile conditions of a global war, and how this in turn was central to women's claim to greater political influence at home and abroad. Particularly useful are the concepts of emotions as practice as discussed by Scheer and of emotional communities developed by Rosenwein.[12] Scheer argues that "[t]hinking of emotions as a kind of practice means integrating the history of feeling into the study of socially produced subjectivities", placing women's emotional expression firmly within their gendered socio-historical context and allowing us to see them as active practices rather than simply a passive response.[13] She notes that emotional responses "rely on social scripts from historically

[11] See for example Jane Addams, *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (Memphis, Tennessee: General Books, ([1922] 2010); Addams, Balch and Hamilton, *Women at the Hague*; Lida Gustava Heymann, and Anita Augspurg, *Erlebtes Erschautes. Deutsche Frauen kämpfen für Freiheit, Recht und Frieden 1850-1940* (Frankfurt am Main: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 1992 [1972]); Aletta Jacobs *Memories. My Life as an International Leader in Health, Suffrage and Peace* (New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1996) published in Dutch in 1924.

[12] Scheer, 'Practice'; Rosenwein, 'Worrying'.

[13] Scheer, 'Practice', 206.

situated fields"[14] and "are also mediated by habitual predispositions to acting within a group, a practical sense of the relations within it, and its broader social context"[15]. Emotional practices - rituals, gestures, norms of communication – have a performative element and can be used for emotional management, to "evoke feelings where there are none, ... or to change or remove emotions that are already there."[16] Emotions then are seen as neither hard wired nor static, instead as shifting over time, subject to regulation and influenced by highly gendered socialisation rules. For Rosenwein, these norms and practices are not universal within the nation state but differ between groups which she has called "emotional communities". These are based on "systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore".[17] Just as Glenda Sluga extended Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" to embrace international and transnational communities[18], Rosenwein's "emotional communities" make sense of the importance of emotional expression to the community of

[14] Ibid, 207.

[15] Ibid, 211.

[16] Ibid, 209.

[17] Rosenwein, 'Worrying', 842.

[18] Glenda Sluga *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Books, 2006).

pacifist women that was constructed and maintained across enemy lines under the hostile conditions of WW1.

Love and Hatred during the First World War

War conditions defined the national community very much against other international communities and policed the feelings and expression of hatred, moral outrage and indignation directed against national enemies. Different rules of emotional expression applied, as the new conditions required revised "feeling rules" within and between belligerent nations.

In 1917, the German expressionist writer and pacifist, Leonard Frank (1882-1961), self-exiled in neutral Switzerland, published a collection of short stories illustrating the cruelties and losses of the war.[19] In the first story, *Der Vater* ("The Father") the character claims that "[t]he absence of love is the enemy and the cause of all wars. All Europe is crying because all Europe can no longer love. All Europe is mad because it can no longer love."[20] Certainly love was hard to find amidst the discourse of hate that dominated newspaper coverage, propaganda images and popular culture in all belligerent (and even some neutral) nations at this time. For example, Ernst Lissauer's (in)famous *Hymn of Hate against England* (1914) promised:

> Hate by water and hate by land
>
> Hate of the head and hate of the hand

[19] Leonhard Frank, *Der Mensch ist gut* (Zürich: Max Rascher, 1918).

[20] Ibid, 1.

Hate of the hammer and hate of the crown

Hate of seventy millions choking down.

His chorus presented the shared and justified outrage at the enemy as a powerful unifying force for the seventy million Germans who "love as one and hate as one." England, too, promulgated hatred of the enemy, exaggerating and even inventing German atrocities committed by Germans in the course of their invasion of Belgium.[21] On both sides, the pulpits were full of hatred. A 1915 German sermon included the following exhortation:

> Cold steel has been placed into the soldier's fist, and he should use it without weakness and softness. The soldier should shoot the enemy dead, stab him in the ribs with his bayonet, bring his blade crashing down on his foe, that is his holy duty, yes, that is his divine worship.[22]

In 1916, a British Army Chaplain asked his congregation:

> What are Germans at present but obstructions to moral progress, a hotbed of flies, bearers of the worst ethical and spiritual maladies? Are they not rats carrying typhoid

[21] See John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: a History of Denial* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

[22] L. Schetter, *In Gottes Namen Durch,* (Leipzig: Karl Sigismund, 1915), quoted in Edlef Köppen, *Heeresbericht* (Berlin: Horen-Verlag 1930) Chapter 8 section 4 Project Gutenberg. Online accessed 16 February 2019 http://gutenberg.speigel.de/buch/heeresbericht-6321/8.

from the drains, and has not a Christian State the right to call upon us all to aid in their extermination?[23]

Nor did women active in the international organisations distance themselves from the expression of hatred. Jane Misme, French feminist journalist, proudly proclaimed that "[a]nd for as long as the war lasts, the wives of our enemies will also be our enemies".[24] Gertrud Bäumer, leader of the nationally-minded umbrella group of bourgeois women's organizations, the Federation of German Women's Associations, which controlled the women's coordinated war effort, the National Women's Service, saw hatred as honest emotion compared with the bloodless abstraction of internationalism, the dull and lukewarm objectivity of the neutrals: "we aren't angels floating above our history", she wrote, "we are at one with of our fighting people and feel as one – in love and enmity. ... The more we are able to unite with our nation, the more we feel its enmity as our own".[25] In Britain, the pages of patriotic suffragettes Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst's retitled journal, *Britannia* were extremely bellicose in calling for the "complete annihilation of the German race" and in their condemnation of pacifists:

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[23] Joseph Dawson, *Christ and the Sword: Words for the War-Perplexed* (London: Kelly, 1916) quoted in Arlie .J. Hoover, *God, Germany, and Great Britain in the Great War. A Study in Clerical Nationalism*. (New York; London: Praeger, 1989), 112.

[24] Jane Misme *La Française,* December 19, 1914 n.p.

[25] Gertud Bäumer, 'Vaterlandsliebe und Völkerhass' *Die Frauenfrage,* January 1, 1915 1-2, 1.

> I consider the Pacifists a disease. They are a disease to which old nations seem to become subject. They are a disease which comes of over-prosperity, and of false security ... a very deadly disease which you will find has afflicted every dead nation of the past.[26]

In fact, the majority of organized women in belligerent nations turned away from internationalism and the discourse of a global sisterhood in 1914 to engage in patriotic war work, and part of that patriotic war work was to express and spread fiery opposition to the enemies that threatened their nation.[27] Writing in 1927, Bäumer herself acknowledged the performative element of these expressions when she reminded her detractors that "[i]t is clear that in an existential struggle such as the one we waged for over four years […] every printed word takes on the character either of a weapon or of poison and that this imposes certain considerations. […] These are not the words of someone neutral, but were written in unprecedented states of elation, suffering, hope and resurrection. They could never have been 'objective'. They were supposed to help us to victory!"[28] Emotions then were mobilised

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[26] Christabel Pankhurst, 'No Compromise Peace' *Britannia*, August 3, 1917.

[27] See for example Rupp, *Worlds of Women*; Wilmers, *Pazifismus and*

Fell, A.S. and Sharp, I.E. (ed.) *The Women's Movement in Wartime. International Perspectives 1914-1919* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[28] Gertrud Bäumer, *Heimatchronik während des Weltkrieges Dritter Teil: 1. Oktober 1918-23.Juni 1919* (Home Diary during the World War Part III October 1 1918 – June 23 1919) (Berlin: Herbig Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1927), 62.

and manipulated in war service, and a closer examination of the German case will illustrate this.

Emotional Communities in the German Women's Movement

In Germany, as elsewhere, the expectation was that a community of shared feeling would encompass the entire nation. This was expressed in 1914 by nationally-minded leader Gertrud Bäumer:

> No love, however much ecstasy or pain it brought. No work of art, however sublime, no work and no happiness have allowed us to feel this exhaltation. In us, Germany spoke, felt, desired, our individual soul was taken up by the soul of our nation.[29]

It was not always easy to get this right: soldiers' wives and mothers who attempted to strike the correct balance between the demands of patriotic love of nation, requiring sacrifice, and family or romantic love, demanding protection of loved ones found it extremely hard to demonstrate what were, in fact, mutually exclusive emotional responses. According to Angelika Tramitz, a woman in wartime could choose between being seen as not patriotic enough if she placed too much emphasis on her love for her own family, and not womanly enough if she showed too little concern for the dangers they faced.[30] This display of

[29] Gertrud Bäumer, "Die Frauen und der Krieg, " *Kriegsjahrbuch des BDF* (Leipzig; Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1915), 6.

[30] Angelika Tramitz, 'Vom Umgang mit Helden. Kriegs(vor)schriften und Benimmregeln für deutsche Frauen im Ersten Weltkrieg' in *Kriegsalltag. Die Rekonstrukton des Kriegsalltags*

emotional cohesion was very hard to maintain in the face of a prolonged war, increased losses and grief, and of course the pacifists within the women's movement rejected this interpretation of women's emotional duty:

> The great crime, war, achieved in twenty four hours a unity that decades of effort by rational people had not managed. This behaviour appeared repulsive to us, not wonderful.[31]

The claim to strong feelings and authentic emotions became a highly contested arena between these factions, both of which claimed to speak for German women, and this was exacerbated during the heightened emotional states during the war years. The nationally-minded women of the National Women's Service contrasted their own robust emotions (hatred for the enemy, love for the nation) with the inauthentic abstract notions expressed by the internationalists, described by Bäumer using word such as *blass* (pallid) *blutarm* (anaemic) or even *blutleer* (bloodless).[32] In Bäumer's view, "[l]ove and hatred belong together. […] The more we are capable of becoming one with our nation, the more we feel its enmities as our own. [...] It

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als Aufgabe der historischen Forschung und der Friedenserziehung. ed. Peter Knoch, (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1989), 84-113, 87.

[31] Heymann and Augspurg, *Erlebtes Erschautes*, 137.

[32] Gertrud Bäumer, 'Der Bund deutscher Frauenvereine und der Haager Frauenkongreß' in *die Frauenfrage.* September 1, 1915, 82-85, 83.

would be senseless, even cruel and inhuman, if we German women could […] stand before Germany's enemies with the lacklustre objectivity of the neutrals".[33]

Antigone's lines to Creon in their German translation were frequently quoted by nationalist and pacifist women alike *nicht mitzuhassen, sondern mitzulieben bin ich hier* meaning "I am not here to join you in hatred but to join you in love" or as the 1947 English translation has it: "my way is to share my love not share my hate".[34] At this stage in the play, Antigone has defied King Creon's decree that one of her two brothers, both of whom died in the war, should remain unburied because he was on the losing side. Antigone has buried him, an act of love and duty that refused to ignore the shared humanity of the enemy and sought to overcome the hatred that is the legacy of the recent war. Feminist campaigner Helene Stöcker, who remained true to her own pacifist principles throughout the war, quotes Antigone's lines as having what she calls the "highest validity for women" during a war in which the men had been forced to abandon human emotion in order to be able to kill. What, she asks, would become of humanity if women too turned to hate?[35] Antigone's words were quoted by women across the political spectrum and seem harmless enough if we see love as weak and ultimately powerless. However, in the mouths or from the pen of feminist pacifists like Stöcker, these words were a shorthand for a radical activist position. Antigone stood for the right of the individual conscience to stand against the unjust laws of the state and to oppose human values against inhuman and immoral decrees. She stood for the ability to see beyond the categories "friend" and "enemy". She also

[33] Bäumer, 'Vaterlandsliebe und Völkerhass', 1.

[34] Sophocles, *The Theban Plays* translated by E.F. Watling, (London: Penguin, 1947), 140.

[35] Helene Stöcker, 'Lieben oder Hassen' *Die Neue Generation* 10 December, 1914, 20.

stands for the unwillingness of the male state to hear the words of women and for the price that is exacted for making a stand against militarism. As all educated Germans would have known, Antigone is sentenced to death for her act of love and hangs herself to escape a lingering death walled up in a tomb. The play also has a message about the costs of war that rebound on the aggressors. The warmongering tyrant King Creon who exercises the power of hate even beyond the boundaries of death pays for this with the loss of everything he loves. In fact, he ends the play as a living corpse himself – with his wife, son and niece all dead "I am nothing. I have no life. Lead me away".[36] This analysis of the war as nothing but loss, damage and shared devastation is central to the feminist anti-war attitude, as expressed by US pacifist Emily Greene Balch: "the gains that either side makes are as nothing compared to their losses. [...] this all-outweighing fact is the intolerable burden of continued war".[37]

Love as Strategy in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

As we have seen, a small minority within the international suffrage movement remained convinced that the international cooperation and political influence of women were urgently needed to bring the war to an end and create conditions where future wars could be prevented and these came together in the imagined international community of the WILPF. The sense of belonging and shared values through their international ties were especially important, and a discourse of love between the international members was adopted as a conscious strategy that played a significant psychological role during the war years: within their emotional community they deployed articulations of love as both a moral imperative and a powerful, gendered

[36] Sophocles, *The Theban Plays*, 161.

[37] Addams, Balch and Hamilton *Women at the Hague*, 55.

strategy of resistance. For WILPF president Jane Addams, her experience of profound isolation and unpopularity in her own country during this time reinforced her belief in the power of the group: she wrote to a friend "I feel as if a few of us were clinging together in a surging sea".[38] As Taylor and Rupp demonstrate, unity within the international communities was forged and maintained by expressions of emotional closeness that invoked familial ties such as sisterhood and motherly love, and this became increasingly difficult as the war dragged on.[39] After The Hague Congress in 1915, there were no more face to face meetings, and the women relied on emotionally charged exchanges and reports from branch members in the pages of the international suffrage journal, *Jus Suffragii*. Throughout the war, French, German, and English women were able to use its pages to exchange greetings, thanks to the pacifist convictions of its editor, Mary Sheepshanks.[40] For example in January 1915 she published Emily Hobhouse's Open Christmas Letter to the Women of Germany and Austria. The letter, which urged German and Austrian women to "join hands with the women of neutral countries, and urge our rulers to stay further bloodshed" [41] The letter was signed by many British pacifists, several of whom later became members of the WILPF, such as Isabella Ford, Annot Robinson, Maude Royden, Sylvia Pankhurst and Helena Swanwick. Lida Gustava Heymann's response, signed by

[38] Quoted in Linda Knight, *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 215.

[39] Taylor and Rupp, 'Loving Internationalism', 142.

[40] See Oldfield "Sheepshanks".

[41] *Jus*, 9.4, 1 January 1915, 228-229 quoted in Oldfield, "Sheepshanks", 123.

German pacifist suffragists including Anita Augspurg, Minna Cauer and Helene Stocker was also published in *Jus Suffragii* in March 1915.[42]

As well as providing the women with vital emotional support, the deliberate stressing of ties of love maintained a sense of the enemy as human beings, and maintained female channels of communication not open to men both during and in the aftermath of the conflict. By stressing the shared humanity of the enemy, they countered the virulent and dehumanising discourse of "patriotic" hatred. Their discourse of women's shared suffering and victimhood directed hatred not at the individuals or the nations, but at the forces that supported the war, claiming emotions as a legitimate response. It is striking that the women at the same time challenged ideas about women's irrationality in their analysis. For some women activists, the outbreak of the war had confirmed their view that far from being the rational sex, men were dangerously volatile, motivated by self-interest, venality and a tendency to violence. For example, the call for participation in the international women's congress at The Hague in February 1915 condemned the war as the insane product of male politics and demanded women's suffrage as the only way of preventing future conflict:

> We women declare the war, the last word in men's statesmanship, to be madness. War is only possible in the life of nations in the grip of a mass psychosis, for it seeks to destroy everything that the creative forces of humanity have built up over centuries.[43]

[42] Quoted in Oldfield, "Sheepshanks", 123.

[43] Anita Augspurg, Call for Attendance at the Women"s International Congress, (February/March 1915) *Landesarchiv Berlin*, Helene Lange Archiv, microfiche 2754.

Christopher Clark has argued in his influential book *Sleepwalkers* that the performance of masculinity in statesmanship was indeed a contributory cause of the war:

> This was a play with only male characters – how important was that? Masculinity is and was a broad category that encompassed many forms of behaviour; the manliness of these particular men was inflected by identities of class, ethnicity and profession. Yet it is striking how often the key protagonists appealed to pointedly masculine modes of comportment and how closely these were interwoven with their understanding of policy.[44]

Clark's account reveals the private displays of emotion by these statesmen, who use the language of the bullied schoolboy: for example, Viscount Bertie, ambassador to Paris in 1914 evoked the language of the playground bully when he warned of the danger that the Germans would "push us into the water and steal our clothes" 359. These statesmen were characterised approvingly as strong, steadfast and firm, rather than intransigent, unimaginative, emotionally blind. Clark describes the stark contrast with such public displays of masculinity with private emotionality, arguing:

> Perhaps we can ascribe the signs of role strain and nervous exhaustion we observe in many of the key decision makers – mood swings, obsessiveness, 'nerve strain',

[44] Christopher M. Clark *Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin, 2012), 359.

vacillation, psychosomatic illness and escapism, to name just a few – to an accentuation of gender roles that had begun to impose intolerable burdens on some men.[45]

In contrast, the language of the women who met at The Hague in April 1915 is saturated with expressions of emotions. Aletta Jacobs, in her opening address to Congress, evoked the emotions of mourning, grief, empathy and sorrow, agony and despair:

> With mourning in our hearts we stand united here. [...] Our cry of protest must be heard at last. Too long has the mother-heart of woman suffered in silence. […] We know only too well that whatever may be gained by a war, it is not worth the bloodshed and the tears, the cruel sufferings, the wasted lives, the agony and despair it has caused.[46]

At the end of the Congress, Hungarian feminist Rosika Schwimmer made the following impassioned speech. She was seeking to persuade the congress to send female delegates to mediate with the governments of belligerent and neutral countries:

> Brains – they say – have ruled the world till today. If brains have brought us to what we are in now, I think it is time to allow also our hearts to speak. When our sons are killed by millions let us, mothers, only try to do good by going to kings and emperors, without any other danger than a refusal![47]

[45] Ibid, 360.

[46] WILPF, *Report of the International Congress of Women*, 5.

[47] WILPF, *Report of the International Congress of Women*, 174.

The fact that Schwimmer herself, like many of the women she was addressing, was unmarried and had no children, did not prevent her from invoking a shared identity as mothers. Within the women's organisations, the concept of motherliness applied to all women: while the influence of biological mothers was limited to the family sphere, childless women could extend their motherly qualities to embrace the whole of society and the policies of the moderate women's movement began to be understood as "spiritual" or "social" motherhood.[48] This line of argument again allowed the women's movement to make radical demands for greater political and social influence without overtly challenging the dominant ideology of female maternity and domesticity, gender polarity and separate spheres.[49] As Ann Taylor Allen argues, far from representing a restriction of women's role, the dynamic maternalism of nineteenth and early twentieth century feminists formed the basis of women's claim to dignity, equality, and a widened sphere of action in both private and public.[50]

Peace campaigner Bertha von Suttner had already pointed out that emotions were a key part of her peace campaign. In her final letter to the International Wwomen's Suffrage Alliance in

[48] See Irene Stoehr, "organisierte Mütterlichkeit.' Zur Politik der deutschen Frauenbewegung um 1900." in *Frauen suchen ihre Geschichte* ed. Karin Hausen (Munich: Beck 1987), 225 – 253.

[49] See Ann Taylor Allen 'Feminism and Motherhood in Germany and in International Perspective 1800-1914' in *Gender and Germanness,* ed. Patricia Herminghouse and Magda Mueller, (Providence; Oxford: Berghahn, 1997); Ann Taylor Allen, *Women in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[50] Allen 'Feminism and Motherhood', 113.

June 1914, she stressed the importance of engaging the emotions as well as the intellect in the struggle for peace and social justice: "[o]ur thoughts should be clear and sharp, our feelings warm and noble [...] We need passion in order to act and to get things done – only passion forces us to act."[51] This is echoed in the President's address by American sociologist and peace campaigner Jane Addams:

> Reason is only part of the human endowment; emotion and deep set racial impulses must be utilized as well – those primitive human urgings to foster life and protect the helpless, of which women were the earliest custodians, and even the social and gregarious instincts that we share with the animals themselves. These universal instincts must be given the opportunity to expand, and the most highly trained intellects must serve them rather than the technique of war and diplomacy.[52]

These women, then, made a rational choice to allow emotions to play a part in their analysis, judging that an emotional response was entirely appropriate for a conflict that went on to leave some 20 million dead, a further 20 million injured and a widespread and lasting legacy of famine, economic collapse, violence and extremism.

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[51] Bertha Von Suttner *Empörung des Verstands und unserer Herzen* [1914] in Gisela Brinker Gabler (ed.), *Frauen gegen den Krieg*. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1980), 51-54, 54.

[52] WILPF, *Resolutions of the First Congress*, 9. NB: 'racial' here refers to the human race.

Underpinning the women's position was Addams' analysis of human psychology as characterised by a deep desire for harmony and a need for connectedness.[53] The experience of the war itself showed the fragility of national integrity and the futility of pursuing progress in isolation. For Helene Stöcker, too, love was a strategy that could be used to oppose the strong but atavistic urge for destruction that she saw as part of human psychology.[54] Like Addams, Stöcker believed that this urge could be overcome by an even stronger primitive urge, the desire to protect and nurture the young, "to foster life and protect the helpless".[55] For both, the war had distorted and all but crushed this instinct. It is clear that women's influence in politics and diplomacy would be the impetus to include these important emotional responses in managing international affairs: Hague Resolutions 9, 17, 18 and 19 all urge the enfranchisement of women and the inclusion of women's voices in the peace settlement and Resolution 20 sets out the plan to send delegates to discuss the findings of the congress and their proposal for

[53] See Jane Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace* (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, ([1907] 2007); Jane Addams, *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (Memphis, Tennessee: General Books, ([1922] 2010); Addams, Balch, and Hamilton, *Women at the Hague.*

[54] See Regina Braker, 'Helene Stöcker's Pacifism in the Weimar Republic: Between Ideal and Reality' *Journal of Women's History*, 13, no.3, Autumn 2001, 70-97; Regina Braker, 'Helene Stöcker's Pacifism: International Intersections *Peace & Change*, 23, no. 4, October 1998.

[55] Addams, Balch and Hamilton, *Women at the Hague*, 61.

mediation by neutral nations with European leaders and the US President.[56] The report concludes with the claim that the congress had shown that "women of different countries can still hold out the hand of friendship to each other in spite of the hatred and bloodshed under which most international ties seem submerged" and suggests that women have a "special point of view on the subject of war" that enables them to "make their own contribution to the work and ideals of constructive peace".[57]

Post-war reconciliation

After the war was over, the need to maintain unity and overcome nationalist animosity was even more acute. The International Council of Women (ICW), founded in 1888, was the oldest of the international women's organisations, whose members largely turned to partirotic war work in their own nations and suspended international links. Nonetheless, ICW president Lady Aberdeen claimed in 1920 that the organisation had emerged from the war as "an unbroken family"[58] while the WILPF at their 1919 meeting in Zurich presented a demonstrative unity between women of former enemy nations. Historian Jo Vellacott contrasts the women's approach with that of the men negotiating peace in Paris: women

[56] WILPF, *Resolutions of the First Congress*. The Hague, Netherlands, 1915, http://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/WILPF_triennial_congress_1915.pdf, Online. Accessed January 2020.

[57] WILPF, *Report of the International Congress of Women*, 20.

[58] Report of the International Council of Women 1920, cited in ICW *Women in a Changing World: the dynamic story of the International Council of Women since 1888* (London: Routledge, 1966), 44.

united by the terrible experience of war wanted to find solutions to shared problems and to identify and work to remove the causes of war - injustice, insecurity, anger and resentment.[59] The men on the other hand saw the peace talks as a forum for retribution and the securing of advantages for the victors at the expense of the vanquished, in marked contrast to the terms of U.S. President Wilson's Fourteen Points, put forward in January 1918.

In line with its transnational vision, the WILPF used a rhetoric of love in a number of ways to counter the very real pressures that threatened to fragment the organisation along lines of national bitterness. It is in this context that the gestures of reconciliation staged by the women of WILPF are to be understood. One of the most moving and dramatic moments of the Zurich Congress was the public embrace between the German, Lida Gustava Heymann, and Jeanne Mélin and Heymann's hope that "we women can build a bridge from Germany to France and from France to Germany, and that in the future, we may be able to make good the wrongdoing of the men." After Melin had responded with a passionate resolve to oppose all militarism and hatred, the entire assembly rose and pledged themselves to "do everything in their power towards the ending of the war and the coming of permanent peace."[60] The women were only too aware of the problems caused by the war losses and the war crimes committed by soldiers

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[59] Jo Vellacott, 'Feminism as If All People Mattered: Working to Remove the Causes of War, 1919 – 1929' *Contemporary European History,* 10, no. 3, (November 2001) 375-394, 384.

Jo Vellacott, 'Putting a Network to Use' in *Politische Netzwerkerinnen : internationale Zusammenarbeit von Frauen, 1830-1960*. Ed. Eva Schöck-Quinteros, (Berlin: Trafo 2007), 131-154, 149.

[60] WILPF *Rapport*, 154-156.

of one nation against another, but they sought to overcome this by a carefully maintained discourse of shared victimhood that stressed common humanity and shared loss. Arguably, this position was easier for women who had opposed the war throughout and had not had any part in the actual killing. However, even the nationally-minded women who had spent the war years engaged in patriotic war work and had often very publicly distanced themselves from international links felt that the international women's organisations had a special mission in overcoming the bitterness of the war years and rebuilding the shattered community of women. When nationally-minded German women's leader Gertrud Bäumer refused to attend the first ICW congress in 1920, she was admonished in the following terms:

> What's needed now from all of us is our *love* and it is demanded even from the German women and perhaps most of all from them. The love that covers over all faults instead of displaying them and holding them up for scrutiny.[61]

It is obvious from this that the "love" the women were talking about here was not necessarily a felt emotion, but a chosen strategy of practical love that could break the cycle of bitterness that would otherwise cause new conflict. The imperative to love was neither sentimental nor naive, but an essential strategy in creating a global order that would encourage the development of humanity to a higher plane. History of emotions scholarship is helpful in clarifying that these are not binary choices and that a strategic mobilization of an emotional response does not imply insincerity.[62] When Bäumer did return to internationalism, she

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[61] van Dorp, Dr. Jur L 'Eindrücke von dem Internationalen Frauenkongress zu Kristiania', *Die Frau*, October, 1920, 18–21, 21.

[62] Scheer 'Practice', 203.

expressed this publicly in terms of the *tendresse* felt by soldiers for one another. She declared that she felt the same love for the women in enemy nations who had suffered and sacrificed during the war, declaring that "the ideal of rebuilding nations in the spirit of trust is worth living and even dying for".[63]

Gendered Communities of Love: Limitations

WILPF's use of love as a rhetorical anti-war strategy is highly gendered and consciously opposed to what they saw as a masculine propensity to aggression and anger that continued into the volatile and violent post-war period. It is not a coincidence that Antigone's (female) capacity to love is opposed to Creon's (male) destructive rigidity. In contrasting their sisterly emotional unity with the inability of male statesmen to overcome the resentments and bitterness of the war, they created both an out-group that reinforced their community and offered a powerful argument for the necessity of women's role in international politics and in creating international conditions for a sustainable peace. True, Stöcker, Addams and von Suttner argue in their writings that nurturing qualities are deeply embedded within *human* rather than simply female psychology, but in fact that these qualities were culturally associated with motherhood and therefore gendered female. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, masculine characteristics such as aggression that underlay men's role in war had become open to feminist critique and men's natures were held responsible for the continuance of destructive wars. In 1911, South African intellectual and anti-war campaigner Olive Schreiner set out the gendered arguments associating men with aggression and war. In

[63] Gertrud Bäumer *Lebensweg durch eine Zeitenwende* (Tübingen: Rainer Wunderlich, 1933), 440.

chapter 4 of her influential book *Women and Labour*, she argued that men were innately programmed to destroy life, women to preserve it:

> "It is a fine day, let us go out and kill something!" cries the typical male of certain races, instinctively. "There is a living thing, it will die if it is not cared for", says the average woman, almost equally instinctively.[64]

This was not because of an innate moral superiority but because, in the case of war, women were seen as having special knowledge born of the flesh, a knowledge to which men had no access; "the knowledge of woman, simply as woman, is superior to that of man; she knows the history of human flesh; she knows its cost; he does not".[65] For this reason, she argued that women's inclusion in the affairs of the state was necessary to bring about the end of warfare: "[w]ar will pass when intellectual culture and activity have made possible to the female an equal share in the control and governance of modern national life; it will probably not pass away much sooner; its extinction will not be delayed much longer".[66]

Schreiner was clearly articulating the key elements of a feminist pacifist position that gained traction in response to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Only women could truly value human life because of their childbearing capacity and experience, consequently women paid a higher price in war than men, and this entitled them to speak on the subject and work towards removing war from the world. Underlying the argument was a belief in human

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[64] Olive Schreiner, *Woman and Labour.* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1911), 176.

[65] Ibid, 170.

[66] Ibid, 178.

progress, in which war belonged to an earlier stage of human development. Schreiner's position is problematic as it associates all women by definition with an anti-war position, assumes that women's political influence would overcome war, places maternity at the core of all women's identity and does not allow for "maternal thinking" in pacifist men.[67] In Germany, the most outspoken feminist peace campaigners were Lida Gustava Heymann and Anita Augspurg, members of the organising committee for the Hague Congress. Through their campaigns against the state regulation of prostitution in the 1890s, these women had formed a view of men as the irrational sex, slaves to their baser instincts unless checked by the greater moral power of women. Even in peacetime, they saw women as the victims of male violence and sexual incontinence, and the outbreak of war in 1914 was for them the ultimate demonstration of men's enslavement to their atavistic urges and further evidence of their unfitness to govern:

> The world war has proved that the male state, founded and built up on force, has failed all along the line; we have never seen clearer proof of its unfitness. The male principle is divisive and, if allowed to continue unchecked, will bring about the total destruction of humanity.[68]

Heymann and Augspurg's conviction that women in their natural state had an innate love of peace that made it impossible for them to support killing remained intact throughout the war

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[67] The phrase 'maternal thinking' comes from Sara Ruddick's seminal book *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (London: Women's Press, 1990).

[68] Heymann Lida Gustava, *Weiblicher Pazifismus* in *Frauen gegen den Krieg* (1917)1922. ed. Gisela Brinker Gabler, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1980) 65-70, 65.

despite all evidence to the contrary: in 1919 they wrote: "[w]omen are, just because they are women, against all forms of brutal force that seek to pointlessly destroy what has grown, what has become. They want to build up, to protect, to create anew".[69] Love, then, expressed as an innate and instinctive urge to preserve human life as well as the capacity to work together with other women was seen as women's specific contribution to international relations between nations and the building of a sustainable peace in the face of men's abject failure of statesmanship. There are problems with this gendered claim to love as an exclusively womanly arena that undermine the pacifist cause – pacifist women risk the accusation of sentimentality that undermines their claim to serious political aims and pacifist men risk an association with feminine values that threatens to "unman" them, to reduce their standing as men and their access to the power and privilege of their sex. For example, this fear is expressed by Carl von Ossietsky (1889-1938), founder member of a veterans' peace group, Friedensbund der Kriegsteilnehmer (1919-1927), who sought to distance the group from the taint of feminine sentiment and proposed instead a tough, manly stance suggested by their "war against war" slogan. For Ossietsky, "the movement's starting point was the lacrymose novel of a very sensitive and very unworldly woman". Bertha von Suttner's "snivelling" approach lacked "masculine energy" and "an eye for unadorned reality", and he lamented that the faint air of ridicule associated with her still clung to the peace movement:

> All honour to Suttner's sincerity, but she found no stronger expression for her idea than snivelling. Like so many women who fight for the realisation of an idea from the depth

[69] Lida Gustava Heymann Nach dem Weltkrieg. Schriften zur Neuorientierung der auswärtigen Politik. Heft 9. 1919 *Frauenstimmrecht und Völkerverständigung, 1.*

> of their female soul when what it needs is masculine energy and an eye for unadorned reality, she descended into the realm of fantasy, thought she'd made a convert whenever she coaxed out a couple of crocodile tears, got stuck in externalities instead of striking at the heart of the matter and, and in her less than incisive manner, came close to kitsch. A gentle whiff of ridiculousness gradually came to surround "Peace-Bertha" and this whiff has unfortunately remained with the peace movement until the present day.[70]

The idea that women should act as a repository for human emotions in wartime was often articulated during the war – in order to kill, men needed to be emotionally cauterised. Yet the work of scholars such as Michael Roper has shown that there were strong emotions at the front, with love expressed by men to their families as well as to each other, and fathers shattered by the loss of sons. Roper argues that the expression of these emotions is not to be found in official or public discourse, and often only obliquely in letters, diaries and memoirs inhibited by the limits imposed by class and masculinity. It is true that in public, the expression of emotion – love, grief, fear – was reserved for women and was sanctioned and validated by women's central role in mourning and loss, while no-one quite knew how to respond if a bereaved father expressed his grief: "[g]rieving could be a lonely experience for these fathers when the networks of mourning and support functioned through mothers".[71]

It is clear, then, that the starkly gendered division set up by WILPF does not reflect the full picture. Leonard Frank's collection of short stories *Der Mensch ist Gut* quoted above is

[70] Carl von Ossietsky, *Die Pazifisten* (The Pacifists) in *Das Tagebuch* 8 November,1924.

[71] Roper, *The Secret Battle,* 120.

indicative of a belief in human nature based on love and care that is aimed at men and women alike. Frank's stories illustrate the hollowness of wartime abstractions such as patriotism, glory, courage and stress the need to reconnect with human values, the most important of which is love: "[w]e only need to love, and then no further shot will fall. Then peace will come,"[72] and this love had to apply to everyone, to the French as much as to the Germans, and had to be felt by men and women, mothers and fathers alike. Only love could open people's eyes to the madness and inhumanity of war.

Arguably too the rhetoric behind the League of Nations was often based on the concept of brotherly love between nations, and religious evocations of love stressed the role of divine and human love in the soldiers' willingness to sacrifice – and of course there was an expectation that men would experience a love of nation as well as home and family. A speech by Emmeline Pethick Lawrence at Zurich shows an awareness that:

> love is not enough. If we are to prevent war, something must go with love, and that is vision, understanding. If we have not vision, then the very love of the people can be exploited and can be turned to the purpose of destruction and death instead of life and creation.
>
> It was the love instinct in the men who fought that enabled them to fight, not hate instinct. The soldiers who fought in this war were inspired by love of their own country and their fellows.[73]

[72] Frank, *Der Vater*, 1.

[73] WILPF *Rapport* 1919, 232.

Conclusion

As well as showing that love can be just as much a force for war as for peace, these examples challenge the WILPF's tendency to claim love as an exclusively female strategy. As the leaders of the international women's organisations were only too aware, women faced the same challenges and barriers to reconciliation in the post-war world as the men and were in just as much danger of perpetuating the bitter mind-sets of war. At the same time, however, the gendered mobilisation of love in order to overcome division has a history, and the concepts developed by historians of emotion have been helpful in illuminating the meaning and significance of the discourse of love within the organized women's movement during and in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. They have offered an explanation of why emotions became such a contested arena between women, staking claims to a gendered emotional culture in pursuit of diametrically opposed aims, and have revealed the performative nature of emotional practice in regulating and evoking the emotions considered desirable within a particular emotional community. William Reddy's concept of an "emotional regime", described as "[t]he set of normative emotions and official rituals, practices and 'emotives' that express and inculcate them: a necessary underpinning of any stable political regime"[74] takes on particular relevance during times of war, when state intervention in citizens' emotional lives becomes direct and prescriptive. In the context of highly-charged and heavily-policed nationalism, expressions and gestures of love, personal friendship and sympathy born of a sense of shared humanity were used to create, revive and maintain emotional communities by women working for peace during the war as well as for those struggling in the post-war period to

[74] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 129.

overcome the mind-sets of war through international reconciliation. The expression and performance of love were deliberately gendered practices designed to create an emotional cohesion that was central to the feminist pacifism espoused and developed by international women's organisations during and after the war.

The women of WILPF saw war as catastrophic to the whole of humanity but especially to women, and in this they contrasted themselves with the statesmen who saw war as a legitimate tool in international politics. They used emotional language, gestures and expressions of love to overcome the psychological pain of isolation within their own communities and to channel the post-war bitterness and grief away from the enemy nations and instead towards the enemy of the whole of humanity: war itself. Despite the problems inherent in the exclusive association of women with peace, the women at The Hague and Zurich made a strong case that a gender perspective, especially the inclusion of women's experience, was central to an understanding of the causes of war and the key to the creation of systems that could bring about and sustain a lasting peace. This gendered analysis, especially when contrasted with the failure of male statesmanship, formed the basis of women's claim to political influence within nation states via female suffrage and to a wider female influence on the international stage via the International Women's Organisations and the League of Nations.