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Women's International Thought and the New Professions, 1900-1940

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Abstract

This article examines the "new professions" as alternative settings where women thought and wrote about the international. Presenting the case studies of Fannie Fern Andrews, Mary Parker Follett and Florence Wilson, it shows that, in emerging professional and disciplinary contexts that have hitherto lain beyond the purview of historians of international thought, these women developed their thinking about the international. The insights they derived from their practical work in schools, immigrant communities and libraries led them to emphasize the mechanics of participation in international affairs and caused them to think across the scales of the individual, the local group and relations between nations. By moving beyond the history of organizations and networks and instead looking for the professional settings and audiences which enabled women to theorize, this article shifts both established understandings of what counts as international thought and traditional conceptions of who counts as an international thinker.

This article examines the "new professions" as alternative settings where women thought and wrote about the international in the first half of the twentieth century.¹ As social workers, librarians and workers in the teaching sector, women sought to both shape public life in the expanding welfare states of the North Atlantic and develop concepts that addressed questions of international order. By moving beyond the history of organizations and networks and instead looking for the professional settings and audiences which enabled women to theorize, this article shifts established understandings of what counts as international thought and traditional conceptions of who counts as an international thinker.

Here we present three American women and their thinking. We discuss Fannie Fern Andrews (1867–1950), a schoolteacher and educational reformer whose peace curriculum transformed the way in which American children were taught how to relate to foreignness at home and abroad. We then turn to Mary Parker Follett (1868–1933), whose experience in the field of social work led her to rethink international, organizational and interpersonal relations alike, and we conclude with a focus on Florence Wilson (1884–1977), a librarian who advocated new methods of information management in order to reform global governance along the lines of American democracy. All three women thought about

international society from distinct vantage points opened to them through their chosen professions. They theorized the mechanics of participation in international contexts and developed ideas regarding membership and access that straddled the scales of states, groups and individuals. While neither radical nor subversive, they furthered international thought by exploring new terrains and including new publics.

Andrews, Follett and Wilson were all white, American, university-educated women, who in the 1910s and 1920s moved within and across the landscape of transatlantic professional life. This made them part of the small and privileged group of Americans that Emily Rosenberg has identified as taking an explicitly internationalist stance in the context of official American aloofness from international organizations in the 1920s. They supported the League of Nations, had links to the large philanthropic foundations and, in line with the United States' mission as a moral empire, sought to "bring America's progressive movement to the world."² These commitments helped them form original ideas about the international that were elaborated in gendered disciplinary and professional contexts that have hitherto lain beyond the purview of historians of international thought.

Excavating the alternative contexts and audiences of international thought presents a challenge to scholars working in a wide range of subdisciplines, including diplomatic and international history, historical international relations (IR) and intellectual history. It asks them to take women and their ideas about international order seriously, and to look beyond familiar sources, institutions and conversations. This does more than produce a "recovery history." Rather, it forces scholars to rethink what counts as international thought itself, where it is located and how it might be studied. One way to think of these women would be as noncanonical thinkers in the context of the discipline of IR, where their contributions have been systematically erased.³ But here we make a different argument. Going beyond disciplinary history, we find women international thinkers in the different professional fields in which their contributions were recognized—in librarianship, education and organizational studies. Rather than recovering lost women for the IR canon and inventing traditions where there may be none, on a more fundamental level we want to ask questions about what constitutes international thought and where it could be located.

Women and international thought

The history of modern international thought is a relatively novel field of study that, according to David Armitage, has hitherto taken relations between nations and international law as its focus and been chiefly concerned with explaining a shift in the collective political consciousness towards imagining "that we inhabit a world of states."⁴ Armitage mobilizes Duncan Bell's definition of the history of international thought as the history of past conceptions "of the nature and significance of political boundaries, and the relations between discrete communities."⁵ Indeed, existing analyses have concentrated on those individuals who explicitly engaged in theoretical reflection on states and their relations across borders, and were often involved in diplomacy and in making war themselves. But both the council chamber and the blood-soaked borderland remain worlds dominated largely by male bodies and men's voices.

The active engagement of women in modern international politics has long been recognized by scholars working within the overlapping subfields of diplomatic history, women's history and the history of cross-border activism.⁶ From different points of departure this work has

shown that women, although certainly underrepresented, took positions in institutions of international governance such as the League of Nations and its technical agencies.⁷ They also worked, formally and informally, for the diplomatic services of national governments.⁸ Scholarship on women's international activism, both of white women and of women of color, has shown how women transcended national politics and pushed new issues onto the international agenda.⁹ Women's pacifist and internationalist organizations in particular have received much attention, none more so than the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the world's most influential women's peace organization.¹⁰ Recognizing the variety of ways in which women cultivated international and transnational spaces and networks of sociability necessitates, as Carolyn James and Glenda Sluga have argued, "a broader interpretation of diplomatic work and the nature of modern international politics."¹¹

This "activist turn," however, with its focus on women's agency and the building and functioning of activist networks, has rarely led to a systematic exploration of the ideas that mattered to women or to an understanding of them as theorists.¹² In the case of WILPF, Linda Schott has challenged the narrow focus of much intellectual history by pointing to organizational records and correspondence as alternative sources for analyzing women's evolving debates on pacifism. Similarly, Catia Confortini has charted ideological developments within the organization after 1945.¹³ Yet, as our three case studies suggest, a still wider perspective is necessary because there were a host of settings *outside international organizations and networks* in which women thought about international politics and problems.

The women we write about here were on the margins of international thought as defined by Armitage and Bell, but at the same time they were leaders in their respective professional fields. Certainly, they accepted the state as the principal actor in international relations, but in their thinking they paid just as much attention to the participation of individuals and non-state actors, frequently collapsing the municipal versus international dichotomy that marks much international thought in the modern period.¹⁴ For all their emphasis on practical action, they were very much *thinkers* who saw themselves in active engagement with the ideas of their male contemporaries and who sought to write themselves into the conversation about international politics and institutions. At the same time they were also finding audiences and acclaim in their respective professions, which in turn informed their conceptualizations of international questions.

Wilson, Follett and Andrews were not straightforwardly feminist in their analyses. Rather, they might be described as "social feminists" who believed that (white) women needed professional training and status in order to fulfill their gendered duty to society.¹⁵ Yet they did not have to be feminists in a way that is recognizable to contemporary IR scholars to have made significant contributions to international thought. Working in their professions, on the edge of the emerging field of international relations, they were nonetheless part of the wider liberal and conservative internationalist interwar conversation about world order, with its inherent biases in terms of race, civilizational models and stages of development.¹⁶ Their trajectories suggest not only that it is time for historians of international thought to look beyond the conventional settings of intellectual production to the wider range of discursive spaces in which thinking on international relations was being worked out in the first four decades of the twentieth century, but also that it is time to recognize the thought of professional women as making a distinct contribution.¹⁷

The new professions

Rather than beginning with the discourse of international thought as currently defined, and trying to find women in it, we begin by identifying the audiences and wider publics that professional women addressed in the first part of the twentieth century.¹⁸ In line with a more general reorientation of the histories of intellectual and scientific production and the call for attention to the social grounding of intellectual history, we argue that it is necessary to look beyond the traditional frames of disciplinary reference and instead examine the diverse lives and professional worlds in which intellectual women operated.¹⁹

The late nineteenth century was a time of rising professional formation and consolidation in the United States, traditionally seen as central to the emergence of the new middle classes and the forging of national societies increasingly governed through expertise.²⁰ Middle-class women played a particular role in this process. While they struggled to enter the male-dominated professions of medicine, law, engineering and the clergy, they joined the less prestigious service professions such as teaching, nursing, social work and librarianship in large numbers.²¹ These activities had long been regarded as extensions of women's supposedly natural instincts to nurture and care, and had hitherto been undertaken by female volunteers. But rapid urbanization and the growth of public institutions with expanding bureaucracies, combined with social mobility and increasing numbers of women entering higher education, led to the professionalization of these occupations.²² It was characterized by the introduction of specialized training, university qualifications, accreditation and associational activities, which included the emergence of journals and other outlets for research that were increasingly framed as "scientific" in emphasis.²³

The shift from voluntarism to professionalization paradoxically limited and enlarged women's opportunities at the same time. Although it opened up many opportunities for intellectual work and leadership—and women such as Andrews, Follett and Wilson certainly experienced them as opportunities—it also created new barriers. Although some women rose through the ranks, administrative direction was frequently still undertaken by men.²⁴ Status and pay remained circumscribed, certainly compared to male-dominated occupations such as law or medicine, leading some social scientists in the 1960s to mark these female-dominated fields of work as "semi-professions."²⁵ Many of the women professionals who rose to positions of eminence continued to subscribe to the liberal paternalism of the period, which did not contest male authority or gendered hierarchies.

But the professionalization of women's work is important to the history of international thought in this period because it created alternative forums (such as journals, bureaucracies and regional, national and international associations) in which women could study, take on leadership roles and bring their ideas to print. More than this, it opened up new discourses not yet dominated by established conventions. It was in these expanding professional spaces that the three women examined here developed their conceptions of international relations. They worked in three of the new professions that offered particularly hospitable arenas for women's international thought: teaching, social work and librarianship. Andrews, Follett and Wilson were by no means the only women occupying leading positions in these professions or connecting them with international thought. Yet all three developed a distinct perspective on international relations through their professional formation, and, in different and often complex ways, each tried to make this perspective useful to audiences beyond as well as

within the emerging field of international relations. Foregrounding the professional contexts of Andrews', Follett's and Wilson's international thinking ultimately points to the dimensions of "the social" that have so far been excluded from international thought, as well as to the gendered nature of the disciplinary and discursive boundary making that has characterized its foundation and elaboration.

Fannie Fern Andrews: teaching how to "feel" the world

Fannie Fern Andrews was the first educational reformer to systematically implement peace education in the United States. Beginning in the 1900s, Andrews consciously aligned the teaching of the United States' place in the world in elementary and secondary schools with trends in the emerging discipline of IR. At the same time, she drew on established professional practice among Progressive Era citizenship educators to argue for the inclusion of education as a category of analysis in international politics. In her view, education was essential to managing a disorderly world, as it was capable of regulating individual emotion and, by extension, public opinion. Influenced by John Dewey's experiential and participatory approach, she argued that education could fashion international *feeling* and saw the curriculum as a means to connect with broad audiences. Andrews was so confident in the relevance of her professional expertise to the study of international relations that from the mid-1920s she attempted to forge a second career as an IR scholar and Middle East expert. She is absent from disciplinary histories. Yet the questions with which she engaged have since returned to scholarly agendas, not least among them her focus on how individual emotions become collective and political in the context of world politics.²⁶

Andrews occupied a privileged position in a changing sector. Although open to women since the late nineteenth century, teaching in the United States became increasingly feminized in the years before the First World War. By 1919–20, 86 percent of teachers were women. At the same time, professional organizations such as the American National Education Association (NEA) took on the challenge of enhancing women teachers' status, particularly over the issue of equal pay.²⁷ Andrews trained as a teacher at Salem Normal School (1884) and Radcliffe College (BA, 1902) and worked in the Boston school system. Financially secure due to her marriage in 1890, Andrews left classroom teaching to become a full-time campaigner for educational reform and peace—causes that she saw as intertwined. In 1908 she cofounded the American School Peace League (ASPL) with the support of the NEA.²⁸ In the same year, she characterized "the teacher of the twentieth century" as an "international figure," capable of teaching abstract principles to children through educational techniques based on individual experience: "One generation of teaching the principles of justice, peace and international unity would revolutionize the world; *these sentiments can be taught in literature, geography, history, and, in fact, in every exercise connected with the school.*"²⁹

Andrews developed these ideas in the four-hundred-page *Course in Citizenship*, a school curriculum first published in 1914. One of the ASPL's major publications, it was coauthored by Andrews and four other women. This curriculum instructed children in how to resolve conflicts by empathizing with others and came to be recognized as an early foray into the teaching of international relations in American schools.³⁰ Inspired by John Dewey's philosophy of experiential, child-centered learning and the "expanding-environments" approach of Progressive citizenship education, *A Course in Citizenship* focused first on the environment of home and neighborhood before extending the cultivation of civic virtues to the nation and then the world. Andrews herself prepared the outlines on "The United States

and the World” and “The World Family.” As Megan Threlkeld has argued, *A Course in Citizenship* primarily encouraged white, native-born schoolchildren to regard the United States as a setter of international standards and world society as an expanded version of American society.³¹ Values such as tolerance, cooperation and the peaceful resolution of international conflicts were reconfigured as quintessentially American and a source of entitlement: “The United States is the cosmopolitan nation of the world. Internationalism is her heritage, and with her complex population, she has perforce grown up with this ideal.”³²

Andrews’ curriculum familiarized schoolchildren with the abstract principles of early twentieth-century American international thought. It emphasized the restrained manliness of American legalism and paternalism and defined international relations as relations between all sovereign states represented at the 1907 Hague Conference who had thereby “established their equality among the nations of the world and secured a recognized status in world-politics.”³³ When it came to international inequality and imperial control, Andrews also represented the scholarly mainstream’s conviction that peoples of the nonwhite world could only attain self-determination under the strict guidance of “advanced” civilizations.³⁴ As Susan Pedersen has observed, paternalistic imperialism often employed the “language of the schoolmaster and the parent,” and thus it is unsurprising that *A Course in Citizenship* encouraged children in the United States to rank foreign peoples according to their capacity for commercial, technological and cultural advancement.³⁵ It used popular school poems, such as John Greenleaf Whittier’s *Cable Hymn*, to map international relations onto a nature–culture dichotomy. Civilizational benchmarks such as technological prowess supposedly emanated from “the vigor of the Northern brain,” whereas the nonwhite world appeared as “Orient seas,” “Africa’s plain” and “Asian mountains.”³⁶

While these framings were uncontroversial among conservative internationalists in the United States, Andrews nonetheless made an innovative contribution to international thought through her insistence on the importance of the emotional dimension of politics in a world community. *A Course in Citizenship* recognized that emotions were personal and conscious, generated in individuals through embodied experience. It instructed teachers in how to create specific pedagogical contexts in which emotions such as international friendship could become meaningful. Andrews encouraged a kind of do-it-yourself internationalism in schoolchildren to socialize them into what she imagined as the international community. *A Course in Citizenship* asked children to acquire pen pals abroad through the services of the ASPL, and to write to organizations dedicated to cultural exchange such as the Amerika-Institut in Berlin, thus coproducing international goodwill. But they were also to use the power of their imagination, by reading children’s book classics such as *Heidi* or those published in the Little People Everywhere series, to empathize with their peers abroad.³⁷ By the 1920s, Andrews’s idea that children should be encouraged to develop a sense of world-mindedness and to express it through concrete experience had become popular among US teachers.³⁸

Once the United States became a belligerent in the First World War, Andrews rewrote parts of her curriculum to make it even less critical of American expansion and militarism.³⁹ Perhaps unsurprisingly, given her previous ideological work on behalf of American greatness, in 1919 Andrews also renamed the ASPL the American School Citizenship League, against the wishes of many in the organization’s more radical rank and file.⁴⁰ During the war she also immersed herself in international women’s and educational organizations, becoming a founding member of the International Federation of University

Women and part of the International Council of Women's delegation to the League of Nations.⁴¹ In her wartime publications, Andrews retained key features of her earlier, classroom-focused work. Rather than presenting a defined argument in favor of a policy, theory or position, Andrews reproduced original documents and expert opinions encouraging readers to come to their own conclusions. But she also reflected upon new ways of reaching audiences beyond the classroom, based on her certainty that educating public opinion would determine the postwar order.⁴² Her efforts to organize an International Bureau of Education attempted to establish education as an “officially recognized ... factor in the relationships of nations.”⁴³

By the end of the war, Andrews was well on her way to establishing herself as an international-relations expert in her own right through graduate work at Radcliffe. This resulted in several publications and a Ph.D. in international law and diplomacy in 1923.⁴⁴ Andrews's postwar career and writing have long been neglected, even though she was one of the few American experts on the Mandates system of the League of Nations, specifically in the Middle East. American educational entrepreneurs had a long history of involvement in the region and Andrews advocated its continuation when she argued in a 1921 article that “the United States holds the educational mandate for that territory.” But Andrews did not just advocate on behalf of American interests; she also pointed to “the intricate problems that will arise under the mandatory system” regarding sovereignty. Indeed, the question of who was sovereign in a Mandated territory—the victors of the First World War, the Mandatory power, the people who lived there or the league itself—was taken up later in a classic study by Quincy Wright and would vex the Permanent Mandates Commission, established in 1920, for the better part of two decades.⁴⁵ Wright, an emerging scholar at the time, would become one of the United States' most renowned political scientists. He corresponded with Andrews about the sovereignty question as she was completing her thesis. When, in 1925, he followed her footsteps to Palestine to study Class A Mandates on a Guggenheim Fellowship, George Grafton Wilson commented that Wright would “do a very good piece of work” but doubted that it would be “so comprehensive a study as [Andrews's] own.”⁴⁶

Many aspects of Andrews's doctoral thesis were original. Andrews argued that American, rather than European, forms of imperial control in Cuba and the Philippines should serve as blueprints for studying the Mandates system because of the “transitionary character of the guardianship.”⁴⁷ Her thesis was, by the standards of the time, a thorough and competent treatment. Scholars congratulated her on doing “pioneer work” and invited her to speak at academic conferences.⁴⁸ Yet whereas Andrews's curriculum found an eager audience, she struggled to get her thesis published. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a leading publisher in the field of international law, turned her down, as did Macmillan. This was when Andrews decided to embark on fieldwork in Palestine in order to write an entirely new book, *The Holy Land under Mandate*, which was published in 1931.⁴⁹

This was not a conventional scholarly work. Andrews sought to give her readers a “dramatic and inspiring” account of her fieldwork. Large parts of *The Holy Land under Mandate* consisted of lengthy reproductions of reports and agreements, interspersed with vivid descriptions of Andrews's travels. A “hot and dusty” ride took the author to Jerusalem, where “the varied hues of the flowers and the green of the vines were delightfully refreshing.” Like scores of Western travelers before her, Andrews tantalizingly spoke of the “inexpressible charm” of living in one of the holiest sites of Christendom.⁵⁰ But, drawing on

her thesis, Andrews also accurately analyzed the Mandates system at work and, crucially, the United States' part in it.

The interwar years' foremost experts on the league's attempt at imperial reform took Andrews's work seriously. One reviewer was the by now established Quincy Wright, who lauded the breadth and depth of Andrews's research. Yet he rejected her impressionistic approach even if "this rather haphazard arrangement may convey to the reader a more realistic sense of the atmosphere in Palestine than might have been possible by a more systematic plan." Raymond Leslie Buell, author of a famous study on European colonialism, had been only too happy to use research material that Andrews had shared with him in 1923. He now chided her for including "personal and chatty material out of place in a serious study," even if her account of the current political developments in Mandatory Palestine was "unusually valuable."⁵¹ Wright and Buell, who had achieved their own position partly by building on Andrews's work, acknowledged her contribution but also coded her book as emotional and thus unserious in a hegemonic move designed to establish the scholarly authority of the fledgling field of IR. Andrews's book, like her earlier curriculum, enabled her readers to meaningfully "feel" what it was like to live in Palestine—but by the early 1930s, professionalization within the field of IR meant that self-styled "serious" scholars had become reluctant to welcome her kind of popular education as a valuable contribution.

Andrews's contribution to international thought was threefold: first, she argued for the inclusion of education as a category of international politics. This would have given teachers a new position of authority in international politics (analogous to the position that international lawyers achieved through the Hague Peace Conferences). While international organizations such as UNESCO came to recognize the importance of pedagogy and the agency of teachers and students in fashioning international subjectivity later in the twentieth century, Andrews stands out as an important fore-thinker. Second, she theorized a mode of international participation through emotional experience, enacting this both in her curriculum and in her book, *The Holy Land under Mandate*. Third, within the field of IR, she made an original contribution to the analysis of the Mandates system of the League of Nations as a project of not only European but also American imperial reform. Yet when she tried to obtain markers of professional achievement within IR that went beyond the Ph.D. and published articles, she encountered obstacles forcing her to revert to a mode of writing that was commercial. This gave Andrews an audience but not recognition. Consequently, Andrews remained an IR amateur but retained her professional status within international education, a field that has hardly figured in conventional analyses of international politics in the mid-twentieth century.

Mary Parker Follett: reconciling difference at home and abroad

Mary Parker Follett is celebrated today as the "prophet of management."⁵² She has become known as "the mother" of the field of dispute resolution and journals in organizational studies award prizes in her name.⁵³ Yet the presence of the international in Follett's thought is striking. Her books of the 1920s, and her lectures delivered in New York and at Harvard and the LSE, laid out a vision of group processes that Follett applied to civic, economic and international contexts alike. "What is the central problem of social relations?" she asked. "It is the question of power; this is the problem of industry, of politics, of international affairs."⁵⁴ Follett saw her analysis as applying to all three of those contexts. Her emphasis upon interpersonal relations and group dynamics has much in common with scholarship that

has emerged in the last fifteen years, and her insistence upon the reciprocal interactions of the organic whole as the unit of study anticipates work that takes a systemic approach to international relations.⁵⁵ Influenced by pragmatist thinkers such as John Dewey, she made a distinctive contribution with her notion that direct interpersonal relations and group processes offered the best way to deal with difference on both an individual and an international scale, and she elaborated these ideas to a new audience of business leaders whom she saw as engaged in working out the methods that would create international community. Yet with a few notable exceptions, Follett is curiously missing from standard histories of both international thought and international relations as a discipline.⁵⁶

Follett's early activities reveal her long-standing interest in political organization. Educated in Anna Eliot Ticknor's Society for Home Study and then at the Harvard Annex (later Radcliffe College), she completed an undergraduate dissertation on the workings of the American House of Representatives under the supervision of the historian Albert Bushnell Hart. Incorporating further research pursued at Newnham College in Cambridge (UK), this work was published as a book in 1896 to wide acclaim. Follett, however, was barred from continuing her studies at Harvard by a university that still only admitted men. Like other intellectual women of her generation who needed to support themselves she initially turned to teaching. Finding the experience discouraging, she instead sought out research work with the Harvard political economist William James Ashley. Yet when he failed to acknowledge her intellectual contribution, she was once again forced to look elsewhere.⁵⁷ So she turned to the new profession of social work—a field with deep voluntarist roots but one rapidly acquiring new forms of credentialization and status.⁵⁸

Working at the “Children's House” founded by Pauline Agassiz Shaw in the working-class (and largely immigrant) Boston neighborhood of Roxbury, Follett developed ideas about group dynamics that would underpin her thinking for the rest of her life. Influenced by Hart's notion that in the long run “a sentiment of civic pride” was the only effective remedy for the problems of urban government, Follett came to believe that personal relations and individual citizens' capacity to govern themselves lay at the heart of all legitimate authority.⁵⁹ At a time when others were advocating exclusion, Follett developed a “commitment to educating immigrant Americans for self-government.”⁶⁰ Putting these principles into practice, she worked with the Boston Equal Suffrage Association for Good Government and the Women's Municipal League to create citizens' groups that enabled democratic participation. This social work gave her political, managerial and economic experience that profoundly shaped her subsequent thinking.

Follett gave articulation to her ideas in a book she called *The New State: Group Organization and the Solution of Popular Government*.⁶¹ Writing during the international crisis of the First World War and publishing in 1918, she argued in it that a healthy democracy depends on direct interpersonal processes and institutions. Echoing the idealist and pragmatist philosophy of Henry Sidgwick, T. H. Green, William James and John Dewey, Follett put forth an inherently social view of the individual that saw the group as central to politics because it was only through the group that the individual could realize freedom and be heard above the crowd.⁶² Building on this, she advanced a practical program that advocated citizen participation in forums comprising randomly selected members who met to discuss policy issues, consult experts and develop written recommendations.⁶³

The New State placed an emphasis upon the neighborhood as the site for group relations. However, if scholars have read Follett's book as primarily about municipal and national contexts, this was not how she understood it. For her, all sorts of groups were the foundation of group relations—trade unions, professional societies, citizens' leagues, religious communities and international organizations. And the process of “recogniz[ing] and unify[ing] difference” through these groups would, Follett argued, give rise not only to a new kind of national state, but also, “through the further working of this principle,” to a “world-state.”⁶⁴ Yet it would equally be a mistake to understand Follett as making an argument about nested relations or expanding sovereignties. Rather, she believed there was a common problem underlying political, economic and international life alike, and that was the problem of how different kinds of people were to live together. As the examples that appear throughout her book show, for her, group organization was “to be the new method in politics, the basis of our future industrial system, the foundation of international order.”⁶⁵ And in 1918 the stakes could not be clearer: “The lesson of the group is imperative for our international relations” she wrote; “There is no way out of the hell of our present European situation until we find a method of compounding difference.”⁶⁶

The New State went into several editions and was widely reviewed. But although philosophers and sociologists praised it enthusiastically—“by far the most successful attempt to rewrite the theory of the state in the light of the most recent knowledge furnished by sociology and social psychology,” read one account—political scientists tended to be more skeptical, seeing it as a “pluralist” critique of the unitary sovereignty of the state.⁶⁷ The *Journal of Race Development* (later *Foreign Affairs*), at the time the primary journal of the nascent discipline of international relations in the United States, did not review it at all. But one of the international thinkers who did read Follett's book was her Romanian British contemporary David Mitrany, whose ideas, as Lucian Ashworth has shown, bear many similarities with Follett's.⁶⁸

Follett's third book, *Creative Experience* (1924), further developed her ideas about the importance of accommodating difference. Written after serving on the minimum-wage board in Massachusetts and arising from an at times difficult collaboration with the sociologist Eduard Lindeman, it focused on conflict resolution. “Many political scientists talk about conferring power without analyzing power,” she began. By contrast, she wanted “wholly to abandon the region of abstract speculation and [instead] to study the behavior of men.”⁶⁹ Finding existing approaches dominated by an emphasis on equilibrium, compromise and balance-of-power arguments—all approaches that characterized the realm of international politics—Follett instead advocated the behaviorism advanced in America by the Harvard psychologist Edwin B. Holt as well as by the gestaltists.⁷⁰ It was unrealistic to think that differences could be settled simply by intellectual activity, she contended. Rather, successful conflict resolution depended on changing behaviors. Creative experience was a “circular response”; conflict was part of the normal process “by which socially valuable differences register themselves”; it was a “confronting and integrating of desires.”⁷¹ The second half of her book applied these ideas to the institutions of democracy, the judiciary and the parliament, but always her field was broader than the group or nation-state: the “activity of co-creating is the core of democracy, the essence of citizenship, the condition of world-citizenship” was how she put it.⁷² With examples that included German reparations, international conferences, interstate commerce and the League of Nations, Follett again made clear that her arguments applied to questions of international relations as much as they did to national and organizational contexts.

American businessmen took up these ideas with alacrity. According to Follett's friend F. Melian Stawell, Follett was "flooded with letters" from executives asking for advice, and in early 1925 she was invited by the Bureau of Personnel Administration to deliver four lectures to some of the country's most senior businessmen at the Executive Conference Group in Manhattan.⁷³ Situated in the context of the acute labor conflicts of the period, these lectures explored how "business [might] be so organized that workers, managers, owners, feel a collective responsibility."⁷⁴ Follett reflected on the nature of constructive conflict, the giving of orders and the process of integrating differences between workers and management. Underlying these topics was her abiding concern with power, particularly the difference between what she called "power-with" and "power-over." Further talks for the bureau followed, as did other speaking invitations and a four-month trip to England.⁷⁵

The lectures Follett delivered between 1925 and 1928 established her as one of the preeminent organizational and management thinkers of her time. Her themes of authority, function and responsibility, the psychology of control and consent, leadership and mediation now appear standard in management theory. Although her ideas originated in her experience as a social worker and engaged with international questions, Follett was thrilled with her business and management audience. As she said in 1926, she wished to "do [her] thinking where it [was] most alive," and "while [she cared] for the ideal," she wanted "to help bring it into ... everyday affairs."⁷⁶ She saw business management as an industry that was "blazing new trails" that could also "be applied to government or international relations."⁷⁷

Follett saw these everyday affairs as closely connected to questions of international order.⁷⁸ The forms of conflict that could be found in business management had their parallels in disputes between countries and in the intimacies of personal relations. Solving problems in business management, she argued in 1926, "may help toward the solution of world problems, since the principles of organization and administration which are discovered as best for business can be applied to government or international relations." Indeed, "the solution of world problems must eventually be built up from all the little bits of experience wherever people are consciously trying to solve problems of relations."⁷⁹ And in 1928, after a decade of applying her thinking about conflict and group processes to international contexts, Follett departed for Geneva to spend the summer studying what she called the "integrations (or lack of them!)" at the League of Nations.⁸⁰ There she found a community of internationalists who had read all her publications and asked her to further her work on "the process of adjustment" between states.⁸¹ This was what she was working on when in 1930 she relocated to London, preparing a series of five lectures to be delivered at the London School of Economics in early 1933 (published in 1949 as *Freedom and Coordination*). But illness, which had dogged Follett all her life, was slowing her down. In 1933 she was diagnosed with an enlarged thyroid gland and she died soon after of postoperative complications in Boston at the age of sixty-five.⁸²

As a social worker in Boston, Follett worked out the principles that underpinned her international thinking. First, her ideas about group processes dissolved the opposition between the international and the local. For Follett, the problems of the international were the same problems that played out in everyday life and her writing always linked these scales together. Second, Follett theorized legitimate authority as resting on participation and coordination rather than on hierarchy or opposition.⁸³ Her approach to power grew from her

understanding of human psychology—she advocated not the “balance of power” but instead “a jointly developing power [that] means the possibility of creating new values.”⁸⁴ This was closely connected to her third contribution—her understanding of conflict not as warfare, but as difference. Differences needed to be articulated, she argued, not ignored or feared, so that they could then be integrated in pursuit of a common goal. In 1925, she thought the league's Dawes Committee, which was arranging German reparations, showed evidence of these principles.⁸⁵ Yet Follett's visits to Geneva in the 1920s made her acutely aware of the organizational difficulties the league confronted. Nonetheless, she saw the league as, in the words of her editor, “a grand opportunity for the development in international relations of her fundamental principle of co-ordination as the basis of all well-organized human activity.”⁸⁶

In the years that followed her death, Follett's work fell into obscurity. According to Mary Ann Feldham, this was partly because “much of Follett's popularity came from lectures given in New York and London” rather than from her books.⁸⁷ But there was also another issue at play. In the post-Second World War era, Follett's ideas, which drew on the pragmatist philosophy and psychology of William James and John Dewey, contradicted the top-down and centralizing paradigms of the Cold War.⁸⁸ In the 1990s, however, as geopolitics and economics began to shift, interest in Follett's work revived in the field of management and organizational studies and her books have been reissued and her lectures brought together.⁸⁹ Yet this nearly three-decades-long revival has only slowly extended to the fields of international thought or international relations, despite the growth of interest in pragmatist thinkers among IR scholars.⁹⁰

Florence Wilson: widening access to international information

Florence Wilson, head librarian of the League of Nations Library in Geneva in the 1920s, foregrounded the crucial role that ordering and facilitating access to information played in defining the body of international knowledge and conceptualizing participation in the internationalist project.⁹¹ In a period in which expertise was becoming a central currency in the world of internationalism and the shaping of public opinion was gaining increasing importance, Wilson believed that the librarian was a critical figure.⁹² In her design of the league's library and its all-important catalogue and index, in the book on the Covenant she published in 1928, in her work establishing lending libraries in the Middle East and in the reports and letters she wrote about these activities, she articulated a vision of the importance of the library as a mechanism that enabled international decision making, permitted direct engagement with materials, and expanded participation in the international community.

Born in 1884 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, (Mary) Florence Wilson had initially planned to enter the field of social work, but when her father objected to this plan because of her delicate health she turned to librarianship, enrolling in Philadelphia's nearby Drexel Institute Library School. Established in 1892, it was the third-oldest library school in the United States and played a central role in the field's professionalization.⁹³ Graduating in 1909, Wilson quickly found employment at Columbia University Library in New York. There she acquired a strong professional identity together with wide subject expertise through work in the libraries of Drama and English, the National Committee for Mental Hygiene and the Natural Sciences. But her particular interest was international relations. This was no coincidence, given Columbia's connection with internationalist initiatives such as the Carnegie

Endowment for International Peace. When, in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson appointed his close adviser “Colonel” Edward M. House to assemble a team of experts, soon named “the Inquiry,” to devise plans for a postwar territorial order, Florence Wilson was chosen to assist in providing them with up-to-date information.⁹⁴ In 1919 she travelled with the Inquiry to Europe—a move overseas that would end up being permanent. Her success in organizing this library in turn led to her appointment in 1919 as a liaison officer at the Paris Peace Conference for the American Library Association and subsequently to being selected as the only woman to receive full membership of the American Peace Commission at the conference.

As an outcome of this work, in 1920 she was asked to establish the Library of the League of Nations and became its head in 1922. This made her the only woman library director in Europe and one of the few women in leading roles at the League of Nations.⁹⁵ It is important to underline the significance of this appointment. Like the librarian Dorothy Porter Wesley whose collection at Howard University helped create the field of African American history, or Ernestine Rose whose work in the Harlem branch of the New York Public Library had a profound influence on the Harlem Renaissance artists, Wilson's decisions shaped the way in which the League of Nations organized and accessed international knowledge.⁹⁶ Located in the Hotel National in Geneva, the library she built became the center of all the Secretariat's activities, with members frequently using its rooms between meetings. Wilson was far from a mere assistant to the experts; it was her ideas about the selection and ordering of international information that determined the kinds of material they used.

In reports and writings, Florence Wilson outlined her specific vision of an international library, attributing a central role to expertise and information in a complex world where knowledge was constantly changing and expanding. In a modern library it was not sufficient merely “to assemble books” (as in a museum). Rather, Wilson believed that librarians should take care in cataloguing, indexing and guiding researchers to various sources, as requests were “for information rather than books.”⁹⁷ This emphasis on use and access was central to her vision of international expertise.⁹⁸ In her view, it was the library and its catalogue, index and staff (rather than merely the books) that enabled access to the information necessary to international decision making. The work of the librarian underpinned the work of the men of state.⁹⁹

Without any specific guidelines, Wilson was the one who determined the scope of the League of Nations Library, assembling around 70,000 volumes based on her close study of its Covenant and her analysis of its intended audience. She gathered reference books, bibliographies, government documents and statistical materials, covering the categories of international law, history, health, sociology, ethnography, economics, finance, political science, geography, maps and material on special subjects such as disarmament or colonial studies, as well as the publications of various societies, newspapers and periodicals.¹⁰⁰

But beyond its content, Wilson's library was characterized by her sophisticated organization of material, and her vision of the importance of thorough cataloguing, indexing and analytical bibliographical work in making information available.¹⁰¹ While Wilson had first opted for the Dewey decimal classification, widely used in American public libraries, this drew widespread criticism from various league officials. She therefore settled on the universal decimal classification, prepared by the International Institute of Bibliography in Brussels.¹⁰² Wilson complemented this classification system with various tools for cross-

referencing, such as a dictionary catalogue with Library of Congress cards and subject headings in English, and an alphabetic list of specific subjects in French. A further research tool was a weekly index to journals circulated throughout the league Secretariat, which proved to be essential for fast and up-to-date information access. This index proved a lasting contribution. It was in use and expanded long after Wilson's departure from the League of Nations and highlights her emphasis on structure, usability and access when it came to international thought: only those who had categories to classify and retrieve information would be able to analyze international questions.

Wilson not only reflected explicitly on the accessibility and ordering of information through her library; she also thought carefully about the audiences she would reach. There were essentially three types of users: the league experts, scholars from around the globe and library personnel in Europe. Of course, the library was first and foremost intended for the league Secretariat. Yet Wilson knew it would also attract researchers from all over the globe—or at least all over Europe—who were working on topics related to international organizations. Finally, Wilson believed that the library might serve as a “training school in which young women of different countries are being educated in American library methods,” therefore “raising the standard of library service all over the world—on the Continent of Europe, in the Far East and in South America.”¹⁰³ This view of Geneva's League of Nations Library saw it as a clearing house for the global dissemination of a model of librarianship and information management—not through explicit training (as at the American Library School in Paris), but by demonstrating best practice.

The novelty of Wilson's efforts to operationalize her conceptions about access to information is demonstrated by the resistance she met.¹⁰⁴ Although she constantly attempted to find additional funding, she was not successful in securing a sufficient budget to realize her vision. The delegates of the league proved slow to appreciate the value of cross-referencing and thorough cataloguing. Wilson was also criticized for employing an entirely female staff, with the committee stating that it “appears to us undesirable that there should be any section of the office which should be considered to be preserve of one sex alone,” even if other sections were of course entirely staffed with men.¹⁰⁵ When approaching funding bodies such as the Rockefeller or Carnegie foundations, she was equally disappointed. Typically, her appeals were met with a reference to her fragile health. Finally, in 1926 she was unceremoniously dismissed from the League of Nations. Women's organizations protested at her treatment and wrote a joint letter to the League of Nations general secretary.¹⁰⁶ But in 1927, she was succeeded by the Dutch librarian Tietse Pieter Sevensma, who presided over an expansion of the library made possible by a gift of two million dollars from John D. Rockefeller, something that Florence Wilson had long worked for but never achieved.¹⁰⁷

On her departure from Geneva, Wilson found a different outlet for her international thinking about information. In 1928 she wrote a book titled *The Origins of the League Covenant* under the auspices of the Information Department of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) that was published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press.¹⁰⁸ It contained documents on the drafting of the league's Covenant, which Wilson had assembled when she had served as a member of the 1919 Paris conference.¹⁰⁹ At first sight, the work resembles a documentary volume. But in providing the full text of each article of the Covenant along with an account of the process of its drafting, Wilson revealed the many voices involved in its construction, showing, for instance, how the

Japanese were frequently sidelined and silenced by Woodrow Wilson or Robert Cecil.¹¹⁰ This account was based largely on the printed, but not widely available, minutes of the Commission on the League of Nations. Much as she had provided access to information through the league's library, her book also sought to make international materials accessible, this time to a much wider audience. It was aimed at scholars and ordinary citizens alike, who, in order to truly understand the clauses of the Covenant, had to "grasp the spirit in which the authors of the Covenant did their work" and see it as "an elastic and growing organism" rather than as a static document, as international-relations professor P. J. Noel Baker pointed out in his foreword.¹¹¹

Reflecting her ethos as a professional librarian, Florence Wilson did not place herself at the center of this text, although she clearly drew on her expertise as firsthand observer and participant. Rather, she limited her own expression to a half-page preface that modestly described her task as placing "at the disposition of the public information that is both invaluable and new."¹¹² Yet a closer look at the book reveals that what is usually seen as preparatory work, note taking and the assembling of lists, really represents an intellectual contribution in its own right.¹¹³ With its emphasis on process, organization, dissenting opinions and structures of power, Wilson showed that official documents do not simply appear but are crafted, debated and disputed. Just like Follett and Andrews, her thinking about information held that understanding international politics required understanding the mentalities and attitudes of the actors involved.

Although designed as a reference volume for "the scholars of the future" as well as "the citizens of to-day," *The Origins of the League Covenant* did not become the standard work on the Covenant.¹¹⁴ Instead, another book published in the same year, by David Hunter Miller, assumed that prominence.¹¹⁵ Miller, who was an American lawyer, had been Wilson's contemporary at the Inquiry and had served as a legal adviser at the Paris Peace Conference. Where Wilson's work placed emphasis on empowering international experts and ordinary citizens by performing objectivity through the provision of "unbiased" information, his was a much more subjective account and provided a chronological narrative and a good deal of interpretation.¹¹⁶

Wilson's belief in the importance of access to information and capacity building is further reflected in her activities of the late 1920s when she undertook several trips to the "new" (by then almost a decade old) post-Ottoman Middle East. She visited Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Greece and other countries to assess the opportunities for spreading internationalism and peace. In the report she wrote following these travels, Wilson argued that new ways of organizing and disseminating information through educational and library work would be needed to help the elites in these countries find their place among the democracies of the West. Echoing notions of American supremacy and the belief in American-style democracy as a successful export article, she saw access to knowledge of international affairs as a way of countering "violent nationalism" and necessary for the building of "new democracies."¹¹⁷ Such access, Wilson argued, should be via the leading libraries of the Middle East, particularly in the American universities of Beirut and Cairo and at Robert College in Istanbul, and it had to be preceded by an expansion of education.¹¹⁸ In her account of Atatürk's educational reforms she referred to John Dewey's 1925 report on the Turkish educational system. She shared his emphasis on progressive education and educational psychology and his abhorrence of rote learning and memorizing, but was more ambivalent on whether education should "produce leaders" or "raise the masses."¹¹⁹

Wilson's 1928 report points to clear continuities in her international thought. It extends her ideas about access to information beyond the circle of experts working for the league or other international organizations and out into the reading publics across the Middle East. But it does so by employing similar tools: the dispatch of educated librarians and aid in cataloguing, administration and book distribution. Transplanting her methods from Geneva to the Middle East, her intervention in library work in this region clearly reflected a paternalism common to other international imperialist development initiatives in the period.¹²⁰ At the same time, it unfolded a new vision of creating international publics where similar concerns would be read and discussed in a wide variety of places at the same time.

Funded by the Carnegie Endowment, Wilson went on to serve as libraries adviser in Europe, where she was involved in managing the International Mind Alcoves program. Propagated by Nicholas Murray Butler and Amy Heminway Jones, these alcoves consisted of dedicated sections in libraries where members of the public could access information on the League of Nations, internationalism and public affairs.¹²¹ As such they extended Wilson's ideas about the role of information in international relations. But in the 1930s, the idea of expanding the alcoves beyond the United States and Great Britain fell out of favor with the Carnegie Endowment, which had become acutely aware that they might be perceived as American propaganda. Sidelined once again, Florence Wilson quit the world of libraries and returned to the pre-professional world of voluntary work, giving her time to the Comité américain de secours civil, which during and after the Second World War championed another quintessentially female profession, nursing. She spent the rest of her life in Switzerland.

Wilson's concern with the individual's relation to international information resonates with the focus on political subjectivity and the Deweyan vision of participatory experience that can be found in Andrews and Follett. Central to her international thinking was an emphasis on the accessibility of international information by different audiences. By introducing American-style cataloguing and indexing at the League of Nations Library, by making available documents on the process of the formation of the Covenant through her book, and by taking libraries to new publics in the Middle East, Wilson consistently reflected on who participated in the international community and how different audiences accessed information about it. At the same time, the methods she proposed to enable that access, the nature of the information she sought to mobilize, and the kind of international community she imagined, bore the clear marks of the biases and missionary zeal of American internationalism.

If Wilson figures at all in more recent histories of internationalism, what is emphasized is her institutional marginalization at the league, while her actual contributions recede to the background. Yet a closer look at her moment at the apex of international librarianship shows how her thinking about the role of information in international society prefigures not only Cold War approaches to public diplomacy, but also more recent concerns with networks and expertise. This scholarship recognizes that controlling, selecting and supplying information are not a passive contribution or mere preliminary work; rather, they constitute a fundamental part of shaping and communicating international thought. Wilson's catalogue and index at the League of Nations Library, her documentary work on the league's Covenant and her report on how to create informed elites in the Middle East reveal a coherent vision of the role that access to and the ordering of information might play in building international society. As a theorist as well as a practitioner of international information, her work opens

the door to historians of international thought interested in the preconditions of both expertise and publicity.

Conclusion

Examining the professional settings accessible to women in the first half of the twentieth century reveals an array of actors who thought about international questions in remarkable ways. Andrews, Follett and Wilson were paradigmatic but not exceptional figures, and their intellectual formations and contributions open new routes of inquiry for historians of international thought who want to take women's thinking seriously. Widening the contexts of international thought introduces distinctive ideas that need to be set against those that currently dominate the field. Although their arguments were diverse, the professional experiences of these three women provide some unique insights into the history of international thought as it was entwined with the disciplinary formation of international relations.

First, Andrews, Follett and Wilson were all engaged in theorizing the mechanics of participation. Their professional training and experiences attuned them to the importance of individual psychology and gave them practical fields in which they could develop their ideas about how different kinds of people might develop a stake in international society. It is not accidental that, albeit in different ways, they were all influenced by the work of John Dewey. If for Wilson this meant reading in dedicated spaces in libraries and facilitating the circulation of information, for Andrews it meant encouraging but also carefully regulating children's and adults' emotional engagement with foreignness. For Follett it meant speaking to business groups who were putting into practice ideas about group organization that could be adopted at an international level. For all three figures, international problems demanded thinking across the scales of the individual, the local group and relations between nations.

Second, Andrews, Follett and Wilson themselves evidence the possibilities for self-fashioning as women intellectuals in the contexts of early twentieth-century international thought. They were three women scholars negotiating how to participate in a conversation that was in the process of being marked off as an academic discipline. The different registers in which they communicated their ideas map out some of the strategies women used to find audiences for their thinking. This has implications for historians of international thought and the sources and genres that they examine. Andrews laid out her vision in the curriculum and in travel writing, Follett in her lectures and Wilson in her index and in reports written for the League of Nations and the Carnegie Endowment. All three maintained extensive correspondence with organizations, friends and colleagues. Moreover, Andrews's example shows that even when women acquired conventional academic credentials, they struggled to publish their work in what would have been accepted as scholarly outlets.

Andrews, Follett and Wilson all attempted to reach broad constituencies and to expand the international community beyond the circles of Geneva, Paris and New York. Although their approach appears to stand in stark contrast to an image of IR as an academic discipline that emphasizes abstract, technocratic and top-down theories focused on states and systems, sanctions and institutions, the two ways of working were never as far apart as they now might seem. Indeed, disciplinary historians have only begun to chart the precise mechanisms which marginalized certain actors and categories from mainstream IR. Taught by Hart and teaching a seminar with Holt, Follett was widely read in Geneva; Nicholas Murray Butler and

Raymond B. Fosdick supported Wilson; and Andrews was read by international-relations scholars such as Raymond Buell and Quincy Wright. Attending to the contributions of women thinkers means both focusing on the gendered forms of exclusion that impacted upon knowledge production and excavating the unique intellectual contributions they developed from their specific professional vantage points.

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