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Edina Hartstein April 10, 2023

Imperial Feminism, Humanitarianism and Shaping Global Trafficking Policies

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Abstract

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This project examines the role of imperial feminism and humanitarianism in shaping global trafficking policies primarily through analyzing the British Empire's role and influence on the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children. I discuss the early evolution of prostitution and trafficking protocol first in Britain in the late nineteenth century and then more broadly at the first International Conferences to Suppress the White Slave Traffic. Later, I investigate the founding the League of Nations and their various social committees including the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children. In looking at the reports and meetings minutes published by the Committee, I argue that the British imposed their ideals of suppressing prostitution onto the rest of the Committee. Dame Rachel Crowdy, Secretariat of the Committee, was a key actor in pushing both the British, and by extension imperial feminist agenda that defined the Committee's work. Ultimately, by situating the Advisory Committee in an imperial context, I reveal the motivations and less than altruistic motives that drove European humanitarian work in the early twentieth centuries.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Over the course of the last century, some feminists' attitudes toward prostitution have shifted from condemnation to one that embraces the sex workers' movement, but the general provisions and policies to suppress and prevent sex trafficking have not.[1] My thesis explores the shortcomings of the League of Nations' Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children's protocols by revealing the rationale and reasoning behind official decisions made in the 1920s. The humanitarian ideals of League's members who aided trafficked women and children are not mutually exclusive from participating government's efforts to maintain hegemony and their borders.

The information I discovered in my thesis about the twentieth century continues well into today. I came to be aware of the different motivations behind anti-trafficking advocacy in the summer of 2021, when interning at Proskauer Rose LLP, a corporate law firm based in New York City. The lawyers dedicated a large portion of their time to pro bono cases including housing disputes, LGBTQ+ rights, and immigration. Immigrants, who had been sex trafficked, were fighting to obtain asylum in the United States because they feared returning to their home countries. If the women returned, they may have been rejected by their families or trafficked again. Survivors needed to acquire their T-Visas, or status that would enable them to remain in the United States for an initial period of four years. As an intern, I researched official United States' policy on each country's trafficking status, different articles about the circumstances in the individual's home country, and the laws and statutes of how trafficking victims could be treated should they be repatriated.

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[1] Juno Mac and Molly Smith, *Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers' Rights*, (London, UK: Verso, 2018).

Though my internship lasted eight weeks, I continued to think about the issue of human trafficking, and more specifically sex trafficking. When I learned about the Palermo Protocols to prevent, suppress, and punish human trafficking particularly in women and children, drafted in 2000, I questioned whether these provisions were the first of their kind. Over the course of the next few months, I delved into the history of sex trafficking and the origins of international agreements to quell the matter. Though I learned what mechanisms international bodies, like the United Nations, developed to eradicate trafficking, I still wanted to understand how officials created the policies and what lay behind people's interest to suppress sex trafficking.

My thesis analyzes the history of international regulations of trafficking. I argue that members on the Advisory Committee were driven by imperialism rather than altruism when crafting trafficking policy. Imperial feminists, or activists who took much the same approach in their work as Western European militaries, played a large role in developing policies. I address the role of British imperial feminists in regulating and policing trafficking and how, at their insistence, prostitution became a major concern of the League of Nations in the 1920s. Using the London School of Economics Women's Library archives and the United Nations Archives at Geneva in Traffic in Women and Children—from early International Agreements on the White Slave Traffic to official League of Nations' Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children Meeting Minutes and Committee members personal correspondences—the chapters trace how already from the late nineteenth century trafficking became a major policy concern for imperial feminists and the British colonial state. Members' personal correspondence highlights these concerns and how the individuals came to influence its Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, or what I will also refer to as the Committee. As one of the League's social committees dedicated to providing humanitarian assistance, the members sought to

implement policies deemed progressive and civilized in territories they presided over. Members classified as imperial feminists promoted the Committee's policies that labeled the practice of prostitution barbaric and demeaning. A key feature of empire is the occupation of material and physical space beyond the central nation. Imperial feminists focused on trafficking both in their central nation, as well as other geographies. I examine the work of imperial feminist Rachel Crowdy, the Secretariat of the Advisory Committee and her relationships with both Committee members and other representatives who supported the suppression of prostitution and trafficking. Her work crafted the Committee's agenda and pushed members to support ideas regarding repatriation and brothels that originated in the British empire. Ultimately, looking at the Advisory Committee's founding and early operation, shapes current understandings of the politics that regulate trafficking and the limits of the policies in place.

Background and Prior Scholarship

Scholars of trafficking have studied the matter independently from the League of Nations. In looking at prostitution and trafficking in Britain, scholars have traced the government's and voluntary organization's roles in creating, changing, and implementing policies to regulate and later suppress the traffic.[2] Scholars who focused on the League of Nations, like Susan Pederson, have highlighted how social committees of the League played a pivotal role in advancing their international goals of peacekeeping, but they have primarily researched the League's political branches and mandate systems.[3] While scholars document the

[2] Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London (Women in Culture and Society)*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992).; Julia Laite, *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens: Commercial Sex in London 1885-1960*, (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).; Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914*, (London, UK: Taylor & Francis Group, 1999), ProQuest Ebook Central.; Philippa Levine, ed. *Gender and Empire*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004).; Philip Howell, *Geographies of Regulation: Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the Empire* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[3] Susan Pederson, "Back to the League of Nations," *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 4 (October 2007): 1091-117. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40008445.; Susan Pederson, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the*

British Empire's influence on the League's mandate system, few have focused on its involvement in 'technical,' or socially focused, groups like the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children. Further, scholars have not analyzed why trafficking became a matter of imperial concern and later how British imperial feminists who sat on the Committee aided officials in writing global trafficking policies.

In the 1860s, policemen enforced the Contagious Disease Acts, a formal mode of regulation that attempted to curb the spread of venereal disease, by identifying, inspecting, and incarcerating suspected prostitutes. Philip Howell examines how these Acts were enforced primarily in military towns where the government took the stance that protection of young men from disease was key to the empire's success. Julia Laite and Paula Bartley then trace a major shift in upper-class attitudes and policies pertaining to trafficking in the 1880s.[4] As the historian Judith Walkowitz has long shown, journalists such as W.T. Stead contributed to the hysteria surrounding sexual exploitation by focusing their reports on sensationalist issues such as child prostitution.[5] This anxiety heightened when feminists labeled demoralizing treatment of "innocent" women "white slavery." While this term is problematic, and was later revised by the League of Nations, its nature had legitimate social and political ramifications. In Britain, it manifested legally in the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, which outlawed prostitution. The law focused on controlling the spread of venereal disease and required prostitutes to register themselves with local authorities. The criminalization of prostitution and sex trafficking continued to focus on exploited women, but later contended with other legal issues like

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Crisis of Empire (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[4] Julia Laite, *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens*.; Paula Bartley, *Prostitution*.; Philip Howell, *Geographies of Regulation.*

[5] Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight.*

immigration that made the practice possible.[6] Public perceptions and legal understandings of the practice played a central role in promoting British norms on the international stage.[7]

While the British policies first operated in British contexts, the nation's expansive empire ensured that much of the experts' work had international impacts. International dimensions of trafficking policy are evident in more recent literature that examines the groundwork of voluntary organizations and the Advisory Committee in various colonial territories. From India to Egypt to Hong Kong, the localized racial and social contexts impacted various groups' capacity to enforce policies.[8] Scholars use the published documents, reports, and correspondences from the task force to form their arguments. Historians Liat Kozma and Stephen Legg argue that nations' leaders had their own ideas about what decisions would have the best outcome for the maintaining and controlling of sex trafficking.[9]

Historians who study prostitution have acknowledged the operation of trafficking policy in different colonial contexts but have failed to discuss early international agreements to suppress sex trafficking in their work. Historians like Judith Walkowitz, Julia Laite, Paula Bartley, and geographer Philip Howell have paid particular attention to the shifts in British policy on prostitution from regulation to suppression between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[10] Others like Stephen Legg and Liat Kozma have examined the international impacts of trafficking policy within the British Empire particularly during the interwar period (1918-1939).[11] As part of a larger shift toward international problem-solving beginning in the early twentieth century, the

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[6] Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World*, (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016).
[7] Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*.; Philippa Levine, ed. *Gender and Empire*.
[8] Liat Kozma, *Global Women, Colonial Ports*.; Stephen Legg, *Prostitution and the Ends of Empire.*
[9] Liat Kozma, *Global Women, Colonial Ports*.; Stephen Legg, *Prostitution and the Ends of Empire.*
[10] Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*.; Julia Laite, *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens*.; Paula Bartley, *Prostitution.*; Philip Howell, *Geographies of Regulation.*
[11] Liat Kozma, *Global Women, Colonial Ports: Prostitution in the Interwar Middle East*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017).; Stephen Legg, *Prostitution and the Ends of Empire: Scale, Governmentalities, and Interwar India*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2014).

matter of trafficking came under government leaders' scrutiny. My thesis addresses this gap in the literature on trafficking and questions why trafficking became a matter of international concern. Delegates for European nations first met at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century to discuss how best to eliminate the issue of what they called the "White Slave Traffic." Representatives primarily pushed for one of two policies: regulation or suppression. Regulationists advocated for the continued maintenance of prostitution in individual nations, but the overseeing of ports and railways to prevent foreign women from entering their nation. Suppressionsts, on the other hand, argued for criminalization, reasoning that legalized prostitution increased the likelihood of trafficking.

When trafficking became a major policy issue for the League, leaders devised a special advisory committee to monitor and regulate it. The creation of the Advisory Committee was part of a shift toward international diplomacy. Though international diplomacy waned during World War One, the creation of the League of Nations in 1919 reignited European, as well as Asian and South American, nations' interest in solving political and social issues diplomatically. The League of Nations was an international body primarily tasked with mediating political disputes. Although social and humanitarian issues have received the least attention from historians, the historian Susan Pederson argues that they could be considered the most "successful" parts of the League project (according to the goals they themselves set).[12] The Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children is a part of their success. The British government was one of the first entities to turn to policies of suppression that the Advisory Committee later adopted. It is critical to reframe the discussion and study how the British Empire's influence on the Committee shaped global trafficking policies.

Sources and Chapter Structure

[12] Susan Pederson, "Back to the League of Nations."

My thesis utilizes many of the same documents as other scholars but my focus shifts from the efficacy of the League's policies to the formation of the Committee itself to reveal the rationale behind the policies enacted. The Women's Library Archives at the London School of Economics and the UN Geneva Traffic in Women Digital Archives housed British laws on trafficking, early international agreements, Committee Meeting Minutes, and the correspondences between delegates and activists that served voluntary organizations. My work builds upon a rich literature in trafficking both on a domestic (British) scale and a transnational context. The international community included imperial countries like Britain, France, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and their colonies. The literature fails to consider the specific ways the Committee was formed under heavy British influence. By examining British and League policies, I gain a better sense of their similarities and differences. Ultimately, I gauge the extent of the British experts' influence on the League.

The personal correspondence often touches on issues of humanitarian thought, economics, health concerns, racial dynamics, and ultimately questions of gender. I formally parse out the imperial context under which the Committee operated because in looking at the members' personal letters to one another it is evident that their interests align with preserving their state's hegemony. While the issue of race is important on an institutional level when crafting policy directly related to trafficking and migration, the League intended for its policies to be applied equitably regardless of race. My thesis, therefore, only touches briefly on racial issues.

The experts on trafficking from the British Empire shaped the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children in their image and accordingly set agendas that conformed the regulation of the traffic to their standards. To make this claim, I have written three chapters that focus on individual policies, milestones, and people that exemplify and further articulate it. The

norms promoted by the League of Nations during the interwar period were informed by those involved in making the policies. Moreover, the decisions published were heavily influenced by the British Empire's transition from regulation to suppression and are thus worth exploring more deeply.

In Chapter One, *The Internationalization of Sex Trafficking Policy,* I investigate the formation of these attitudes in Britain in the face of regulation and suppression. Leading up to the codification of the Criminal Amendment Act of 1885, a law that suppressed the practice of prostitution in England, voluntary organizations composed of female activists and social purists raged against the immorality of sex work. After achieving their goal of implementing repressive legislation, reformers turned to a more global audience that had been building concurrently. Larger networks, made up of European campaigners from different countries, felt like those in England and by 1902 had enough people and support for their cause to host a Convention to Suppress the Traffic in Women and Children. The International Agreements of 1904 and 1910 provide context for the ways in which British legislation proved a model for the transnational community. While policing prostitution domestically continued, the intercontinental dimension at these conferences gave rise to monitoring people's movements across states.

Chapter Two, *The British Empire's Influence on the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children,* introduces the League of Nations' Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, as well as the formal policies they established in the 1920s. British actors' goals to eliminate prostitution were deeply embedded in the League's publications and recommendations. By first investigating the Committee members, then looking at the voluntary organizations' roles on it, and finally how the British informed the group's purpose, I argue that the group was forged with the British viewpoint of complete suppression of the traffic in women and children. The British experts veiled their actions as motivated by humanitarianism.

Regardless of charitable intentions, however, the British delegates and representatives of voluntary organizations gradually implemented policies with the intention of eliminating the practice worldwide.

Chapter Three, *Secretariat Crowdy's Imperial Feminist Agenda,* delves deeply into the Committee's imperial agenda by examining Dame Rachel Crowdy's work. Crowdy was the Secretary of the social branch of the League and garnered authority from other country representatives through her role. Her personal correspondence exemplifies the nuanced balance between aiding women exploited in relation to trafficking and an imperial viewpoint that drove the work. Crowdy set the agenda for annual meetings based on questionnaires sent to each participating country and the topics of her letters with other women who sat on voluntary organizations. Logically then, Secretariat Dame Rachel Crowdy's personal relationships with other women and voluntary organizations set the tone for the Committee's foundations and future policies reflecting an imperial feminist and by extension an agenda centered around suppression.

Chapter 1: The Internationalization of Sex Trafficking Policy

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many elite Europeans took an interest in transnational politics because of their government's land holdings in other regions.[13] Western European Empires, particularly the British, developed a dependent economic system with their colonies. The colonial officials enforced rules that national leaders crafted to promote imperial goals, such as maintaining a hold on the territory and extracting potential resources for their gain.[14] In the 1900s, colonial officials investigated economic, social, and cultural questions to determine the national character of their central authorities. These questions were deeply tied to issues of political policy for the Empire. Among the widely debated topics of political policy lay prostitution and trafficking. This was in part because an individual state's power could not be separated from other nations' due to increased migration and closely tied global economies.[15] The White Slave Traffic, as Europeans referred to it at the time, forced government leaders to contend with questions of sexuality and create rules for what was deemed permissible.[16]

Social relations and policy implementation in each empire depended upon hierarchical structures of gender, race, and class. [17] To address broader questions of demography and population, I argue that Western European imperial power hinged upon the elite's ability to police prostitution and trafficking creating moral standards for sex. Representatives for European empires met at international conferences in 1902, 1904, 1910, and 1912 to develop "international agreement and understanding" on the matter of trafficking.[18] European government delegates sought to retain their nations' imperial status by preventing human trafficking, specifically sex

[13] Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire: Challenges to Modern British Imperialism*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[14] Philip Howell, *Geographies of Regulation*, Chapter 6 (get page count when I get back to ATL)
[15] Barbara Bush, "Gender and Empire: The Twentieth Century" in *Gender and Empire*, 79.
[16] Philippa Levine, "Introduction" in *Gender and Empire*, 1-13.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 1.

trafficking. Members at the conferences sought to implement "effective protection against the criminal traffic" by discussing migration of young women and girls, policing state borders, and attempting to quell each nations' demographic anxieties. [19] In the context of international concerns over imperial authority, prostitution became deeply intertwined with the matter of human trafficking.

In this chapter, I trace how the regulation of prostitution became a matter of colonial and ultimately international policy. I first discuss British concepts of imperial power and sexuality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During the 1800s, leaders and the public discussed questions of femininity and proper sexual behavior. These concerns led to British feminist campaigns against prostitution and what was coined the White Slave Traffic. Later, the rise of international diplomacy and Western European leaders' desires to retain control over their colonial territories resulted in international debates and conferences on how best to curb sex trafficking. Early international conferences on the White Slave Traffic occurred in the early 1900s. I argue that during these conferences, the use of the word trafficking and legislation to curtail it became synonymous with prostitution, which enabled European government leaders to control immigration and working-class women that crossed borders. Moreover, I argue that the internationalization of sex trafficking policy implicitly regulated migration and European nations' borders. The legislation written eventually informed the League of Nations' discourse on the traffic in women and children.

Imperial Power in Britain and Ties to Prostitution and Sex Trafficking

Trafficking policy emerged from concerns of sexuality and management of sexual deviancy, especially in relation to prostitution. This was in part because controlling and crafting

[19] "International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, May 1904," May 18, 1904, Traffic in Women and Children, United Nations Library and Archives, Geneva, CH, 6.

gender was central to the British Empire's operation. Levine's edited collection on gender and empire traces the themes and patterns that developed over the course of five centuries related to ideas of femininity and British leaders' attempts to manage female bodies.[20] During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, British rulers and elite classes expanded territories they ruled through economic and political pursuits.[21] Scholars of empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries viewed imperial rule as an extension of the central government under which the colony existed. This definition fails to describe the intense dependency colonial territories had and the excessive control Britain exerted to maintain its power in the 1800s and 1900s.[22] The gendered aspects of the British empire and its imperial rule became a means for controlling the people they colonized and viewed as less civilized than themselves. British rulers held women and men to different standards both in Britain and in its colonies.

Imperial society's "treatment of women was frequently held up as evidence of its degree of civilization, with 'rude' societies cruel to their womenfolk and 'advanced' ones respectful of them."[23] For example, it became critical for British leaders to mold native women into what they deemed respectable. In the nineteenth century, "men's imperial work was to 'discover,' to explore, to conquer and dispossess others, women's was to reproduce the race, to bear children, maintain their men, and make families and households."[24] The British Empire's rules and regulations were meant to enforce the gendered work required to maintain the government's authority.

Racial policies also informed men's and women's roles in British society. Despite Britain's turn away from the system of slavery—or human trafficking—in 1833, the process of its Empire-building through capital and economic dominance continued to enforce racial hierarchies.

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[20] Philippa Levine, ed. *Gender and Empire.*
[21] Kathleen Wilson, "Empire, Gender, and Modernity in the Eighteenth Century" in *Gender and Empire,*14-45.
[22] Ibid., 22.
[23] Levine, "Introduction" in *Gender and Empire,* 6.
[24] Catherine Hall, "Of Gender and Empire: Reflections on the Nineteenth Century" in *Gender and Empire,* 47.

Colonizers attempted to carry out a "civilizing" mission under which whiteness became a main boundary between native individuals and colonists.[25] This particularly impacted Indian women when colonial officials observed "issues of child marriage, the treatment of widows, the segregation of women, and polygamy" and compared "the victimized status of Indian women with the freedom of British women."[26] Within the British Empire, though the racial distinctions between people were often mutable, "whiteness became a signifier of power."[27] Race carried privileges that those in power wanted to protect.[28] Protecting social dominance required sexual control and limiting inter-racial mixing.[29]

Women represented vessels within which the British Empire could grow and expand. For advocates of colonialism, this view of women meant controlling gender through sexual practices would improve and define the national character of Britain. In the eyes of British leaders, the country's reputation was intertwined with the Empire's. The government, therefore, supported elite members' endeavors to expand British power by acquiring land. Maintaining the colonizers' status quo became imperative to maintain control of the land, which informed policies that extended to people, borders, and labor. Much like colonial officials attempted to control the sexuality of the colonized by prohibiting certain sexual practices and intermarriage to manipulate the racial makeup of Western European Empires, I argue that British leaders also assumed that regulating sex affected imperial power.

According to lawmakers, prostitution and those that maintained its existence, like madams and procurers, operated on the opposite end of respectability. Prostitution occurred as what many

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[25] Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire,* 15.
[26] Hall, "Of Gender and Empire: Reflections on the Nineteenth Century," 54.
[27] Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire.*; Hall, "Of Gender and Empire: Reflections on the Nineteenth Century," 49.
[28] Suzanne Miers, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem*, (Oxford, UK: AtlaMira Press, 2003).
[29] Hall, "Of Gender and Empire: Reflections on the Nineteenth Century," 49.

men and women creating policy deemed a necessary evil in the British Empire.[30] In 1864, Parliament passed the Contagious Disease Acts (CDA). The CDA upheld a regulatory system wherein brothels and prostitutes functioned in designated spaces.[31] Women and girls employed in brothels were required to register with their local government so that regulators and social actors could ensure the prostitute's health and the health of those that engaged with them.[32] These Acts were primarily enforced in military towns where the local government officials felt protection of young men's hygiene was key to curbing venereal disease in the military. Legislators assumed that preventing the spread of disease would allow colonial projects abroad to run smoothly.[33] In college towns like Oxford and Cambridge, local authorities tolerated brothels in specific locations. The government subscribed to the idea that if vices, like solicitation, were allowed in some areas, then the population could maintain its morality.

In 1885, however, the British government passed the Criminal Law Amendment Act (CLA), outlawing prostitution at the insistence of voluntary organizations that grew over the course of the late nineteenth century led by British feminists.[34] One hundred and six voluntary organizations first branded Ladies' Associations developed for the explicit purpose of eradicating the regulatory system.[35] Many of the women and men involved in these groups saw themselves as humanitarians working to better society.[36] Activists participated in these groups to address higher rates of urbanization, and more women working in the public sphere. The visibility of prostitutes "made life unbearable for respectable inhabitants" according to social purists.[37] In effect,

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[30] Philip Howell, *Geographies of Regulation.*
[31] Ibid.
[32] Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914*.
[33] Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight.*
[34] Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914*, 73-93.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Emily Baughan, *Saving the Children: Humanitarianism, Internationalism, and Empire*. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2022).
[37] Ibid., 158.

regulating prostitution was a means of policing immigrant and working-class women who could be targeted arbitrarily on the streets.

In the wake of the groups' success in convincing Parliament to pass new legislation, larger and more formal voluntary organizations grew to enforce the CLA.[38] The National Vigilance Association (NVA), the Jewish Association for the Protection of Women and Girls (JAPWG), the Association for Social and Moral Hygiene (ASMH), and various Ladies' Associations set out to strengthen the new British policy.[39] Organizations like the ASMH promoted social purity as their motivation behind pushing for the CLA. Similarly, the NVA sought to eradicate vice and immorality from British society. The JAPWG focused primarily on aiding trafficked Jewish women who had become prostitutes in Britain. Despite the various missions of the groups, volunteers all had the same desire to promote suppression. Though many of these alliances began their operations in Britain, members of each concurrently found themselves spreading their message to an international community. By 1899, the NVA created a larger branch of their organization entitled International Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the ASMH and JAPWG developed branches in various cities like Buenos Aires, Paris, and other British colonies.[40]

Through regulation of prostitution, trafficking became a matter of colonial and European metropole policy. Slavery had been outlawed earlier in the 1800s. Politicians, however, had not addressed new patterns of migration including the movement of young single women that resulted in sex trafficking. Voluntary organization members argued that the issue breached more areas than

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[38] Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914*, 155-177.
[39] Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914*, 73-93.; Stephen Legg, *Prostitution and the Ends of Empire*.; Philip Howell, *Geographies of Regulation*.; Donna J. Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family and Nation in Argentina*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).
[40] Philip Howell, *Geographies of Regulation*.; Donna J. Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires*.; "Records of the National Vigilance Association," Archives Hub, Accessed March 5, 2023, https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/a97a5bcd-eb99-31df-b564-8e75a4c33fb7.

what African Slave Trade abolitionists had focused on. Sex trafficking impacted not only the relationship between metropole and colonies, but also between European nations, and Western European societies and Central and Eastern European peripheries. The voluntary organizations' feminists' larger scope of inquiry created a deep tie between prostitution and trafficking because members understood that legalized domestic prostitution increased the rate and scale of human trafficking across borders. As such, voluntary organizations that worked with women and girls from foreign nations used the exploitative nature of procurement to shape their reform efforts. These groups assumed that women's participation in sex work was non-consensual, and that therefore women considered trafficked needed to learn how to liberate themselves from their circumstances.[41] Most strictly, they sought for individual governments to pass laws that would make the practice of prostitution obsolete.[42]

Government representatives made little distinction between the terms "trafficking" and "prostitution" during early international discussions on human trafficking, but officials did not always use the terms interchangeably. Prior to the first Conference on the Suppression of the 'White Slave Traffic,' nations defined sexual commerce primarily through the practice of prostitution. The White Slave Traffic, later renamed Traffic in Women and Children, was meant to elicit a reaction like that of the Atlantic Slave Trade.[43] As nations outlawed slavery as a form of labor, imperial feminists and members of voluntary organizations that advocated for suppressing prostitution appropriated the term, "Slave Traffic," to garner sympathy for exploited women and girls.[44] Concerns of trafficking and maintaining the sanctity of the Empire extended

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[41] Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money (Routledge Classics)*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011).; William I. Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl: With Cases and Standpoint for Behavior Analysis*, (New York, NY: Harper Torchbooks, 1966).
[42] Philippa Levine, "Sexuality, Gender, and Empire," in *Gender and Empire*, 134-155.
[43] Suzanne Miers, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century*.
[44] Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914*.

to all European empires' governance. More definitively, human trafficking, "to trade in or procure human beings for the purpose of slavery or exploitation," in the context of prostitution then fell under leaders' purview of policy decision-making.[45]

European leaders established offices and commissions dedicated to eradicating trafficking based upon the international voluntary organizations' work and the general principle of progress. Progress for many nations' officials and international humanitarians slowly became entangled with the elimination of prostitution due to its perceived immorality. European officials determined that "imperialism benefited both colonized people and Western people, raising standards of living and education for the former, and producing economic benefits for the latter."[46] I argue that in addition to the voluntary organizations' influence, the British and more broadly European delegates were keen to outlaw prostitution because solicitation threatened the Empire beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

As policing women's bodies became central to bureaucrats' power, the 1885 CLA policy shift furthered a gendered imperial agenda. European officials' concerted efforts to police their own territories contributed to the leaders' interest in controlling sexual activity of women and men transnationally. The creation and discussion of anti-trafficking policies blurred the differences between trafficking and prostitution. To control European migration and sexuality, three large conferences for the suppression of trafficking took place in 1902, 1904, and 1910. Each meeting examined the state of the traffic and the moral and political implications that solicitation had on their nations. Representatives who attended the conferences formally used "prostitution" and "trafficking" interchangeably informing both international policies and individual empire's laws on the matter.

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[45] Oxford University Press, Oxford English Dictionary, Accessed December 11, 2022. https://www-oed-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/Entry/89262?redirectedFrom=human+trafficking#eid321601944.
[46] Emily Baughan, *Saving the Children*, 82.

An International Understanding

International agreements to manage sex trafficking, or what Europeans deemed the White Slave Traffic, emerged through imperial thought and as a means for government leaders to carry out a civilizing mission in their colonial territories. Sex trafficking became a matter of international policy because of the larger move toward internationalization and leaders' need to control sexual practices. The International Agreements for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic in 1904 and 1910 brought dignitaries from European Empires and nations to Paris, France with the intention of eradicating sex trafficking.[47] Leaders' desires to quell the traffic stemmed from moral, social, and imperial reasons that gained broader attention in the late nineteenth century because of voluntary organizations' work.

Around this time, world leaders across Europe, North America, and South America moved toward internationalized problem solving. International work grew because leaders of European nations had both the "will and ability…to define [their] own national interests and impose them worldwide."[48] The trend toward international cooperation and using humanitarianism to further imperial interests began in the nineteenth century with the Scramble for Africa and reforms for policing.[49] Reformers in late 1800s built upon these early examples and applied international problem-solving techniques to all social issues, including sex trafficking.

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[47] "International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, May 1904," United Nations Library and Archives.; "International Convention for the Suppression of the 'White Slave Traffic,' May 1910," May 4, 1910, Traffic in Women and Children, United Nations Library and Archives, Geneva, CH.

[48] Martti Koskenniemi, "Sovereignty: A Gift of Civilization – International Lawyers and Imperialism, 1870–1914," In *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870-1960*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 100.

[49] Brian Vick, "Ambassadors, Activists and Experts Conferencing and the Internationalization of International Relations in the Nineteenth Century," in *Placing Internationalism: International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World*, ed. Stephen Legg, Mike Heffernan, Jake Hodder, and Benjamin Thorpe, (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021) 39-54.

Nation representatives met at International Conferences for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children to fulfill leaders' imperial goals. Government officials' goals and volunteers' efforts to eradicate sex trafficking were mutualistic. Government policies attempted to address the transnational character of sexual exploitation, and volunteer groups sought to implement the legislation through service. Agreements signed, however, often benefited the signatories more than the population they pledged to protect. These two conferences on trafficking before World War One furthered imperial feminists, European governments, and colonial advocates' agendas to control demography and retain imperial power.

White Slave Traffic as a term was first developed by British feminists. Participants in campaigns to end trafficking used the term to evoke reactions from the public similar to responses from the African Slave Trade. Abolitionists successfully pushed for the eradication of the African Slave Trade first in England. British feminists compared sex trafficking to slave trafficking because just as black men and women were treated inhumanely, they argued that prostitution demoralized white women and girls. While voluntary organizations viewed their work as 'saving' abused women and girls, governments used policing policies to control women's bodies. Moreover, the term limited who could be seen as a victim of sex trafficking to white individuals and assumed that female bodies required government regulation. As managing prostitution became colonial policy, laws excluded black and brown women from the protections afforded to white women and European governments policed their national female populations.

All European governments and voluntary organizations developed two main approaches to fight sex trafficking. The first British campaigns to end the traffic came in the form of regulation. Regulationists wanted the state to legalize brothels and manage venereal disease by having prostitutes go through routine medical checks. British feminists eventually abandoned the strategy

of regulation in favor of suppression. Suppressionists fought for the complete criminalization of prostitution to eradicate sex trafficking. Though Britain shifted to a suppressionist strategy to end the White Slave Traffic, many governments continued to maintain regulationist stances. The different approaches created internal tensions between delegates at both early and later international conferences on sex trafficking.

European officials' ambition to maintain control over colonies and their power within their principal locations created concerns over sex trafficking and a need to hold International Agreement Conferences. The delegates at these conferences "sought to eliminate various forms of unfree migration" perpetuating the notion that those facilitating the traffic were drafting women into slavery.[50] Each conference further fleshed out specificities of managing different aspects of the traffic including how to handle the women trafficked, the criminals involved, and later how countries should act to prevent its existence. The countries and empires represented included the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, the French Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, and Sweden and Norway.[51] Imperial nations held territories in Africa, South America, and Asia. Belgium and Italy existed as independent states while Sweden and Norway maintained a unified government under the Kalmar Union until 1905. All the conference representatives acted on behalf of their parent country and the colonial territories their leaders ruled over. All empires reserved the authority to implement the Agreement's provisions as they deemed fit in areas within their possession.[52]

When the plenipotentiaries assembled to sign the Agreement of 1904 and 1910, they did so with the intent to curb sex trafficking, but not all European nations and empires were in

[50] Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure*, 27.
[51] "International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, May 1904," United Nations Library and Archives, 6.
[52] Ibid., 11.

attendance. To account for this potential gap in their plan, the delegates added a clause accounting for nations that had not officially been invited to the conference.[53] Using this stipulation, leaders of Austria and Hungary signed onto the Agreement.[54] Austrian and Hungarian officials' adherence to the various articles is noteworthy because around this time, many members of the country's Jewish population had migrated or were in the process of migrating to Western Europe, America, and South America.

Jewish migrants and Jews involved in the facilitation of migration were regarded by European officials skeptically. Western and Eastern Europeans often viewed Jews as sexual predators—an anti-Semitic trope— that fed into Europeans' fears of migration and prostitution. European media and governments, particularly those operating out of Austria and Hungary where many Jewish people ran emigration businesses, "deliberately linked emigration and sex trafficking in an effort to criminalize Jewish emigration agents."[55] In the press's coverage of the 1899 Wadowice trial lawyers prosecuted about sixty Austrian Jews for their role in the emigration of vulnerable individuals highlighting the anti-Semitic nature of European bureaucracy.[56] Government officials and European feminists observed the connection formed between Jewish businessmen and female exploitation, which led to a belief that the key to preventing the traffic lay in determining rules for migration. Further, the rise of eugenic science resulted in a fear of racial mixing.[57] The association between Jews and prostitution and the migration of Jewish women to other European nations heightened these anxieties. Therefore, officials signing the International

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 13.
[55] Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure*, 49.
[56] Ibid., 47.
[57] Mir Yarftiz, *Impure Migration: Jews and Sex Work in Golden Age Argentina*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2019), 26.

Agreement were also concerned with Eastern European migration, especially in relation to Jewish populations.

The International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, 1904

At the International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, 1904, delegates dedicated time to discuss central authorities, monitoring ports and railway stations, repatriating prostitutes, and managing employment agencies. All the provisions written applied strictly to 'white' women and girls.[58] The representatives recognized that the issue of prostitution, trafficking, and immoral activity spanned across borders and required a coordinated response. After the Agreement's ratification, government offices and voluntary organizations attempted to enforce its details.

One of the delegates' main concerns was the "coordination of all information relative to the procuring of women or girls for immoral purposes abroad."[59] To properly address this matter, each representative agreed to establish Central Authorities in each contracting state. The Authority would communicate with other participants.[60] While each of these nations independently dealt with acts of an 'immoral nature,' the Conference broadened each nation's scope of required communication on matters of migration. Policy on prostitution thus became a means to control emigration and a way to shape each nations' populations the way the government leaders saw fit.[61]

Country delegates further expanded their capacity to control migration in later articles of the Agreement by policing railways and ports. In Article Two, each signatory agreed to "have a watch kept, especially in railway stations, ports of embarkation, and *en route*, for persons in charge

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[58] Sunil Salankey Rao, "Early History," in *Trafficking of Children for Sexual Exploitation: Public International Law 1864-1950*, (New Delhi, IMD: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17.
[59] Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure*, 7.
[60] "International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, May 1904," United Nations Library and Archives, 7.
[61] Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure*, 17.

of women and girls destined for an immoral life."[62] Officials' urgency in policing ports and other means of entrance into a nation's borders denoted a fear of women entering what they refer to as the 'criminal traffic.' These protections are not just a design of the past. In the Atlanta airport today the public service announcement recording routinely blares warnings for travelers to be weary of human trafficking. Patrons in airports today and designated patrollers of the past were required not only to look out for foreign women entering, but also anyone that looked like they could be trafficking women. If the official encountered "principals, accomplices in, or victims of, such traffic" the authorities of the country were to be notified.[63]

In Articles Three, Four, and Five, delegates determined how best to repatriate foreign women. The representatives drafted measures and rules to handle situations where foreign women became prostitutes in their non-native territory. The signatories agreed to have government workers interview the women entering "who are prostitutes in order to establish their identity and civil status, and to discover who has caused them to leave their country."[64] In conducting these interviews, officials were privy to information concerning sex trafficking and other reasons for the woman's or girl's departure. The approach taken revealed social, political, or economic factors that contributed to a woman's engagement in prostitution. Economic and social factors included the perception that young single women would have more opportunity abroad. Political factors that contributed to increased migration often related to women escaping persecution like antisemitism in Austria and Hungary. After the initial interview, each nation agreed to take steps necessary to deport the woman or girl. In cases where the individual was destitute, the nation would take on the financial burden of carrying out the order and providing security, if necessary, after the woman had

[62] "International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, May 1904," United Nations Library and Archives, 7.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

revealed their identity and nationality.[65] The officials' dedication to sending women home with their financial and labor resources demonstrated their commitment to maintaining the demographic makeup and character of their nations.

The International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, 1910

Though the International Conference of 1904 focused on the women trafficked to different nations and how best to handle their removal, the International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, 1910 served preventative goals for the nations involved. Their revisions furthered European delegates' aspiration to eradicate the White Slave Traffic and control migration. Specifically, the officials wrote Articles that addressed minimum legislative measures, establishing legal cooperation between states.[66] Though the delegates created different protocols for women and girls considered 'underage' (under twenty years old) and for women considered 'overage,' the main concerns addressed in the Convention applied to the Contracting States' abilities to enforce the suppression of trafficking and prostitution.

Delegates of contracting governments defined separation between international and State power through legislative measures. Article One of the Convention defined an offense as "constituting [anything] against their internal legislation in respect of obscene writings, designs, pictures, or objects."[67] The Convention members placed emphasis on individual states' decisions, which allowed them to define the kinds of committable offenses. Each states' leadership could also redefine the age of consent for their own territories. In Article Five, however, representatives agreed that each state could "facilitate the discovery and suppression of acts constituting offences against their internal legislation in respect of obscene writings, designs, pictures, or objects, where

[65] Ibid.
[66] Sunil Salankey Rao, "Early History," 19.
[67] "International Convention for the Suppression of the 'White Slave Traffic,' May 1910," United Nations Library and Archives, 14.

the various acts constituting the offence have taken place in different countries."[68] Relinquishing and acknowledging that every government retained its own authority demonstrated a lack of coordination and a limit to which the Convention could effectively eradicate prostitution. Instead, Article Five makes clear that every participating government has the right to extradite traffickers and procurers as they deem fit.[69] The inclusion of this wording denotes that much of the work done benefitted those with population and demographic anxieties, as opposed to the exploited women and girls.

While each country was able to determine whether they followed a regulationist or suppressionst approach, all nations agreed to collaborate with one another to enforce migration and any other means of transmission between trafficked women and those facilitating it in Articles Six and Seven. The authority is required to "communicate to similar authorities of all the other contracting nations particulars of convictions pronounced in the said country in respect of offences contemplated" by Article One. [70] The leaders were less concerned with the flow of information than people's movement. Their motivations are made even clearer in Article Seven, whereby each nation determined to share conviction records with any other Contracting States.[71] The legislating measures established at the Convention ensured transnational cooperation while allowing states to retain their independence.

The International Conferences held in 1902, 1904, 1910, and finally in 1912 focused on different infractions related to sex trafficking, prostitution, and ultimately, emigration. Nations represented at the Conferences agreed to uphold the decisions made through diplomatic channels for the sake of unity and protection of their territories. Though each state retained their

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., 15.

independence from one another, like through their ability to define obscenity in 1910, the overall spirit of the 1904 Conference remained intact.

Conclusion

Some leaders of imperial nations tolerated prostitution because of the supposed gain in controlling the spread of venereal disease and sexual behavior. In Britain, particularly, the empire's gendered understanding of national character ensured that the protection of women was key to their success in maintaining power across their colonies. When notions of femininity collided with protecting the empire from illicit activity like solicitation, the British government acted and criminalized the practice. Concurrently, a growing international movement led by voluntary organizations composed of activists and feminists sought to eradicate sexual commerce globally.

The international debates on trafficking were similar in nature to those in Britain: the defense of imperial power was central to any policy written. As I have argued in this chapter, prostitution and human trafficking were synonymous in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because of the desire to maintain the borders of each Empire. Along with devising strategies to quell fears of immorality, the signatories of the Conferences crafted agreements that protected the contracting governments' boundaries. These Agreements functioned well until World War One.

During World War One, observance of the International Conferences halted. Following European peace, the League of Nations' Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children stepped in to redesign the diplomatic decisions previously made advancing the nativist agenda of old and new countries. At its core, the Advisory Committee took up the mantle in controlling land, women, and sexuality.

Chapter 2: The British Empire's Influence on the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children

European Governments' focus on international humanitarian projects, like curbing sex trafficking, picked up in the late nineteenth century. While the first international conferences preceded World War One, the war stalled many activists' social work. When fighting ended, however, both a renewed sense of instilling diplomacy swept over world leaders and the practice of trafficking resumed with intensity. The previous international conferences served as a precursor to the creation of the League of Nations. Imperial government leaders' desire for peace contributed to the creation and ratification of the League—an intergovernmental organization meant to solve political crises and disputes. The League, however, was not only set up to deal with political matters, but social ones as well. One of the most pressing social issues that emerged in the eyes of political leaders related to drugs and human trafficking. World War One, impeded the efficacy of older international agreements, and trafficking victims suffered. The lack of international cooperation meant that the ability to regulate ports and other prevalent sites of trafficking diminished. Drugs and people continued to pass newly created borders at rates that alarmed government officials and continued to weigh heavily on voluntary organizations that aided the people affected by the traffic. As such, the Secretary-General of the League, Eric Drummond, decided to establish the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children. The Advisory Committee built upon the work done by International Agreements signed in the early 1900s and sought to strengthen intergovernmental cooperation for the purpose of what many viewed as protecting women and girls' best interests.

The League of Nations operated under the assumption that international cooperation would limit future political, social, or economic disputes and disasters.[72] While some of its founders believed in the notion that each nation-state should govern itself under its own principles, imperial powers quickly asserted authority. Imperial powers, like England and France, operated as nations with colonies, and often implemented laws that applied differently within each territory. Leaders codified their power under Article 22 of the League's Charter which stated that "'advanced' nations would administer 'peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world' according to the principle that 'the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization.'"[73] Research on the League focuses on political agreements made like the Mandate System and especially its economic impacts. 'Technical' committees that supervised and combatted social issues are rarely studied.[74] These groups worked closely with international commissions, organizations, lobbies, and experts who offered up their services voluntarily or were requested to contribute by various delegates. The Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, and what I will refer to as the Committee or the Advisory Committee, operated under the technical committee section and exerted its authority and expertise over other nations.

The Advisory Committee continued and reframed the discussion many activists, particularly women, had during the last half of the nineteenth century. The Committee, and the other social reform groups of the League, are a part of a larger narrative of the bureaucratization of activism. The League's inclusion of social issues acknowledged that activists could achieve their goals with the state and inter-governmental power behind them. The Committee structured

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[72] Susan Pederson, *The Guardians*, 3.
[73] Ibid., 1.
[74] Susan Pederson, *The Guardians*.; Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations,1920-1946*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), 2013.

much of their decisions around both ideals of 'civilizing' other women's morality and conforming the standards on trafficking to imperial frameworks, which satisfied government leaders and social activists. I argue British experts, who had previously encouraged the abolition of prostitution—under a guise of humanitarianism—fleshed out and crafted advisory Committee frameworks that followed imperial expertise and agendas to prop up Europeans' interests of controlling migration.

How did British Expertise Shape and Influence the Committee?

Who was a part of the Committee?

The British government played a large role in the founding of the Advisory Committee. Eric Drummond, the first Secretary-General for the League of Nations, approached Sir Malcom Delevingne, a British civil servant who worked at the Home Office to assist in the creation of the Committee. The Home Office workers were responsible for policing immigration and security in England. Delevingne informed Drummond that the Home Office would be "fully prepared to help in any way" they could in the creation of the Committee and the carrying out of any of the decisions made.[75] Home Office employees and Delevingne agreed because of the "expert advice" the British government would be able to impart given the country's legal precedent in curbing trafficking. The advice was based on the domestic policies enforced beginning in 1885 with the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the continued criminalization of prostitution and repatriation of foreign women and girls. The creation of the CLA and the international movement that grew alongside it stemmed from the work of British advocates and those that supported their cause. An "international federation was formed at Liverpool which called itself 'The British Continental and General Federation for the Abolition of the Government Regulation

[75] Malcolm Delevingne to Eric Drummond, August 7, 1919," in Traffic in Women and Children, United Nations Library and Archives, (Geneva, Switzerland), 6.

of Prostitution.'"[76] The primary goal of the Federation was to create a space for leaders both from England and abroad to convene and end state regulation.

The international movement and expanded British agenda of suppression grew with the understanding that state regulation promoted national and international traffic and commerce in prostitutes.[77] This notion was founded in a British enquiry conducted in 1880 when it was believed that English girls were being shipped to brothels abroad. Finalized in 1882, the investigation revealed that there was truth to the idea that girls and women were migrating for the purpose of trafficking. The findings were key to the creation of legislation against procuration of women and girls from England, as well as creating a "model in connection with later international discussions" for the purpose of suppressing the traffic.[78] These developments paved a path for British officials to promote their agenda at the International Conferences in the early 1900s, denouncing social evils and aiding the women and girls involved in the trade, particularly on an international scale. In Drummond and Delevingne's correspondence they discussed the International Agreements of 1904 and 1910 and the general organization of the Committee. It was agreed that the Advisory Committee would meet annually and that the Secretariat of the Committee, Dame Rachel Crowdy, would be available to the countries that signed the agreement throughout the year.

Due to Drummond's perception that British people had considerable expertise on quelling the traffic, and suppressing prostitution domestically, England had a large proportion of representatives on the Committee compared to other nations. Mr. S.W. Harris served as the permanent British representative on the Committee at its founding. Drummond solicited Harris to help form the Committee due to his position at the Home Office making his transition to

[76] Ibid., 7.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

permanent representative smooth. The Committee also had delegates from voluntary organizations that prior to the creation of the League had promoted suppressing sex trafficking. Two of the five voluntary organizations had representatives from England, including Miss Baker of the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children and Mr. Cohen of the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women. Moreover, Secretariat Dame Rachel Crowdy was a British citizen who served as the Deputy Director of the Women's Royal Naval Service during World War One prior to her appointment to the Committee.

Representatives on the Committee from other countries also shed light on matters and methods they deemed most effective in suppressing the trade. The Committee had representatives from eight other countries including Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Uruguay.[79] With the exceptions of Japan and Uruguay these powers were European. Leading up to the establishment of the Committee each nation had dealt with prostitution inside its borders differently. French policies contrasted the British agenda of suppression. For example, French officials legalized prostitution and brothel-keeping in the 1790s the practice continued well into the 1900s. While the abolitionist agenda appeared in France, it only manifested in voluntary organizations and did not make major waves in legislation until the creation of the Committee.

British citizens were overrepresented on the Advisory Committee ensuring that much of the work done was forged under British legal precedent of complete suppression of the traffic. British laws attempted to improve the safety of the women involved, as well as create a more just society. The Committee and League's General Assembly set out to eliminate the traffic but debated the best way to do so. While other countries played a significant role in the Committee,

[79] "The Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children First Session," June 28, 1922, Traffic in Women and Prostitution, London School of Economics, London, UK, 3.

many adopted British precedent that suppression, or abolition as it was referred to, of prostitution was the only sure way to prevent trafficking. From the first session of the Committee, which met in 1922 to the formation of the Special Body of Experts and their report in 1927, many countries gradually implemented policies that acknowledged the effectiveness of suppression to completely eradicate the practice worldwide.

The Operation of Formal and Informal British Networks

British representatives' influence on the Committee became evident in the first meeting of the First Annual Session of the Conference in 1922. Members declared Mr. S.W. Harris the Chairman of the Conference due to his expertise. His appointment is a symbol for the larger notion that the British Government held influence over the Committee's direction. Secretary-General Drummond originally appointed "the Danish Delegate…to take the Chair" first, but "she said that "as her country had not yet signed the Convention of 1921, and as she had no experience of the subject, she did not feel competent to" do so.[80] Instead she insisted the Committee appoint the next Delegate in alphabetical order. Mr. Harris accepted his appointment with no objection from the Committee lending itself to the idea that he felt competent enough to handle the role. Given his work at the British Home Office, he understood British precedent on trafficking policies and issues similar to what the Committee would examine.

In addition to the expertise from the British government, the Committee focused on British voluntary organizations' previous work during the Conference. At the second meeting, Harris asked representatives from the five international voluntary organizations appointed to present "reports on the work of their associations" and discuss "the relations of these voluntary organizations to each other, to the Committee, and to the Secretariat."[81] Originally based in

[80] Ibid., 4.
[81] Ibid, 8.

England, many of the organizations working with the Committee had British ties. It is evident that the international ties formed were done so in the image of British domestic policy and action dating back to the 1860s.

The *Federation of National Unions for the Protection of Girls* represented by Madame Studer-Steinhaüslin, for example, was "founded in 1877 on the initiative of Mrs. Josephine Butler, with the object of combating the white slave traffic by prevention of the evil."[82] The evil referenced here refers to foreign men that preyed on vulnerable women and girls. The phrase "White Slave Traffic" though outdated in the International Conference of 1921 specified the kinds of victims that the international organizations typically focused their efforts on. Victims deemed innocent and vulnerable by volunteers equated these traits with being white. Though delegates did not raise the issue of race in this meeting, many of the young girls "protected while traveling by representatives at railways stations and by the provision of special homes for their accommodation," prior to World War One were white. Activists protected white women and girls based on assumptions made in imperial nations like England where this organization was founded. Studer-Steinhaüslin commented that the Federation sought to extend help to all young girls because the source of the traffic had become more difficult to pinpoint.[83] Her comment denotes a general shift toward the imperial viewpoint of Great Britain in that she believed using western aid and perspectives would better other nations.

The Jewish Association for the Protection of Women and Girls founded in London and represented by Mr. S. Cohen, a British citizen, sought to expand the "mutual cooperation of the various Jewish organizations" aimed at combatting the traffic. As such, Cohen proposed recommendations to the Advisory Committee based on British efforts. In 1919, Britain passed

[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

the Aliens Restriction Act requiring immigrants entering England to register with the police. The Aliens Order of 1920 operated under this act allowing agents to refuse entry to individuals seeking employment in certain spheres like entertainment or who had criminal records abroad. His first proposal examined these British laws and the immigration article in the Convention of 1921. He suggested holding a conference with the shipping companies seeing as their businesses and "agents have given their help and sympathy to voluntary organizations in England, as well as in some other countries."[84] Cohen forged his assessment of the companies' and agents' actions as sympathetic to the cause of trafficking in British legal precedent. The stringent restrictions placed on immigration and emigration in Britain made it easier for the country to manage traffickers and vulnerable women and girls. Cohen's reference and praise to England's shipping companies should then be taken as a commendation for its domestic and restrictive immigration policy.

The International Labor Office in conjunction with the International Emigration Commission devised a plan to keep a watchful eye over the flow of immigrants entering and leaving various participating nations. The Commission's decision to do so "was connected with the general question of preventing the traffic and suggested that strong measures should be taken to supervise emigrants at their ports."[85] The Committee, therefore, adopted Cohen's general proposal during this meeting with the additional notion that the supervision of emigration should contain a moral element when protecting women and children. The moral element ensured that the shipping companies and agents would focus on women's perceived vulnerability.

British Secretary and Director Anne Baker of *The International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children* also sat on the Committee. The Bureau

[84] Ibid., 9.
[85] Ibid., 21.

operated in at least ten countries across Europe and a few others throughout the world. As stated in the organization's Report, Mr. William Coote founded the group in 1898. At that time, Coote acted as the Secretary of the National Vigilance Association (NVA) and was a member of the movement to suppress trafficking in Britain. His guidance provided the foundation for the Bureau and helped solidify the group's goals in the early 1900s. The Bureau sought to protect trafficked women and girls. Their strategy included the "appointment of a Central Authority in each country" responsible for communicating information about the traffic, "the surveillance of ports and railway stations," and "the taking of declarations from alien prostitutes" to establish their identity and understand their reasons for entering new borders.[86] Protection and support extended to returning trafficked women and girls to their countries of origin in a safe manner. Prior to the League's inception, the NVA and other associated groups repatriated young women and girls from Great Britain. Volunteers' work was made possible because the "International Bureau had already been entrusted by the British Government with the task of" determining the women's identities and then sending "a worker with each repatriated woman to her destination."[87] The Bureau's capacity to maintain a close watch on the individuals was due to its close relationships with the governments they operated under. Baker reported that because of their efforts the traffic had not resumed in or through Great Britain.[88] Baker strongly emphasized Britain's role to suppress trafficking throughout her report demonstrating the government's position in establishing an international network that operated on humanitarian morals and values.

Unlike the voluntary organizations with British ties, those like the *International Catholic Association for the Protection of Girls* had a more difficult time passing proposals in Committee

[86] Ibid., 43.
[87] Ibid.,44.
[88] Ibid., 45.

meetings. As the representative for the organization, Madame Adéle Thurler explained that the group "pursued a policy of prevention and had been founded in 1897 at Fribourg with the idea of protecting young Swiss girls."[89] In describing the Association's work, Thurler claimed that they had helped many girls by placing agents across railway stations and working actively to prevent women from entering the country who seemed vulnerable or ill. Despite Thurler's report, Chairman Harris requested that before the group made any proposals that they obtain quantitative information regarding the number of agents they employed. Many of the delegates and representatives like Mr. Cohen seconded this notion. Thurler attempted to have the Committee address the issues she brought up, but given the pushback she received, the "Committee approved the Chairman's proposal to defer the adoption of the resolution until the next session."[90] The Committee members viewed the Association skeptically because of the imprecise nature of their report. While the representative may have had general expertise, the deferral of her proposal is demonstrative of the mistrust of non-British actors.

Alongside voluntary organizations permanently assisting the Committee, country representatives promoted policies rooted in British precedent. Resolutions often mirrored policies first enforced in Great Britain. In the third meeting of the Conference, delegates discussed the issue of exploitation among foreign women employed by theaters, music-halls, cafe-concerts, and cinema agencies.[91] In the 1920s, employment agencies promoted traveling abroad for work as enticing and exciting. Most companies, however, went "totally unregulated…meaning there were no rules concerning how much commission [the employer] could charge their recruits, how much they could require in repayment for passage or what they

[89] Ibid., 11.
[90] Ibid., 12.
[91] Ibid., 16.

would demand as the terms of the contract."[92] Though the act of performing and entertaining did not equate to the practice of prostitution, delegates assumed that the lifestyle of performers leant itself to solicitation because the lack of regulation ensured the existence of fraudulent schemes.

Chairman Harris took the lead in the discussion highlighting the British Government's response to the matter. Though Harris acknowledged that the "problem is to some extent met by some of the provisions of the existing conventions," specifically Article 6 of the Agreement of 1904, he pointed out that the decision does not "touch cases of women…who secure their engagements apart from employment agencies."[93] Harris claimed this oversight in the International Agreement was remedied in Great Britain due to its domestic policies on immigration. The policy prohibited "any children under fourteen from going abroad for the purpose of performing for profit" and no one sixteen or younger could leave England for the same purpose "without obtaining a license from a magistrate," granted only under strict surveillance and provisions.[94] These restrictions ensured young people would carefully enter contracts that would be difficult to break due to financial dependence upon the employer. Having seen successful implementation of these laws, Harris proposed three ideas to the Committee: that governments should advise and warn women being issued passports, that officials should be allowed to go over the contracts issued, and that governments should investigate the conditions of the spaces foreign girls are employed.[95] Harris believed these proposals would prevent foreign girls from falling into what he termed an "immoral" life.[96] With few adjustments, the Committee passed the British backed resolutions.

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[92] Julia Laite, *The Disappearance of Lydia Harvey: A Guardian Book of the Week: A True Story of Sex, Crime and the Meaning of Justice*, (London, UK: Profile Books), 2021, 43.
[93] Minutes, June 28, 1922, Advisory Committee, 52.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 54.
[96] Ibid.

Delegates that suggested policies diverging from British precedent faced difficulty in communicating with the Committee and passing their proposals. M. Leon Bourgois, the French delegate standing in for M. Regnault, had challenges both as a temporary member of the group and as a representative for a country that maintained a system of regulation. In the fourth meeting of the Conference, when the group discussed the International Emigration Commission, Bourgois insisted that "the Committee should postpone the discussion until a later meeting."[97] Harris and Cohen shut down this suggestion and in turn Bourgois abstained from the vote. His decision was not rooted in hostility to the resolution proposed, but rather in objection to the timeline upon which the Committee agreed to vote. In the fifth meeting, Bourgois once again found himself at odds with the Committee leadership. The Committee had convened to discuss inviting both Germany and the United States to sign the International Agreement despite each nations' lack of formal participation in the League. While Bourgois insisted inviting Poland over Germany and separating the two country's admittance from one another, the Marquis de Claboli from Italy "said that if the resolution were separated into two parts a political element would be introduced which was incompatible with the nature of the Committee."[98] Chairman Harris, already having expressed his desire for Germany to enter the Committee's ranks sided with Claboli. For the sake of fairness, however, Harris put the resolution to a vote. All but Bourgois agreed with Harris and Claboli, exemplifying the authority Harris' opinions held.

How did the British Inform the Purpose of the Committee?

The British government's implementation of suppressive policies coincided with the continuation and rise of British humanitarianism that had begun with the abolition of slavery. Addressing poverty in Britain went hand-in-hand with efforts to combat what was then entitled

[97] Ibid., 20.
[98] Ibid., 26.

the White Slave Trade. Victorian Era notions of victimhood that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century often focused on women perceived as innocent and deserving. Contemporary British humanitarianism shifted the focus of people's work "beyond the British Empire into a new "international" area."[99] Historians in the nineteenth century understood humanitarianism as a movement meant to rescue victims in colonized territories, but while many may have been well-intentioned, activists' efforts ultimately sought to reframe imperial endeavors in a positive light. Imperialism, as defined as the ruling of colonies under a European or Western power, and by extension humanitarianism condemned poverty as both a "moral and material condition" that could be remedied in future generations if properly addressed.[100]

In the 1920s, the British were able to apply their humanitarian efforts on a global scale due to the creation of the League of Nations. Ideas of who was considered a victim expanded, as evidenced by the renaming of the White Slave Trade to the more neutral term of Traffic in Women and Children. Activists' efforts to help women and children depended on many people's understandings of who fit their own ideals of victimhood. British experts and representatives in government and the League informed these perceptions.[101]

In 1921 at the League's International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children the British employed their seemingly generous approach to international humanitarianism with trafficking victims in the creation of global policies. The Convention met with the purpose to "secure more completely the suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children described in the preambles to the Agreement of May 18, 1904, and to the Convention of May 4, 1910."[102] All three of these agreements had structures that could help prosecute those

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[99] Emily Baughan, *Saving the Children*, 2.
[100] Ibid, 6.
[101] Ibid, 45.
[102] "International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children Geneva, 30 September

promoting the traffic. The Agreement of 1921 made more explicit the connectioin between migration and trafficking in Article 7. Article 7 agreed to “undertake in connection with immigration and emigration to adopt measures" that manage and check women and children.[103] This measure meant that the flow of the traffic across borders became a topic of discussion, as opposed to just the practice. Committee members had a direct hand in managing the issue of travel and movement. Now, the Advisory Committee was able to legally address the flow of the trafficking while individual nations maintained their policies on prostitution.

The nuanced discrepancy between regulating the traffic verses suppressing prostitution and brothel keeping created tension amongst Committee members and voters. Much of the Committee’s work then was to create and implement a unified policy. The decision often overshadowed opinions from delegates of nations that stood in opposition to British representatives or delegates. Over the course of 1921, country leaders were asked to ratify the International Agreement and sign onto the agenda of the Committee. Many nations, including those not formally part of the League like the United States, pledged to uphold the agreement.

At the close of the 1922 Conference, matters of when next to meet, the ratification of the International Convention of 1921, and budgets were brought up, but the issue of further investigating the traffic persisted. The Committee’s humanitarian work to aid and protect women and girls from “immorality” was far from over. The following annual meetings brought about gradual changes that contributed to mission of completely suppressing prostitution, but no meeting or Session was more effective in summarizing the need for this shift than the Special Body of Experts. The Special Body of Experts appointed at the Second Annual Conference, began collecting information for their report in 1924. The experts’ Report, broken up into two

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1921," September 30, 1921, accessed August 16, 2022, https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/9d9c4q/pdf/.
[103] Ibid., 16.

parts, dove deeply into the traffic on both a global and national scale. The first part summarized the international trade, while the second part discussed each country's individual circumstances in detail. Investigators obtained first-hand accounts of the traffic from women and girls affected, as well as the people who solicited them. While led by William F. Snow, an American and Secretary of the American Social Hygiene Association, the foundations for the report are grounded in a British context and as such displayed an imperial humanitarian perspective that Great Britain prided itself on in the twentieth century.

Established by the Committee in 1923, the Special Body of Experts set out to determine the causes and effects of the traffic, and how best to quell the issue on a global scale. The Report presented in 1927 began with an introduction that detailed the early history of the Committee and its purpose revealing the extent of the British's influence. The global movement "developed actually out of the national examination of certain social evils connected with prostitution."[104] England examined these social evils after women and other activists noted the continued spread of disease and vice under the system of state regulation. Whereas it took many years to shift public opinion internationally, the British campaign launched both through organizations' work and the newspapers reporting on vice created a kind of hysteria in the late nineteenth century regarding the preservation of virtue and innocence among young women and girls.[105] The public's fear contributed to the end of the Contagious Disease Acts that prevailed as British state law in the mid-1800s. The campaign to rid the nation of state regulation "ended by the repeal in 1886 of the legislation which authorized the system" and is associated "with the name of

[104] *Special Body of Experts Report on Traffic in Women and Children*, (Geneva, CH: Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children), 1927, 6.
[105] Paula Bartley, *Prostitution.*

Josephine Butler."[106] This repeal came in the form of the Criminal Law Amendment of 1885 and marked a shift in public opinion across England toward the practice of prostitution.

The Report then focused on the broader issue at hand and defined trafficking in the international context. The experts defined international traffic as "the direct or indirect procuration and transportation for gain to a foreign country of women and girls for the sexual gratification of one more other persons" making it impossible to separate the national from the international traffic.[107] The lack of division ensured that controlling the traffic stemmed from suppressing prostitution and the practice of state regulation in all nations. Upon noting the connection between high volumes of traffic and licensed houses, "the question of the retention or abolition of these houses has acquired an international as well as a national character."[108] These questions required the public's attention and opinion, especially regarding the eradication venereal disease and public immorality. Medical professionals and the public had developed a better understanding of how to detect and cure infection, limiting the efficacy of arguments made in favor of state regulation. In addition, numerous voluntary organizations worked to change people's perceptions of prostitution. Their work highlighted the "economic depression, poverty, the danger of enforced migration, and low wages" that contributed to inadequate living conditions and a lack of family guidance.[109] No longer was prostitution viewed as a necessary evil. Instead, the humanitarian desire to help those impoverished and exploited by pimps and traffickers who "were primarily criminal businessmen…concerned only with profits" overwhelmed the previously normalized practice.[110]

Conclusion

[106] *Special Body,* 6.
[107] Ibid., 43.
[108] Ibid., 47
[109] Ibid., 43.
[110]Julia Laite, *The Disappearance of Lydia Harvey,* 189.

The League of Nations' Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children was founded on the same principles as British campaign to suppress immorality and evil in their nation. The Committee was created with the expertise of private British citizens who then later held permanent seats and positions within the League. Many of the delegates fully supported the British abolitionist and humanitarian agenda. British citizens' interest in international matters "was presented by politicians and the press as a natural extension of the collaborative and compassionate virtues that had animated the British Empire."[111] The rise of international humanitarianism made it possible for imperial nations to impart their beliefs and values onto others making the rise of internationalism an extension rather than contraction of British power.

While the intergovernmental pacts created in 1904 and 1910 addressed the issue of trafficking and procuration, the international collaborations that took place after World War One were more widely regarded and acknowledged. After World War One the issue of migration and its increased accessibility to all people complicated the matter, making the International Agreement of 1921 different. Governments and voluntary organizations focused on policing borders and ensuring the safety of migrants both leaving and entering their nation. Further, the increased understanding of poverty and impoverished circumstances made the public more forthcoming in their desire to quell the traffic. People's perceptions changed due to "social reformers and anti-vice campaigners work[ing] closely with news journalists, who were instrumental in raising public awareness about social problems and inspiring popular support for their campaigns."[112] The increased circulation of stories of exploitation promoted the work done by individual organizations as well as intergovernmental organizations like the League. Many people and by extension governments shifted their stance on prostitution as a necessary evil to a

[111] Emily Baughan, *Saving the Children*, 45.
[112] Julia Laite, *The Disappearance of Lydia Harvey*, 121.

practice that should be condemned for preying on vulnerable women and children and making vice visible in public spaces.

At the meetings held annually by the Advisory Committee, the British could impart their knowledge and policies onto other nations. At the first meeting held in 1922, the British publicly addressed the issue of women finding work in concert-halls and other entertainment venues as a place that bred immoral behavior. Modeled after a British policy, other countries' officials were determined to keep a closer watch on the foreign women working in these places, as well as the people in charge. In subsequent meetings, delegates deemed it appropriate to appoint a special commission that would investigate the causes and effects of the traffic in cities across the globe. The report by the Special Body of Experts was released in 1927 and was credited with the movement's direction toward earlier the British campaigns' agendas.

The heavy reliance on British expertise to both form the Advisory Committee and then shape its agenda ensured British experts' viewpoints on the traffic would be cemented on a global scale. The British government's enthusiasm for participating in these decisions and on social committees of the League developed from a strong sense of imperialism wrapped up in a humanitarian front. The nature of their actions coupled with their imperial ideals shifted the general public's opinion on the issue of trafficking, marking a turning point to the complete suppression of the trade, rather than regulation.

The suppression and repressive policies implemented by the Committee were ratified by many countries. The experts and delegates behind these publications, however, had many long, behind-the-scenes discussions that reveal more deeply the thoughts and motivations driving the cause. Their personal correspondences highlight imperial humanitarianism and feminism as primary factors.

Chapter 3: Secretariat Crowdy's Imperial Feminist Agenda

In 1921, Dame Rachel Crowdy, Secretariat of the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, received a personal note from Anne Baker, Director of the International Bureau for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic. In the letter, Baker asked Crowdy to advocate for the group to have a permanent representative sit on the Committee. As an imperial feminist, Crowdy and the members of the International Bureau held similar views on the issue of trafficking. As such, in an official letter to Sir Eric Drummond, the Secretary General of the League of Nations, Crowdy requested official representation for the group, or at the very least a member of the Committee attending the Bureau's quarterly meetings so that they may better understand the organization's interests.[113] In a personal note to Baker, Crowdy revealed that Drummond agreed to the latter request. Moreover, she informed Baker that she would be in London the following week to discuss the matter and aiding the organization further, as well as topics for the next Conference.

The exchange between Crowdy and Baker is just one example of the ways the Committee operated behind closed doors. Dame Rachel Crowdy's progressive appointment to the role of Secretariat led to women playing a larger role in crafting policy for social committees.[114] In this chapter, I examine Crowdy's work and through it the League's Advisory Committee. Her efforts reflected and furthered the ideals of abolitionist campaigns that began operating in the 1880s.[115] The women involved on the Committee as well as in the voluntary organizations that took an interest in the matter were "well versed in their subject" and could usually "out-argue the

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[113] Rachel Crowdy to Anne Baker, March 11, 1921, in Traffic in Women and Children, United Nations Archives (Geneva, Geneva, CH).
[114] Susan Pederson, "Women at Work in the League of Nations Secretariat" in *Precarious Professionals: Gender, Identities, and Social Change in Modern Britain,* ed. Heidi Egginton and Zoë Thomas (London: University of London Press, 2021), 181-203.
[115] Suzanne Miers, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century*.

national representatives" to secure more radical change.[116] Aided by Crowdy and her vision the Committee made room for strong feminist voices. Crowdy's correspondence with Alison Neilans the Secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene (AMSH) highlights how Crowdy brought the concerns of imperial feminist to the Committee's attention. In particular, Crowdy's personal relationships with other imperial feminists demonstrates why the Committee focused heavily on the Traffic in Women and Children's complete eradication of prostitution.

Imperial feminists, including Crowdy, viewed their activism as saving women that had fallen victim to immoral lifestyles. Imperial feminists took much the same approach to their work as Western European militaries who monitored the activity of people abroad. Along with spreading their values in their central locations, they took it upon themselves to impose their beliefs on other geographies. While it is traditionally understood that imperial feminists employ their work in colonial territories, in regard to sex trafficking these women and men focused on Central and Eastern European nations. The term imperial feminism applies in this context because both instances tie together humanitarian efforts with the feminists' racial superiority. Classifying the morality of trafficking victims coincided with the rise of international humanitarianism, as discussed in the last chapter. These two approaches to combating sex trafficking promoted western governments' legislation written to eradicate the practice. It is through investigating the writings and decisions made by those that shared these ideals that imperial agendas come into focus. Crowdy's work on the committee is emblematic of the imperial feminist movement's goals and the means used to achieve them. I argue that her personal relationships with other women on voluntary organizations that worked to suppress trafficking resulted in the league's foundations and future policies reflecting an imperial feminist agenda, and by extension suppresionist agenda.

[116] Pederson, "Women at Work in the League of Nations Secretariat," 188.

Who Was Dame Rachel Crowdy?

In 1884, just one year before the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, Rachel Crowdy was born to James Crowdy and Mary Isabel Anne Crowdy.[117] Not much was written about her until 1908 when Crowdy completed training at Guy's Hospital to become a nurse in London. Guy's was and continues to be a large teaching hospital with many notable alumni dating back to its founding in 1721. Crowdy's time at the hospital prepared her to become a prominent figure in the nursing community.

Crowdy's professional career began amidst World War One. When Crowdy passed through the hospital's entrance, she was unaware that roughly a decade later England's young men would be swept up in the largest war to date. After graduating, she volunteered as a nurse for the Red Cross in 1911 "in case of invasion."[118] Whether she felt violence was imminent or called to a higher purpose of saving those that put their lives on the line is unclear, but her early work put her in a position of authority and credibility when the war began. In 1914, she and fellow nurse Katharine Furse, traveled abroad to determine techniques to treat the war's wounded.[119] Their initiative led to the creation of rest stations for soldiers set up along the front, ambulance depots, and hostels for nurses and doctors.[120] For their work, British leaders appointed Crowdy Principal Commandant of Voluntary Aid Detachments in France and Belgium. Her heroic efforts also led the British government to bestow the title Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire upon her in 1919.[121]

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[117] "Crowdy, Rachel Eleanor, Dame, 1884-1964," Social Network and Archival Contexts, University of Virginia Library, accessed March 6, 2023, https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w6tx5scx.
[118] "Rachel Crowdy," Queer Places, Wikipedia, accessed March 6, 2023 http://www.elisarolle.com/queerplaces/pqrst/Rachel%20Crowdy.html.
[119] "Crowdy, Rachel Eleanor, Dame, 1884-1964," Social Network and Archival Contexts.
[120] Ibid.
[121] "Rachel Crowdy," Queer Places.

Drummond appointed Crowdy to the Secretariat of the League—a decision that reflected the embrace of using social issues to monitor and shape political ones. When Sir Eric Drummond first appointed people to the League's committees, Crowdy's reputation preceded her. Drummond established a Secretariat that "was as much an outpost of the British Foreign Office as anything else."[122] To override the resentment this classification would breed, Drummond determined that different branches would be run by intergovernmental collaboration, rather than by a designated nation-state. Drummond's decision attracted "visionary appointments" to various committees like that of "Dame Rachel Crowdy, who had made a name organizing Britain's voluntary nursing service in France during the First World War."[123] Dame Rachel Crowdy acted as the head of the Social Section of the League under which the Advisory Committee for Traffic in Women and Children fell. When speculating on her appointment to the position, Crowdy envisioned "a committee of tired men eager for their luncheon, a list of unfamiliar female names, hers being first in the alphabet."[124] In spite of her assumption, women played key roles on various committees and branches of the League. While they remained a minority, their presence demonstrated world leaders' progressive attitudes toward gender after World War One.[125] Women mostly worked on committees in the League's technical branches that oversaw social issues and society's ills. Their contributions to the League had lasting impacts that extended beyond its collapse in 1946.

The women offered League positions and roles on committees are classified as imperial feminists. Western and Eastern Europeans most supported imperial feminism prior to World War One. Historians associate the term with women who supported imperial missions to gain

[122] Susan Pederson, *The Guardians*, 49.
[123] Ibid., 48.
[124] Pederson, "Women at Work in the League of Nations Secretariat," 181.
[125] Pederson, "Women at Work in the League of Nations Secretariat."

acceptance and citizenship from the empires they resided in.[126] Imperial feminists viewed the issue of trafficking as an attempt to save women from immorality and impurity. Their understandings resulted in the creation of the term White Slave Traffic, appropriated from the African Slave Traffic. After the War, feminists shifted away from its imperial ties. Non-imperial feminism, socialism, and anti-imperialism decentered patriarchal relationships both in public and private spheres. These movements posed threats to Western European Empires.[127] The League's leaders attempted to minimize these influences using pro-imperialist women to carry out their goals and civilizing mission. Imperial feminists romanticized "upper-class imperial masculinity," which promoted a form of sexual morality. Women, like Dame Rachel Crowdy, who supported imperialist agendas were more likely to gain acceptance from hegemonic powers, composed primarily of elite white men.[128] Crowdy and the women she worked closely with while leading the Social Section of the League were dedicated to a maternalistic relationship between themselves and those classified as lower-class and racially or ethnically inferior.

Crowdy's Committee Work

Seldom was there a topic of debate related to the traffic in women and children that Crowdy did not have a hand in. Dating to the creation of the Advisory Committee, Crowdy played an integral role in helping delegates raise issues they cared about and worked quietly as representatives argued over policies and semantics. Whether it be related to foreign women in brothels; the repatriation of foreign women; the details of the Special Body of Experts' Report, discussed in Chapter Two; or her own work to celebrate both the Committee's and voluntary organizations' work, Crowdy represented a group of women who pushed for imperial policies through humanitarian work.

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[126] Barbara Bush, "Gender and Empire: The Twentieth Century" in *Gender and Empire*, 82.
[127] Bush, "Gender and Empire: The Twentieth Century," 80.
[128]Mrinalini Sinha, "Nations in an Imperial Crucible" in *Gender and Empire*, 200.

Crowdy's letters to Alison Neilans, Secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, reveal her impact—creating policy that regulated prostitution and state borders. The AMSH was dedicated to the complete suppression and criminalization of prostitution and trafficking. In the first few years of the Committee's operation, Neilans and Crowdy communicated with one another in official and personal capacities. Though the AMSH did not have a permanent representative sitting on the Committee, members of the organization continued to investigate the traffic and report on its circumstances independently. Neilans remained a staunch supporter of the Committee's work and advocated for radical changes to different countries' and colonies' policies. She was particularly interested in India's policies and supported activists on the ground who promoted the League's work.[129]

In 1922, after the first annual Advisory Committee Conference, employing foreign women in brothels persisted despite the Committee's best attempts to prevent it. At the Conference, Mr. S.W. Harris, the British delegate, and Chairman, proposed a resolution for officials to review the contracts women signed with entertainment houses and clubs to ensure that foreign women would not engage in prostitution. The delegates approved Harris' resolution agreeing that regulating migration could resolve issues related to the traffic. While this may have relieved some of the problem, in the following months foreign women continued to work in brothels.

Crowdy and Neilans' discussion of the matter exposed the Committee's internal tensions between regulationists and suppressionists, and Crowdy's efforts to sway the delegates toward eradicating the traffic and support an imperial feminist agenda. Representing the AMSH, Neilans wrote a letter to Crowdy with suggestions to further revise Harris' work. She proposed that

[129] Stephen Legg, *Prostitution and the Ends of Empire*.

"foreign women are not to be allowed in Licensed Houses."[130] Crowdy responded both in an official and personal manner.[131] In the official letter, Crowdy wrote on behalf of the Committee that Neilan's proposal would never pass, but she wished Neilans could have presented her idea.[132] Given her support for Neilan's vision, Crowdy sent her a personal letter. She claimed that though she could not stop the resolution from coming to the floor, preventing foreign women from licensed houses would at first glance support state regulation. To remedy this and further both her and Neilan's interests, Crowdy got the Assembly to insert the words 'pending the complete suppression.'[133] With revisions to frame the resolution as anti-state regulation, Crowdy detailed the true reasons it would fail at an Assembly Meeting.[134] It would first fail because no delegate had presented the issue before and, therefore members would need more time to think on it. Second, she argued "that countries do not like employing their own nationals, and that if therefore you can stop the supply of foreign prostitutes, you would go far to closing these places."[135] She then goes further to say that she is "in favor of the Resolution having been put forward by the Assembly and referred to the Advisory Committee."[136] Though the removal of foreign women from brothels and the complete suppression of licensed houses would be an ongoing fight for Committee members, including Crowdy, she was able to prevent a ruling on a pro-state regulation proposal.

In addition to internal topics of debate within the Advisory Committee, Crowdy also impacted what the Committee published to craft public perception of the anti-trafficking efforts

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[130] Rachel Crowdy to Alison Neilans, "Official," December 1, 1922, in Traffic in Women and Prostitution, London School of Economics, (London, UK).
[131] Crowdy letter to Neilans, "Official," 2.; Rachel Crowdy to Alison Neilans, "Personal," December 1, 1922, in Traffic in Women and
Prostitution, London School of Economics, (London, UK).
[132] Crowdy letter to Neilans, "Official," 2.
[133] Crowdy to Neilans, "Personal," 2.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.

as "moral." When the Committee members circulated the Special Body of Experts' Report Parts I and II to other experts and leaders of voluntary organizations, Neilans replied to Crowdy with two technical suggestions regarding its publication.[137] These suggestions though minor would suit Neilans and the AMSH's goal to alter the public's understandings of prostitution and trafficking. Neilan's sought to gain support for the suppression of the prostitution entirely, an imperial feminist belief. As she notes, "the League is pushing an open door if it merely brings home to the public a detestation" of the matter. It is critical for "the public to realize…that any and every man who pays for commercialized prostitution is employing and financing the trafficker, who is really working for him and his like."[138] In her response, Crowdy was able to add one of Neilan's suggestions to the reprint and that she very much hoped Part II would also be "made available to the public" because "nearly every man with whom [she has] discussed the report, a feeling of great horror and great shame that he or his sex should have contributed in any sort of way to a such a traffic" took over.[139] She also praised the Committee's work in her letter by adding that while there was more she would have liked to have seen in the Report, "it is to [her] mind rather a miracle that a report which condemns the system of licensed houses and registration should have been accepted."[140] Crowdy's disbelief over the Report's publication is gratifying given that five years before she and Neilans had discussed the censure of licensed houses, which were featured heavily in the investigation.

Crowdy, and more broadly imperial feminists swayed the Committee to implement policies that, in effect, controlled immigration. In subsequent personal letters on the matter,

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[137] Alison Neilans to Rachel Crowdy, March 17, 1927, in Traffic in Women and Prostitution, London School of Economics, (London, UK), 1.
[138] Ibid., 2.
[139] Rachel Crowdy to Alison Nielans, March 22, 1927, in Traffic in Women and Prostitution, London School of Economics, (London, UK).
[140] Ibid.

Neilans urged Crowdy to take into consideration the AMSH's resolutions on the weaker points of the Report, but Crowdy acting as a representative for the Committee rejected the suggestions despite her beliefs. The AMSH begged the Committee "to continue these investigations and to include within their scope an examination into the efficacy or otherwise of the Regulation system in promoting public health and order."[141] Though Crowdy agreed with Neilan's "criticism that not enough emphasis was laid on the equal moral standard [was] a just one" and would have liked "to have seen something more on this in the Report," she knew that certain members of the Committee would take offense.[142] She argued that the moral critique would have appeared as an emotional appeal that imperial feminists who viewed suppressing prostitution as an extension of the civilizing mission would make. Instead Crowdy suggested that imperial feminists, including herself, fight for "cooperation from the Governments" and "appealed to their aid rather than attacked—as one was very much tempted to do—their police systems."[143] Moreover, she argued that women in support of suppression continue to apply pressure to the Governments investigated by publicizing the Report to the general public.

Crowdy's balanced approach to working on the Committee enabled her to both put forth ideas she agreed with, while also remaining respectful of the different nations' delegates. In doing so, Crowdy maintained her position in the League until 1931. Her work and diplomatic skills allowed for the Advisory Committee to make incremental policy changes that furthered her suppresionist and imperial feminist ideas. When Drummond first established the Committee, he sought out a woman to lead the group both for the nature of the issue of trafficking and to demonstrate the League's modern ideals. Though Crowdy would later go on to say that her

[141] Alison Neilans to Rachel Crowdy, "Resolution concerning Experts' Report on the Traffic in Women and Children," April 22, 1927, in Traffic in Women and Prostitution, London School of Economics, (London, UK).
[142] Rachel Crowdy to Alison Neilans, May 27, 1927, in Traffic in Women and Prostitution, London School of Economics, (London, UK), 1.
[143] Ibid., 2.

appointment was arbitrary, her reputation in England and embrace of internationalism and humanitarianism made her an ideal candidate. In working with various voluntary organization representatives and members of the Committee, she influenced internal debates and publications over the course of her leadership.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that imperial feminists like Rachel Crowdy were crucial to Britain's and the Committee's imperial project. Imperial feminists operated as empire-builders on the Committee. Crowdy's story teaches us that humanitarianism is more nuanced than solely acting for the betterment and progress of others. As part of a modern stance on gender and a perception of the issues being feminine, Secretary-General Eric Drummond appointed more women to roles that had a hand in shaping the policies published by social groups. The Advisory Committee in Traffic in Women and Children allowed a delegate from each nation to attend conferences to represent their interests. In addition, five voluntary organizations had permanent representation on the Committee to help share more specific expertise. Crowdy interacted with each of these members and helped shape the Committee's agenda at each meeting.

While Crowdy was not necessarily one of the loudest members in the room, her work behind-the-scenes impacted the Committee. Her influence is most clearly seen through her correspondences with representatives and women who ran voluntary organizations dedicated to suppressing the traffic in women and children. Alison Neilans, the Secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, developed a personal relationship with Crowdy. The women, who often agreed with one another, would propose resolutions and solutions to each other on how to solve pressing matters related to the traffic. Crowdy would take Neilans suggestions and attempt to implement them in Committee proceedings or publications to the best of her ability.

Imperial feminists viewed themselves as saviors of the women that had fallen victim to immoral lifestyles or prostitution. Crowdy's work aligned itself with an imperial agenda, specifically the British one discussed in Chapter Two. To further their interests, Crowdy and her allies fought for the suppression, rather than the regulation, of traffic in women and children globally. Women who worked on committees dealing with social issues collaborated with nation representatives alongside the rise of international humanitarianism and diplomacy. Humanitarian appeals furthered the imperial feminist cause because the framework renewed the cause's focus on saving the impoverished and destitute. Ultimately, Secretariat Crowdy's personal relationships with other women and voluntary organization leaders that worked to suppress trafficking resulted in the Committee's foundations and creation of future policies.

Conclusion

In my thesis, I argued that the members of the Advisory Committee were motivated by imperialism, rather than humanitarianism, when attempting to suppress trafficking. To make my argument, I examined early international agreements on suppressing trafficking, the Committee's meeting minutes and reports, and personal correspondences of the Committee's members. By attempting to enact legislation to curb women's movement across state borders at these conferences, the word prostitution became synonymous with trafficking. The merging of the two words gives rise to new ways of understanding the internal disputes among delegates. Delegates organized their ideas around two schools of thought—suppression and regulation. Regulating prostitution predated ideas to suppress it. Suppressing prostitution in Britain emerged as a policy in the late nineteenth century. As part of the British understanding of gender, women were responsible for reproducing the next generation and raising children. Parliament, therefore, enacted policies to promote appropriate sexual practices. British imperial feminists and members of voluntary organizations, who viewed their work as an outpost of their central authorities' military, pushed for the eradication of state regulation. Imperial feminists organized around the idea that sexual deviancy and the government's maintenance of prostitution was immoral. Those who supported regulation and the maintenance of the brothel system argued that criminalizing the practice would not aid imperialists. Lawmakers, however, agreed with suppressionists arguing that criminalizing sex strengthened imperial power. They passed the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which outlawed prostitution in Britain.

International campaigns to eradicate sex trafficking emerged around the same time that British imperial feminists succeeded in their efforts to pass the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Collaboration on social reform was part of a larger trend toward international diplomacy

whereby networks of experts were called upon to craft policy and address specific transnational problems. Delegates for European nations first met at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century to discuss how best to eliminate sex trafficking. National representatives either supported the regulation of prostitution or suppression of it. While regulation allowed prostitution to continue under state maintenance, suppression would completely criminalize the practice. Many delegates argued that suppression of prostitution was the only way to end the traffic.

During World War One, European governments did not uphold international agreements, but the creation of the League of Nations in 1919 reignited global interest in solving political and social issues diplomatically. Alongside the creation of political branches in the League, Secretary-General Eric Drummond, established technical committees that addressed social issues. The Advisory Committee of Traffic in Women and Children enabled imperial feminists who had first found a platform in England and later on an international stage to continue their work and shape global policy on trafficking. The Committee was composed of national delegates and representatives from voluntary organizations like the International Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children. The formal and informal British networks enabled certain policies that bolstered Britain's imperial agenda to pass. Members of the Committee, particularly those from Britain, considered themselves humanitarians. While seemingly an altruistic concept, imperial humanitarianism obscured the intention to protect and aid women and girls by imposing British values of sexuality and gender onto others. The early meeting minutes and later publications make it evident that the British's imperial agenda shaped the Committee's actions.

In my thesis I have argued for the importance of Secretary Dame Rachel Crowdy and her role on the Advisory Committee. She championed imperial feminists' beliefs by supporting and pushing for the Committee to focus on suppressing prostitution. To further the broader imperial feminist agenda of maintaining white-male hegemony between European nations and in outposts of governing empires, Crowdy developed close relationships with the members of the Committee and representatives for voluntary organizations. Her relationship with Alison Neilans, the Secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and an imperial feminist, highlighted how the Committee operated. I argued that Crowdy circulated resolutions and proposals that aligned with policing prostitution, ultimately influencing the Committee's direction.

Looking to the Present

Though my project focuses on policies and legislation written over one hundred years ago trafficking remains a matter of great concern for diplomats, politicians, and law enforcement officers. In 2000 the United Nations passed the Palermo Protocol, resolutions written to prevent transnational organized crime. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children focused on human trafficking. The Protocol references early United Nations' resolutions passed in 1951, 1967, and 1998 but neglects to mention the League of Nations work. International debates on trafficking no longer revolve around of regulation or suppression. Moreover, modern debates around trafficking readdress labor trafficking, an issue that sex trafficking overshadowed for many years.[144] Labor trafficking discussions highlight systemic inequalities like poverty that drive people to cross borders.[145] Sex trafficking policy should be written to address similar issues. The general protections and efforts taken to enforce measures in a contemporary setting, however, are relatively similar to the ones

[144] Denise Brenna, *Life Interrupted: Trafficking into Forced Labor in the United States*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).
[145] Juno Mac and Molly Smith, *Revolting Prostitutes*, 56-86.

written by the Committee. These include provisions criminalizing trafficking, repatriating "victims of trafficking," the sharing of information between different states, and implementing border and security measures.[146]

The members of the anti-trafficking committee that drafted the new protocol make specific note of "human rights" and "international humanitarian law," but nationalist issues like enforcing state boundaries and migration remain a concern. Labor rights activists rightly point out that an emphasis placed on human trafficking, particularly under the Donald Trump administration, is part of border control policies. In Article 11, the first provision is that contracting states should strengthen border controls "to prevent and detect trafficking in persons."[147] Each state also has the right to deny entry or revoke visas of individuals implicated in the offense. These paragraphs give individual states power to enforce their own legislation regarding immigration and do not specify how states should proceed other than to safely repatriate the coerced or vulnerable individuals.

The new protocols enacted by the United Nations are similar to those written by the League of Nations. Both left readers unable to determine whether motivations behind the protection of women and girls were and are altruistic. While the language of the protocol is more inclusive in comparison to early international agreements, the focus to secure state borders is an evident continuity. Further, the emphasis placed on repatriating women and girls to their home nations disregards the circumstances under which they may have left. Imperial nations that shaped the early international agreements on the traffic in women and children are no longer standing, but their influence on the geopolitical state of the world remains.

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[146] "Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime," United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, United Nations, accessed March 6, 2023.
[147] Ibid.

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