‘International’ Feminism? International Women’s Rights Congresses at the Paris World Exhibitions, 1878 – 1900

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Abstract

The 1878 International Congress of the Rights of Women, the 1889 French and International Congress of the Rights of Women and the 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women took place during the third, fourth and fifth World Exhibitions held in Paris. Their organisers combined a trend for international social movements with a new way to address the priorities of the French women's movement. This thesis is based upon a close analytical reading of the discussions and resolutions of each of these congresses and their reports in contemporary newspapers *Le Figaro*, *Le Gaulois*, *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires* and *La Presse*. It seeks to interpret the feminism articulated by contributors and organisers of these congresses within their context as features of a new internationalist fashion during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

This thesis argues, firstly, that the organisers of these events sought to use the new fashion for international social movements to highlight the validity of their claims for women's rights. This was intended to help convince French politicians, intellectuals and writers of the need for legal changes in women's status. Secondly, in discussing women in an international context, they based their views upon a universal image of 'woman', which was largely race- and class-blind, and used their superiority as Western, middle-class campaigners to make claims on behalf of the whole world. Finally, the French participants also made a case for feminism in France on the basis of a nationalist discourse, which asserted that France had a natural and historical affinity with human rights.

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1: Introduction

On 28 July 1878, during the third World Exhibition held in Paris, a group of approximately two hundred writers, politicians, journalists, intellectuals and activists, from France and abroad, gathered at number 16, rue Cadet for an 'International Congress of the Rights of Women'. It was the first self-proclaimed 'international' congress on the subject to ever take place, at least to the participants' knowledge.[1] Over the following two weeks, the congress hosted discussions on women's rights and roles in families, in work, in education, and voted on resolutions on how to improve women's lives.

What made this congress significant? As a gathering which invited participants from other countries, its organisers, the writers and campaigners Léon Richer and Maria Deraismes, hoped to situate the 'woman question' within a context beyond metropolitan France. This thesis examines the congress of 1878, and those which followed during the World Exhibitions of 1889 and 1900, within the multiple contexts they inhabited: as features of a growing internationalist fashion;[2] as attempts to work within the political system of the new Third Republic in France to pass laws for the improvement of women's condition; as demonstrations of the priorities of a predominantly middle-class feminism; as examples of events during World Exhibitions; and as demonstrations of colonial power and authority.

The organisers, speakers and members of the women's rights congresses of 1878, 1889 and 1900 utilised the modern international social scene to represent women's rights as a contemporary issue, in need of attention by the French government. In using an 'international'

[1] Organiser Léon Richer described it as such during his speech at the closing banquet. Auguste Ghio, ed., *Congrès International du Droit des Femmes: Actes Compte-Rendu des Séances Plénières* (Paris: Clermont (Oise); Imprimerie A. Daix, 1878), 204. Hereafter, '1878 proceedings'.

[2] Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

structure to do so, however, they based their resolutions upon an assumption of the universalism of women's experiences. This generalised a privileged, middle-class, largely European perspective to represent women across the globe, accepting colonialist and racist power structures of power. However, the congress discussions demonstrated the incompatibility of a generalist model of internationalism and concrete measures for the French Republic. The earliest women's rights congress in 1878 favoured general measures which were assumed to be globally applicable, yet by 1900 foreign attendees at the congress were expressing frustration at the overtly French sets of priorities and the styling of proposals along the lines of measures to be taken by the French republican government. French speakers also employed a nationalist discourse which argued that women's rights were necessary on the grounds that France had a tradition of granting human rights. This thesis demonstrates the tension between attempts to find a universalising, internationalist feminism and the use of these congresses specifically within the women's movement of the French Third Republic.

1.1 The Paris international women's rights congresses of 1878, 1889 and 1900

Here, I outline the structure of each of the three congresses. The International Congress of the Rights of Women was held from 25 July to 9 August 1878 at number 16, rue Cadet, Paris. It featured an 'historical section' on 29 July which claimed to draw together the disparate experiences of women during the preceding centuries from many different nations.[3] This was followed by a section on education on 31 July, which focussed on the need for schooling to impart an understanding of rights and equality, as well as a commitment to the same teaching for all.[4] On 2 and 3 August, an 'economic section' was held, which discussed the lower salaries given to women and the need for equal access to professions, primarily

[3] 1878 proceedings, 27-48.
[4] 1878 proceedings, 49-70.

using French examples.[5] On 5 August, the congress dealt with morality, emphasising the supposedly more 'moral' state of women, and focussing on the 'seduction' and abandonment of unmarried women as well as the treatment of prostitutes by the police and hospitals.[6] The final section, on 7 and 8 August, dealt with legislation, primarily particular articles of French law.[7] The closing day of the congress, on 9 August, saw great celebration at the perceived success of international collaboration that had supposedly been created throughout the congress, and the founding of an international commission that would oversee the organisation of future meetings.[8] The speeches and official proposals were published by the Commission and edited by Auguste Ghio as *Congrès International du Droit des Femmes: Actes Compte-Rendu des Séances Plénières.*

From 25 to 29 June 1889, a French and International Congress of the Rights of Women was held at the *Salle de Géographie* in Paris. The World Exhibition for which it was organised was considered, in part, as a celebration of the centenary of the French Revolution. Yet many of the speakers at the women's rights congress marked the events of 1789 as a turning point in the history of the rights of *men*, but a profound disappointment when it came to the rights of women.[9] The timetable of this congress followed a similar structure to the one in 1878. After the opening day, 26 June saw an 'historical section' which once again gave a summary of women's position in history, but added a speech on female anatomy and invited speakers from Poland and Sweden to speak on women's experiences there.[10] The congress discussed economic matters on 27 June, with a focus on women's access to their assets when married, as well as contributions focussing on the experiences of women in certain

5 1878 proceedings, 71-108.
6 1878 proceedings, 109-49.
7 1878 proceedings, 150-88.
8 1878 proceedings, 189-206. There is no sign that this organisation was effective; the following congresses were organised by almost entirely French committees.
9 F. Dentu, ed., *Congrès Français et International du Droit des Femmes* (Paris: Libraire de la Société des Gens de Lettres, 1889), 162, 175. Hereafter, '1889 proceedings'.
10 1889 proceedings, 19-83.

professions.[11] On 28 June, the congress discussed morality.[12] The final section, held on 29 June, on legislation, discussed women's need to gain their husbands' consent to work, before examining specific articles of French law which dealt with research into paternity and the banning of women as legal guardians.[13] A closing banquet was held on 30 June.[14] The proceedings were published as *Congrès Français et International du Droit des Femmes*, edited by F. Dentu.

The International Congress on the Rights and Condition of Women took place from 5 to 8 September 1900, at the *Palais de l'Economie Sociale et des Congrès* in Paris. The proceedings of the Congress were published the following year, edited by Marguerite Durand as *Congrès International de la Condition et des Droits des Femmes*. Although all three events took place because of the World Exhibitions taking place in Paris, the 1900 occasion was the first women's rights congress that was officially a part of the World Exhibition. The structure of the published proceedings was very different to the previous congresses, as it recorded much more discussion after each speech and also included a number of reports which were not actually discussed at the end of the text.[15] The division of topics was somewhat different to its precedents, as well; the first section, entitled "Economic, Moral and Social Questions," on 5 and 6 September, dealt with women's involvement in both work and family environments as well as the need for "one morality for both sexes" and an end to state-regulated prostitution.[16] The second section, on 6 and 7 September, discussed education, and focussed on the diverse reports of coeducation from the people in attendance as well as a discussion of schools' responsibilities to encourage a belief in equality and rights, and to

[11] 1889 proceedings, 85-129.
[12] 1889 proceedings, 131-204.
[13] 1889 proceedings, 205-257.
[14] 1889 proceedings, 261-275.
[15] Marguerite Durand, ed., *Congrès International de la Condition et des Droits des Femmes* (Paris: Imprimerie des Arts et Manufactures, 1901), 323-428. Hereafter, '1900 proceedings'.
[16] 1900 proceedings, 27-114.

provide the opportunity for entrance to liberal professions and higher education.[17] The legislation section on 7 and 8 September passed resolutions on women's rights in marriage and their rights of access to public institutions.[18] There was a brief closing session and banquet.[19]

1.2 Women's international organising

The organisers of the 1878 International Congress of the Rights of Women regarded theirs as the very first congress to address the 'woman question' by gathering people from multiple countries for discussion. Historian Bonnie Anderson has claimed the existence of the "first international women's movement" in the form of a network of correspondence, newspaper publications and visits between certain women in Great Britain, the USA, Germany, France and Sweden during the mid-nineteenth century. These women discussed a radical rethinking of women's access to divorce rights, work, education, the vote and sexual consent.[20] Anderson suggests that, as early as the Seneca Falls Convention on women's rights in the USA of 1848, discussions of the women's movement were infused with a universalising bent, espousing a "radical international feminism."[21] To suggest, then, that the so-called 'first' international women's rights congress that occurred in 1878 was in any way the *start* of the international level of women's organising would be incorrect.

Nonetheless, as the first meeting of this scale, the International Congress of the Rights of Women in Paris in 1878 did act as an example for subsequent events being organised both in France and abroad. In France, as well as the two congresses of 1889 and 1900, there was

[17] 1900 proceedings, 115-92.
[18] 1900 proceedings, 193-281.
[19] 1900 proceedings, 282-92; 307-19.
[20] Bonnie S. Anderson, *Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Movement, 1830-1860* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6-13.
[21] Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 171-2.

also a General Congress of Feminist Societies in 1892 and an International Feminist Congress in 1896. These are largely excluded from this study primarily due to the absence of official published proceedings from either of these events, making discussion of their policies highly difficult.[22] In addition, I consider the contextual framework of World Exhibitions in Paris in 1878, 1889 and 1900 to provide a useful paradigm through which to examine the women's rights congresses during those years.[23] There were also International Congresses of Women's Work and Institutions organised in Paris in 1889 and 1900, which were also part of the World Exhibitions. They dealt with women's involvement with philanthropy, and represented a less radical stance on women's involvement in French society than the women's rights congresses studied in this thesis.[24]

Before the end of the nineteenth century, international congresses dealing with women's rights or feminism were organised in several other countries, following the example of 1878. In 1888 the first International Council of Women (ICW) congress took place in Washington; in 1893 a World's Congress of Representative Women took place during the Chicago World Fair; 1896 saw an International Congress of Women's Work and Ambitions in Berlin; 1897 an International Feminist Congress in Brussels; and 1899 an International Congress of Women in London, organised in part by the International Council of Women.[25]

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[22] Clotilde Dissard published her response to the resolutions of the 1896 congress, but there was no official publication of the discussions. Clotilde Dissard, *Opinions Féministes à Propos du Congrès Féministe de Paris de 1896* (Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1896).

[23] Both of these congresses are mentioned in Karen M. Offen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach," *Signs* 14 (1988): 119–57, especially for their actual use of the terminology 'feminist' within their official titles.

[24] Their proceedings were published as *Actes du Congrès International des Œuvres et Institutions Féminines* (Paris: Bibliothèque des Annales Économiques, 1890) and Mme Pégard, ed., *2e Congrès International Des Œuvres et Institutions Féminines* (Paris: Imprimerie Typographique Charles Blot, 1902). For more on the philanthropic congresses, see Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche: le Féminisme sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1989), 84-5; 137-9.

[25] Ulla Wikander offers a concise list of women's congresses from 1878 to 1914. Ulla Wikander, "International Women's Congresses, 1878 - 1914: The Controversy over Equality and Special Labour Legislation," in *Rethinking Change: Current Swedish Feminist Research*, ed. Maud L. Eduards (Uppsala: Humanistisk-samhällsvetenskapliga forskningsrådet, 1992), 14. For more on the ICW, see Leila J. Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women's Organizations, 1888-1945," *American Historical*

No nation, however, saw as many 'women's congresses' during this period as France, and no others formulated their congress explicitly around discussing "the rights of women," according to their titles.

1.3 Main characters

To avoid the necessity of repeating biographical details about the major players of the international women's rights congresses, I will briefly outline here some of the details concerning some of the most prominent organisers and speakers. The seven individuals presented here are particularly significant, both for their roles in organising one or more of these congresses, and the speeches they made during the proceedings.

Léon Richer (1824 – 1911) and Maria Deraismes (1828 – 1894) collaborated in organising the International Congress of the Rights of Women in 1878. A journalist who had become interested in the 'woman question' while working as a notary, Richer founded the newspaper *Le Droit des Femmes* in 1869, which published articles on women's rights from a variety of authors for the next quarter of a century (it was renamed *L'Avenir des Femmes* between 1871 and 1879).[26] Maria Deraismes became known for her speeches amongst freethinkers from the late 1860s onwards, which dealt with various elements of the condition of women.[27] She focussed on changing women's position in the family and reforming education, in order to give men and women the same teaching.[28] She wrote several articles for Richer's newspaper, and both Richer and Deraismes were founding members of the *Association pour le Droit des Femmes* in 1870, which discussed women's access to civil and

Review 99 (1994): 1571–1600.

[26] Jean Elisabeth Pedersen, *Legislating the French Family: Feminism, Theater, and Republican Politics, 1870-1920* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 22.

[27] Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1984), 179-81.

[28] Moses, *French Feminism*, 182-3.

divorce rights and demanded reform.[29] Richer also founded the *Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes* in 1882.[30] In addition to organising the 1878 event, Richer and Deraismes took positions on the organising committees of the women's rights congresses in 1878 and 1889 and made speeches on multiple topics. Deraismes passed away in 1894 and Richer had largely retired by 1900, but the speeches of the International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women of that year paid tribute to their influence.[31]

Hubertine Auclert (1848 – 1914) was another vital character within the French women's movement, most notably for her profound conviction that suffrage was the most important element of women's rights.[32] After Richer and Deraismes rejected her speech on women's political rights from the programme of the 1878 congress of women's rights, Auclert attempted to find allies amongst the socialist *Parti Ouvrier* with a speech at their congress in Marseilles in 1879.[33] In 1881 she founded *La Citoyenne*, France's first newspaper to support women's suffrage, which discussed women's position in metropolitan France and the French empire.[34] In 1888, she moved to Algeria to join her husband there, but she still submitted a report to the 1889 French and International Congress of the Rights of Women.[35] After his death in 1892, she returned to France, participated in the 1900 congress, and continued to publish work on women's suffrage and Arabic women until her death.[36]

Marie Goegg-Pouchoulin (1826 – 1899), born in Geneva, founded the International

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29 Pedersen, *Legislating the French Family*, 22-3.

30 Moses, *French Feminism*, 210.

31 For example, Deraismes' sister, Anna Féresse-Deraismes, paid tribute to her memory. 1900 proceedings, 23.

32 Hubertine Auclert, *Le Droit Politique des Femmes, Question qui n'est pas Traitée au Congrès International des Femmes* (Paris: Imprimerie de L. Hugonis, 1878).

33 Steven C. Hause, "Hubertine Auclert," in Hause, ed., *Hubertine Auclert, Pionnière du Féminisme: Textes Choisis* (Saint-Pourçain-sur-Sioule: Bleu autour, 2007), 27. The rejection of this speech is discussed further in chapter 4. See Hubertine Auclert, *Égalité Sociale et Politique de la Femme et de l'Homme : Discours Prononcé au Congrès Ouvrier Socialiste de Marseille* (Marseille: Imprimerie de A. Thomas, 1879).

34 Carolyn J. Eichner, "*La Citoyenne* in the World: Hubertine Auclert and Feminist Imperialism," *French Historical Studies* 32, no. 1 (2009): 66.

35 See chapter 6.

36 Hubertine Auclert, *Les Femmes Arabes en Algerie* (Paris: Société d'Éditions Littéraires, 1900); *Le Vote des Femmes* (Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1908).

Association of Women in 1868 and the *Journal des Femmes* in 1870, which she used to establish connections with many women, discussing feminism across Britain, France, Italy and the United States.[37] She was the only Swiss member of the *Commission d'Initiative* in 1878 and gave speeches at the women's rights congresses of that year and in 1889.[38]

Marguerite Durand (1864 – 1936) was an actress and journalist who, in 1896, was commissioned to write a sceptical article for *Le Figaro* on the International Feminist Congress taking place in Paris. She never wrote the article; instead, she was fully convinced by the arguments she heard there, described herself as "converted" to feminism, and founded the first French daily women's newspaper, *La Fronde*, the following year.[39] She was the general secretary of the congress during 1900, and was therefore responsible for editing and prefacing the official proceedings of its meetings.[40]

René Viviani (1863 – 1925) was a socialist lawyer, politician and journalist, born in Algeria to Italian parents. He was deputy for a Paris ward from 1893 and 1902 and would become French prime minister in 1914.[41] He was one of the secretaries of the organising committee for the congress in 1889.[42] He was then involved with Richer's *Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes* throughout the 1890s and was one of the vice-presidents of the 1900 congress.[43] In 1921, he published a history of feminism in France which recounted the efforts, organisations and congresses of Richer, Deraismes and other campaigners.[44]

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37 Margaret McFadden, *Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-Century Feminism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 118. She was often known simply as 'Marie Goegg'.

38 1878 proceedings, 1-2; 1889 proceedings, 173-4.

39 Mary Louise Roberts, "Acting Up: The Feminist Theatrics of Marguerite Durand," *French Historical Studies* 19 (1996): 1103-4. See also Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

40 1900 proceedings, i-vi.

41 "René Viviani," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, accessed 13 May 2014, www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/631427/Rene-Viviani.

42 1889 proceedings, vi.

43 Jennifer R. Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque: A Historical and Literary Anthology* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 40, n. 16.

44 René Viviani, *Cinquante-Ans de Féminisme : 1870-1920* (Paris: La Ligue française pour le droit des femmes,

Maria Pognon (1844 – 1925) was Richer's successor as president of the *Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes* and was one of the leading speakers at the 1896 International Feminist Congress who convinced Durand of the validity of the feminist cause.[45] She chaired the organising committee of the 1900 congress and spoke multiple times during its proceedings.[46]

These seven men and women appear multiple times within this thesis, but I also quote many others' speeches. I have attempted to add details on the background of each of them where possible.

1.4 What was 'feminism'?

Feminist scholars continue to debate their use of the term 'feminism' within historical study. The word, which originated in the French language, was born of a need to describe the very activism of which these congresses were a part: the French women's movement which employed the same vocabulary of human rights and citizenship as had been used throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries within discourses around universal rights in the French revolutionary tradition. Historian Karen Offen has detailed how the term 'feminism', which emerged during the nineteenth century, had a number of meanings and was briefly used pejoratively to mean 'effeminate' men.[47] Although its origins have often been associated with the work of the work of the French philosopher Charles Fourier (1772 – 1837), Offen states that this is an error.[48] Nonetheless, she affirms that it was certainly associated with its current

1921).

45 Pedersen, *Legislating the French Family*, 54-5.

46 For example, 1900 proceedings, 12-13.

47 Karen M. Offen, "Sur l'Origine des Mots 'Féminisme' et 'Féministe,'" *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 34 (1987): 494.

48 Offen, "Defining Feminism," 126.

meaning – i.e. supportive of female emancipation – by the 1890s in France.[49]

During the writing of this thesis, I have often struggled with the applicability of the term 'feminism' to the beliefs and arguments represented in the records of the women's rights congresses held during the Paris World Exhibitions. This is primarily due to a fear of anachronism: during the 1878 congress, the terms 'feminist' or 'feminism' were absent from the proceedings. However, I have chosen to leave the term 'feminism' in the title and throughout the analysis of this thesis, on the basis that it best encapsulates the ideologies represented within the speeches made at these events. In doing so, I have made the same decision as Bonnie Anderson in her analysis of an international network of women's letter-writing and meetings during the mid-nineteenth century. She calls her subjects 'feminist', although they did not use the word at the time, on the basis that "no other word" would accurately denote their commitment to improving women's position in marriage, in the work market and in education.[50]

I feel using the term 'feminist' for the participants and organisers of these congresses, is more firmly justified by the fact that those involved were using it to describe their own actions within their own lifetimes. Journalist Marguerite Durand opened her preface to the proceedings of the 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women with the words: "However paradoxical this axiom might seem, we can claim today that the whole world is feminist."[51] She made this claim on the basis that, although they might not know it, the whole world would, she believed, benefit from the changes this congress proposed. On looking back at preceding events, Maria Pognon, president of the 1900 congress, saw no break point between the congresses of women's rights which did not use the term 'feminist'

[49] Offen, "Sur l'Origine des Mots," 495-6; Offen, "Defining Feminism," 126.

[50] Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 3. For another discussion of using the term 'feminist' to describe those who did not use it themselves, see Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 4-5.

[51] 1900 proceedings, i.

and those which did.[52] Although there were some small changes in the political attitudes supported by the official congress proceedings between 1878 and 1900, mainly over suffrage, the overarching theme was one that denied women's 'natural' inferiority and claimed equality on the basis that it was society, not nature, which had subjugated them. By 1900, the participants described this ideology as 'feminism' – and for the purposes of this thesis, so do I.

1.5 Sources and methodology

This thesis makes a historical analysis of the three international congresses of women's rights which were held during World Exhibitions in Paris, as well as the political context in which they took place. The officially published proceedings of the congresses are the most significant sources for this study. They were published under the following titles:

- *Congrès International du Droit des Femmes: Actes Compte-Rendu des Séances Plénières*. (Paris: Clermont; Imprimerie A. Daix, 1878), edited by Auguste Ghio.
- *Congrès Français et International du Droit des Femmes* (Paris: Libraire de la Société des Gens de Lettres, 1889), edited by F. Dentu.
- *Congrès International de la Condition et des Droits des Femmes* (Paris: Imprimerie des Arts et Manufactures, 1901), edited by Marguerite Durand.

The three documents reproduce the texts of speeches and reports which were accepted by the congress committees in each case, as well as official opinions which were subsequently proclaimed as officially mandated by the congress. I have used textual analysis to examine these sources, looking for markers of how participants and organisers interpreted their

[52] 1900 proceedings, 12-13.

internationalism, their feminism and their position as Western campaigners.[53]

In addition, in order to understand how some of the organisers and speakers at these congresses understood their significance, I have used some of their own writings. Work by Maria Deraismes and Léon Richer has been particularly valuable, as have been texts written by others who gave reports or acted on the congress committees, such as Hubertine Auclert and René Viviani. Examining contemporary national newspapers has also proved significant for interpreting the response to the women's rights congresses in contemporary public discourse. These have included *Le Figaro*, *Le Gaulois*, *L'Aurore*, *La Femme*, *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires* and *La Presse*.[54] I have used these sources to analyse the context of public discourse in which the congresses of women's rights were situated. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from the sources are my own translations from French to English.

1.6 Outline

In chapter 2, I review the literature presently available on these congresses, as well as elaborating upon the contextual frameworks offered by feminism, internationalism and colonialism. In chapter 3, I begin my analysis by contextualising the women's rights congresses of the Paris World Exhibitions within the context of the political structure and public discourse of the French Third Republic, which was established in 1870. In chapter 4, I discuss the subjects which were discussed at these congresses, in an attempt to understand the political colour of the feminism developed there, and the areas of women's rights which the speakers considered most important. Chapter 5 moves on to analysing the representation of

[53] On using textual analysis, see Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse : Textual Analysis for Social Research* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 21-62.

[54] For access to many of these sources I am deeply grateful for the excellent resources published online by the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, available at gallica.org.

the 'international' within the congresses. In order have a more complex analysis of this internationalism, I found it necessary to have a separate chapter 6 on the impact of colonialism; I do bear in mind, however, that colonialism and internationalism were not separate. The final analysis in chapter 7 deals with the context and significance of the World Exhibitions of 1878, 1889 and 1900.

1.7 Main arguments

I argue here, firstly, that the French organisers and contributors to these congresses were making use of the growing fashion for international scales of organising and communicating,[55] including World Exhibition culture, in order to add credibility to their demands for legal reform within metropolitan France for women. Secondly, however, I demonstrate that they claimed a universalism of women's condition across borders, espousing a "gender-only feminism" which was race- and class-blind.[56] This included colonial and racist assumptions of Western superiority, which erased non-Western nations from the congresses' depiction of the 'whole world'. It also led to tension between the French organisers and foreign visitors during the 1900 congress. Thirdly, French participants' representation of *France* within international organising was a nationalist depiction, in which the condition of women was portrayed as a betrayal of the worthy ideals and history of French human rights. National superiority was therefore tied into an internationalist and colonialist discourse to demonstrate the need for advances in women's rights within France, as a major power on the world stage.

[55] Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*.

[56] "Gender-only feminism" comes from the work of my supervisor; Francisca de Haan, "Eugénie Cotton, Pak Chong-ae, and Claudia Jones: Rethinking Transnational Feminism and International Politics," *Journal of Women's History* 25 (2013): 175.

2: Literature review and methodological frameworks

The nature of the congresses as internationally organised and attended events places their study at the apex of a number of different fields of historical enquiry. This chapter contextualises the work I am doing in this thesis, by establishing how current historical work has taken account, or chosen to ignore, these congresses. I also establish some theoretical frameworks within which I am interpreting the speeches and discussions of the congresses of women's rights at Paris World Exhibitions. The congresses have been left largely unstudied by historians, highlighting a gap which I hope to begin to fill with this thesis.

I begin by discussing the two short articles that deal specifically with international women's rights congresses: one by French scholar Laurence Klejman, the other by Swedish historian Ulla Wikander. I then discuss the way in which they have been mentioned within studies of women's movements, such as those by Karen Offen, and Sylvia Paletschek and Bianca Pietrow-Ennker. As I then highlight, it is important to consider the work of Leila Rupp and Bonnie Anderson, two major historians of international feminist organising. Another significant context is that of France's history of women's rights movements, including the work of Laurence Klejman, Florence Rochefort and Claire Goldberg Moses. Because I intend this study to take full account of the context of the congresses as parts of the World Exhibitions in Paris in 1878, 1889 and 1900, I have also looked at research on international exhibitions and their role in the international milieu during the late nineteenth century.

I then elaborate on three important conceptual frameworks for the analysis of these congresses within their position as examples of international and feminist organising during the era of colonialism. The first is feminism; I draw on Karen Offen and Joan Scott to add more nuance to the definitions of feminism provided by the other historians in this literature

review. Secondly, Glenda Sluga provides an important framework for understanding the intertwining of nationalism and internationalism during the late nineteenth century with her notion of the 'international turn'. Finally, a study of international social movements during this period would certainly be incomplete without a consideration of the colonial context. The research and ideas of historian Antoinette Burton are invaluable when it comes to combining gender as a tool with post-colonial analysis.

2.1 Contexts

2.1.1 Approaches to women's rights congresses

One of the few historians who has written specifically about international women's rights congresses during the nineteenth century is Ulla Wikander, in her chapter "International Women's Congresses, 1878 - 1914: the Controversy over Equality and Special Labour Legislation," published in a compilation of Swedish feminist research in 1992. Wikander uses 'women's congresses' in France, the USA, Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, Canada and Italy between 1878 and 1914 in order to outline an underlying conflict between North American and European feminist groups over their understanding of how best to steer the international women's movement. She characterises this as a tension over the use of 'equality' or 'difference' feminism as the core values of these congresses' activism.[57] The absence of any further French-organised congresses after 1900, for Wikander, represents the end of attempts to use the notion of 'equality' as the basis for international feminism, and a victory for the Anglo-American model of 'difference'.[58] Her interpretation of the feminism articulated within the French women's movement stands in contrast to those of Karen Offen

[57] Wikander, "International Women's Congresses," 12.
[58] Wikander, "International Women's Congresses," 21.

and Joan Scott, as explained further in section 2.2.1.

The one other article specifically on these congresses was a contribution by Laurence Klejman to *Cahiers George Sorel* in 1989. Rather than discussing the congresses chronologically, he analyses them thematically, but he does not choose to cite particular moments within the congress proceedings to support his claims. As a result, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly how he comes to his conclusions. Klejman argues that the congresses were more about submitting and interpreting reports on the state of women's condition in different countries than inciting debate and discussion.[59] He underlines that the expression of national pride was *not* a goal of these congresses, due to a desire to show the "universal character of feminism."[60] In this thesis, I contradict this argument, by suggesting that attempts to universalise discussions of the 'woman question' did not preclude French nationalism or a focus, within the congresses' speeches, upon a French republican context. His hypothesis that the emphasis on exchange of information was the most important goal precludes the notion that the very selection of speakers at the congress served to mark out those who were considered worthy of giving such 'information' and those who were there to listen. Indeed, the congress proceedings include substantial passages on the role of France itself within an international women's movement, as well as the guidance that can be taken from other nations – mainly the USA and Great Britain – which suggests the relationship between national and international motivations was more complex than Klejman hopes to suggest.[61]

2.1.2 French feminism in the nineteenth century

Multiple scholars have produced detailed studies of feminism within the context of

[59] Laurence Klejman, "Les Congrès Féministes Internationaux," *Cahiers Georges Sorel* 7 (1989): 83.
[60] Klejman, "Les Congrès Féministes Internationaux," 85. My translation
[61] See chapter 5.

the nineteenth century.[62] Historian Claire Moses published *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* in 1984. In her analysis, the French women's movements were explicitly linked with the political left, meaning they were "stop-and-start" – i.e intermittent and prone to failure – under the "illiberal" regimes prior to the Third Republic, which was established in 1870.[63] A series of newly granted freedoms, including a free press and the right to plan public meetings, were what prompted the first international women's rights congress during 1878.[64] Moses describes Maria Deraismes and Léon Richer as fundamental to French feminism during the 1870s and 1880s. Their strategy was one which attempted to make "small dents" in patriarchy by mirroring the tactics of pro-Republic writers and intellectuals and trying to convince notable politicians to support their ideas for improving women's lives.[65] Richer and Deraismes' focus was on making women and men equal within the family and giving girls more educational opportunities. Alongside this moderate, although progressive, approach, Moses sets up Hubertine Auclert as the vanguard of the suffrage issue in France, who was more revolutionary in her mindset and had a speech on women's political rights refused by Deraismes and Richer in 1878.[66] Despite a sense of rival radical and moderate approaches to feminism, however, Moses argues that, by 1900, the movement had a clear sense of direction thanks to the discussions and debates its supporters were having in congresses and meetings.[67] Although she does refer to the 1878 and 1889 women's rights congresses at the World Exhibitions, there is no mention of the 1900 event, because of her explicit nineteenth-century focus.

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62 Florence Rochefort states that much of the pioneering work on French feminism was done by Americans, namely Karen M. Offen, Charles Sowerwine, Claire Goldberg Moses, Steven C. Hause, Patrick Bidelman and Marilyn M. Boxer, until her own co-authored thesis with Laurence Klejman. Florence Rochefort, "The French Feminist Movement and Republicanism, 1868 – 1914," trans. Amy Jacobs, in Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker, eds., *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004), 78.

63 Moses, *French Feminism*, 229.

64 Moses, *French Feminism*, 197-8.

65 Moses, *French Feminism*, 198-206.

66 Moses, *French Feminism*, 214-17. The conflict over this speech is discussed in chapter 4.

67 Moses, *French Feminism*, 226.

Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort's collaborative 1989 volume, *L'Égalité en Marche: le Féminisme sous la Troisième République* is the volume usually cited in a footnote if an author refers to the congresses or suggests further reading.[68] However, it includes just two pages each on the 1878 and 1889 congresses of women's rights in Paris, and six on the one in 1900.[69] Their focus is mostly on *what* was discussed at the congresses, rather than *how*, or the significance of the congresses' 'international' claims.[70] What their text does emphasise, however, is a growing acceptance of women's rights as a topic worthy of discussion within the political scene throughout the existence of the Third Republic.[71] While discussing the experiences and contributions of multiple central figures within feminism, it is Maria Deraismes that Klejman and Rochefort describe as "feminism's theoretician," notably for her focus on women's education and the right to "civil, familial, economic and political equality of the sexes."[72] Like Moses, Klejman and Rochefort consider the greater liberties available under the Third Republic to be decisive in feminism's progress in France.[73]

Historians of feminism offer certain major themes which should frame analysis of the French-organised congresses. Two other extremely important scholars of French feminism are Karen Offen and Joan Scott. I have chosen to discuss their work within a separate section on the methodological framework of feminism, in section 2.2.1. Claire Moses, Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort suggest the significance of the Republic's greater freedoms for the growth in the importance of feminism. The significance of working *with* rather than against those in power must be kept in mind. My hope is that this study will add to the understanding of these events as significant for the French women's movement by highlighting the way in

[68] For example, Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism," 1573, n.6. My supervisor, Francisca de Haan, has been told by Julie Carlier that little has been written about the congresses *except* for Klejman and Rochefort's volume. Francisca de Haan, email message to author, 20 February 2013.
[69] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 54-6; 82-4; 141-7.
[70] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 54.
[71] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 27.
[72] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 34-5.
[73] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 339.

which participants interpreted the nature of 'international' within their campaigns and proposals. This internationalism was used in order to provide a more convincing case for improving women's legal condition within France.

2.1.3 Work on international women's movements

Karen Offen devotes a few pages to international women's rights congresses at the Paris exhibitions within a chapter entitled "Internationalizing Feminism" in her synthetic work *European Feminisms, 1700 – 1950: a Political History*.[74] She sets the 1878 congress very much in its French context, referring to the addition of "internationalist initiatives" to feminism within the new Third Republic and the Paris World Exhibition. It is evident from the detail she gives of this event that she has closely read the published congress proceedings, although her use of them is descriptive rather than analytical. For Offen, the starting point to divisions and discussions of policy is sparked by the decision to exclude suffrage from the debates at this congress. Somewhat like Wikander earlier, she situates this division in a tension between a French and an Anglo-American bloc, the latter of which "now carried the torch on the suffrage issue."[75] Chapter 4 of this thesis discusses the politics of the women's rights congresses in more detail, and demonstrates that the congresses' speakers' attitudes to women's suffrage rights were more complex. Offen's chronology of women's rights congresses also includes the 1889 Paris World Exhibition's women's rights congress. She once again gives a detailed account of the proceedings and the make-up of the attendees.[76] However, there is little to connect this with other congresses – either the 1900 event involved in this study or others – as Offen's work is so wide-ranging that she also includes discussions

[74] Karen M. Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950 : A Political History* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000), 144-181.
[75] Offen, *European Feminisms*, 151-4.
[76] Offen, *European Feminisms*, 158.

of concurrent developments in women’s rights in several western and northern European countries within this chapter.

When it comes to work focussed on international women’s movements, there have been attempts to include the congresses, but they have largely been overshadowed in importance in comparison to longer-lasting organisations. Leila Rupp, a historian of international women’s organisations, footnotes the congresses in reference to a sentence discussing how “women began to organise across national borders” but initially “gathered in conferences without any larger, permanent structures,” before giving way to longer lasting institutions.[77] She bases this conclusion largely on Laurence Klejman’s assertion that the congresses were primarily intended for the exchange of information, as discussed above. For this reason, she prefers to focus on major international women’s organisations. This is not to say, however, that Rupp belittles the role of the congresses, stating elsewhere that the 1878 congress “laid the groundwork” for organisations which “institutionalized and perpetuated the impulse to work on behalf of women on the transnational stage.”[78]

Other volumes that take a transnational approach to the study of women’s movements or feminisms have a similar blind spot when it comes to the congresses at the Paris World Exhibitions. Offen’s wide-ranging volume of essays, *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945*, for example, includes them on a timeline of significant events in the history of transnational women’s movements, but none of the studies of the book treat them with any more than a brief mention.[79]

Similarly, Sylvia Paletschek and Bianca Pietrow-Ennker’s 2004 volume entitled

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77 Rupp, “Constructing Internationalism,” 1573.

78 Leila J. Rupp, “Transnational Women's Movements,” in European History Online (EGO), published by the Institute of European History (IEG), Mainz 2011-06-16. www.ieg-ego.eu/ruppl-2011-en, 1.

79 Karen M. Offen, ed., *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), xxiv. Examples include Florence Rochefort, “Feminism and Protestantism in Nineteenth-Century France: First Encounters, 1830 – 1900,” trans. Karen Offen, 75; Susan Zimmermann, “The Challenge of Multinational Empire for the International Women’s Movement: the Habsburg Monarchy and the Development of Feminist Inter/national Politics,” 158.

Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective makes a point of using nation states as the spatial subjects in a volume which aims to be synoptic, and includes one essay on American and British women's movements' interconnections.[80] The only real mention of the Paris World Exhibition's women's rights congresses comes in Florence Rochefort's chapter on France, in which she claims that the feminist movement maintained a high profile between 1878 and 1889 "by holding international congresses."[81] The concluding chapter by Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker places clear emphasis on the significance of American women's movements in providing an example to Europe, and suggests that the growth of international women's organisations was encouraged "by international congresses of women's associations, which had been taking place since the late 1880s," thus ignoring the fact that a congress of women's rights had in fact been organised, in France, as early as 1878.[82] The book places no real emphasis on interconnections between national women's movements except between the USA and Britain. The exclusion of any discussion of the women's rights congresses at the Paris World Exhibitions within a volume dedicated to European perspectives on the women's movement demonstrates a gap in literature which I hope to begin to fill with this thesis.

Finally, Bonnie Anderson has explored what she calls the "first international women's movement" in the form of a radical group of feminist activists from France, Germany, Sweden, Britain and the USA connected by letters, travel, literature and publicity from the 1830s onwards, at a peak during the 1850s.[83] These women discussed divorce, sex, marriage reform and prostitution, and often came from a background of other international initiatives

[80] Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker, eds., *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004). On the choice of nation-states as units of analysis, see page 4; the article on US and British connections is Christine Bolt, "British and American Feminism: Personal, Intellectual and Practical Connections," 283-300.

[81] Florence Rochefort, "The French Feminist Movement and Republicanism, 1868 – 1914," trans. Amy Jacobs, in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements*, 87-8.

[82] Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, "Conclusions," *Women's Emancipation Movements*, 314-15.

[83] Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 178.

such as the antislavery, socialist, or free congregation movements.[84] According to her analysis, from the 1860s until the end of the nineteenth century, women's movements were less progressive than the movement she identifies during the middle of the century.[85] However, I would argue that the campaigns that were represented in the international women's congresses at the World Exhibitions in France – as studied here – contradict her argument. Many of the topics they discussed were similar to the ones which she describes as 'radical' and 'feminist' during her work, and they came to similar conclusions as her subjects.

2.1.4 World Exhibitions

In addition, the Paris congresses took place within the context of the World Exhibition, which was a new genre of political and commercial occasion during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The existing literature on this topic is therefore also useful. For example, Jeffrey Auerbach has analysed the 1851 Great Exhibition in London and argued that such exhibitions were "new arenas in which nations could compete with each other."[86] While the elements of commerce and performance within an exhibition might most readily show this competitive element of international collaboration, there is also potential to see congresses on political issues as similarly charged, including those on women's rights. This presents an alternative paradigm through which to view the information discussed in the congress reports, as reproduction of this competitive (and therefore nationalist) dynamic. In contrast to Klejman's understanding of the women's rights congresses as merely facilitating information exchange, I explore them along similar lines to the competitiveness identified by Auerbach at the 1851 Great Exhibition.

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84 Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 10-13.
85 Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 205.
86 Jeffrey Auerbach, "The Great Exhibition and Historical Memory," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 6 (2001): 106.

Meetings which discussed political themes, such as these congresses, were perhaps the perfect opportunities to demonstrate that the host nation was more advanced than those of the audience. Auerbach also demonstrates that the occasion of the 1851 Great Exhibition in London provided an opportunity for the British nation to revel in national identity.[87] If we view the Paris World Exhibitions in the same way, we, similarly, see how these congresses formed part of greater efforts to establish French national pride within its supposed superiority over other nations when it came to the field of women's rights. More specifically, claims were made that women's rights were necessary in order to demonstrate French prestige, within the supposed tradition of human rights established in French history.

In addition, Zeynap Çelik and Leila Kinney have demonstrated that the "World Exhibitions" were "systems of representation on a grand scale."[88] They show that host committees were establishing patterns of national representation and knowledge production in Exhibitions as "microcosms that would summarize the entire human experience" which therefore represented France and other Western nations' colonial domination as well as interpretations of the modern state of knowledge about society, science and politics.[89] Similarly, Sadiah Qureshi's work on displays of colonised people at British Exhibitions highlights that, in addition to reproducing racist notions of Western colonial superiority, the events organised during World Exhibitions produced "natural knowledge" about contemporary science.[90]

The work on World Exhibitions provides several important ideas to bear in mind while analysing the congresses of women's rights which took place during Paris' World Exhibitions in 1878, 1889 and 1900. The first is that these events were sites for rivalry between Western

87 Auerbach, "The Great Exhibition and Historical Memory," 107.
88 Zeynep Çelik and Leila Kinney, "Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles," *Assemblage*, no. 13 (1990): 35.
89 Çelik and Kinney, "Ethnography and Exhibitionism," 36-8.
90 Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 275-9.

nations; the representation of the host nation as superior to its competitors in Western power. The second is that the Exhibitions intended to display and communicate the modern state of knowledge. The organisation of women’s rights congresses during these Exhibitions can therefore be seen as an attempt to demonstrate that the ‘woman question’ was an important topic and deserved attention within the environment of the modern Exhibition. The last is the impact of colonialism within these environments, which produced and represented claims of Western superiority in anthropological and scientific displays, as well as the beliefs of speakers at congresses like those studied here.

2.2 Theoretical frameworks

2.2.1 Feminism

In addition to her substantial work on transnational approaches to women’s movements, Karen Offen has conceptualised a definition to feminism that contradicts Wikander’s construction of French ‘equality’ versus Anglo-American ‘difference’. Offen sees instead a French tradition of “relational feminism” which highlighted “women’s rights as women (defined principally by their childbearing and/or nurturing capacities) in relation to men.” In contrast, Anglo-American “individualistic feminism” was defined by a “quest for personal independence” and abstract notions of “individual human rights.”[91] While emphasising that she does not want to suggest that these forms of feminism are binary, it is clear that Offen’s construction opposes Wikander’s argument. Her attachment of “relational feminism” to French feminists is partly based upon their “objections” to an “uncompromising individualism... that seemed to portend bitter competition between the sexes.”[92] Offen sought

[91] Offen, “Defining Feminism,” 136.
[92] Offen, “Defining Feminism,” 146.

to demonstrate the potential for "new feminist politics" which could "draw on the most valuable features of both historical traditions."[93] However, I hold that a still less oppositional interpretation of feminism, as offered by Joan Scott, may provide a more effective analytical depiction of feminism, both as a general concept and within the Paris Exhibitions' women's rights congresses.

Joan Wallach Scott is known for her pioneering work in introducing gender as an analytical category to historical study. [94] In her 1996 book *Only Paradoxes to Offer,* she employs poststructuralist frameworks in order to deconstruct the generally accepted notion of feminism, as being either based on 'equality' or 'difference'. Instead of perpetuating the idea that women's movements have always needed to choose between these inconsistent ideas, she interprets feminism as intrinsically paradoxical. For Scott, feminism opposed sexual difference in politics as a protest against women's exclusion; yet it made its claims on behalf of women as a distinct category, which was discursively produced through the very sexual difference feminists sought to deny.[95] Scott therefore situates feminism precisely within the context of its origins in the Western democratic tradition of France: not as a sign of a progressive movement within liberalism, but rather as a symptom of its "constitutive contradictions."[96] According to Scott's interpretation, French feminists therefore constructed their claims within the same universalist discourses upon which French politics rested, seeking to demonstrate that women's exclusion betrayed the ideas of "liberty, equality, fraternity" and that women were coherent political agents, as demanded by French republicanism.[97] In chapter 3, I seek to interpret the feminism articulated by the participants in

[93] Offen, "Defining Feminism," 153-6.
[94] See Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053–75.
[95] Joan W. Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 1-5.
[96] Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 18.
[97] Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 11-15.

the congresses within the 'paradox' framework offered by Scott.

2.2.2 International social movements

Historian Glenda Sluga has recently published a large monograph on internationalism and discussed what she sees as the "international turn" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a renewed sociability across borders and a sense amongst contemporaries that they had arrived at so-called "objective internationalism" which required an imaginative re-figuring of international actions.[98] This is important when it comes to understanding the 'international' nature of the congresses confronted here. The internationalism they claimed to represent was limited both in terms of scale – given the small number of nationalities who were in fact in attendance – and scope – given the domination of discussion by French, British and American women's rights activists. The fashion for internationalism should be interpreted as essential in understanding why Léon Richer, Maria Deraismes and organisers of other international women's rights events *chose* to hold such events with an international audience. Discussing women's rights in an international context added validity to the claims of French feminists when attempting to convince republican lawmakers of the credibility of women's rights as a social movement.

2.2.3 Colonialism

Antoinette Burton is widely known as a pioneer in the post-colonial study of the history of feminism. She has sought to demonstrate how British feminists – as well as others from colonial powers – made use of a discourse of 'global sisterhood' to demonstrate their supposedly vital role in 'saving' the less fortunate women in the colonies. In this way, the

[98] Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, 12-17.

need for emancipation was linked to activists' "self-image of themselves as the rightful citizens of an imperial nation."[99] Her claim is that nineteenth-century British feminism was fundamentally based upon notions of universal women's oppression and a bond across borders through "the similarity of [women's] condition."[100] However, this represented a conflict within the ideas of the women's movement, since the articulation of a leadership role for British women in particular seemed, at least partially, to contradict the universalism of the need for liberty.[101] The idea that British feminists had a responsibility to lead suffragist movements across the empire relied on constructing colonial women as helpless. These ideas involved a complex interlocking of identities for suffragists, as subordinated by the unfair treatment of women at home, but *also* as given power by their national domination over others.[102] Of course, the reality of women and feminists of nationalities which *were* dominated by imperial powers disrupted this narrative by not appearing as the helpless victims needing salvation from their British, French or Dutch 'sisters'.[103]

This Western articulation of 'global sisterhood' is a useful narrative for understanding how the context of international organising produced and reproduced imperial power relations and their significance for a 'global' – or at least international – feminist movement. The organisers and speakers at the women's rights congresses of the Paris World Exhibitions staked a power claim over their audience and women in nations *not* represented, by choosing to articulate what they saw as women's major concerns. Their assumptions were therefore based upon a 'universalism' which was class- and race-blind, claiming a generalised condition of women, which could be used to discuss 'women' as a homogenous category.

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99 Antoinette Burton, "The Feminist Quest for Identity: British Imperial Suffragism and 'Global Sisterhood' 1900-1915," *Journal of Women's History* 3 (1991): 47.

100 Burton, "Feminist Quest for Identity," 49.

101 Burton, "Feminist Quest for Identity," 47-9.

102 Burton, "Feminist Quest for Identity," 68-9.

103 Antoinette Burton, introduction to M. Grever and B. Waaldijk, *Transforming the Public Sphere: The Dutch National Exhibition of Women's Labor in 1898*, trans. M. F. C. Hoyinck and R. E. Chesal, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 6; see also Antoinette Burton, "Thinking beyond the Boundaries: Empire, Feminism and the Domains of History," *Social History* 26 (2001): 60–71.

Their politics was a part of a 'gender-only feminism' which discussed women's inequality but paid little attention to addressing any other unequal power structures.[104] International identities were therefore based upon a power structure rooted in colonial relationships. Interpreting international women's movements makes Burton's ideas invaluable. In addition, the inherent contradiction between holding events within a *French* context, for the benefit of the *French* women's movement, and attempts to form a universal, international type of feminism, became more and more evident in the congress proceedings, as is discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

2.3 Drawing the threads together

It is clear that there is a range of threads of historical research which should be drawn together for my analysis. Using some of the methodological considerations already presented by historians on international organising like Burton and Sluga, I attempt here to engage more directly with the 'international' nature of these congresses. It is clear from the mention of these events by historians including Karen Offen and Leila Rupp that they have not been completely forgotten in the understandings of international feminist history; however, no individual study has been published which reaches any further than the articles by Klejman and Wikander, published in 1989 and 1992 respectively. Neither of these explicitly analyse the significance of an 'international' stance within the context of French feminism, a gap that this research begins to fill. My hope is that by contextualising these events within their framework of World Exhibitions – and the growing appetite for fostering connections across borders – my work contributes to a greater understanding of how these congresses were situated within the context of the French Third Republic, but were also symptomatic of the

[104] De Haan, "Eugénie Cotton, Pak Chong-ae, and Claudia Jones," 175.

fashion for internationalism during the late nineteenth century. Examining these congresses as a part of multiple, interconnecting contexts shines light upon the use of internationalism for women’s organising within the feminism which developed within the French Third Republic, and upon the power relations, both international and national, within which they were situated.

3: The women's rights congresses of the Paris World Exhibitions in a French context, 1878 - 1900

The Third Republic was declared in France on 4 September 1870, although, as stated by Claire Moses, it "was a decade in the making," with conflicts between royalists, republicans and radicals lasting for several years.[105] It lasted until 1940, making it "the most successful of all French republics," at least measured by longevity.[106] A new constitution was written in February 1875, based upon a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate, who would together elect a President of the Republic, who could himself decide to dissolve the Chamber, but only with the consent of the Senate. Historian Robert Gildea describes the Third Republic's political system as "unashamedly the fruit of compromise": the President was not the centre of power, to avoid another Bonaparte-style authoritarian figure; the Chamber could be dissolved by the Senate and President to escape "overheating by universal suffrage"; but it was the Chamber which held power, rather than the Senate, as had held ultimate authority during the Second Empire.[107]

This is undoubtedly a very brief summary of the political system in which the women's rights congresses of the Paris Exhibitions took place. Nonetheless, it is necessary to situate these events specifically within the context of French republicanism, in which the deputies of Parliament had a great deal of power concerning new legislation, to which the power of senators was secondary. This chapter uses the interpretations of French feminism articulated by historians such as Claire Moses, Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort to

[105] Moses, *French Feminism*, 197.
[106] Robert Gildea, *The Third Republic from 1870-1914* (London; New York: Longman, 1988), 1.
[107] Gildea, *The Third Republic*, 7-12. Although the Chamber was dissolved on 16 May 1877, it was the only time this power was used, as it was met with outrage by republicans, who continued to be successful in elections.

demonstrate that international women's rights congresses in France were part of a tactic of feminist organising which put pressure on influential politicians. The context of the Republic and its political structure had a profound impact on the way in which feminism was formed in France. The construction of women's rights can also be interpreted through the theories of Joan Scott, who has written about the 'paradoxes' inherent within feminism, which was based on denying sexual difference, while reiterating such difference by speaking on behalf of women.[108]

This chapter will therefore explore the Paris World Exhibitions' women's rights congresses within a specifically French metropolitan framework and context.[109] This begins with an examination of how the legalised freedoms permitted within the Third Republic were essential in the timing of the congresses. Next, I move to examine how the congresses, and the manner in which they were reported by newspapers, demonstrated a growing acceptance of women's rights as a topic of political discussion. I then discuss how the French contingent of the audiences for these congresses included people with various positions of power within politics and media. Lastly, I examine the congresses within the framework presented by Scott, of feminism as a movement with "only paradoxes to offer."

3.1 Women's rights congresses at the Paris Exhibitions and the 'woman question' in the Third Republic

The French women's movement was explicitly bound up with the liberties granted by the Third Republic government, in contrast to the stricter regulations over public meetings and women's participation in newspaper publishing, as well as general instability, which had

[108] Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 3.
[109] The context of colonialism and France as a colonial power is discussed in chapter 6.

existed under the Second Empire.[110] For historian Claire Goldberg Moses, for example, the French women's movement was characterised as "stop-and-start" up until the political climate changed around 1878-9.[111] Its growth from that point on was tightly bound to its allowance of freer publishing and public speaking for men and women.

Indeed, the clearest evidence of the importance of the freedoms of the Third Republic within women's rights congresses came from the timing of the first event in 1878. Léon Richer initially attempted to plan an international congress in February 1873 for September of that year, and corresponded with associates in England, Ireland, Switzerland, Spain, the Netherlands, Italy and the United States.[112] Yet political instability and opposition to controlling measures by the Minister of the Interior caused Richer to write on 6 July 1873:

> We no longer know either where we are going, or under what form of government we will be living in September... We cannot submit our friends to a costly move, a tiring journey only for – at the last minute – us to find ourselves with the difficult duty of telling them that our planned meeting had been considered dangerous by our governors... Not feeling free, we are postponing the Congress.[113]

The capacity to hold the congress in 1878 thus represented a substantial change in fortunes for the organisers of the French women's movement.

In their collaborative 1989 volume on French feminism during the Third Republic, Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort detailed several trends within the women's movement as it developed during the years of the Third Republic. The most important for examining the women's rights congresses of the Paris World Exhibitions were "the recognition of women as an autonomous political force" and "politics taking account of feminist perspectives, in line with ideas of rights and justice."[114] Feminism during this period was not reacting *against* the mainstream political system; instead, it operated within and

[110] Moses, *French Feminism*, 197-8.
[111] Moses, *French Feminism*, 229.
[112] Viviani, *Cinquante-Ans de Féminisme*, 68-9.
[113] Quoted in Viviani, *Cinquante-Ans de Féminisme*, 70.
[114] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 27.

around it, as the congresses of women's rights demonstrated, particularly given their inclusion of notable French politicians as vital members of the congress.

We can identify the growing acceptance of women's issues as worthy of discussion with the help of contemporary national newspapers and the way in which their editors and writers chose to report on the international congresses. I have also chosen to include the reporting of the International Feminist Congress of 1896, which did not have official proceedings published and was not part of a World Exhibition, but treated related topics and included an international membership in a similar way to the women's rights congresses in Paris of 1878, 1889 and 1900. My analysis shows that mainstream newspapers demonstrated little pleasure at the idea of women's rights organising during the early years of the Third Republic, yet by 1900 were more receptive of the discussion of women's roles.

The first example is *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires*, a moderately liberal daily Parisian publication which had been critical of the France's Second Empire up until its collapse in 1870.[115] In 1878, its journalists paid no attention to the International Congress of the Rights of Women when it took place in July and August; in 1889, the French and International Congress of the Rights of Women was only mentioned when the 'Chronique de l'Exposition' listed its topics of discussion on 28 June.[116] In 1896, however, the International Feminist Congress received attention on multiple days, often on the first page, with the writer and teacher Armand Albert-Petit noting that "it is no longer the fashion to make fun of the egalitarian claims of the beautiful sex," although he still described the idea that "women would be happier if they were more like men" as "bizarre."[117] Four years later, the acceptance of women's rights (or 'feminism', as they were now calling it) as a topic of public discussion

[115] "Le Journal des Débats," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, accessed 13 April 2014, www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/306675/Le-Journal-des-Debats.
[116] "Chronique de l'Exposition," *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires* (Paris), 28 June 1889.
[117] A. Albert-Petit, "Au Jour le Jour: Congrès Féministe," *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires* (Paris), 10 April 1896. The International Feminist Congress was also reported in the paper on 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14 April 1896.

seemed even greater at *Journal des Débats*, who published reports on the women's rights congress from 5 to 10 September 1900. On 7 September, the congress occupied the first column on the first page, arguing that although feminist arguments had not always been made "with moderation or with good sense," and despite the fact that some of the proposals of the congress seemed premature, "the feminist cause is, in principle, just."[118]

Another example of this change in attitude towards women's rights discussion was offered by the journal *Le Figaro*, a conservative daily morning paper, published in Paris, which is still published today.[119] In 1878, the International Congress of the Rights of Women was reported by journalist Albert Millaud, with a deeply critical stance. In articles published between 28 July and 8 August, he accused the women of the congress of not being "true women," suggested that the men in attendance were women in disguise (and vice versa), and stopped reporting on the discussions between 31 July and 8 August because they were "bereft of interest," although saying it would not be "gallant" to completely ignore them.[120] In his summary of the congress on 10 August 1878, he stated that the results of the proposals of the congress would be both "worrying and comical" and said that the only way to achieve equality would be to go to God and "plead with him to only make one sex from now on."[121] In 1889, *Le Figaro* only published one article with any significant discussion of the French and International Congress of the Rights of Women. While not as mocking as the articles of Millaud in 1878, it still suggested that the congress was mistaken in seeking "equivalence" with men, and implied that women were better served with the less radical Congress of Women's Works and Institutions to come later in the year.[122]

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[118] "Congrès Féministe," *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires* (Paris), 7 September 1900.
[119] "Le Figaro," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, accessed 13 April 2014, www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/206556/Le-Figaro.
[120] Albert Millaud, "Le Congrès des Femmes," *Le Figaro* (Paris), 28 July, 29 July, 31 July, 8 August 1878.
[121] Albert Millaud, "Courrier du Vendredi," *Le Figaro* (Paris), 10 August 1878.
[122] Charles Chincholie, "Les Femmes en Congrès," *Le Figaro* (Paris), 3 July 1889.

In 1896, *Le Figaro* reported upon the International Feminist Congress with assertions that the women there seemed to want to create "a third sex," and stated that equality was "contrary to natural laws."[123] Nonetheless, unlike in 1878 and 1889, the congress was featured in the newspaper every day.[124] Indeed, the journalist originally sent to report on the congress, Marguerite Durand, was convinced by the arguments she heard there, declared herself "converted" to feminism and went on to found *La Fronde*, the first daily newspaper for women in France, and play a major role during the 1900 congress.[125] During 1900, *Le Figaro* had a very different approach to its previous views of women's rights congresses. Writer Jules Bois suggested that with such "weapons" as women like Maria Pognon, feminists were bound to succeed.[126] After the congress closed, he wrote again, confirming that even "pretty women" had attended, praising in particular the resolutions against husbands' authority over women, and expressed pride that the congress "has shown us that feminism doesn't just have leaders, but troops."[127] The attitude of *Le Figaro* towards international women's rights congresses had thus completely changed from the derision of 1878. Of course, the different opinions of journalists is significant here, but the decisions to publish with such praise for the event of 1900 should be considered as demonstrative of the growing acceptance of discussion of women in public discourse.

La Presse, which was the first penny press newspaper in France at the time of its foundation in 1836, sold by street vendors and produced and marketed at a cheap price, showed a similar evolution towards Parisian international women's rights congresses. The online archives of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* are missing most of the issues of *La*

[123] Jacques Vincent, "Au Jour le Jour: Congrès Féministe," *Le Figaro* (Paris), 7 April 1896.
[124] *Le Figaro* (Paris), 7-13 April 1896.
[125] See Roberts, "Acting Up," 1103–4.
[126] Jules Bois, "Autour des Congrès: le Congrès des Femmes," *Le Figaro* (Paris), 6 September 1900. Bois was known as a feminist novelist; the fact that he was commissioned to report on the congress for *Le Figaro* marks a distinct editorial shift from the previous anti-feminist writers who had been asked in 1878 and 1889.
[127] Jules Bois, "Autour des Congrès: le Congrès des Femmes," *Le Figaro* (Paris), 10 September 1900.

Presse from 1878, and I therefore can only analyse their approach from the 1889 congress onwards.[128] That year, they did not report anything on its proceedings until after it had closed, when reporter André Vervoort wrote a deeply sexist and mocking critique:

> Why will a women's congress always be a bit ridiculous? Because women always lack restraint... Certainly, we are supportive of women's conquest of certain rights, which are made absolutely necessary by humanity's laws as well as civilisation's progress. And now chance forces us to jeer at the rather comical proposals of the unfortunate congress... I suspect that deputies have other fish to fry. And notice that pretty women never gather for protest meetings... And isn't it pretty women who count?[129]

Yet this approach towards women's organising was completely altered by the time of the 1896 International Feminist Congress. Then, *La Presse* published details of the planned discussions and the members in attendance. In stark contrast to the paper's position seven years previously, Léon Bailby wrote:

> We do not believe that the feminist congress which is finishing today deserves either the sarcasm or the irony with which men, in general, have welcomed it... the women's congress will have been an interesting event, as it will have concentrated the efforts of supporters of woman's emancipation, and it will have forced even those do not want to see or listen to realise that there is a feminist movement being organised.[130]

Thus the viewpoint of *La Presse* had, like *Le Figaro* and *Journal des Débats*, altered substantially, and was now supportive of the actions of women's rights congresses. In 1900, they maintained this standpoint.[131]

Le Gaulois, a Parisian daily with a conservative and often pro-monarchy stance, similarly showed disdain towards the idea of a woman's rights congress and the participants within it in 1878. Journalist Emile Villemot therein described the "emancipated woman" as "ugly or old" and stated "truly superior women are not those whose who claim superiority for themselves, they are those who take it gently, without saying anything, with man's tacit

[128] Available at gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb34448033b.
[129] André Vervoort, "Chronique: Revendications Féminines," *La Presse* (Paris), 16 July 1889.
[130] Léon Bailby, "Pour les Femmes," *La Presse* (Paris), 13 April 1896.
[131] *La Presse* (Paris), 5-10 September 1900.

consent."[132] However, the same writer wrote, three weeks later, "I admit that I was wrong to attack the decisions of the women's congress. Equality of the two sexes would have a point, a lot of point, regarding certain opinions."[133] In 1889, the paper was far more supportive of the congress' efforts, citing the 1878 event as an example of success and reporting the discussions, which sought to fight "male tyranny."[134]

However, in 1896 and 1900 *Le Gaulois* had a critical approach to the International Feminist Congress and the International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women. While not actually denying the necessity of improving women's lives, the paper reported discord and disorganisation in 1896, arguing that there was a great deal of confusion over ideas and that one meeting had been a "waste of a day" because of the tumult caused by the huge numbers trying to enter.[135] The impression they gave was not of a publication opposed to the feminist cause; they did, however, make it clear that the methods used seemed ineffective. In 1900, the *Gaulois* writers continued this interpretation of international women's rights congresses. Although one column expressed satisfaction at the better levels of education which had been established for women over the previous years, the 'Bloc-Notes Parisien' feature suggested that little could be achieved within the "sterile" discussions of the congress, and even concluded with the words "if only the feminists would keep quiet and the women could talk!"[136] However, the newspaper did not suggest it was wrong to discuss women's rights, or that there was no need to do so; merely that the congress was not a useful mechanism for such discussion. It seems that, although *Le Gaulois* was not supportive of the women's rights congresses by 1900, as seen with *Le Figaro*, *Le Journal des Débats*, and *La*

[132] Emile Villemot, "La Femme Emancipée," *Le Gaulois* (Paris), 8 August 1878.
[133] Emile Villemot, "Le Domicile Conjugal," *Le Gaulois* (Paris) 28 August 1878.
[134] M. G. "Un Congrès Féminin: Lunch chez Mlle Maria Deraismes," *Le Gaulois* (Paris), 20 June 1889, and Will-Furet, "Nouvelles Diverses," *Le Gaulois* (Paris), 26 June 1889.
[135] Joseph Montat, "Le Parlement des Femmes," *Le Gaulois* (Paris), 10 April 1896 and Henry Désormeaux, "Le Congrès Féministe," *Le Gaulois* (Paris), 12 April 1896.
[136] "Ce qui se passe," *Le Gaulois* (Paris), 7 September 1900, and "Bloc-Notes Parisien," *Le Gaulois* (Paris), 8 September 1900.

Presse, it was in favour of discussion of 'the woman question', demonstrating the kind of capital the topic had gained by the end of the nineteenth century within Paris and metropolitan France. As Klejman and Rochefort have attested, feminist ideas were being recognised as an important topic of discussion in public discourse, as was evidenced by more positive attitudes to congresses concerning women's rights.[137]

3.2 The relationship between women's rights congresses and parliamentary politics

In connection with the growth in discussion of women's issues within contemporary media, historians of French feminism have made a case that the structure of the Third Republic directly affected the practices of the French women's movement and its leaders. This meant that there was a specific tactic, spearheaded by Maria Deraismes and Léon Richer, to target political figures who might be able to approve laws which improved women's lives. Historian Claire Moses characterised this approach as the brainchild of Deraismes, aiming to make "small dents" in the existing patriarchal system, mainly by convincing legislators of the justice of her cause.[138] The argument that politicians – or lawmakers – were the most important targets of feminist action is also supported by Karen Offen, who highlights the understanding that "The legislators make the laws for those who make the legislators," a quotation she took from the 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women.[139] A major part of the function of these congresses should therefore be interpreted within the framework of an attempt to 'convert' various male politicians to the cause.

[137] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 27.
[138] Moses, *French Feminism*, 199.
[139] René Viviani, quoted in Karen M. Offen, "Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-de-Siècle France," *American Historical Review* 89 (1984): 667.

The organisation of international women's rights congresses at the Paris World Exhibitions, was structured around applying pressure on French male legislators to support women's rights causes, with the proceedings highlighting the inclusion of notable politicians at the congresses as speakers and as invited members. Lists of members or subscribers specifically noted when someone in attendance had a position which might prove influential, suggesting the perceived significance of their presence. For example, the list of congress members for the 1878 International Congress of the Rights of Women marked the inclusion of *hommes de lettres*, lawyers, parliamentary deputies, Paris municipal council members, senators and *publicistes* (publishers, journalists and writers). The *hommes de lettres* were Jean Alesson, Alfred Assolant, Maurice Champion and Robert Hyenne, the lawyers Madame Berline (one of the few women whose position was noted), Marcel Gay, Léon Giraud and Monsieur Lemaire, the deputies Charles Boudeville (of the Oise department), Germain Casse (of Paris), Louis Codet (of Haute-Vienne), Emile Deschanel (of Seine), Monsieur Gagneur (of Jura), Monsieur Godissart (of Martinique), Monsieur Laisant (of Loire-Inférieur), Monsieur Tallandier, (of Paris) and Monsieur Tiersot (of Ain), the Paris municipal councillors Severiano de Heredia, Doctor Level, Antide Martin, Georges Martin and Monsieur Morin, the senators Eugene Pelletan and Victor Schoelcher, and *publicistes* Auguste Desmoulins, Charles Lemonnier, Antonin Levrier, Nelly Lieuter (another woman whose position was noted), Charles Limousin, Edouard de Pompéry, Louis Ratisbone, Tony Révillon and Léon Richer himself. Two Italian senators were also noted as being present.[140]

For the 1889 French and International Congress of the Rights of Women, the proceedings similarly highlighted the value of those in positions of influence and power with relation to lawmaking. For example, the first round of memberships sent to the general secretary, even before the forming of the organising committee, included the senators Jean

[140] 1878 proceedings, 8-10.

Macé, Jean Couturier and Georges Martin, the deputies Ernest Lefèvre, Anatole de la Forge, Bernard Montaut, Yves Guyot, Charles Beauquier, Eugène Delattre, Phillipe Jullien, Frédéric Passy, Jean-Claude Colfavru and Victor Poupin, the municipal councillors Paul Viguier, Léon Donnot, Henri-Blaise Chassaing (all of Paris) and Edmond-Joseph Béliard (of Étampes), and the newspaper editors Auguste Vacquerie and Eugène Mayer, as well as several former politicians.[141]

The proceedings of the 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women did not include a list of members or subscribers in the same way as those published after 1878 and 1889. However, the list of the organising commission did take note of the positions of deputy René Viviani (who would become prime minister in 1914), lawyers André Weiss, Lucien Leduc and Jeanne Chauvin, and labour relations councillor H. Lelorrain, amongst the representatives of various organisations and publications who also formed the organising committee.[142]

However, what is evident is that it was not just the editor of the congress proceedings who emphasised the importance of the lawmakers and legislators attending these kinds of events, and who were therefore aware of and involved in the debates over 'the woman question'. A reading of the contemporary newspapers' reporting of the congresses suggests that others viewed the presence of legislators as significant. For example, on 28 July 1878, despite their mocking criticism of the congress for much of its duration, *Le Gaulois* noted:

> The major members are Messieurs Bertani and Mauro-Machi, deputies from the Italian assembly, Boudeville, Codet, Dechanel, Gagneur, Gaudissart, Germain Casse, Laisant. Monsieur Pellatan is the only Senate member whose name was striking for us. The municipal council is represented by Monsieur Antide Martin, named congress president, Monsieur de Heredia, Monsieur Morin. We also noticed the names of Charles Fauvety, Décembre-Alonnier, Alfred Assollant, etc., etc.[143]

[141] 1889 proceedings, v.
[142] 1900 proceedings, vii-ix.
[143] "Échos de Paris," *Le Gaulois* (Paris), 28 July 1878.

Similarly, in 1889, when the paper reported the International and French Congress of the Rights of Women, it stated that:

> Several senators, deputies, municipal councillors were to be found in the room, including senator Georges Martin, deputies Anatole de la Forge, Colfavru, de Heredia, Clovis Hugues, Beauquier, municipal councillor Donnat, etc.[144]

Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires reported on the same congress with the statement "in attendance we noticed Anatole de la Forge, Frédéric Bajer, Danish member of Parliament, senator Georges Martin, Madame Clovis Hugues, etc."[145] In 1900, the new liberal newspaper *L'Aurore*, which was largely supportive of the congresses, suggested the centrality of politicians to these events:

> If the audience was particularly numerous yesterday, perhaps it was not just because the principal speaker was a man. It was in fact Monsieur Viviani who was responsible for the report. With his habitual eloquence, the Seine deputy showed how, in marriage, the man is favoured, to the detriment of the woman.[146]

The emphasis upon the presence of politicians, thinkers and writers at these congresses – and more significantly, the highlighting of their presence by the published accounts of the congresses and contemporary media – demonstrated the organisers' attempts to create close ties between feminism and the active political system. We should therefore not interpret these congresses as taking place *in spite of* politicians who were opposed to women's rights movements. Instead, the feminism that was represented within international women's rights congresses at the Paris Exhibitions was explicitly rooted in a strategy which revolved *around* communication with those involved in law-making.

[144] "Nouvelles Diverses," *Le Gaulois* (Paris), 26 June 1889.
[145] "Chronique de l'Exposition," *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires* (Paris), 26 June 1889.
[146] Jean Torlet, "Le Congrès Féministe," *L'Aurore* (Paris), 8 September 1900. Two days before, the paper had stated "Feminism is merely a fight, parallel to socialism, against the forces of oppression and darkness." "Féminisme," *L'Aurore* (Paris), 6 September 1900.

3.3 French feminism and its 'paradoxes'

Situating the feminism represented within the women's rights congresses at Paris Exhibitions as one bound up with the French republican politics risks suggesting that the movement was limited or confined by this system. The framework which Joan Scott offered in *Only Paradoxes to Offer* in 1996 demonstrates a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between French feminism and the political traditions within which it appeared, seeking to escape the traditional categorisation of historical feminist movements as being based on either 'equality' or 'difference'.[147] Scott characterises feminism both as a protest against women's political exclusion, and therefore sexual difference, and as a movement declaring its claims on behalf of women as a category which were produced by a discourse rooted in that very sexual difference.[148] Within a system based on "universality of human rights", with sexual difference an example of the limits to this notion of the "universal," feminism "emerged" to highlight the betrayal of the principles on which the French Republic was founded entailed by women's exclusion.[149]

Scott uses the radical suffragist and writer Hubertine Auclert's activism as an example of how feminists rooted their politics within the rationalist, secular discourse of the French Republic. According to Scott, Auclert deliberately distanced her demonstration and interpretation of womanhood from the extremes of the "unruly, sexually dangerous woman" and the "pious, superstitious handmaiden of the priest," both of which were stereotypes of French femininity.[150] Instead, she presented women as logical beings, whom therefore deserved rights in line with the rationalist, positivist, secular and scientific ideals of the Third

[147] Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 1.
[148] Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 3-12.
[149] Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 11.
[150] Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 101-2.

Republic.[151] I argue that the proclamations and forms of action at the women's rights congresses also fit into this tradition, despite the divisions between Auclert and organisers Deraismes and Richer over the exclusion of political rights from the agenda during the 1878 International Congress of the Rights of Women.[152] The discussions of French feminists at the women's rights congresses at Paris World Exhibitions denied the importance of sexual difference, while simultaneously maintaining the understanding of women as a distinct category with something to offer society beyond what they were being permitted to give.

Many of the congresses' speeches worked to deny the significance of sexual difference, particularly as a justification for women's exclusion. Speakers argued that female inferiority was a fallacy which had been reproduced by discussions within society, as well as showing the fact that women and men were capable of the same things. In showing that women could fulfil the same roles in society as men, the speakers at the women's rights congresses in Paris in 1878, 1889 and 1900 sought to show that there was no logic behind their exclusion from the worlds of work and politics. In 1878, the French novelist Nelly Lieutier stated: "We are all equal in front of natural law, which imposes the same obligations and duties upon us."[153] Similarly, Maria Deraismes' introductory speech in 1889 argued that "science... repudiates the old theories of women's cerebral inferiority."[154] Later during the same congress, Swedish feminist and journalist Rosalie Ulrica Olivecrona stated that, "history

[151] Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 103-4.

[152] A great deal has been made of this divide, e.g. Rochefort, "The French Feminist Movement and Republicanism," in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements*, 86-7. Rochefort suggests that Auclert saw the Republic as "all for show" and that her conviction that the vote was the most important measure for women meant that she broke off from the "little steps" of Richer and Deraismes. However, given that Auclert submitted a report to the Richer- and Deraismes-organised 1889 French and International Congress of the Rights of Women, and that she took an active role in discussion at the 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women, I think Rochefort overstates this division. Given that political rights *were* included in the agendas of both 1889 and 1900, it seems that Auclert was content to work with Richer and Deraismes once they became more open to including them in their discussions. This is discussed further in chapter 4.

[153] 1878 proceedings, 72.

[154] 1889 proceedings, 9.

will say that our so-called inferiority was nothing but a matter of convention."[155] In 1900, the editor of the proceedings, Marguerite Durand, wrote in her introduction, "men and women are made to deal with the same trials, live the same life, suffer the same distress, feel the same feelings, enjoy the same pleasures."[156] The argument for women's rights was thus based on a denial of difference between the sexes. Moreover, this denial was made explicitly on the basis of such difference being contradictory to nature, and to natural law.

Further support for Scott's argument can be found in the way in which the congress speakers' renouncements of sexual difference were rooted in demonstrating women's capacities for reason, rationalism, and logic – the same kinds of principles on which rights were assigned to the universal man according to French republicanism.[157] Women's equality was based upon a discourse of "rights" and of "duties" which were presented as bound up with citizenship in a democratic tradition. In 1878 French author Camille Chaigneau argued:

> In the domain of education, in teaching and in science, we [men] have a supremacy which we must tear apart... in the economic domain it is impossible to give women justice without an equal division of the profits of work... the rights of women, are the duties of men.[158]

This example suggests that men's responsibilities as citizens involved helping women to claim their rights; in later years, speakers' rhetoric around women's own citizenship cited their fulfilment of the requirements of republican personhood. In 1889, the author Madame Vattier d'Ambroyse argued that "to form a society capable of constant perfection, each of the beings making up that society must have the right to live according to their skills, according to the scope of their intelligence."[159] During the closing banquet, honorary president Clémence Royer, offered a toast to the women who "were the founders [*fondatrices*] of all

[155] 1889 proceedings, 68. Rosalie Ulrica Olivecrona (named erroneously 'Oliva Crona' in the proceedings) had founded the Swedish *Tidskrift för Hemmet* ('Home Review') in 1859 and wrote articles about women's working opportunities. See Offen, *European Feminisms*, 154; 178.
[156] 1900 proceedings, v.
[157] Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 11.
[158] 1878 proceedings, 124.
[159] 1889 proceedings, 95.

human civilisations."[160] In 1900, Marguerite Durand wrote in her introduction to the congress proceedings:

> It is beyond doubt that many women do not listen to politics; that the education that they receive renders many of them unable to take a useful part in the management of public affairs. But can we logically assume that most men who have held... this responsibility, would not be in the same situation? That understanding affairs, consistency, judgement, calmness, composure, fairness and justice are exclusively the privilege of one sex?[161]

Her answer, implicit in her introduction and, by extension, the discussions of the entire congress, was an emphatic 'no'. Women's capacity to fulfil political and economic responsibilities was considered obvious, if they were only to receive the same education as men. Sexual difference was attributed to social convention, rather than nature.

However, embodying the paradoxes that Scott argues were inherent to French feminism, speakers at the congress also spoke on behalf of women as a distinct category, who had something new and necessary to offer society via their inclusion. In particular, women were often presented with an important role in perfecting the morality of French society. French author Eugène Garcin said at the 1878 congress "what we must maintain to save France is morals, and morals are created by women."[162] In 1889, Maria Deraismes said in her opening remarks "Woman is, through her constitution and the nature of her mandate, the moral and peaceful agent *par excellence*."[163] The very communication of ideas of women's rights involved speaking on behalf of women as a category of people with certain attributes, especially morality, which affirmed sexual difference at the same time as denying it. Alongside representing women in this way, the speeches of the women's rights congresses at the Paris Exhibitions denied any natural basis for sexual difference and sought to demonstrate women's capacity to be citizens within the political system of the French Republic. This

[160] 1889 proceedings, 268.
[161] 1900 proceedings, iii.
[162] 1878 proceedings, 35.
[163] 1889 proceedings, 7.

seeming contradiction supports Scott’s arguments that while denying sexual difference to end women’s exclusion, French feminists constructed ‘woman’ as a particular category on whose behalf they spoke.

Examining the women’s rights congresses at the Paris Exhibitions of 1878, 1889 and 1900 within the context and framework of the French Third Republic provides us with an important understanding of how the feminism espoused by speakers at the congresses was constructed around French republican political traditions. These congresses took place at the same time as a growing discussion of women and their role in society, as was demonstrated by the changing attitudes of contemporary newspapers. In addition, the methods of congress organisers were rooted in convincing deputies and senators of the validity of their claims, with specific aims of enacting small legislative changes. The framework offered by Joan Scott in *Only Paradoxes to Offer* provides a nuanced understanding of how feminists’ portrayal of womanhood at the congresses was based upon constructions rooted in the context of the French republican democratic tradition. The speakers at the international women’s rights congresses of the Paris World Exhibitions believed sexual difference to be unnatural and therefore insufficient justification of women’s political exclusion. However, they also reified part of this difference in their articulation of feminism on behalf of women, as a group with certain attributes for the benefit of society. What that feminism involved – including improving women’s access to work, education, divorce rights and consent to sex – is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

4: The Paris World Exhibitions’ international women’s rights congresses, 1878 – 1900: topics of discussion

This chapter examines the policies and agreed resolutions that were discussed during the international women’s rights congresses at Paris World Exhibitions in 1878, 1889 and 1900 and published in their official proceedings. This establishes the political “colour” of these events, as well as elaborating on the tensions which emerged within these meetings and within the wider forces of French feminism.

For the purpose of analysing the feminist politics during the congresses, I am using three conceptual frameworks. The first is predicated upon nuancing supposed divisions within the feminist movement between bourgeois and socialist strands of feminism. Although much is made of the ‘bourgeois’ origins of the feminist movement in France and elsewhere, as it was seemingly entrenched in middle-class ideals, and ignored the experience of workers, the historian Marilyn Boxer, a specialist in socialist feminism, has sought to problematise this division. She argues that, within socialism, “the most far-reaching legacy for women was the socialists’ success in spreading disdain for feminism,” damaging the success of both socialism and feminism, *but* that there was not the absolute class divide which some historians have emphasised within the women’s movement.[164] I seek to maintain this nuance over the discussion of working- and middle-class women’s concerns in relation to the debates over work and education which appeared during the Paris Exhibition women’s rights congresses.

I also re-examine feminism within an ‘international’ environment in relation to the assertions of Bonnie Anderson, who claimed in her work on international women’s movements during the mid-nineteenth century that, from the late 1860s onwards, international

[164] Marilyn J. Boxer, “Rethinking the Socialist Construction and International Career of the Concept ‘Bourgeois Feminism,’” *American Historical Review* 112 (2007): 156-8.

feminism was less radical.[165] She makes this argument on the basis that the women she studied were "radical" during the mid-nineteenth century because they discussed "prostitution, forced marriage, the right to have sex or refuse it... child custody... a new kind of marriage based on companionship... the right to divorce."[166] Her interpretation was that women who rejected the idea that female subordination was "natural" held a "radical feminist outlook."[167] I argue that, at least according to the discussions at the international women's rights congresses in Paris during the World Exhibitions, international women's rights networks in Europe in fact continued to propagate and discuss these 'radical' views for the rest of the nineteenth century. Anderson's notion of a decline in radicalism in the international women's movement from the 1860s belies, I think, the continued interest in the topics, which she herself defined as 'radical', within the discussions of international contexts like those of the congresses held in France.

The third framework I use in analysing the feminism of the women's rights congresses of 1878, 1889 and 1900 involves its close links with the French Republic, as discussed in the work of Clare Moses and in chapter 3. In particular, the strategies of leaders Maria Deraismes and Léon Richer were centred around convincing lawmakers of the need to make slow, small changes to the legal situation of women.[168] This was reflected in the work of the women's rights congresses during the Paris Exhibitions, which increasingly focussed on passing resolutions which equated to real, practical solutions to women's issues, such as insisting on the legal assurance of equal access to work, education and divorce rights with small alterations to the law. However, I argue here that this attempt to make the resolutions of the congress specific enough to be enacted in law was at odds with the generalism intended

[165] Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 205.
[166] Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 10.
[167] Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 11.
[168] Moses, *French Feminism*, 199.

within the international scope of these congresses. For this reason, while the discussions and proposals were relatively general in 1878 and 1889, when some at the 1900 congress suggested a more specific list of measures, it caused conflict over the supposed internationalism of the discussions.[169]

In this chapter, I have divided the discussions of issues at the congresses into four broad categories: political rights, sexual and marital freedoms, women and education, and women and work.

4.1 Political rights

Political rights were a source of conflict during the 1878 International Congress of the Rights of Women. Hubertine Auclert recounted later that she submitted a proposed text on women's political rights to the congress organisers, but it was considered "subversive," and the topic was banned from discussion.[170] She ultimately pressed the issue at the Socialist Workers Congress at Marseilles in 1879, where she made a forceful argument for women to have equal voting rights to men on the basis of their naturally equal role in society, considering suffrage "the absolute right."[171] Steven Hause, Auclert's biographer, cited this moment as the trigger for a "fracture" between Auclert and the feminist movement in France.[172] In fact, women's suffrage *was* mentioned at one point during the 1878 congress. American author Theodore Stanton, while claiming to represent the USA's emancipatory movement, made the following statement:

We are in favour of woman's suffrage, as a means to protect herself, through the law, and to

[169] For example, Lady Grove complained about the domination of French speakers. 1900 proceedings, 286-7. See chapters 5 and 6.
[170] Auclert, *Le Vote des Femmes*, 104.
[171] Auclert, *Le Droit Politique des Femmes*, 70-82.
[172] Hause, "Hubertine Auclert," in Hause, *Hubertine Auclert*, 27.

> defend her interests against the fatal consequences of "alcohol abuse."[173]

Nonetheless, it is clear that Auclert was not able to make the argument she wished to make concerning women's voting rights, at least for the audience for which she had intended it. This caused some tension; she refused to submit the text of another speech she made during the closing section to the publication of the proceedings.[174] Since the text was not submitted, we cannot know what it discussed; nonetheless, her refusal to return it for publication, coupled with her complaint about the omission of political rights in her later book, suggests tension over the issue of suffrage.

However, organiser Maria Deraismes, at least, did not oppose the inclusion of political rights from her agenda for much longer; she wrote in 1891:

> Observe that the large number of congresses which took place during the 1878 Exhibition... highlighted people's need to communicate with one another, to consult each other, to have a conversation without intermediaries about their mutual concerns. This happy brainwave to unite in one place all the scattered knowledge to find more clarity, this desire to arrive at common assent, at unanimous consent, is it not an impressive assertion of universal suffrage?[175]

It could be argued that Deraismes' interpretation of 'universal suffrage' was not one which included women, as the term had often previously been used to denote suffrage for all *men*.[176] Nonetheless, Auclert's animosity towards other women's rights campaigners had abated by the time she sent a report from Algeria to the 1889 French and International Congress of the Rights of Women, and she participated in the 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women.[177] During both of those congresses, speakers made clear their support for women's suffrage, despite the fact that it was not included as an official topic during the

[173] 1878 proceedings, 40.
[174] 1878 proceedings, 194.
[175] Maria Deraismes, "Eve dans l'Humanité," in Deraismes, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Félix Alcan (Paris: Ancienne Libraire Germer Baillière, 1895), vol. 2, 242-3.
[176] Gisela Bock, *Women in European History*, trans. Allison Brown (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 149.
[177] Her speech, 'The Arab Woman', is discussed in chapter 6; 1889 proceedings, 175-81. She is noted as speaking at the 1900 congress, 1900 proceedings, 268.

congress programme.

In 1889, for example, Jules Allix, delegate of the *Ligue de la Protection des Femmes*, stated that "universal suffrage will not be worthy of such a name unless women participate in it."[178] He highlighted an important point: since 'universal suffrage' was used to refer to voting rights for all *men*, regardless of class, it was conventionally interpreted as a concern of working-class men, rather than women.[179] Allix's challenge to the 'universal' understanding of men's suffrage therefore attempted to justify women's political rights within the same framework as other rights-based movements within the French tradition.

At the 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women, René Viviani, writer and politician, argued:

> It is said that woman is not fit to have the vote because she is not fit to bear arms... So the capacity to bear arms is the source of civic capacity. I know well that in the room where I am speaking, not one person will support this idea, but we do not only speak for the Congress, we also speak for the honest adversaries who might be convinced by our propaganda.... No, right does not depend on force! It is attached to the person.[180]

Thus although political rights did not occupy much time during the speeches of these congresses, attendees freely showed their support for female suffrage during the 1889 and 1900 events. It seems likely that not much time was dedicated to these issues because they were not considered realistic prospects to be passed into law in France at that time. In other words, the binding of feminist priorities as discussed at these congresses to those of the Republic remained clear. Nonetheless, claims of women's capacity to vote were being made on the basis of their suitability as citizens of France, according to republican and revolutionary principles.

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[178] 1889 proceedings, 159. During the legislation section, British women's rights campaigner Florence Balgarnie also gave a speech on the topic of "the women's voting question in England." 1889 proceedings, 208-12. For more on Balgarnie, see Claire Hirshfield, "Liberal Women's Organizations and the War against the Boers, 1899-1902," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 14 (1982): 32.

[179] Bock, *Women in European History*, 149.

[180] 1900 proceedings, 202.

4.2 Sexual and marital freedoms

Discussion of women’s inequality within the areas of sexuality and marriage occupied a great deal of the congress’ discussions in 1878, 1889 and 1900. What is particularly striking about their discussions was that the speakers largely accepted the idea of an ‘equal morality’, including in sexual matters, between men and women. For example, in 1878, Léon Richer stated:

> Since morality is singular; since the degree of culpability for a matching crime or misdemeanour should not vary between the sexes... the Congress puts forward the opinion that penal laws should not establish any difference between the adultery of a wife and the adultery of a husband, no matter where the crime has been perpetrated...[181]

Similarly, in 1900, French feminist journalist Avril de Sainte-Croix commented that it was “bizarre” that, more than a century after 1789, “we still have to add to our programme a paragraph claiming the unity of morality for the two sexes and the abolition of [state] regulated prostitution.”[182] Congress pronouncements therefore rooted the ‘morality’ of their ideas in a notion of absolute equality between men and women.

The congresses touched upon many ‘moral’ issues, including war and pacifism, alcoholism, clothing customs, and prostitution.[183] Here, however, I wish to focus on how they discussed rape, or, as they more frequently termed it, ‘*séduction*’, followed by women’s rights within marriage. These areas are, I think, where the participants most clearly showed their radical feminist outlook. They supported many of the same ideas that Bonnie Anderson claimed were in decline by the last decades of the nineteenth century. Anderson classified women as “radical” and “feminist” partially on the basis that they discussed women’s right to consent to sex, their access to divorce and their capacity to keep their surname upon

[181] 1878 proceedings, 178-9.
[182] 1900 proceedings, 97. For more on Sainte-Croix, see Karen M. Offen, “‘La plus Grande Féministe de France’: Mais qui est donc Madame Avril de Sainte-Croix ?,” trans. Michèle Bruhat, *Bulletin Archives Du Féminisme* 9 (2005): 46-54.
[183] 1878 proceedings, 119-21; 1889 proceedings, 136; 1900 proceedings, 80.

marrying.[184] All of these topics came up during the Paris World Exhibitions' women's rights congresses, suggesting that, contrary to Anderson's argument, the international women's movement, at least when organised in France, did not become less radical after the 1860s.

The '*séduction*' of women was a major topic during these congresses, particularly how best to help those women who were 'seduced' and 'abandoned' by men once they had fallen pregnant. During the International Congress of the Rights of Women in 1878, politician Antide Martin argued that *séductions coupables* ('guilty seductions') were enacted by men who were "masters of tricking the female sex" and introduced the following proposal, which was unanimously adopted:

> The Congress expresses its great desire to see introduced, in the nations which lack it, a law qualifying the *offence* [original italics] of seducing an underage girl, accomplished with the help of deceitful manoeuvres and an unrealised promised of marriage. This law will have to confer upon courts recognising the offence complete capacity to condemn the delinquent to pay damages to the plaintiff, when it takes place.[185]

He later attempted to establish the "degrees of culpability, difficult to distinguish" according to whether the victim of the *séduction coupable* had been "more or less clear and stubborn in her resistance" to her attacker.[186] While this is hardly an encouraging model for modern conceptions of consent, it is notable that Martin, in 1878, was attempting to establish that women could consent to sex. In 1900, perhaps even more radically, journalist René Viviani sought to establish a married woman's right to refuse sex to her husband:

> Have you noticed, in fact, the difference between the shyest fiancée and the most experienced wife. Look at the sweet and naïve fiancée... The day that, through her consent, she fell into marriage as if into a trap, she lost all her rights. … Well, when the wife has her rights, when he has to seek her opinion, when she can say no, his masculine charm will be well-matched [with hers].[187]

In other words, the congress, while passing proposals seeking to punish men who forced women to have sex with them, allowed discussion about women's own sexuality and their

[184] Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 2-10.
[185] 1878 proceedings, 173. Also 118, 148-9.
[186] 1878 proceedings, 180.
[187] 1900 proceedings, 200.

capacity to agree to sexual activity. Bonnie Anderson writes of the radicalism of women discussing "the right to have sex or refuse it;" it is clear that the international women's rights congresses in France during the late nineteenth century continued to debate such issues.[188]

In connection with discussing *séduction*, the speakers at the congresses also discussed how to make 'paternity research' possible, primarily to oblige negligent fathers to support mothers and children. At the women's rights congress of 1878, researching paternity was mentioned, but there was no suggestion of how to achieve it.[189] This provoked scepticism in *Le Figaro*, who scoffed that such research was impossible.[190] In 1889, for example, the congress' session on legislation included a lengthy debate over article 340 of the Napoleonic Code, which forbade such research, and the Congress voted to support a repeal of the article. The official proceedings of the congress published this proposal with the specification "that the deputies and senators, who are members of the congress, take the initiative to propose a law to that effect."[191] However, the speakers were still unclear on how to research paternity, other than in a case where a mother had been kidnapped by her seducer, and had conceived a baby during her abduction.[192]

During the 1900 congress, the issue was debated once more, this time with more questioning of the practicality of attempting to research paternity. Chair of the organising committee Maria Pognon suggested an alternative proposal for the congress to vote on, which involved setting up a maternity fund for the support of abandoned mothers, whether married or not.[193] Hubertine Auclert suggested a "paternity tax" be charged of all men to support

[188] Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 10.
[189] 1878 proceedings, 118.
[190] Albert Millaud, "Courrier du Vendredi," *Le Figaro*, 10 August 1878.
[191] 1889 proceedings, 234.
[192] 1889 proceedings, 233.
[193] 1900 proceedings, 264.

fatherless children.[194] Nonetheless, the congress still ultimately voted that paternity research be permitted, the outcomes of which were to be decided by courts on the basis of whether a woman had cohabited with the man in question.[195] Thus although the participants in the congresses were not particularly sure how best to organise paternity research, there were clear attempts to make their resolutions directly applicable to the law-making process in France, and sometimes elsewhere. In other words, rather than passing abstract resolutions concerning morality, their proposals were tied into convincing the politicians present as to how certain women's issues could be resolved. This was a demonstration of the way in which the feminism of the congresses was explicitly tied to the politics of the French Republic, as their resolutions were intended to be copied and enacted in French law.[196]

When it came to discussing marriage and divorce, the women's rights congresses of the Paris World Exhibitions demonstrated a progressive openness to questioning pre-existing conventions. In 1878, the French author Jenny Sabatier-Herbelot argued:

> Of all the laws of which woman, and even man, are victims, the most terrible, that which causes the most suffering, the most demoralisation... the most crimes, is the law which proclaims the indissolubility of marriage![197]

She went on to say:

> The indissolubility of marriage is contrary to the principle of individual liberty; to the primordial principle of autonomy of the individual. All human beings, whether male or female, are their own people, and marriage can only exist if it has been freely consented to.[198]

The official view of the congress was therefore that all nations should "establish or re-establish divorce, on the basis of equality between spouses" and that "penal laws should

[194] 1900 proceedings, 268.
[195] 1900 proceedings, 268-9.
[196] A similar point can be made concerning the discussions of how to improve the lives of women in prostitution, including abolishing the *police des moeurs*. 1878 proceedings, 122-4, 185-7; 1889 proceedings, 186-75; 1900 proceedings, 97-111.
[197] 1878 proceedings, 164.
[198] 1878 proceedings, 166.

establish no difference between a wife's and a husband's adultery."[199] In 1900,[200] the congress voted upon the specifics of divorce law, discussing the right of any children issued by a divorcing couple, and the length of time a couple should be separated before being granted a divorce. The final pronouncement was the following:

> That divorce by mutual consent be granted after the spouses have declared their will to separate in front of the president of a civil court three times, with a three-month interval between the first two times, and a six-month interval the third time.[201]

The hope was that a divorced woman would be able to find happiness elsewhere, and attendees also discussed the possibility that a man might refuse to give his consent.[202] In addition, some participants were suggesting new ways to restructure marriage: the Commission of the Congress proposed the following resolution, which was approved by vote after little discussion.

> The Congress proclaims the view that a wife takes the nationality of her husband unless she retains, via declaration on the day of her marriage in front of a state official, her original nationality.[203]

They did, however, reject the version which Hubertine Auclert suggested:

> The Congress proclaims the view that, in all circumstances, a wife retains her original nationality, unless she declares that she wishes to adopt another.[204]

Nonetheless, they did pass Auclert's later proposal concerning surnames:

> The Congress proclaims the view that, in order to safeguard her individuality, her liberty and her interests, a wife retains, during her marriage, her patronymic name [surname], instead of taking the name of her husband.[205]

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[199] 1878 proceedings, 212.

[200] The 1889 proceedings record little discussion of divorce rights, although Polish-French feminist Maria Chéliga did discuss the need to allow young women to make their own choice of companion as a husband. 1889 proceedings, 145. For more on Chéliga, see Agnieszka Janiak-Jasinska, "Szeliga, Maria (pseudonym), also known in France and the USA as Maria Chéliga or Chéliga-Loevy (1854 – 1927)," in Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms in Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe: 19th and 20th Centuries* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2006), 562-5.

[201] 1900 proceedings, 225.

[202] 1900 proceedings, 234.

[203] 1900 proceedings, 205-7.

[204] 1900 proceedings, 206.

[205] 1900 proceedings, 246.

Maria Pognon and Marguerite Durand both openly expressed their support for this measure, describing the practice of taking a husband's name as a "mere custom."[206] It is important to note that the attendees of the International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women were so open to discussion about redefining the practices associated with women and marriage. Once more, the discussions and pronouncements of the congress matched those considered "radical" by Bonnie Anderson.[207] They therefore demonstrated an openness to refigure the customs and practices around women's rights within the institution of marriage, both in terms of customs and their freedom to divorce.

4.3 Educational responses to women's inequality

Studies of nineteenth-century feminism often emphasise education as a key demand of the women's movement. Historian Claire Moses, for example, argued that Léon Richer focussed upon education, as an area in which he could target legislators to change existing standards.[208] In an effort to demonstrate the social nature of women's inferiority, rather than any basis in a 'natural' order of affairs, campaigners argued that if women and men received the same education, they would be capable of performing similar roles in society. The International Congress of the Rights of Women in 1878 had a section devoted specifically to pedagogy, and the International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women in 1900 devoted its second section to education, under the presidency of teacher Marie Bonnevial.[209] In 1889, there was no education section, which historians Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort assigned to the organisers' assumption that the Camille See law of 1880 had 'dealt'

[206] 1900 proceedings, 246.
[207] Anderson commented that women in the international network she studied were refusing to take their husbands' surnames, as well as discussing access to divorce. Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 2.
[208] Moses, *French Feminism*, 206. Klejman and Rochefort also emphasise the importance of education as an area which Deraismes focussed on. Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 34-5.
[209] 1900 proceedings, 115.

with the problem by establishing girls' secondary schools.[210] Nonetheless, all three congresses involved some discussion of the need to change women's education.

In 1878, for example, the pioneer Dutch educator Elise van Calcar, spoke at length about the function of education in forming a young woman's character, stating that "education is the normal development of all faculties."[211] The conclusion of the pedagogy section was as follows:

> Considering that the basis vices of education are the result of the social inequalities which separate the citizens of one country into distinct classes;
> That the best way to remedy these vices is to make public education complete and to make the highest studies available to all children of both sexes;...
> That [education] must have the aim of forming men and women, citizens and workers; that no one is permitted to prevent a child from receiving such advantages;
> The Congress proclaims the view that education be accessible to all children of both sexes, that it be secular, moral, professional, completely free, and, ultimately, compulsory.[212]

Women's access to education was therefore specifically situated in their rights and duties as citizens, with a clear understanding that education's purpose was to create (in the case of France) responsible members of republican society. The attitude towards education was therefore rooted in a politics of republicanism, supporting the arguments of Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort, which situated nineteenth-century French feminism deeply in its republican context.[213]

In 1889, the organisers of the Paris women's rights congress did not choose to have a section dedicated to education. However, participants still showed a clear prioritisation of educational concerns when it came to how best to advance their cause. Doctor Verrier, a supporter of Auclert and her newspaper *La Citoyenne*, linked educational progress for women to the French Republic:

> Already we are seeing, since the advent of the Republic, a movement taking shape among the

[210] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 83. See also Moses, *French Feminism*, 209.
[211] 1878 proceedings, 57. Van Calcar's name was misspelt as 'Elisa von Calcar'. See Grever and Waaldijk, *Transforming the Public Sphere*, 57.
[212] 1878 proceedings, 70.
[213] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 27.

> popular masses. The development of primary teaching, the opening of secondary schools to young girls, have pushed many parents to steer their daughters towards an education more complete than that which they received themselves.[214]

Once more, therefore, the arguments made at the congress were grounded in the realities of the French Republic, despite the claim to be an 'international' congress. The absence of an education section was perhaps therefore intended to show a sense of satisfaction that the French government were making changes along some of the criteria previously outlined by the French women's movement, most notably with the Camille See law.[215] Nonetheless, French feminist and pacifist Virginie Griess-Traut gave a speech in support of expanding mixed education, which she felt offered evidence of girls' equal aptitude to boys; the speech was included in the morality section, demonstrating that education was being continuously linked to moral condition.[216] Thus even while participants hailed recent progress (namely the Camille See law) as marking improvement for women's education, they sought to demonstrate that more change was needed.

During the International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women in 1900, education was once more a central part of the agenda. Madame Harlor, a friend of the journalist Marguerite Durand, opened the section with a speech proclaiming that education "is for all individuals of both sexes," with the need to offer the same "developmental conditions" to all in "a society which declares all humans born free and equal in rights."[217] After some discussion, the congress voted for "the view that general programmes of teaching, standardised for the two sexes, be reformed in favour of justice and equality."[218] Such pronouncements were largely made from a distinctly middle-class set of priorities, despite attempts to universalise them; proposals also included an insistence that young women

[214] 1889 proceedings, 38.
[215] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 83.
[216] 1889 proceedings, 186-8.
[217] 1900 proceedings, 115.
[218] 1900 proceedings, 136.

receive the education necessary to "access all liberal professions" and "that all young girls, rich or poor, learn a trade or profession."[219] Assumptions about education were based on the fact that there was no "intellectual inequality" between men and women, making any difference between their educations illogical as well as discriminatory.[220]

The women's rights congresses at the Paris Exhibitions took a clear stance in favour of educating men and women *together*, and according to the same curriculum. This was explicitly rooted in an image of education as formative of an individual's citizenship, to which men and women deserved equal access. The feminism espoused by the congresses therefore viewed education as a means to form people as members of society. The intention of speakers was to demonstrate that, once women were legally required to be educated in the same way as men, they would be able to occupy the same roles in society.

4.4 Women and work rights

Alongside education, women's rights in work occupied significant portions of the discussions of the women's rights congresses of the Paris Exhibitions. However, although their pronouncements were primarily rooted in demonstrating women's equal potential and worth, they also highlighted class differences between women, flagging up inconsistencies with the way they discussed work rights. Despite the attempts of the predominantly middle-class women present at the congress to speak for and about working-class women, they continued to speak from a position of bourgeois privilege.

On the basis of the 'equal' role speakers saw as due to women, they argued for equal pay. Emmanuel Pignon submitted a report to the International Congress of the Rights of

[219] 1900 proceedings, 146.
[220] 1900 proceedings, 170. Speeches also favoured coeducation; 1900 proceedings, 158-177.

Women in 1878 which demanded an "equal salary for equal production," a principle which was also mandated as an official stance of the congress.[221] Similarly, French author Astié de Valsayre stated during the French and International Congress of the Rights of Women in 1889, "it is equality which will open all professions to women and put into practice the motto, *equal salary for equal work* [original italics]."[222] In 1900, the congress voted unanimously in favour of the following proposal:

> The Congress proclaims the view that the principle of equal salary for equal work, being a principle of strict equity, should be the example given to bosses, by national, regional, district, and hospital administrations, in paying the women and men that they employ the same amount.[223]

Thus all three congresses made it clear that equal pay was a fundamental principle within their understanding of women's emancipation.

However, for most of the attendees of women's rights congresses, their support for equal pay was based within their own experiences as (usually) middle-class men and women rather than any actual understanding of working life. In addition to favouring an education to form 'citizens' with understandings of their rights, their own experiences made them more concerned with access to professional careers than to industrial work. Eugénie Pierre, a writer for Léon Richer's newspaper, spoke in 1878 of the need for "liberal professions" to be "equally open to women as to men."[224] When Belgian lawyer Marie Popelin presided over the legislation section in 1889, René Vivani spoke at length about the injustice she had experienced, as a woman qualified to practise law, when the Brussels Court had forbidden her from joining the bar.[225] Discussions of girls' education were predicated upon how well it provided access to "liberal professions."[226] The speakers therefore clearly spoke within the

[221] 1878 proceedings, 91, 209. I have not been able to find more information about Pignon.
[222] 1889 proceedings, 198
[223] 1900 proceedings, 39, 295.
[224] 1878 proceedings, 77.
[225] 1889 proceedings, 205-7. Popelin gave a lengthy speech on the subject herself, 1889 proceedings, 238-45.
[226] For example, 1900 proceedings, 144.

framework of their middle-class experiences and priorities.

Nonetheless, there were attempts to make pronouncements based upon a wider set of class priorities. In 1878, discussions about women's work considered the issue of the physical condition of women, and therefore their capacity to fulfil the demands of manual labour.[227] The congress' speakers were unsure of how best to protect women in the working class, with fears that protectionist laws which limited working hours would reduce the possibility for women to achieve economic freedom from their husbands.[228] The 1889 congress included a report on working conditions in the textile industry, namely the dangers associated with sewing machines.[229] During the 1900 event, the debate on regulating work highlighted the tension between enforcing the principle of 'equality' and the reality of protecting workers from potential harm, with proposals being changed from one concerning removing laws limiting women's work to include the following (italicised) amendment:

> The Congress proclaims the view that all exceptional laws which govern women's work be repealed, *and replaced by an equal system of protection for the entire working population, without distinction of sex*.[230]

Debates over women's work in industry therefore struggled with the tension over protecting women against exploitation with limits on working hours and inspections of working conditions, and the worry that such measures would result in less freedom to work for many working women.[231] The division on the issue was such that the 1889 organisers chose not to be an 'official' part of the World Exhibition because doing so would oblige them to accept

[227] 1878 proceedings, 83.
[228] 1878 proceedings, 96-9.
[229] 1889 proceedings, 109-111.
[230] 1900 proceedings, 55. Nonetheless, other pronouncements specifically applied to women, in particular those relating to maternity rights, including rest periods and funds for their support. 1900 proceedings, 67-8.
[231] Wikander suggests that the general French consensus *against* these kind of protective labour laws, on the basis that they undermined equality between working men and women, was evidence that the feminism of French-organised congresses was based on 'equality', while that seen in Anglo-American organising was based on 'difference'. Wikander, "International Women's Congresses," 26. See also Ulla Wikander, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Jane Lewis, eds., *Protecting Women: Labor Legislation in Europe, the United States, and Australia, 1890-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

Jules Simon, known for favouring the 'protectionist' strategy, as president.[232] This debate over how best to protect working women was based on the assumption that, if working, women were more independent, and therefore laws should not be passed which risked limited such freedom.[233]

In 1900, the tension concerning the predominantly middle-class speakers discussing workers' rights came to a head in a conflict over extending proposed protections for industrial workers to domestic workers. Madame Vincent, one of the vice-presidents, proposed a series of reforms for domestic work, including training, hygiene measures and rest days.[234] A member of the organising committee, Madame Wiggishoff, responded that such measures would not work in practice, as they would require an employer to prepare their own servants' meals on their rest days.[235] Others added that it would be impossible to properly regulate domestic work, as holding inspections of private homes was impossible.[236] The incident highlighted divisions between attendees with a background in socialism and those who primarily considered the needs and priorities of middle-class women.

Nonetheless, although one might interpret the divisions over treatment of working class women as demonstrative of the anti-socialist bent of many of the attendees, it is clear from the other discussions on working conditions that participants made some attempt to consider the experiences of women from different classes. Marilyn Boxer has highlighted that we could view the 1900 incident as evidence of "the efforts of 'bourgeois' women to improve conditions for working-class women."[237] She suggests the importance of noting the "crossing of borders" between socialism and feminism. I would argue that, although the 'bourgeois'

[232] 1889 proceedings, 3. See chapter 7 for more on the rejection of Jules Simon.
[233] Specific discussions of work granting freedom were particularly evident in 1878 and 1889. 1878 proceedings, 99-100, 1889 proceedings, 120-1.
[234] 1900 proceedings, 74-5.
[235] 1900 proceedings, 75.
[236] 1900 proceedings, 75-6.
[237] Boxer, "Rethinking the Socialist Construction," 149.

women at these congresses showed that their experiences led them to prioritise access to professions, they also made clear attempts to discuss how to improve the lives of working women, showing an attempt – albeit not one which took many working women’s views into account – to make their policies apply beyond the middle class. However, it was clear that these speakers were *not* seeking to redefine class boundaries or inequalities overall; meaning their feminism was still predicated purely upon *women’s* inequality.

The topics of discussion of the women’s rights congresses during the Paris World Exhibitions of 1878, 1889 and 1900 revealed a commitment to a progressive, often radical feminism which consistently discussed women’s rights to access education and work, to divorce their husbands, and to equal treatment in other areas of life. Their proposals contradict the hypothesis of Bonnie Anderson that international feminism lost its radicalism during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, including beliefs in women’s right to consent to sex and reconfigurations of the conventions of marriage. The official views of the congresses became more and more tied into measures which might be passed by French politicians, despite attempts to encourage an international stance on their issues. In this sense, they demonstrated the ‘republican feminism’, predicated on convincing lawmakers of the validity of particular women’s rights causes, which has been highlighted by historians such as Claire Moses and Florence Rochefort. However, the speakers at the congress attempted to make proposals which would be applicable for all classes, rather than focussing entirely on the bourgeois concerns they had largely experienced themselves. This adds credibility to the ideas of Marilyn Boxer concerning the potential for a crossover between socialism and feminism, despite the largely middle-class origins of the feminists at these congresses. The women’s movement, as it was represented at the women’s rights congresses of the Paris World Exhibitions, was one of a radical reconsideration of women’s roles in the family, in work and

in education, which attempted to propose reform for the French context even while discussing the measures in a supposedly ‘international’ congress. However, it did not seek to address any inequalities other than those between men and women; and, despite discussions of the situation of working women, did not reach beyond a “gender-only feminism.”[238]

[238] De Haan, “Eugénie Cotton, Pak Chong-ae, and Claudia Jones,” 175.

5: The 1878, 1889 and 1900 Paris women’s rights congresses: some ‘international’ aspects

This chapter interprets the understandings of ‘internationalism’ portrayed within the proceedings of the women’s rights congresses in Paris of 1878, 1889 and 1900. As Glenda Sluga has demonstrated with her concept of an “international turn,” the late nineteenth century saw international activity within many areas of life.[239] By understanding how operating across borders was tied into a fashion for international action, I hope to interpret these international congresses as attempting to fulfil the demands of modern internationalism, while remaining entrenched in Western and, more specifically, French understandings of how to advance women’s rights causes.

I start with a numerical take on the international organising represented by these congresses, by examining the nationalities of the organising committees, speakers and audiences at each of the events in 1878, 1889 and 1900. This information is taken directly from the official proceedings of each of the congresses. As they were set in Paris, there was an understandable domination by French men and women, but the origins of other members provide an informative snapshot of the spread of countries making up an ‘international’ audience. I then turn to a textual analysis of the notion of the ‘international’ within the speeches and texts reproduced in the proceedings. This includes how they understood an international level of organising to alter their practices as campaigners, and the extent to which they acted differently in response to their international audience. I take this congress by congress, in order to interpret how interpretations of ‘international’ organising changed between the women’s rights congresses at the Paris World Exhibitions. I argue that, while the

[239] Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, 12-13.

1878 congress prized a 'diversifying' internationalism, albeit limited in the actual nations it welcomed, this changed over the following years to become what we might call a 'generalising' internationalism by 1900, which focussed on general pronouncements about women's rights which sought to be applicable across international boundaries.

5.1 Internationalism by the numbers in 1878, 1889 and 1900

There were three dimensions of participation we can discern from the members of these congresses. The first method of activism was simply through attending these events. There was a certain amount of input to the printed proceedings in this role – the texts noted applause and shouted praise for speeches, as well as votes on the official opinions sanctioned by the congress. The 1900 proceedings detailed much more discussion and interaction than during the other two congresses of this study. The 1878 proceedings included a record of members in attendance and their nationalities, but the members of the subsequent congresses of 1889 and 1900 are not as easy to locate in terms of nationality, given their lack of such a clear list.

The next level of participation was that of contributing a speech, report or text – those people whose words made up the bulk of the congress proceedings. These people were able to contribute more fully to the published views of the congress by suggesting principles to be voted on. The third – and most intensive – level of participation was that fulfilled by the organisers themselves. Not only were they involved in the organisation of the congress itself, but they were also often chairs of a particular 'section' of the talks, and contributed multiple speeches throughout the proceedings. Their notable role was made clear by the significance they were given within other members' talks – they often noted a particular person by name

and thanked them profusely for their role in the organisation of the event.[240]

By discerning as separate these three elements of participation, we can begin to discover how 'international' the process of these congresses truly was – if we understand 'international' on the basis of how many countries were represented. In 1878, the congress speakers devoted considerable space to the significance of the congress' international context. Although the *Commission d'Organisation* was entirely French, the *Commission d'Initiative* included members from France, of course, but also Italy, Russia, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the USA.[241] These included Maria Deraismes and Léon Richer, who had collaborated in organising the congress, Deraismes' sister Anna Féresse-Deraismes, the Swiss Marie Goegg-Pouchoulin, and Theodore Stanton, author and son of the prominent American suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who subsequently published *The Woman Question in Europe* discussing the "status of women" in different European countries.[242] These people represented a transnational group of men and women who had clearly spent some weeks and months collaborating in order to plan, publicise and populate the congress.

The listed 'members' of the 1878 congress provide further information of the international make-up of this congress.

Table 1: 1878 Congress members by nationality

Nationality	**Number of members**
American	17
Belgian	1
Brazilian	1
Dutch	2
English (never listed as "British")	16

[240] Examples of thanking organisers are particularly evident among the toasts at the closing ceremonies and banquets; 1878 proceedings, 198; 1889 proceedings, 265.
[241] 1878 proceedings, 1-2.
[242] On Stanton and his work, see Offen, *European Feminisms*, 151-3.

French	159
German (Alsace-Lorraine)	1
Italian	9
Romanian	1
Polish	1
Russian	6
Swedish	2
Swiss	5
Unknown (not listed)	2
Total	**223**

Source: 1878 proceedings, 8-10[243]

The notion of 'international' as represented by these members was evidently limited to a very small number of countries. Other than Brazil and the USA, all the nations represented were European. What is notable, however, was the extent to which the 1878 congress proceedings emphasised the diversity of the origins of their members – almost every individual was listed with their nationality, and there was a list of the countries represented in the official congress proceedings.[244] Such features were lacking in the congress reports of 1889 and 1900 (making it much harder to identify their nationalities), and it seems clear that the organisers of the 1878 congress felt a need to highlight that they had succeeded in attracting an international body to discuss women's rights.

The thirty-seven contributors to the 1878 congress were made up as follows:

Table 2: 1878 Congress contributors by nationality

Nationality	**Number of contributors**
American	4
Dutch	1

[243] See appendices for complete list.
[244] 1878 proceedings, 8-10.

English (never listed as “British”)	2
French	26
Italian	3
Romanian	1
Total	**37**

Source: 1878 proceedings.[245]

Although this can hardly be considered global, it did mean that half of the nations who had representatives in attendance had at least one speaker.[246] The overwhelming domination of French speakers, however, was clear. Seventy per cent of those who spoke or wrote for the congress were French. However, it is worth noting that seventy-one per cent of the overall membership was also French.[247] Although we can therefore certainly suggest that such a domination of French citizens in attendance and contributing to the congress created a hegemony of specifically French interests, there were deliberate attempts to emphasise that an ‘international’ congress required an international array of speakers. As discussed later in the chapter, the speeches in 1878 devoted considerable time to mentioning their revolutionary status as the claimed ‘first’ international women’s rights congress.

In 1889, by contrast, the organising committee was entirely French. It should be noted that this congress was titled “French and International Congress of the Rights of Women” and so it could be argued that the event was intended to have a greater weighting on French – as opposed to international – issues. Deraismes, Féresse-Deraismes and Richer were once again prominent in the organising committee, and were joined by the Darwinian scientist Clémence Royer, the first female member of the *Société d’Anthropologie de Paris*, and socialist

[245] See appendices for complete list. Not all of these speeches were included in full in the text of the proceedings; where absent, the editor included a note of explanation stating that the text of the speech had not been submitted to the organising committee afterwards.
[246] 1878 proceedings, 12.
[247] ‘Membership’ is here referring to the list of ‘members’ of the 1878 congress – that is to say, the list of people in attendance.

journalist René Viviani.[248] Rather than having a list of 'members', the congress instead had 'subscribers' who donated money to the congress, some of whom, of course, did not attend. There can therefore be no definitive list of those who attended this event. However, the list of subscribers does provide a snapshot of the audience of the congress in 1889, and although nationalities were not always specified, their addresses often were included, allowing for a certain understanding of where each subscriber was from. However, there was a much higher proportion of names whose countries of origin are not made clear. The vast majority had typically French names; however, in order to prevent inaccuracies owing to assumption, those whose nationality was not specified have all been placed in the category of 'unknown'.

Table 3: 1889 Congress subscribers by nationality

Country	**Number of subscribers**
Algeria	5
Belgium	6
England	7
France	110
Germany (Alsace-Lorraine)	2
Poland	1
Sweden	1
Switzerland	1
French Indochina (Vietnam)	1
Unknown	88
Total	**225**

Source: 1889 proceedings, viii-x [249]

This table demonstrates a different audience than was present in 1878. The known subscribers

[248] For more information on Royer's Darwinism, see Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 124-32. On her views on women, see Pedersen, *Legislating the French Family*, 175-6.

[249] See appendices for complete list.

gave addresses which were in European countries or French colonies, demonstrating a considerably different audience than in 1878. It could be tempting to interpret this as supporting Ulla Wikander's claim of a birth of the rivalry of international women's rights organising between American- and French-run discourses.[250] However, there were a number of letters of support from Americans included in the 1889 congress proceedings, so we should not overstate the significance of their absence – the difficulty and expense of travelling from the USA to France during this time period was probably more significant than any opposition to the Congress itself.

There were forty-seven contributors to the 1889 Congress, not including the letters of regret from those who could not attend. One speaker, well-known feminist Mina Kruseman from the Dutch Indies, was prevented from speaking because of lack of time.[251]

Table 4: 1889 Congress contributors by nationality

Nationality	**Number of contributors**[252]
American	1[253]
Belgian	1
Danish	1
English	3
French	30
Greek	1
Italian	1
Polish	6
Swedish	2
Swiss	1
Total	**47**

Source: 1889 proceedings[254]

[250] Wikander, "International Women's Congresses," 12.
[251] 1889 proceedings, 257. Kruseman's surname is misspelt as 'Wizuseman'.
[252] The word "contributors" is used because of the inclusion of some reports whose authors were absent, but whose work was read out during the congress.
[253] The one American contributor, Rev. Amanda Deyo, was absent, but her report, 'On the Moral Influence of a Woman in Politics', was read out during the session on morals.

The number of Polish speakers was worthy of comment: efforts were made to learn about the influence of the Napoleonic Code in Poland.[255] It is, nonetheless, clear that French opinions once again dominated.

In 1900, the committee of organisation was almost entirely French.[256] Maria Deraismes had now passed away and Léon Richer was also absent, but René Viviani, Anna Féresse-Deraismes and Clemence Royer all had honorary president or vice-presidential roles. The organisers also included Maria Pognon, Richer's successor as president of the *Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes*, and Marguerite Durand, who had founded the first women's daily journal in France, *La Fronde*, in 1897. As in 1889, there was no official list of those in attendance, but there was, for the first time, a list of official delegates from certain countries.

Table 5: 1900 Congress official delegates by nationality

Nationality	**Number of official delegates**
American	5
Belgian	1
Ecuadorian	2
French	2
Mexican	1
Romanian	1
Russian	3
Total	**15**

Source: 1900 proceedings, 11.

The proceedings also noted several other countries which were represented in the audience,

[254] See appendices for complete list.
[255] One example was a speech by Madame Ratuld on "the moral situation of woman in Poland in the nineteenth century," 1889 proceedings, 190-5.
[256] The exception was Madame Chapman, of the *Westminster Review*, from London.

including England, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy.[257]

Examining the origins of the contributors to the 1900 congress is a little more complicated than with previous meetings, as it involved a great deal more discussion and unplanned commentary. Although some speeches were planned and announced, there were also considerable amounts of unstructured talk. Most of the names of these speakers were noted, but it was not always made clear which country they represented. However, I have compiled a table of the nationalities of those whose origins are known.

Table 6: 1900 Congress contributors by nationality

Nationality	**Number of speakers**
Belgian	2
Dutch	2
English	2
French	37
German	4[258]
Italian	2
Norwegian	1
Portuguese	1
Russian	2
Swiss	1
Unknown	28
Total	**82**

Source: 1900 Congress proceedings[259]

As is clear from this table, the 1900 congress was a very European affair; where in 1878 American speakers were the most frequent contributors after the French, they were absent from the records of 1900 altogether. The 28 speakers whose nationality was unclear

[257] 1900 proceedings, 3. The Netherlands was usually referred to as 'Holland'.
[258] Including one from Alsace-Lorraine.
[259] See appendices for complete list.

almost all had names which suggested that they were also French, meaning the domination of French ideas is likely to have been even greater than these numbers suggest.

5.2 Interpretations of the 'international' at the 'first' congress of its kind: 1878

The reasoning behind the 'international' nature of the 1878 congress was expressed in complex and nuanced ways. The speeches reproduced in the proceedings adopted a seemingly paradoxical position, in which internationalism was presented as both diverse and universal in its consequences. They celebrated the varied experiences of the men and women of many different nationalities who came to Paris for the congress. In addition, there were multiple references to the fact that this claimed to be the *first* occasion on which such a mixed group had gathered to discuss women's rights. At the opening of the congress, organiser Maria Deraismes stated, "Today we open, for the first time, an international and mixed Congress, that is to say, made up of both sexes and of all nations," and suggested that previous attempts to hold such an event had always failed.[260] The speeches made were constantly affirming the importance of the international origins of those attending the congress. During the closing banquet, French author Jenny Sabatier-Herbelot saluted "new France, wise England and the adventurous United States."[261] The members were eager to demonstrate to their fellows and to future readers of the text that there was an undoubted justification for making this congress international, both for the good of the French organisers and for the foreign visitors.

However, there was also a sense that international contexts did not deny a

[260] 1878 proceedings, 14. For more on the timing of this first congress, see chapter 3.

[261] 1878 proceedings, 201. This speaker was noted merely as 'Madame Sabatier' in the text, but since no one of that name appeared on the list of members, and the 1878 congress banned non-members from entry, I have assumed this to have been Jenny Sabatier-Herbelot, who had given a speech on divorce earlier during the proceedings.

universalism of the human – and female – condition. Indeed, a universal condition of womanhood was implied to be a part of the resolution of the problems which women faced. British-born suffrage advocate Emilie Venturi, who ran a political salon in London, referred to a "collective being" composed of the "humanity" of the republican nations which the Congress was "sending into the future."[262] This variation in the way in which contributors to the proceedings referred to particular nationalities – either as individual examples of women's experience, or gripped by similar models of oppression – reflected the manner in which they wished to proceed. Speakers believed that it was only by claiming a common solution to a common problem that they hope to improve the international experiences of 'woman'.

However, the 1878 congress proceedings also provided an explanation as to why there was also an emphasis on the significance of the individual countries represented by the people at the congress. As has been suggested by historian Laurence Klejman, information exchange was a significant part of the congresses' purpose.[263] The sense of collective learning and exchange was clear throughout the 1878 proceedings. The introductory programme states that the discussion on education "must reunite, in as great a quantity as possible, diverse systems of study in current use, and compare and discuss them."[264] A further reason for the emphasis on international communication was the claim that in 1878, there was no precedent for international women's organising; the congress speakers therefore felt a need to make clear the benefits of the new framework within which they operated throughout the proceedings. As journalist and essayist Léon Richer, one of the organisers, argued during the final speech of the closing banquet, "our Congress has a particular, special character, as it is the first International Congress for the Rights of Women, which will never again take place anywhere

[262] 1878 proceedings, 187. Born Emile Ashurst, she had married the Italian Carlo Venturi and become an outspoken supporter of Italian independence. Jonathan Spain, "Venturi, Emilie (1819/20?–1893)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), www.oxforddnb.com/index/101050085/Emilie-Venturi.

[263] Klejman, "Congrès Féministes Internationaux," 83.

[264] 1878 proceedings, 4.

on the globe."[265] The perception that the 1878 congress was such a landmark in the history of the women's movement therefore drove an emphasis on exchanging information drawn from other countries, which would be used for the benefit of the French women's movement.

The implication, in 1878, was that France could learn from other countries' examples. During the closing session, Maria Deraismes, the other major organiser, praised the foreign attendees: "We – French women – have profited from their example."[266] On the same day, Charles Lemonnier, a French publisher involved in the *Ligue Internationale de la Paix et de la Liberté*, stated that "until now, France has allowed other nations to surpass her... thanks to this Congress... this difference will disappear," indicating that France would be able to learn from the progress made by other nations.[267] However, it is clear that the understanding of *which* other countries provided satisfactory lessons from which to learn was severely limited; it was largely England and the USA that were cited for their progress. During the section on legislation, for example, French socialist leader Antide Martin discussed "those countries, such as England, the United States, where young girls enjoy greater freedom and where, nonetheless, guilty seductions [*séductions coupables*] are less frequent than here."[268] By attempting to discuss the 'woman question' in an international environment, participants hoped to learn more about how to improve women's lives, which could then be applied in a French context and add credibility to the aims of the French women's movement.

However, the discussion of France was more complex than one in which the French merely learned from their more-advanced fellow nations. As the home of the 1789 Revolution, France had a significant role within the rights-based discourse on which much of

[265] 1878 proceedings, 204.
[266] 1878 proceedings, 190.
[267] 1878 proceedings, 200. For more on Charles Lemonnier, see Sandi E. Cooper, "Pacifism in France, 1889-1914: International Peace as a Human Right," *French Historical Studies* 17 (1991): 362-3.
[268] 1878 proceedings, 172. For more on Antide Martin, consult Ronald Aminzade, *Ballots and Barricades: Class Formation and Republican Politics in France, 1830-1871* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 166-7.

the congress' proposals were based.[269] Speakers from other countries made a point of thanking France for its contributions thus far – hardly surprising as the host nation – but more significantly, cited France as a pioneer in rights-based discourses. Genevieve Graham Jones, a representative of the American National Woman Suffrage Association, stated that,

> Every true woman loves and honours France; France, where the fertile soil conceives and nourishes ides of progress, despite kinds, emperors, priests or tyrants; France, country of knowledge and thought; France, generously open asylum for women who seek the intellectual advantages refused to them in their countries; France who obliged republican America and civilised England to open their institutions to women...[270]

Graham Jones was not the only foreign speaker to revere France's role in women's rights to this extent; Emilie Venturi also used part of her closing speech to suggest that the 1878 congress' importance was "doubled" because it had taken place in Paris, as "the popularising of great ideas is unique to French genius."[271] In this way, speakers made it clear that there was a particular kind of discourse around the internationalism of the congress, and why it was necessary. Visitors from outside of France felt it necessary both to thank their host nation, but also to qualify that it could *only* have been France where this congress had been held. France's particular history in forming understandings of human rights came dramatically into play when discussing women's rights on an international level. In this way, the women's rights congress at the 1878 World Exhibition in Paris combined women's rights with the modern trend for internationalism, but maintained a sense of competition between nations in which France was doing well.[272] In addition, women's rights were implied to be essential to French traditions of human rights. This tied into the attempts of the organisers of World Exhibitions in Paris to portray France as advanced, at a time when national rivalries were

[269] The policies themselves are discussed in chapter 4.
[270] 1878 proceedings, 23.
[271] 1878 proceedings, 202.
[272] This can be tied into the argument in Jeffrey Auerbach's work on World Exhibitions which interpreted such Exhibitions as arenas for competition between Western nations. This idea will be discussed further in chapter 7. Auerbach, "The Great Exhibition and Historical Memory," 107.

thriving.[273]

There was some mention, in 1878, of the importance of international collaborations for the women's movement. Maria Deraismes stated that previous attempts to campaign for women's rights "retained a character of a party or sect" and therefore the congress of 1878 had significance as an attempt to gain more universal collaboration.[274] During her closing speech, she suggested that certain people might previously have thought that this kind of congress would witness "rivalry dividing [women]; they would never be able to hear one another; everyone would speak at the same time."[275] The proud claims of many of the speakers, however, were that any differences borne from different nationalities had disappeared as a result of the international collaboration represented by the congress. Lemonnier, for example, stated that "we can no longer distinguish between nations... they all hold hands."[276] Speakers demonstrated their enthusiasm for international collaboration, which was growing in popularity amidst the growth of international organisations and events – the "international turn" identified by Sluga.

5.3 Interpretations of the 'international' at the centenary of the French Revolution: 1889

During the 1889 congress, the speakers and reports made reference to the significance of learning from other nationalities, and the differences one might find between the different nations in attendance. The majority of the speeches that were not made by French representatives were in the form of a report on the conditions of women in their home nation.

[273] Eric John Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1870: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 122.
[274] 1878 proceedings, 14.
[275] 1878 proceedings, 189.
[276] 1878 proceedings, 200.

World Exhibitions have been characterised as attempts to represent the current state of knowledge about society, science and politics.[277] Gathering information on the condition of women in different countries was therefore a way to represent the issue of women's rights within a modern, international framework.

For example, Polish women's rights campaigner Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmitt spoke of the "special character" of the Polish women's movement,[278] and Swedish writer Rosalie Olivecrona delivered a "snapshot of woman's condition in Sweden."[279] Other reports made a point of drawing together the situation in several countries for comparison and reflection on solutions. The Swiss feminist Marie Goegg-Pouchoulin, for example, drew together the legal situation on "moral police" from many different countries in her speech.[280] She stated, "there is no country today in which the question [of the *police de moeurs*] is not either posed or on the point of being resolved."[281] Many of the speakers thus submitted reports on their experiences in their home nation in order to exchange information with the allies they were meeting at the congress.

Nonetheless, the patterns of *which* countries were used as examples perpetuated the supposed supremacy of France, Britain and the USA. This does not just come down to who was asked to give a report on their country's condition; indeed, although there were multiple reports from Polish delegates, barely any mention was made of Poland during other speeches. England and the United States were once again the most commonly cited examples of how to 'do' a woman's movement. For example, French sculptor Elisa Bloch's speech on the

[277] Elizabeth M. L. Gralton, "A Battle for the French Soul: The Anthropological Exhibit at the 1878 Exposition Universelle," *Journal of European Studies* 43 (2013): 197-8.
[278] 1889 proceedings, 51. See Grzegorz Krzywiec, "Kuczalska-Reinschmit (Reinschmidt), Paulina Jadwiga (1859 – 1921)," in de Haan, Daskalova, and Loutfi, *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms*, 274-6.
[279] 1889 proceedings, 63.
[280] She discussed the "successful" abolition of the *police de moeurs* in England, their disappearance in many cantons of Switzerland, support for abolition in Italy, the Belgian government's condemnation of the practice, and, indeed, the situation in multiple other nations.
[281] 1889 proceedings, 173-4.

different roles of women in society cited, "our friendship with England, who first rang the bell for the vindication of the Rights of Woman; with America, who, following this great idea with fervour, has already put it into practice for many years."[282] Léon Richer made a speech about the importance of women in contemporary politics, but referred entirely to French women except for Harriet Beecher Stowe, the American author of the famous *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), who showed, according to Richer, that "it is a woman who has most contributed to abolishing slavery."[283] In saying this, Richer also demonstrated his acceptance of a discourse which credited white people with 'saving' those of other races from subordination; such colonialist and racist ideologies of 'global sisterhood' are discussed further in chapter 6.[284]

Indeed, despite the openly proclaimed efforts of the congress to gather information from many visiting nations, discussion of nationalities beyond England (it is unclear whether they mean the United Kingdom, or just England), the USA, and France, tended to be confined to a few short sentences at the end of a speech. Richer's report, for example, devoted a few words to women on the throne, mentioning Elizabeth I of England, Isabelle of Spain, and Maria Theresa of Austria, but only with one sentence for each.[285] The exchange of information might have included reports from visiting delegates on the situation for women in their home countries, but the speeches which did not claim to be about a particular nation rarely mentioned any country except for the three which cropped up repeatedly – France, Great Britain and the United States.

In 1889, France was once again singled out in a different way than other nations, either as a nation deserving gratitude – as seen during the thanks offered by speakers of other

[282] 1889 proceedings, 30. For a biography of Bloch, see "Bloch, Elisa," *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906), http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3382-bloch-elisa.
[283] 1889 proceedings, 80.
[284] See Burton, "Feminist Quest for Identity."
[285] 1889 proceedings, 81-2.

nationalities – or as a nation with a special history and status within human rights which needed to act to fulfil its prior role. Speakers often used French events and actors as the examples of their arguments; Léon Richer used French women Charlotte Corday and Madame de Staël as his major examples of women in politics, and then cited Joan of Arc to close his argument.[286] This is one of many occasions where elements of French national heritage were referenced in this way, without explanation as to how this related to international discussions of human rights.[287] Once more, therefore, speakers used the international women's rights discussions to situate France as superior to other Western powers, within a seeming spirit of competition and national rivalry.[288]

More significantly, French and foreign speakers alike used France as an instrumental nation in the history of rights and freedom as a reference point throughout the event. The speakers in 1889 had *more* of a historical precedent to cite than their predecessors of 1878 for two reasons. The first was that they could hark to the 'first' international congress of women's rights, having taken place in France, under French initiative, and having been followed up by other events in many other countries. In her opening speech as president, Maria Deraismes harked back to 1878, and added:

> Since then, local and national congresses have taken place, especially in America, without doubt, but it was in France, in Paris, that the first international congress met, and I claim with pride this great honour for my country, just as I gave myself a great honour by taking the initiative to organise and direct it.[289]

This excerpt was typical for its sense that an individual's actions for the cause of women's

[286] 1889 proceedings, 81. Charlotte Corday (1768 – 1793) was notorious for her murder of Jean-Paul Marat, for which she was executed. See Elizabeth R. Kindleberger, "Charlotte Corday in Text and Image: A Case Study in the French Revolution and Women's History," *French Historical Studies* 18 (1994): 969–999. Madame de Staël, or Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein (1766 – 1817) was an author who published detailed accounts of her perspective of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras. See Simone Balayé, "La Révolution et ses Personnages selon Madame de Staël," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* 90 (1990): 631–640.

[287] See also 1889 proceedings, 26; 53.

[288] This national rivalry has been referenced by Eric Hobsbawm; see Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1870*, 122.

[289] 1889 proceedings, 12.

rights were not just representative of them, but also represented something about the national character of the country they came from. France was once more situated as superior on the world stage of international social movements, demonstrating the nationalism that was essential to the internationalism of the period.[290]

The second reason for citing France as a natural home of women's rights, which appeared repeatedly during the proceedings of the 1889 congress, was the fact that this congress took place during the centenary year of the Revolution of 1789. This historical event, cited frequently – then and now – as a major turning point in the history of human rights, was used to refer to France as a pioneer in rights-based discourse; a nation that could therefore be called upon to act once more to correct the injustice that was the status of women. Frenchman Jules Allix, who had created the *Comité des Femmes* to defend the short lived Paris Commune in 1871, suggested that on this occasion:

> *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, our motto so oft-cited, so oft-commended, so-oft sung... to which we add the great word *Solidarité* – our republican watchword, which also includes woman, although we command man most to consider it, we command him to reflect upon it with balance, as... man will never achieve the truth of these words of human justice, while injustice and immorality persist against woman, his equal...[291]

It was not just French speakers who used the anniversary of the revolution to add credence to their arguments. Swiss feminist Marie Goegg-Pouchoulin felt that "French ideas have a particular contagiousness."[292]

During the women's rights congress of 1889, there was little mention of diversity; instead, speakers considered references to a particular nationality or individual to be evidence enough for a generalised understanding of the experience and needs of humanity. Once again citing 1789 as a revelatory moment for humanity, Deraismes stated that the *Declaration des Droits de l'Homme* "was not only the particular act of one race, of one people, but the

[290] Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*.
[291] 1889 proceedings, 162. Pedersen, *Legislating the French Family*, 190.
[292] 1889 proceedings, 175.

expression of universal consciousness, in full possession of itself."[293] Statements about women's experiences were interpreted as a general, universal truth. French doctor and anthropologist Léonce Manouvrier stated:

> That woman has been, in general, mistreated, cut down, confined, overworked, that is undeniable, whether we judge according to what happens amongst barbaric peoples and unfortunately also amongst civilised peoples.[294]

Part of the premise of this international women's congress was that general statements could and would be made about the experience of women worldwide, and that universal solutions would be helpful. Nonetheless, at the end of the 1889 congress, Greek women's historian Callirhoe Parren made a toast to

> The health of all those who, through their writings and their actions, have made the woman question an international question, asked in order to change the fate of the entire of humanity, to the benefit of family and society...[295]

She, at least, felt that the holding of an international congress "made" the discussion of women's rights an international one, whether or not the speeches and discussions made consideration of this international level of organising. The speakers assumed a universal, race-blind truth to what they said, despite the limitations of their frame of reference to the nations who were represented at the congress.

The 1889 congress made references more frequently than the event of 1878 to the international alliances and, indeed, friendships, which the members hoped would result from their meeting. These appeared most prominently in the letters of support which came from those unable to attend, a section which was absent from the proceedings of 1878. Deraismes spoke of her gratitude for her "constant relationships with many among you" when opening

[293] 1889 proceedings, 4.

[294] 1889 proceedings, 44. On Manouvrier, see George Grant MacCurdy, "Léonce Pierre Manouvrier," *Science* 65 (1927): 199–200.

[295] 1889 proceedings, 265. Carrihoe Parren was a journalist who historian Angelika Psarra has credited with the introduction of feminism to Greece. She also published the *History of Women* in 1889, the first work to centralise women in a historical narrative, according to Psarra. See Angelika Psarra, "'Few Women Have a History': Callirhoe Parren and the Beginnings of Women's History in Greece," trans. Martha Michailidou, *Gender & History* 18 (2006): 400–411.

the congress. She added that they were at a great advantage compared to during the 1878 event, when "we were seen as curiosities; we were utopianists, eccentrics."[296] Indeed, the success of the international women's movement in establishing itself in the intermediary years resulted in multiple references to the successful establishment of transnational networks; in a letter, Susan B. Anthony, vice-president of the American National Woman Suffrage Association, congratulated the *Association Française pour l'Amélioration du Sort de la Femme et la Revendication de ses Droits* for its affiliation to the International Council of Women, for instance.[297] The congress proceedings reflected the fact that women's rights were becoming more prominent within public discourse, at the same time as a turn towards internationalism.[298]

In addition to official forms of collaboration, and a change from the previous congress, speakers also made many references to being 'friends' and the spirit of 'friendship' between the foreign and French delegates. Contributors implied a level of ease and camaraderie between the attendees, and indeed, although they came from many different countries, there was perhaps a level of informality to their relationships which had not been so evident eleven years earlier. For example, a letter from American representatives of the Memphis Equal Rights Association stated:

> We would have been glad to send a delegate to your meeting, but as that is impossible, we send you our best wishes, hoping that your reunion will be equally profitable, and although separated from the site of your meeting by thousands of leagues, by an ocean and by half a continent, we celebrate being able to communicate with our friends, united by the same cause and following the same goal.[299]

The fact that these letters were considered a vital part of the opening day of the congress, and the fact that they included these references to international cooperation and friendship, can be

[296] 1889 proceedings, 12.
[297] 1889 proceedings, 15. For more on Anthony, see Lesley L. Doig, "Susan B. Anthony," ed. Bonnie G. Smith, *Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[298] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 27; Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, 12-13.
[299] 1889 proceedings, 16. For more on this association, see Marsha Wedell, *Elite Women and the Reform Impulse in Memphis, 1875-1915* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

attributed to the growing sense of a thriving, international women's movement by 1889. With these kinds of sentiments, the speakers demonstrated a collaboration with and even affection for their partners within the women's movement, and attempted to pass beyond national and local boundaries to achieve a more collective mode of operation, in words if not in practice. By doing so, they portrayed themselves as a part of growing international forms of activism, which would help to validate the claims of the French women's movement within France, and made claims for rights on the basis of a nationalist tradition in France of establishing human rights discourses.

5.4 Interpretations of the 'international' at an 'official' congress: 1900

In contrast to 1878 and 1889, the 1900 congress speeches made almost no mention of the difference made by its international membership. The International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women was also the first congress to be officially mandated by the Paris municipal council as part of the World Exhibition.[300] There was little of the discussion of the significance of international levels of organising which had been seen previously. In justifying why the congress was held in France, the journalist and actress Marguerite Durand wrote in her introduction as editor of the proceedings, "abroad, and notably in England, women of the aristocracy and the rich bourgeoisie are at the head of the feminist movement which, in France, is above all honoured among the working classes."[301] In this way, France was construed as an example to be followed, and a locus of the women's movement, in part due to the multiple international feminist congresses that had now been held there. Congress president Maria Pognon discussed Durand's foundation of the first French daily women's

[300] This is discussed further in chapter 7.
[301] 1900 proceedings, xiv.

newspaper *La Fronde* in 1897; "her example will certainly be followed abroad, but the honour will not be small for a Frenchwoman for having dared to first open the way to female journalists," indicating, once again, a nationalist representation of the importance of French activists in advancing the feminist cause worldwide.[302]

In its discussions, the congress saw the same universalising of 'womanhood' as in 1878 and 1889 – for example, the French leader of the society *L'Amélioration du Sort de la Femme* Anna Féresse-Deraismes argued that "poor knowledge of woman's rights and organised exploitation of her weakness are certain causes of her great sufferings and unjust subordination."[303] There was some attempt to speak in terms of general principles rather than specific laws or circumstances, in order to fit within an 'international' congress' discussion. For example, during the section focussing on education, the Dutch lawyer Lizzie van Dorp argued for the removal of a proposal that because "education should be complete, free and compulsory," the "current educational programme be revised," as she considered it to be asking for judgement to be passed on the French educational system in particular.[304] The focus on discussion of general principles meant that, in 1900, there were none of the special reports on other nations which had been significant in 1889. Indeed, one English speaker, Lady Agnes Grove, even raised the question of how little foreign speakers were permitted to contribute to the discussions, although she also stated that she had learnt a great deal from the French speakers she had heard.[305] These tensions highlighted emerging conflicts over the use of an international congress for the purpose of the French women's movements, at the cost of hearing about experiences from other nations.

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[302] 1900 proceedings, 14.

[303] 1900 proceedings, 23. Féresse-Deraismes had taken over the society after the death of her sister, Maria Deraismes, who had been its founder in 1870. Waelti-Walters and Hause, *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque*, 199.

[304] 1900 proceedings, 129-34.

[305] 1900 proceedings, 286-7. Grove would later become known for her travel account, *Seventy-One Days Camping in Morocco* (1902). See Marni Stanley, "Skirting the Issues: Addressing and Dressing in Victorian Women's Travel Narratives," *Victorian Review* 23 (1997): 147–167.

Some references to the difference made by the international nature of this congress were made, however. In a section on the 'result' of the announcements of the congress, the proceedings stated that newspapers "carried the echoes of the discussions to the four corners of the world."[306] During a closing speech, journalist René Viviani expressed his pride at the "international force of our thoughts" and emphasised how the discussions of the congress could benefit many governments.[307] Speakers and organisers of the congress situated their event within an internationalism which was, by 1900, thriving – as Glenda Sluga has indicated. By demonstrating the relevance of women's rights concerns within an international framework, they validated them for attention in the host country of France.

5.5 Notions of 'international' across three congresses: 1878, 1889 and 1900

The commitment to having an 'international' membership and committee was most evident in the records of the 1878 congress, with its mixture of nationalities among the organisers, speakers and members clearly marked in the published minutes. By hosting an international congress of women's rights, organisers Léon Richer and Maria Deraismes wer combining their commitment to what would soon be called 'feminism' with a fashion for international organising. The reduced detail in the proceedings on the nationalities represented by attendance in 1889 and 1900 when compared to 1878 suggests less emphasis on proving the international credentials of the congress. Nonetheless, the notion of 'international' as represented by these groups of people was clearly a limited one, largely confined to Europe and the USA. This universalism is discussed further within a colonial framework in chapter 6.

My analysis of how the members and audiences of these three congresses interpreted

[306] 1900 proceedings, xx.
[307] 1900 proceedings, 310.

an ‘international’ level of organising to alter and improve their perspective on women’s rights suggests a change in the representation of the value of internationalism within the framework of women’s rights congresses. Given that all three took place as part of Paris World Exhibitions and had similar committees of organisation, this change is perhaps surprising. In 1878, the focus was very much on internationalism as a source of new information to be drawn upon, with diverse narratives of experience acting as further information to supplement the resolutions being drawn about the women’s movements. In 1889, this was similar, with many special reports on other countries. However, there was no longer the need for explanation as to the necessity of international information exchange; the utility of the discussion was considered self-evident because of the precedent set by 1878. Then, in 1900, the use of particular examples and reports on other nations almost vanished, replaced by a commitment to general principles which were not nationally specific.

It appears, therefore, that the notion of ‘international’ within the Paris World Exhibition women’s rights congress proceedings changed from being a representation of diversity and variation in 1878 to a broad sense of universalism over women’s rights and needs by 1900. While the first congress, in 1878, sought to take advantage of internationalism as a resource for information, members of the French women’s movement were firmly invested in their own strategies to persuade their own deputies and senators of the need for legal changes in women’s condition. The international perspective offered by these congresses was therefore organised and intended to assist most consistently with the aims of a French social movement. By 1900, the contradiction within this strategy was beginning to show, with little overt discussion of international perspectives and even complaints by certain foreign members about the French focus of discussion. The French international women’s rights congresses must therefore consistently be understood as bound up with strategies related to the French Republic’s own political system, as well as with a French nationalism

which asserted women’s rights on the basis of a perceived historical affiliation between France and human rights.

6: Colonialism within the Paris World Exhibitions women’s rights congresses, 1878 – 1900

This chapter analyses the women’s rights congresses of the World Exhibitions by taking account of the colonial power relations in which they were situated. These congresses were entrenched within the colonialist ambitions and assumptions of France and other Western nations, in which speakers articulated their perceived superiority over colonised countries and their right to speak on behalf of the whole world. The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the birth of the ‘Scramble for Africa’ or ‘New Imperialism’: the race between Britain, France, Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain and Germany to acquire colonies and protectorates in order to demonstrate their power and prestige on the international stage. These nations acquired control over ten million square miles of new territory and 110 million colonial subjects in Africa alone.[308] With little regard for local agreement, Western European governments scrapped over their claims to colonised lands and conceived of a legal framework of colonisation with the Berlin West Africa Conference of 1884-5, whilst “explorers, officials, traders and missionaries” imposed colonial control over local rulers.[309] Britain had been the dominant imperialist nation with little competition for much of the nineteenth century, but from 1870 onwards other European nations ‘scrambled’ to get in on the act, to gain lands and international status.[310]

Alongside this imperial context, the United States had implemented a set of racial segregation laws on national and state levels in the aftermath of their Civil War, known as ‘Jim Crow’, named after a character in a minstrel show which had portrayed an offensive and

[308] Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912* (New York: Random House, 1991), xxi.
[309] Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 141-3.
[310] Doyle, *Empires*, 146.

ridiculing stereotype of black Americans. Jim Crow included segregation on public transport, interdictions on interracial marriages and laws limiting the access of African Americans to the vote.[311] As historians David Gellman and David Quigley have highlighted, Jim Crow "meant the exclusion of African Americans from political power, educational opportunity, and even the basic human dignities of equal access to water fountains, lunch counters and bathrooms."[312] In other words, the USA and the Western colonial powers had political systems that validated racist and imperialist ideologies, privileging the power and human rights of those of European descent, and viewing people of other ethnicities as racially and socially inferior. This is an important context for the discussions of the 'international' congresses of women's rights that took place in Paris in 1878, 1889 and 1900; the speakers and organisers of the congresses accepted and benefited from racist and colonialist power structures.

I start this chapter with an examination of how the speakers and organisers of these congresses presented themselves as representing the 'whole world' or 'all humanity'. The attempts at an international approach to discussing women's rights in a collective manner rested strongly upon an assumption of universalism concerning women's plight and its solutions. This assumption can be tied into what Chandra Mohanty has critiqued as a "universal patriarchal framework" which Western feminists use to make generalisations about women's condition.[313] The speakers and organisers of the congresses assumed that the reports and speeches they heard portrayed a 'universal' female experience which allowed them to speak for how 'all' nations could improve women's rights.

I then turn to an analysis of the presentation (or lack thereof) of the supposed

[311] Ronald L. F. Davis, "From Terror to Triumph: An Historical Overview," *The History of Jim Crow*, accessed 3 April 2014, www.jimcrowhistory.org/history/overview.htm.
[312] David N. Gellman and David Quigley, *Jim Crow New York: A Documentary History of Race and Citizenship, 1777-1877* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 3.
[313] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Boundary 2* 12/13 (1984): 335.

inferiority of countries outside of Europe and the neo-Europes (primarily the USA) within the proceedings of these women's rights congresses.[314] Antoinette Burton provides a theoretical framework of a Western feminist discourse of "saving" other women, as encompassed by "global sisterhood."[315] This formula is powerful in understanding how the speakers at the congresses, who primarily represented Western Europe and the USA, constructed women in colonies and other 'backward' nations as needing their help. Since there were no indigenous representatives from such countries actually speaking at (or even attending) these congresses, the discussion or mere mentions of their experiences were rooted in imperialist assumptions which saw non-European countries as 'behind' France, Britain, the USA and other Western nations in terms of progress.

I then examine the implicit superiority of colonial powers as it was produced within the speeches (at least as far as they were reproduced in the published congress proceedings of 1878, 1889 and 1900). This includes both the way in which Western nations (particularly France, Britain and the USA) were described, as well as how the rest of the world was implied to need their guidance. In doing so, I use the framework for a postcolonial analysis offered by Leila Rupp, who has sought to demonstrate how transnational women's organisations "lauded 'Western' societies as the pinnacle of progress for women in contrast to backward, repressive 'Eastern' ways."[316] By analysing how the ideals of Europe and the neo-Europes were presented as the basis for modern progress, we can understand how imperialist ideologies factored into the *self*-representation of speakers at the Paris World Exhibitions' women's rights congresses.

[314] The formulation of 'neo-Europe' to represent countries outside of the geographical region of Europe which shared similar political and social traditions is one I use here because of Leila Rupp's use; Leila J. Rupp, "Challenging Imperialism in International Women's Organizations, 1888-1945," *NWSA Journal* 8 (1996): 8. She takes it from Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), who coined it to refer to nations with populations made up of European descendants in temperate climactic zones.

[315] Burton, "Feminist Quest for Identity," 47.

[316] Rupp, "Challenging Imperialism," 10.

6.1 Universalism at the Paris World Exhibitions' women's rights congresses, 1878 – 1900

The interpretation of the 'international' as depicted within the framework of the international women's rights congresses must be critiqued as belonging to imperialist attitudes. The audience and speakers' claims to represent not just their own nations, but the whole world, reflected a universalising understanding of how colonial power relations during the late nineteenth century were replicated within women's rights congresses. Despite their focus on liberty and freedom for women, people at these congresses interpreted their movement *without* challenging the colonial power structures in which they were located, which denied freedom to much of the world, and assumed that women of the 'whole world' were accurately represented by a body of speakers largely from Western Europe.

In 1878, the congress was not a public event, with a membership card required to attend and listen to speeches, which were distributed by the office of Richer's journal *L'Avenir des Femmes* (as *Le Droit des Femmes* had briefly been renamed).[317] The editors of the proceedings explained that this control was intended to ensure that "the votes on the questions treated by the Congress can be easily controlled."[318] In other words, the organising committee – itself composed of individuals largely from colonial powers – felt the need to "control" the voting on the congress' proposals, and those who were permitted a vote were, as seen in chapter 5, representatives of a particularly European and neo-European set of experiences and opinions.

At the 1889 French and International Congress of the Rights of Women, the congress proceedings represented a similar sense that their mixture of nationalities – largely from Europe and the United States, again – represented the whole world and therefore could draw

[317] 1878 proceedings, 5.
[318] 1878 proceedings, 50.

conclusions for the whole of the human race. There were a small number of subscribers from French colonies – namely Algeria and 'Vietnam' – French Indochina at that time. However, it is clear from the *names* of these subscribers that these were not indigenous people. Those from Algeria include a 'Doctor and Madame Mourlet', a 'Monsieur Nielly', 'Madame Hélène Viviani', and a 'Monsieur Letermelier'. A 'Madame Bonnemain' was from Vietnam – French Indochina.[319] Instead, these subscribers were among those posted to colonies in order to sustain French domination. Similarly, novelist Mina Kruseman, who was prevented from speaking at the 1889 congress because of lack of time, was born in the Netherlands but grew up in the Dutch East Indies. Her presence as a delegate of "one women's society of the Dutch Indies" was thus an example of a European representing the interests of a colony purely because of imperial domination of another state.[320]

Unlike in 1878 (the rules on entering the meetings were not included in the 1889 proceedings), the 1900 women's rights congress of the Paris World Exhibition was explicitly a public event.[321] Nonetheless, there was still strict regulation of who was able to voice an opinion by voting on the proposals of the congress. The proceedings stated that, when voting, a person had to hold their membership card in their raised hand, to ensure that only those who were considered members were able to vote.[322] There was no list of members included in the 1900 proceedings, other than the official delegations discussed in chapter 5. Nonetheless, if we assume that the membership's array of nationalities was broadly similar to the number of speakers, it seems likely that, both in voting and in speaking, it was predominantly those from Europe and the 'neo-Europes' who had a voice in approving the congress' resolutions.[323]

The assumption throughout the congresses, as represented by their proceedings, was,

[319] 1889 proceedings, vii-x. See appendices for complete list of subscribers.
[320] 1889 proceedings, 257. For more on Kruseman, see Justus M. van der Kroef, "The Indonesian Eurasian and His Culture," *Phylon* 16 (1955): 455.
[321] 1900 proceedings, xv.
[322] 1900 proceedings, xiii.
[323] See appendices for lists of speakers and delegates.

therefore, that the attendees represented the whole world. During the opening ceremony of 1878, Maria Deraismes referred to the congress as “international and mixed, that is to say, composed of individuals of both sexes and from *all nations* [my italics].”[324] Later during the same congress, Genevieve Graham Jones from the American National Woman Suffrage Association said “Paris is the point to which pilgrims of *all nations* direct their impatient steps [my italics].”[325] The organisers and attendees assumed that their representation of the ‘international’ - largely composed of French, British and American people – was capable of speaking on behalf of ‘all nations’, an indication of their acceptance of colonialist assumptions of Western imperial domination.

The claim was made throughout the congress of 1889 that the represented audience was ‘universal’ – an audience, it must be made clear, which was not listed, meaning that we cannot know exactly what mixture of nationalities it represented. Despite its domination by European speakers, many spoke of the congress as representing the whole world, as well as communicating with all of it. Sculptress Elisa Bloch closed her speech with the words, “Go, spread our rallying cry, ‘*sursum corda!*’ [‘lift up your hearts!’] and it will echo across the whole world.”[326] During her report on women in Sweden, writer Rosalie Olivecrona stated that,

> We women, while we claim our rights, it is not just to benefit our female sex, but for the benefit of the entire race; the more dignity and elevation of her ideas woman gains, the more social transformation will occur quickly and peacefully...[327]

This sense of the “entire” race, or the “whole” world, being improved by the congress’ proposals represented the assumption that the reports exchanged at the congress – almost entirely focussing on French or European experiences – were representative of the world as a

[324] 1878 proceedings, 14.
[325] 1878 proceedings, 23.
[326] 1889 proceedings, 31. *Sursum corda* is a traditional part of the Eucharistic Prayer in the liturgies of the Church, adding credence to the assumption that the speeches at this congress were rooted in Christian tradition.
[327] 1889 proceedings, 72. More examples of this kinds of universalism, were found in the 1889 proceedings, 82, 101, 174, 222.

homogenous society, requiring one form of activism to improve women's experience. A report sent in by Madame Fabre, secretary of the society *Avenir des Femmes de Nîmes*, claimed that "the history of humanity shows us that accomplished progress is almost always due to collective effort."[328] Yet the "collective effort" so espoused by the speakers at these congresses was based on a notion of a "collective" which assumed the right of European men and women to speak on behalf of the entire world.[329]

There was one incidence in the text of the proceedings of the 1889 women's rights congress of a speaker highlighting that she was just representative of one opinion. Madame Vattier d'Ambroyse, author of *Littoral de la France*, began her speech on the *femme de lettres* with the following statement:

> I wish to establish, before getting onto my subject, that I will express *my* particular ideas. I have not asked eminent personalities, or the congress organisers, to share my way of seeing political, social or religious rights [my italics].[330]

Yet this was the only occasion on which a speaker set out any understanding of the *individual* nature of their opinions or experience. What this extract therefore highlighted, paradoxically, was the assumption across the other speeches of the 1889 congress that the views expressed were representative of all humanity. This reflected an acceptance and assumption of the validity of colonial power relations, which allowed Europeans to speak on behalf of all nations.

At the 1900 women's rights congress, many once more assumed a universal situation with an equally universal solution to be appropriate for the field of women's rights. In an echo of the words of Rosalie Olivecrona in 1889, Anna Féresse-Deraismes, sister to the now-deceased Maria Deraismes, stated:

> This demand for our rights is not only followed for the particular interest of women, but in the

[328] 1889 proceedings, 124.
[329] For more examples of the idea of a unified 'humanity' with a particular path, see speech of Eugénie Potonié-Pierre, 1889 proceedings, 212; 221.
[330] 1889 proceedings, 89-90.

> interests of the entire human race![331]

Similarly, Marguerite Durand’s description of the delegate reception before the start of the congress listed the countries represented in the room (England, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Russia, Italy and the USA) and continued:

> The greatest cordiality presided over this first meeting and the representatives of the press who were gathered there were able to testify that the community... had continued to create a real link of sympathy between the women of *all countries* [my italics].[332]

Once more, therefore, the congress was assumed to represent “all” countries and the “entire” of humanity. Universalism was part of the methodology of the congress as a practice in feminist strategy. In 1900, the psychologist Doctor Foveau de Courmelles argued, “a general formula must be found which applies to all countries.”[333] This focus on a *general* solution allowed speakers to perpetuate the notion that they, as Europeans, could speak for the rest of the world.[334] Mohanty’s critique of universalism is equally applicable in studying these Western feminist descriptions of women’s condition as it is concerning modern feminist scholars, about whom she was writing.[335] By claiming to speak *on behalf* of women in the colonies, who were not invited, let alone present, the speakers at these women’s rights congresses betrayed their wholehearted acceptance of existing colonialist attitudes.

At moments where speeches were more specifically about France during the 1900 event, there were calls for a firm focus on ‘international’ perspectives – namely those which were explicitly general rather than centred on France. During a discussion on regulation of working hours, the editor of the Dutch feminist journal Theodora Schook-Haver asked for a correction to the proposals, which she saw as relating specifically to French law, “as we are in

[331] 1900 proceedings, 23. Also xx, 13, 211.
[332] 1900 proceedings, 3.
[333] 1900 proceedings, 145.
[334] In 1900, as discussed in chapter 5, there were no speakers present who were from the USA.
[335] Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes,” 333-6.

an international Congress."[336] The secretary, *La Fronde* founder and journalist Marguerite Durand, responded:

> The Commission of the Congress is French, it is entirely natural that it would be pulled towards the situation of Frenchwomen. It is up to foreign delegates to propose amendments in relation to the interests that they represent.[337]

As discussed in chapter 5, there were other incidents in which foreign delegates complained that the congress was not international enough – yet it seems clear that they meant that not enough space was being given to allow foreign delegates to speak, rather than the suggestion that those in attendance were not representative of an international body of experiences.[338] In other words, the assumption of organisers, as spoken for by Durand, was that having foreign delegates present, with the chance to speak or vote if they wished, was sufficient to claim a 'universal' or 'general' solution to problems with women's rights and condition. However, it is clear that even when visiting members complained about the overly French priorities of the congress, they did not think to criticise the colonialist assumptions on which they were based.

The central conceit to these congresses, therefore, was that a predominantly European body of men and women was capable of speaking about, and on behalf of, the rest of the world. The fact that its organisers chose its representatives within a limited pool of Western powers demonstrated their colonial and racist assumptions concerning certain nations' capacities to represent themselves. At one point during the 1878 event, Emilie Venturi referred to the "mistaken" assumptions of men that they could say to women, "You are ignorant; let us judge for you, you are weak; let us protect you against your own weakness."[339] Yet no one was recorded within the proceedings as having challenged the assumption, inherent to the congress' very claim to represent 'all nations', that a set of

[336] 1900 proceedings, 62. For more on Schook-Haver, see Mineka Bosch, "History and Historiography of First-Wave Feminism in the Netherlands, 1860 – 1922," in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements*, 58.
[337] 1900 proceedings, 63.
[338] 1900 proceedings, 134, 142, 289, 318.
[339] 1878 proceedings, 97.

speakers who were French, American, British or one of a handful of other nationalities were qualified and indeed able to speak on behalf of women across the world.

6.2 Presenting non-Western nations during the Paris World Exhibition women's rights congresses, 1878 – 1900

Antoinette Burton's ideas concerning 'global sisterhood' and women from colonial power's attempts to 'save' their less fortunate sisters in the colonies were supported by the discourses around the plight of non-Western women during the women's rights congresses.[340] Speakers often ignored the very existence of nations outside of Europe and North America during their speeches; where they did mention or discuss colonies or other non-Western countries, it was within a colonialist framework in which such nations were presented as 'backward' or needing European help to advance.

In 1878, the speeches of the International Congress of the Rights of Women, as reproduced in its official proceedings, made no reference whatsoever to nations which were not European or North American, even with one attendee being from Brazil. The implication of the inferiority of colonised states and non-Western nations was still implicit, however, especially in the links drawn between women's rights and the antislavery movement. For example, the American writer Theodore Stanton's speech on the history of the women's movement highlighted the initiative of what he called "England's friends of negro emancipation" at the 1840 International Congress against Slavery.[341] The sense that slaves were being and had been rescued by their "friends" from colonial powers was made even clearer in a speech demanding better education for women by the American 'Miss Hotchkiss'.[342] She argued that people who were uneducated would not appreciate freedom if

[340] Burton, "Feminist Quest for Identity," 69-70.
[341] 1878 proceedings, 36-7.
[342] I have not been able to firmly identify 'Miss Hotchkiss'.

it was given to them, since, “in America, it is not the stupefied slaves who demanded their freedom.”[343] The result of this kind of racist thinking was the view that those within a privileged position of power were responsible for the emancipation of others, who were not capable of speaking for themselves. Hotchkiss demonstrated her belief that those who were dominated by others – slaves in her example, but also people from colonised nations – lacked the agency to demand their own rights, at least without education. Her perception was emblematic of the colonialist and racist assumption that people from countries like Britain and France were better qualified to speak for those from the colonies than indigenous people themselves.

Perhaps the most overt incidence of the presentation of non-Western peoples as inferior and powerless in the proceedings of all the congresses was a 1889 report, sent by the radical suffragist Hubertine Auclert, on ‘The Arab Woman’. At the time, she was living in Algeria with her husband, Antonin Lévrier, a justice of the peace in the city of Frenda.[344] Auclert emphasised the “different laws” which ruled the lives of Muslim women and asked her audience, “will you not allow yourselves to feel pity for these little victims of Muslim debauchery?”[345] She acknowledged that Arabic women experienced different kinds of independence to those of the French; yet ultimately her argument was that the French citizenry should not allow practices such as polygamy or forcing young children to marry to occur “on French soil” in Algeria.[346] Her solution was to suggest “the fusion of our race to this Arab race which has given birth to many wonders,” notably by making French language teaching mandatory and banning polygamy and young marriage, which would “remove racial prejudice.”[347] Her call for French women to ‘save’ these deprived Arab women reproduced

[343] 1878 proceedings, 64.
[344] Eichner, “*La Citoyenne* in the World,” 67.
[345] 1889 proceedings, 175-6.
[346] 1889 proceedings, 178.
[347] 1889 proceedings, 181.

the idea of 'global sisterhood' which Antoinette Burton highlights among nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British feminists.[348] By claiming that Arabic women needed French help to recover and progress, Auclert betrayed her lack of any recognition of their agency, and ignored the racist assumptions underpinning French domination of Algeria and the rest of the French-dominated Arab world. She also reproduced the ideology of 'assimilation' which was a prominent policy within French colonial administration until around 1900 – the idea that the best way to rule in the colonies was to give colonised people the benefit and advantage of French customs and laws, rather than altering policy to take account of local policy.[349]

Historian Carolyn Eichner has explored the brand of 'feminist imperialism' propagated by Auclert through her journal *La Citoyenne.* According to Eichner, Auclert and her publication "strove to disrupt the absolutes of 'civilised' France and 'uncivilised' colonies" but nonetheless "appropriated their [Arab women's] oppression to further her primary goal of French women's full citizenship."[350] For Auclert, "full citizenship" was defined by suffrage, as her ultimate priority. The report submitted to the 1889 congress supported Eichner's argument, most notably in that Auclert opposed the French attitude to their empire, but did not ultimately object to their imperial domination of Algeria or other colonies, and still felt that French laws and customs would benefit colonised peoples. At these congresses, references to colonies served merely to underline the universal nature of women's plight and suggest that European and neo-European attitudes to women were more advanced than their own. Their rhetoric exemplified Burton's 'global sisterhood', appropriating non-

[348] Burton, "Feminist Quest for Identity," 47.

[349] Julia Ann Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, introduction to Clancy-Smith and Gouda, eds., *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 13-14. Clancy-Smith and Gouda contrast "assimilation" with the Dutch policy in the East Indies of "association," which focused policy on the basis of individual ethnic groups. After French colonial administrations moved away from "assimilation" policy towards "association," feminists and socialists, including Auclert, argued that this deprived colonised people of the benefits of French law. Jean Elisabeth Pedersen, "'Special Customs': Paternity Suits and Citizenship in France and the Colonies, 1870 – 1912," in Clancy-Smith and Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire*, 52.

[350] Eichner, "*La Citoyenne* in the World," 64-5.

Western women's experiences to demonstrate the global and universal nature of women's suffering, while simultaneously claiming Western superiority and duty to 'save' other nations by helping them along the Europeanised path of progress.

At other points during the 1889 congress, speakers demonstrated that they were, like Auclert, unquestioning of the racialised ideologies that were part of colonial power structures. During his speech on men and women during the "prehistoric era," Doctor Verrier, a supporter of Auclert and *La Citoyenne*, stated that:

> The New Zealanders, at the current time, like the Indians of North America or the negro tribes of Central Africa, live from day to day, without worrying about the next day and with no concern for day before; inferior in that, perhaps, than our cave dwellers of the stone age.[351]

The construction of indigenous people in colonies or former colonies as "inferior" to those from Europe, attached to discussion of the supposed anatomical explanations of such inferiority, represented a whole-hearted acceptance of the idea that colonial powers – Britain, France and the Netherlands were the most pertinent examples in terms of the attendance of these congresses – were *naturally* more adept to rule. There was no questioning of these assumptions within the feminism discussed at these congresses.

As discussed in chapter 5, the 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women included fewer references to specific countries than in 1878 or in 1889. There were thus an even smaller number of references to countries not in Europe or North America, and virtually none to colonies.[352] There were small mentions of the Ottoman Empire, including one moment where *La Fronde* writer Louise Debor mentioned Turkish women wearing trousers during a discussion about regulation on clothing.[353] Mary Léopold-Lacour, another journalist for *La Fronde*, gave a report on the history of coeducation, abroad and in France, which finished with a few sentences on the Middle East:

[351] 1889 proceedings, 34. On Doctor Verrier, see James F. McMillan, *France and Women, 1789-1914: Gender, Society and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2000), 189.
[352] There are now references to New Zealand, however, having passed female suffrage. 1900 proceedings, 16.
[353] 1900 proceedings, 80. For more on Debor and her writing, see Roberts, "Acting Up," 1130-1.

> In the Levant... there are coeducational schools. Beirut has one which has been well-run by a young French couple... In Smyrna, there has long been a large mixed school maintained by the Greeks and a Frenchwoman. It has only remained coeducational because the man who runs it had just had his education in France.[354]

Thus even when discussing a place which was not under French or European control, Léopold-Lacour felt it necessary to make clear that it was positive French influence which affected progress in women’s education. She reproduced the ideology of colonial ‘assimilation’ in which it was assumed that ideas from France would benefit those in non-Western nations.[355] References like this are too sparse to make overarching conclusions about the 1900 congress members’ attitudes to colonial power structures, but it seems likely that the sense that certain values and cultures – namely those of the British and French, and sometimes American nations – were those which should be implemented across the world, was both widespread and largely unquestioned.

Thus the speakers at these congresses adopted a patronising attitude towards those nations outside of the limited geographical scope which they represented, largely suggesting that they were ‘behind’ Western Europe and the United States in terms of progress or simply failing to mention them at all. We can situate this attitude among French and British speakers in what Antoinette Burton has referred to as “a self-image of themselves as the rightful citizens of an imperialist nation.”[356] Burton coined this term to describe middle-class British feminists, but it seems equally applicable to an international body of women’s rights campaigners who came primarily from colonising nations. Constructing those outside of Europe and the neo-Europes as backward, and needing French or Western help, supported colonising ideologies concerning Western supremacy.

[354] 1900 proceedings, 166-7.
[355] Clancy-Smith and Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire*, 13-14.
[356] Burton, “The Feminist Quest for Identity,” 47.

6.3 Assuming and presenting Western superiority at the Paris World Exhibition women's rights congresses, 1878 – 1900

As Leila Rupp has argued, international approaches to women's rights based their claims upon the idea that *their* version of progress was the right one.[357] This included the Euro-American leadership of international women's rights initiatives, and the choice of English, German or French as the language in which to conduct meetings and discussions.[358] For the international women's rights congresses of the Paris World Exhibitions, the largely French organising committees, majorities of French speakers and the insistence upon using the French language all maintained the domination of French feminists over the discussions. Implicit in much of the discourse of the 1878 women's rights congress in Paris was an assumption that, as a predominantly European gathering, they represented a superior set of ideals and values which made the time ripe for discussion of women's rights.

Throughout the congresses, the speakers made multiple references to America and England as the kinds of emancipatory campaigns worthy of emulation. Theodore Stanton gave a speech on the women's movement in the United States in 1878. He finished with the declaration:

> Public opinion, which is the great power within *our democracy*, shows itself more favourable to woman's emancipation each year... Can't we hope for the same for France?[359]

Similarly, Maria Deraismes, as president of the 1889 congress, remarked in her opening speech:

> It is fair... to recognise that American women have launched and carried on with an emancipatory campaign with a vigour and constancy worthy of our admiration...[360]

[357] Rupp, "Challenging Imperialism," 10.
[358] Rupp, "Challenging Imperialism," 9-10.
[359] 1878 proceedings, 45.
[360] 1889 proceedings, 9. Further examples include the speech of the sculptress Elisa Bloch, 30 and the speech of Kate Mitchell, British temperance campaigner, which discussed the foundation of an international union of temperance which combined England, America and Australia, 143.

This kind of highlighting of the superiority of the women's movements in the United States implied an unquestioning certainty that they and other Western nations were working in the only appropriate way to improve women's condition. The assumption was therefore not only that they should be admired, but also that they should work towards the same results in nations elsewhere. In another example from the 1889 event, the Swiss feminist Marie Goegg-Pouchoulin talked about the efforts in England to remove police powers to examine suspected prostitutes (the Contagious Diseases Acts):[361]

> The fight began in England, and it was also there that it finished first... Victory won in the mother-country, the English busied themselves with passing on the effects in even the furthest colonies, and they succeeded, not without effort. A few months ago, the House of Commons unanimously invited the Indian government to withdraw the regulations [on prostitution], whose details horrifyingly surpass those produced by even the most alarmed imagination.[362]

Thus the mission to improve things for women was constructed as a specifically international one, which involved colonial powers replicating their efforts to improve women's experience in other countries, regardless of cultural differences or any sense that this was not their role to fulfil. During her speech at the 1889 closing banquet, scientist and honorary president Clémence Royer stated:

> Woman's spirit has a great mission of peace and union to fulfil. She must prepare for it. … To her falls the duty to teach herself to enlighten peoples, so often blind to their own interests; to appease discord of parties and castes rather than agitating them; to make men put down their weapons intended for great slaughter...[363]

Constructing women's "mission" and colonised peoples' "blindness" in this way was another example of Burton's 'global sisterhood' concept. The sense that European and neo-European ideas needed to be encouraged among colonised peoples in order to bring them closer to the Western ideal model of modernity inferred that they were racially and nationally inferior to France, Britain, the USA and other Western countries. Royer's words were evidence that the

[361] For more information on the British Contagious Diseases Acts and the campaigns against them, led by Josephine Butler, see Anne Summers, "Which Women? What Europe? Josephine Butler and the International Abolitionist Federation," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 62 (2006): 214–31.
[362] 1889 proceedings, 173.
[363] 1889 proceedings, 268.

organisers and audiences of the 1889 women's rights congress in Paris had no objections to a colonialist and racist power structure which saw European ideals upheld as better than those in the countries certain amongst them had colonised.

Similarly, in 1900, Henri Lefort, a Frenchman who had been instrumental in the founding of the International Workingmen's Association, suggested during a discussion on women's access to work, "From an international point of view, the French government offers a great example."[364] The suggestions of certain powers offering an "example" was also seen in the published views of the congress. Part of proposal twelve from the 1900 education section read as follows:

> That domestic schools be founded, *as in* England, in Belgium, in Germany, etc., for women who wish to manage farms themselves, and that teaching farms be founded for the training of employees and instructors [my italics].[365]

The education section also greatly praised the coeducational system in the United States.[366] Speakers at the congress thus presented Western nations as the most appropriate examples for the reset of the world to follow, assuming the necessity and rightful nature of their colonial superiority.

Chapter 5 discussed the fact that particular countries appeared far more as examples of how women's condition might be better improved – namely France itself, the USA and Britain. But we should also include this as part of a critique of the racist colonialism which underpinned this internationalism. It is evident that the speakers and organisers of the three women's rights congresses at the Paris World Exhibitions did not question, and were deeply entrenched within, the beliefs inherent to the imperialist ambitions of many of the countries they represented, particularly Britain and France. This included the representation of British, French, American and other Western European ideologies as the *only* paths to progress for

[364] 1900 proceedings. For more on Lefort, see Milorad M. Drachkovitch, introduction to Drachkovitch, ed., *The Revolutionary Internationals, 1864-1943* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1966).
[365] 1900 proceedings, 300.
[366] 1900 proceedings, 161.

women’s rights. The speakers and organisers of women’s rights congresses at the Paris World Exhibitions, as with the leaders international women’s organisations analysed by Leila Rupp, saw Western societies as leading the way for women’s rights in the world.

The women’s rights congresses in Paris in 1878, 1889 and 1900 were organised on the basis of colonialist assumptions that a group of speakers from European and American countries were capable of and suited to speaking on behalf of women across the entire world. In doing so, the organisers demonstrated their acceptance of a universalising image of women’s experience and needs: one which was based upon reports predominantly based on Western Europe and North America. In addition, the solutions proposed by the speakers and committees of the congresses were built around racist ideologies which interpreted Western women’s condition as progressive and other experiences, particularly in the colonies, as inferior and requiring guidance by colonising powers. This was emphasised because of the general preference within French colonial administrations for policies favouring ‘assimilation’; that is, imposing French laws upon colonised peoples.

7: Women’s rights congresses, Parisian World Exhibition culture and French ‘international’ nationalism, 1878 - 1900

This chapter interprets the congresses of women’s rights in 1878, 1889 and 1900 within the precise context of the World Exhibitions in Paris. These Exhibitions brought together representatives of many world cultures over the course of several months for congresses discussing political and social issues, opportunities for trade and industry, and displays and exhibitions of art, inventions and – more significantly for contextualising ‘international’ congresses – people from French colonies. These occasions were opportunities to share and produce knowledge about current affairs, science and trade on a international scale; by doing so, the host and visiting nations presented and represented their rivalries with other Western powers and superiority over colonised countries.

The position of women’s rights congresses within the exhibitions changed between 1878 and 1900, with the International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women in 1900 being the first – and only – French-organised women’s rights congress which was officially sponsored by the Paris municipal council, giving it ‘official’ status. However, there were also other congresses which focussed on women, namely the International Congresses of Women’s Works and Institutions which took place during the Exhibitions of both 1889 and 1900, and which were ‘official’. In this chapter, I discuss what was inferred by being an ‘official’ congress of a World Exhibition. I then move on to discuss the impact of French nationalism and self-representation within the international milieu of the Exhibitions, specifically with relation to women’s rights congresses. Finally, I set the discussions of women’s rights within the context of the ‘global’ spectacles and displays which were being held contemporaneously with the international congresses of women’s rights.

The first World Exhibition is generally considered to have been the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, spearheaded by Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria.[367] This event prompted a wave of similar events across the globe, with Ireland and the USA holding their first World Exhibitions in 1853 and France, New Zealand, Austria, Australia, the Netherlands and India all hosting similar events over the next three decades. Paris held World Exhibitions in 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, and 1900.[368] I have chosen to describe the events termed *Expositions Universelles* in French as 'World Exhibitions' in English, but other scholars have chosen 'World Fairs', 'International Expositions' or other terms. I do not intend to suggest that 'World Exhibitions' has more validity than other expressions, but have merely chosen to use it throughout my writing for the purpose of consistency.

7.1 International women's rights congresses and the granting of 'official' status

The granting of 'official' status to the congresses was fraught with complication and potential interference. Maria Deraismes, as one of the pivotal organisers, described the 1878 International Congress of the Rights of Women as taking place "during the Exhibition," and Léon Richer chose to organise it specifically at that moment in order to profit from the gathering of many nations in Paris, but it was not technically a part of the World Exhibition in any official capacity.[369] This was reflected in the fact that few of the speakers made mention of the Exhibition as a frame of any particular importance.

In 1889, the relationship between the French and International Congress of the Rights

[367] For more on the 1851 Great Exhibition, see Auerbach, "The Great Exhibition and Historical Memory."
[368] For a comprehensive record of world exhibitions from 1851 until 2010, see J. E. Findling and K. D. Pelle, *Encyclopedia of World's Fairs and Expositions* (McFarland & Company, 2008).
[369] Deraismes, "Eve dans l'Humanité," in *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 2, 242; Viviani, *Cinquante-Ans de Féminisme*, 4.

of Women and the Exhibition commemorating the centenary of the 1789 Revolution was more complex. The organisers had begun the process of planning with the expectation that the congress *would* be an official event of the World Exhibition – yet Deraismes stated in her opening speech:

> It remains for me to supply some explanation to people who are surprised that our Congress is not official. It is not official because we did not believe it essential to accept the conditions imposed upon us by the directing body of the Exhibition. Under such circumstances [i.e. official status] it appeared that the directors reserved the right to choose a president.[370]

She went on to explain that the president the Exhibition directors had chosen "does not see the woman question as we do," particularly with reference to protective working laws which she saw as limiting, and concluded that "we preferred that our Congress be free."[371] Although she did not name him, the president they had rejected was Jules Simon, a *Journal des Débats* journalist.[372] Deraismes went on to use this rejection of an imposed president with different views to state the freedom of expression which she claimed was inherent to the congress:

> Our congress being free, each can express all of their thinking, and moreover, we therefore model ourselves on the great significance of the Centenary.[373]

However, during the same year, there was another congress of women which *was* 'officially' part of the World Exhibition: the International Congress of Women's Works and Institutions, held in July, and organised by female philanthropists, especially author Émilie de Morsier.[374] Historian Florence Rochefort characterises the division in priorities between the self-proclaimed feminist congress organised by Richer and Deraismes and the philanthropist event as demonstrating a "clash" between progressive rights-based feminism and conservative

[370] 1889 proceedings, 2.
[371] 1889 proceedings, 3. There is more discussion of the debate over the 'protectionist' strategy of regulating working hours in chapter 4.
[372] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 82.
[373] 1889 proceedings, 4.
[374] De Morsier wrote about the Congress of Works and Institutions and reproduced some of its discussions in Émilie de Morsier, *La Mission de la Femme : Discours et Fragments* (Paris: Libraire Fischbacher, 1897), 109-14.

protection of women's special role in philanthropy.[375] However, I would argue that we should not necessarily interpret the holding of two congresses as demonstrative of opposition or rivalry within women's movements as represented at the 1889 Paris World Exhibition. Although the philanthropic women's congress was officially supported by the local government and organisers of the Exhibition, many people attended both congresses and it should therefore not be assumed that the policies espoused by the two women's congresses of 1889 were opposed.[376] More importantly, I do not think that a lack of 'official' status changed the way in which the 1889 women's rights congress was viewed: contemporary newspapers certainly considered the French and International Congress of the Rights of Women a part of the Exhibition. *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires*, for example, included its discussion in its 'Chronique de l'Exposition' feature, despite the congress' rejection of their own journalist, Jules Simon, as president.[377]

In 1900, by contrast, the International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women was 'official', and such status made a significant difference to the structuring of the discussions and proceedings of the congress. The preface reproduced a letter soliciting a subsidy of five thousand francs from the Paris municipal council, and the congress' membership cards (distributed by the daily women's newspaper *La Fronde*) gave their holders free entry to the rest of the Exhibition for the four days on which the congress took place.[378] This congress also marked the first time that 'official' delegates were sent by foreign governments to a French-organised women's rights congress, as the president Maria Pognon expressed with considerable pride.[379] There was also another 'official' International Congress of Women's Institutions and Works during 1900, but this was not a rival for the support given

[375] Rochefort, "The French Feminist Movement and Republicanism," in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements*, 88-90.
[376] This is the implication in Moses, *French Feminism*, 221.
[377] "Chronique de l'Exposition," *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires* (Paris), 28 June 1889.
[378] 1900 proceedings, xiii-xiv, xvii.
[379] 1900 proceedings, 21.

to the women's rights congress. Instead, the organisers and many of the attendees of both women's congresses in 1900 collaborated to form a French National Council of Women the following year, an organisation which historians Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort characterised as the first feminist 'party' in France.[380]

Despite the fact that only one of the women's rights congresses held during a Paris Exhibition was an 'official' part of the World Exhibition itself, they derived elements of their authority and justification from their situation within Paris' World Exhibitions. With this chapter, I hope to demonstrate how, for all three congresses, the context of a World Exhibition lent their discussions of women's rights questions a validity which was derived from situating themselves in this specific international environment, during the time of the "international turn."[381]

7.2 The (self-)representation of France and the nation within World Exhibitions and women's rights congresses

World Exhibitions, for all of their claimed focus on international collaboration and dialogue, were abound with nationalist rhetoric and attempts to demonstrate the modernity and progress of the host country. I interpret 'nation' in the same way as historian Eric Hobsbawm: as a group of human beings whose existence as a single entity may be defined by a common language, ethnicity or mere geographical boundary, but primarily as a concept which was and is derived *from* nationalism, rather than the other way round. This notion of a 'nation' belonged to a historically specific time frame that began during the nineteenth

[380] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 147-9. For more information on the French National Council of Women, see Anne Cova, "International Feminisms in Historical Comparative Perspective: France, Italy and Portugal, 1880s–1930s," *Women's History Review* 19 (2010): 595–612.
[381] Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, 12-13.

century.[382] Hobsbawm also highlights how, during periods of imperial expansion, national rivalries were encouraged by governments.[383]

Other historians have also highlighted a spirit of competition between Western, imperial powers which was highlighted in a number of ways during exhibition events. Jeffrey Auerbach's analysis of the 1851 London Great Exhibition suggests the idea that exhibitions were "new arenas in which nations could compete with each other."[384] Literary scholar Vlasta Vranjes uses exhibition culture as a framework for analysing British literature, and highlights the discursive construction of Britain as uniquely capable of gathering together "all nations" for the Great Exhibition, to demonstrate how advanced the nation was in its cosmopolitanism.[385]

In a similar way, elements of the Exhibitions hosted by France established French power in rivalry with other Western powers and demonstrated a particularly French national character. Historian of exhibition politics Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus has analysed the attendance of the 1889 Paris World Exhibition by the "great powers"; she suggested that, despite the Exhibition's conspicuous status as a commemoration of the particularly French Revolution of 1789, the French government hoped to use it "to deny France's isolation" and to show "the sympathy that France was able to generate not only among the new nations of America, but also in Europe, and among the great powers."[386] Similarly, Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort wrote that the 1900 World Exhibition was "a new opportunity to show the whole world that feminism knew how to conquer France."[387] In other words, by attracting an international audience to attend events in France, organisers of both the World

[382] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 5-10.
[383] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 122.
[384] Auerbach, "The Great Exhibition and Historical Memory," 106.
[385] Vlasta Vranjes, "English Cosmopolitanism and/as Nationalism: The Great Exhibition, the Mid-Victorian Divorce Law Reform, and Brontë's 'Villette,'" *Journal of British Studies* 47 (2008): 330-1.
[386] Brigitte Schrœder-Gudehus, "Les Grandes Puissances devant l'Exposition Universelle de 1889," *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 149 (1989): 16. My translation.
[387] Klejman and Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche*, 137. My translation.

Exhibitions and of the women's rights congresses upon which I here focus sought to demonstrate the sympathy between France and other powerful nations. They also portrayed claims of the central role France was able to play within international relations by virtue of its particular character and history. We saw in chapter 5 that the speakers at the women's rights congresses spoke of France as uniquely qualified to host such events and lead the way in advancing women's rights, even while seeking to learn from the different experiences reported from other nations.

In addition, the speeches recorded in the proceedings of the Paris World Exhibition women's rights congresses used France's national history as a mechanism to demonstrate France's importance within international discussions of rights and social movements. During the 1878 International Congress of the Rights of Women, a French speaker named Louise Rétoux stated that, "France is the country of intelligence *par excellence*, the point from which light shines on the whole world."[388] During the 1889 French and International Congress of the Rights of Women, author Mme Vattier d'Ambroyse spoke of the "anomaly" of calling intellectual women "bluestockings" in "France, the country of generous and intelligent progress."[389] Swiss feminist Marie Goegg-Pouchoulin also presented France in this way, speaking of the "particular genius of France, who believes in the virtual power of principles, and who has the glory of having suffered much for them."[390] At one point during the 1889 congress, president Maria Deraismes opened a speech on prostitution with the following statement:

> The subject is delicate, but I estimate that the French language is rich enough, supple enough, clever enough, to furnish me with the words allowing me to treat this subject without shaking up legitimate sensitivities.[391]

Thus even the language in which the congresses were conducted was imbued with a particular

[388] 1878 proceedings, 95. I have not been able to find more biographical information on Rétoux.
[389] 1889 proceedings, 90.
[390] 1889 proceedings, 169.
[391] 1889 proceedings, 164.

nationalist importance when it came to discussing women’s rights. Speakers implied the French commitment to a set of principles, which were never particularly defined, but were used to demonstrate the suitability of France to host a women’s rights congress and to discuss the woman question. Such ‘principles’ allowed the presentation of France as holding an important role in the sphere of women’s rights. France’s history with human rights was employed both to assert national superiority and to demonstrate the need for women’s rights, in order to fulfil France’s rights-based traditions. When viewed within the framework of World Exhibitions, this can also be interpreted as a part of a wider trend of constructing the host nation as superior to other visiting countries.

7.3 Discussing women’s rights within the spectacle and display of an ‘international’ environment

Having sought to establish that Paris World Exhibitions *and* speakers during the women’s rights congresses sought to construct France as superior, I now seek to situate these congresses within the physical context of the ‘international’ environment of the World Exhibition. These events were intended to encompass, across visual exhibitions, congresses and trading events, the contemporary state of knowledge, science and politics. The environment of an Exhibition also constructed Western nations as powerful and racially superior, and others – namely colonies – as not. Holding women’s rights congresses within this particular geographical and temporal environment (in Paris, the site of the Exhibition, and during Exhibition years) meant that their discussions were a part of producing and reproducing ideologies about what the ‘international’ environment was during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In historian Glenda Sluga’s book on internationalism, she characterised the end of the nineteenth century as fascinated with the idea of the

'international' and the passing of the 'national'; ten new international organisations were founded each year during the 1890s, opportunities for sociability across borders were facilitated by opportunities for communication and transport, and claims were made that 'objective internationalism' had arrived.[392]

As well as this new capacity to socialise across borders, World Exhibitions offered an environment in which to discuss new areas of knowledge, and were responsible for the production and reproduction of colonialist and supposedly modernist ways of thinking about science and society. According to scholar Elizabeth Gralton, the Exhibitions "aimed to 'expose' all the knowledge of the 'universe' to the general public in a rational and ordered fashion."[393] In a volume on the Dutch National Exhibition of Labour in 1898 (which was not a World Exhibition), historians Maria Grever and Berteke Waaldijk demonstrate that the Dutch women's movement "used an exhibition to put women's social position on the political agenda."[394] Combining these two understandings of exhibition culture, we can interpret the women's rights congresses which took place as *part of* World Exhibitions as attempting to proclaim the worth of women's rights issues as an important area of modern discussion. In other words, the best way to demonstrate the relevance of women's rights was to show that they had credibility in an international environment. As architectural historians Zeynep Çelik and Leila Kinney phrased it, "The universal expositions... were intended as microcosms that would summarize the entire human experience" – including, by virtue of the congresses organised by Maria Deraismes and Léon Richer, the experience of women.[395]

René Viviani, a left-wing politician who was an adjoint secretary during the French and International Congress of the Rights of Women in 1889 and a vice-president during the International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women in 1900, wrote a detailed

[392] Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, 11-14.
[393] Gralton, "A Battle for the French Soul," 197-8.
[394] Grever and Waaldijk, *Transforming the Public Sphere*, 9-10.
[395] Çelik and Kinney, "Ethnography and Exhibitionism," 36.

account on feminism in France in 1920. He placed great importance on the context of World Exhibitions for the women's rights congresses examined here. Having recounted the postponement of an international women's rights congress in 1873, he wrote that "the exhibition of 1878 presented a favourable opportunity to take up the idea again."[396] He described his introduction to Maria Deraismes as follows:

> I knew her in 1889, at the point when the Exhibition, having called a number of foreigners to Paris, held the international congress of the Rights of Women in the *Société de Géographie*, of which I was one of the secretaries.[397]

For Viviani, at least, the congresses were therefore situated firmly within the international opportunity presented by the World Exhibitions in Paris.

In addition, during the congresses themselves, speakers referenced the environment of the exhibitions and used them to place themselves, as attendees of an international congress, within an international framework of activism. During the 1889 French and International Congress of the Rights of Women, Maria Deraismes spoke of the success of its predecessor:

> Already, in 1878, during the previous World Exhibition, a Congress of the Rights of Women produced excellent results. It must surely only have been the prelude to that of 1889.[398]

During the International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women in 1900, president Maria Pognon read out the regrets of the French writer Henry Bérenger that he could not "attend the meetings of a Congress which will certainly be one of the most interesting, the most important, and the most useful of the 1900 Exhibition."[399] During the closing speeches, Ottilie Hoffmann, the delegate from the German National Council of Women, said the following:

> During the months of this great and marvellous Exhibition, you have seen the most important Congresses assembling in Paris. Today, at the end of this Congress that you organised with

[396] Viviani, *Cinquante-Ans de Féminisme*, 70.
[397] Viviani, *Cinquante-Ans de Féminisme*, 7.
[398] 1889 proceedings, iii. This is in contrast to during the congress of 1878 itself, when the speakers made far fewer references to the Exhibitions. Indeed, the only explicit reference I have found was during Miss Hotchkiss' speech on education, in which she referred to certain displays on the state of higher education for women in the USA. 1878 proceedings, 57.
[399] 1900 proceedings, 72.

> such foresight, marking such great social progress for woman, it is a sincere joy for us, coming from abroad, to see how collaboration for the condition and rights of woman unites us all.[400]

These examples are not just signs that the speakers at the congresses were aware that their events were a part of World Exhibitions. Instead, they show that participants in these congresses understood their discussions as taking place within the specific internationalist context provided *by* such Exhibitions. This kind of event was an innovation of the second half of the nineteenth century, and came with an implication that it represented the current understanding of scientific knowledge and societies. Situating their discussions of women’s rights as a part of the events of a World Exhibition gave their proposals credibility.

However, it must also not be forgotten that the Exhibitions’ forms of knowledge production assimilated and accepted racist colonialist assumptions which reproduced and emphasised the same power relations which were discussed in chapter 6. Zeynep Çelik and Leila Kinney have convincingly argued that the arrangement of displays and quarters representing the French colonies were intended to reproduce an imagery of French power and influence. In 1878, for example, the site for Algeria was partially encircled by the Trocadero Palace, representing “France as a protective father/master with his arms encircling the colonial village.”[401]

Another vital context to the racist notions of superiority perpetuated within women’s rights congresses were the displays of colonised people, which had taken place in trade fairs and world exhibitions throughout the nineteenth century. Sadiah Qureshi’s book on people displays, *Peoples on Parade*, demonstrates how such exhibitions sought to perpetuate supposed “natural knowledge” which constructed colonised bodies as different and separate from the bodies of the people from France, the rest of Europe and North America who flocked

[400] 1900 proceedings, 284.
[401] Çelik and Kinney, “Ethnography and Exhibitionism,” 37.

to see them.[402] In 1889, for example, camps of Congolese, New Caledonians, Dahomeyans, Gabonese and Senegalese people were set up at the foot of the new Eiffel Tower, a symbol of French innovation and progress.[403] Attendees at the women's rights congresses which took place during World Exhibitions therefore were surrounded by physical and architectural representations of France's alleged superiority over its colonies. The speeches they made, and discussions they had, have therefore to be understood within the context of a constantly affirmed authority to speak on behalf of their colonies, as well as race-based notions of Western superiority.

The speakers and organisers of the women's rights congresses of the 1878, 1889 and 1900 World Exhibitions in Paris derived much of their authority to speak on the woman question from the exhibition culture in which they were situated. Although the International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women in 1900 was the first to be 'official' in terms of receiving funding from Paris municipal authorities, all three were able to call upon the World Exhibition as an environment which lent credibility to their discussions as representing an 'international' state of women's condition, in the midst of international events which also claimed to represent the global state of knowledge of science, society and politics. This both allowed for a certain authority to speak on such matters – which perpetuated colonial interpretations of how to represent an 'international' state of a question – and for the reproduction of nationalist representations of France, as an internationally influential power both for its capacity to draw a global audience and its potential to discuss and improve the issue of the 'woman question'.

[402] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 2-8; 279.
[403] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 248.

8: Conclusions

In this thesis, I have analysed the proceedings of the 1878 International Congress of the Rights of Women, the 1889 French and International Congress of the Rights of Women, and the 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women. My aim has been to understand how the organisers and participants at these congresses, which took place during World Exhibitions in Paris, used internationalism to support their feminism. Other than two articles – one by French historian Laurence Klejman, the other by Swedish scholar Ulla Wikander – there has been little by way of historical analysis of the proceedings of these congresses. What I have sought to do, therefore, was understand how these congresses’ status as ‘international’ events was tied to strategies of the French women’s movement to work within the structures of the Third Republic. To analyse this, I have examined the official proceedings of the three congresses for signs of how speakers interpreted the meaning of the ‘international’ within their activism, including an acceptance of colonialist and racist assumptions about the ‘universal’ condition of women. I have also looked for instances of speakers’ use of a framework of French nationalism, based on claims of France’s historical affinity with human rights, and analysed the discussions and resolutions to interpret how the feminism of the congresses was situated within the political context of the French Third Republic.

Based upon my analysis of the congress proceedings and contemporary newspapers *Le Figaro*, *Le Gaulois*, *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires*, and *La Presse*, my first major claim is that the international congresses of women’s rights during the World Exhibitions in Paris in 1878, 1889 and 1900 were conceived, planned and organised according to the context of a time when internationalism was an expression of the modernity and progressiveness of a social cause. World Exhibitions, held in Paris as well as a host of

other cities, were symptomatic of this "international turn."[404] I argue that making women's rights a topic within this international level of discussion was a mechanism for French feminists to demonstrate the credibility of their cause to the French public and to the intellectuals, senators, deputies and journalists who attended. The manner in which issues such as women's access to work, education, protection and divorce rights were treated during these congresses was therefore a part of the strategy of women's rights leaders such as Maria Deraismes, in which "small dents" could be made in discriminatory structures by convincing lawmakers to make small changes, in line with the French republican system of politics.[405]

Secondly, the basis for the discussions of the congresses was an assumption of the universal nature of women's condition, and, by extension, the idea that general solutions could be found which were applicable across nationalities, races and classes. Rendering women's rights a topic for international discussion required the assumption that the reports of delegates from a limited number of countries could represent the 'whole world'. In universalising both the condition of women *and* the proposed solutions intended to advance the feminist cause, I have found that speakers and organisers of these congresses accepted and demonstrated colonialist and racist ideas. These ideas set them, as European and American middle-class individuals, as able to speak on behalf of those who were excluded from their gatherings.

As historian Glenda Sluga has argued, the international and the national were closely intertwined.[406] Along such lines, my third finding is that the congresses' speakers and organisers articulated their claims for women's rights within a specifically French nationalism, which associated national pride with France's supposed historical affinity with the development of other human rights. The environment of World Exhibitions was a site for

[404] Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, 12-14.
[405] Moses, *French Feminism*, 199.
[406] Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*.

national rivalries and for demonstrating the power and influence of a host nation.[407] This study has shown that the women's rights congresses, as events intended to fit into an internationalist World Exhibition culture, portrayed France as superior, even while arguing that participants could learn from the information gleaned from reports on other nations. France was praised for its historical importance within the development of human rights and for its suitability as the location for the 'first' international women's rights congress. The implication was that women's rights were a natural next step for a country such as France.

These ideas can be brought together. The feminism of the women's rights congresses of the Paris Exhibitions was situated within a universalising intention of classifying women's rights in general international terms, which was part of a specifically French republican strategy. This contradiction – between a universalising internationalism and specific measures designed for France – was a conflict which began to emerge by the 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women, with complaints from socialists and foreign visitors emerging over both the bourgeois priorities of the privileged women present and the overly French concerns of many speakers.

This thesis demonstrates the way in which organisers and speakers of international women's rights congresses took advantage of the fashion for international organising to place French feminist priorities within a universalising politics. The proposals of these events were intended to act as guidance for an international audience, but were modelled on changes which were more intended for France. It is only by interpreting them at the crux of the multiple contexts in which they were situated – internationalism, colonialism, French republicanism and nationalism, exhibition culture and feminism – that we can begin to understand the complex internationalising French republican strategy which underpinned these international congresses of women's rights.

[407] Çelik and Kinney, "Ethnography and Exhibitionism," 36.

9: Appendices

9.1 1878 International Congress of the Rights of Women

Appendix 1: 1878 organisers

Name	Nationality	Sex	Role
M. Schoelcher	French	M	Initiative
Eugène Pelletan	French	M	Initiative
Emile Deschanel	French	M	Initiative
A. Laisant	French	M	Initiative
M. Codet	French	M	Initiative
M. Tiersot	French	M	Initiative
M. Boudeville	French	M	Initiative
M. de Hérédia	French	M	Initiative and Organisation (Treasurer)
Antide Martin	French	M	Initiative
Dr. Georges Martin	French	M	Initiative
M. Léon Richer	French	M	Initiative and Organisation (General Commisar)
M. Griess-Traut	French	M	Initiative and Organisation
M. A. S. Morin	French	M	Organisation
Dr. Huguet	French	M	Organisation
M. Rama	French	M	Organisation
M. Emmanuel Pignon (res)	French	M	Organisation
M. Antonin Lévrier (res)	French	M	Organisation
Maria Deraismes	French	F	Initiative and Organisation
Anna Féresse Deraismes	French	F	Initiative and Organisation (Treasurer)
Mlle Amélie Morancé	French	F	Initiative
Mme Caroline de Barrau	French	F	Initiative
Mme V. Griess-Traut	French	F	Initiative and Organisation
Mme J. Richer	French	F	Initiative
Mlle Hubertine Auclert (res)	French	F	Initiative and Organisation
Mme Jenny Chilliet	French	F	Organisation
Mme Lucie Dissat (res)	French	F	Organisation
M. Mauro-Macchi	Italian	M	Initiative
Dr. Antoine Mora	Italian	M	Initiative
Marie Malliani (dec)	Italian	F	Initiative
Marie Goegg	Swiss	F	Initiative
Elise Van Calcar	Dutch	F	Initiative
Serge de Scharapov	Russian	M	Initiative
Theodore Stanton	American	M	Initiative
Julia Ward-Howe	American	F	Initiative
Mary A. Livermore	American	F	Initiative

Source: 1878 proceedings, 1-2 (res = resigned; dec = deceased by the time of the congress).

Appendix 2: 1878 contributors

Name	Nationality	Sex	Notes
Maria Deraismes	French	F	
Maria Mozzoni	Italian	F	
Julia Ward Howe	American	F	
Genevieve Grahame Jones	American	F	
Salvatore Morelli	Italian	M	Letter
Léon Richer	French	M	
Antonin Lévrier	French	M	not submitted
Eugène Garcin	French	M	'Woman's Social Influence and Role in History'
Theodore Stanton	American	M	'The Women's Movement in the USA'
Léonie Rouzade	French	F	
Tony Révillon	French	M	
Elisa Van Calcar	Dutch	F	'Harmonious Education of Women'
Miss Hotchkiss	American	F	'Women's Education in America'
Aurelia Cimino Folliero de Luna	Italian	F	'Woman's Mission' (not read aloud)
Eugénie Pierre	French	F	'Vices of Education in the Different Classes of Society'
Nelly Lieutier	French	F	
Mme Houry	French	F	read out by Richer
Eugénie Pierre	French	F	
M. Payard	French	M	
Constantin Calligari	Romanian	M	
Lucie Dissat	French	F	
M. Pignon	French	M	Not present; text read by M. Lévrier
M. Camille Adam	French	M	
Louise Rétoux	French	F	
Emilie Venturi	English	F	
Mme d'Elhom	French	F	Not present; text read by Mlle Pierre
Maria Deraismes	French	F	
Jean Alesson	French	M	
Mme Griess-Traut	French	F	'On the Influence of War on Women's Fate'
Marie Drouin	French	F	
Camille Chaigneau	French	M	
Dr. Chapman	English	M	Dissertation on prostitutes; read by M. Derode
Emile Venturi	English	F	
Dr. Huguet	French	M	
Mme de Morsier	French	F	
Marie Mozzoni	Italian	F	
Léon Richer	French	M	Suppression of civil incapacities of woman
Jenny Sabatier-Herbelot	French	F	On divorce
Antide Martin	French	M	On *séduction*
Léon Richer	French	M	
Antide Martin	French	M	
Emilie Venturi	English	F	
Maria Deraismes	French	F	
Léonie Rouzade	French	F	
Antide Martin	French	M	

Antide Martin	French	M	
M. Laisant	French	M	
Mme Goëtz-Steinhelmer	French	F	
Marie Mozzoni	Italian	F	
M. Lemonnier	French	M	
Madame Sabatier	French	F	
Emilie Venturi	English	F	
Camille Chaigneau	French	M	Sonnet
Léon Richer	French	M	
Mme Griess-Traut	French	F	Toasts

Source: 1878 proceedings. By order of proceedings. Titles in ‘notes’ where listed.

Appendix 3: 1878 members

Name	Nationality	Sex
M. Camille Adam	French	M
M. Jean Alesson	French	M
M. Alfred Assolant	French	M
Mme Atman	English	F
Mme Aubé	French	F
Mlle Hubertine Auclert	French	F
Mme Vve Bailly	French	F
Miss Anna Balland	English	F
Mme Caroline de Barrau	French	F
Mme Barrière	French	F
M. Bazire	French	M
Mme Sophie Beale	English	F
Mme Berline	unknown	F
M. Bertani	Italian	M
Mme Béseaud	French	F
M. Bibal	French	M
M. Boreau	French	M
M. Ch. Boudeville	French	M
Mme Ch. Boudeville	French	F
Countess of Bourdonnaye	French	F
M. Arthur Bourmensé	French	M
Mlle Marie Boutteville	French	F
Miss Myra Bradwell	English	F
M. Albert Brisbane	American	M
Mme Brisbane	American	F
Miss Brown	English	F
Mme Catherine Bussy	French	F
Mme Brucker	French	F
Mlle Cagé	French	F
M. Constantin Calligari	Romanian	M
Mme de Caqueray	French	F
Mme Carraz	French	F
M. Germain Casse	French	M
Mme Germaine Casse	French	F
M. Rodolphe Cerf	French	M
Mme Cimino Folliero de Luna	Italian	F
M. Camille Chaigneau	French	M
Mme Elisabeth Chalmers	American	F
M. Maurice Champion	French	M
Mme Chaplin Ayrton	English	F
Dr. Chapman	English	M
Mme Chapman	English	F
M. Emile Chaté	French	M
Mme Jenny Chilliet	French	F
Mme Vve Christin	French	F
M. Louis Codet	French	M
M. Colfavru	French	M

Mlle Anne-Marie Cortet	French	F
Mlle Aline Cuvelier	French	F
Mme Dalencourt	French	F
Mme Louise David	French	F
M. Décembre-Alonnier	French	M
Mme Décember-Alonnier	French	F
Mme Demars	French	F
Mlle Maria Deraismes	French	F
M. Derode	French	M
M. Emile Deschanel	French	M
Mme Vve Destriché	French	F
M. August Desmoulins	French	M
Mme Lucie Dissat	French	F
M. Disch	French	M
Mlle Marie Drouin	French	F
M. Duquesne	French	M
M. Clément Dulac	French	M
Mlle Charlotte Duval	French	F
Mlle de Dwernicka	Polish	F
Mme d'Elhom	French	F
Mme Fanny Faron	French	F
M. Fauvety	French	M
M. Féresse-Deraismes	French	M
Mlle Floch	French	F
M. de Font-Réault	French	M
M. Gustave Francolin	French	M
Mme Froissart	French	F
M. Fuzillier	French	M
M. Gagneur	French	M
Mme M.-L. Gagneur	French	F
M. Eugène Garcin	French	M
Mme Eugène Garcin	French	F
M. Marcel Gay	French	M
Mme Gibbons	American	F
M. Giraud	French	M
M. Godissart	French	F
Mme Marie Goegg	Swiss	F
Mme Catherine Gontcharoff	Russian	F
M. Goron	French	F
Mme Goëtz-Steinhelmer	French	F
M. Griess-Traut	French	M
Mme Griess-Traut	French	F
Mme Guéin	French	F
Mme Heaterley	English	F
Dr. Hébert	French	M
M. de Hérédia	French	M
Mlle Herzen	Russian	F
Colonel E. W. Higginson	American	M
Dr. Hoffman	unknown	M
Mlle Hoskens	English	F

Miss Hotchkiss	American	F
M. Houry	French	M
Mme Anna Houry	French	F
Dr. Huguet	French	M
M. Aimé Humbert	Swiss	M
M. Robert Hyenne	French	M
M. Arthur Jame	French	M
M. Frédéric Jones	American	M
M. Fernando Jones	American	M
Mme Grahame Jones	American	F
Mlle Geneviève Graham Jones	American	F
Mme Keller-Dorian	Alsace-Lorraine	F
Mme Klumple	American	F
Mlle Klumple	American	F
Mme Krohn	French	F
M. Krohn	French	M
M. Henry Lacroix	French	M
Mme Amélia Laforgue	French	F
M. Laisant	French	M
Dr. Edouard Landowski	French	M
Dr. Paul Landowski	French	M
M. Lavy	French	M
M. Léger	French	M
Mme Léger	French	F
Mme Vve Lejosne	French	F
M. Lenoël-Zevort	French	M
Mme Lenoël-Zevort	French	F
M. Lenoir	French	M
M. Lemaire	French	M
Charles Lemonnier	French	M
Mme Level	French	F
Dr. Level	French	M
M. Antonin Levrier	French	M
M. Edouard Lévy	French	M
Mme Nelly Lieutier	French	F
M. Ch. Lemousin	French	M
Mme Malval	French	F
M. Mancel	French	M
Mme Lara Marcel	French	F
Mme Marshall	English	F
M. Antide Martin	French	M
Dr. Georges Martin	French	M
Mme Martinet	French	F
M. Mauro-Macchi	Italian	M
Mme de Meysenburg	Russian	F
M. Molet	French	M
Mlle Hélène Molet	French	F
Mlle Marie Molet	French	F
Mlle Amélie Morancé	French	F
Mme Montéran	French	F

Dr. Mora	Italian	M
M. Salvatore Morelli	Italian	M
M. Morin	French	M
Mme de Morsier	French	F
Mlle Anna Maria Mozzoni	Italian	F
Mme Eugènie Niboyet	French	F
Mme Nine Olivetti	Italian	F
M. Parizot	French	M
Mme Party	American	F
M. Frédéric Passy	French	M
Mme Paulin	French	F
M. Payart	French	M
M. Eugène Pelletan	French	M
M. Perrau	French	M
Mme Perrau	French	F
M. Pérussan	French	M
M. Pétrot	French	M
M. Philippe	French	M
Mlle Eugénie Pierre	French	F
M. Pignon	French	M
M. Gaëtano Pini	Italian	M
M. Edouard de Pompéry	French	M
M. Auguste Raimon	French	M
M. Rama	French	M
M. Louis Ratisbonne	French	M
M. Régnier	French	M
M. Léon Richer	French	M
Mme J. Richer	French	F
Mme Rosen	Swiss	F
M. Rosen	Swiss	M
M. Rouzade	French	M
Mme Léonie Rouzade	French	F
Mme Clémence Royer	French	F
Mme Jenny Sabatier-Herbelot	French	F
Mme Louisa Santhworth	American	F
M. Sancelot	French	M
M. Santa-Anna Véry	Brazilian	M
M. Savary	French	M
M. Serge de Scharapov	Russian	M
M. Victor Schoelcher	French	M
Mme Schmael	Russian	M
M. Charles Silvain	French	M
Mme Henriette Silvain	French	F
Mlle Skwarzoff	Russian	F
M. Théodore Stanton	American	M
M. Talendier	French	M
M. Terson	French	M
Mme Tessier	French	F
M. Tiersot	French	M
M. Charles Traut	French	M

Mme Julie Traut	French	F
Mme van Calcar	Dutch	F
Mlle Van der Slyden	Dutch	F
Mme Emilie Venturi	English	F
Mme Eugène Véron	French	F
M. Verrier	French	M
M. Virey	French	M
M. Carl Von Bergen	Swedish	M
Mme Sophie Von Bergen	Swedish	F
M. Von Breitschwert	Belgian	M
Mlle Walker	English	F
M. Walter de Selys	French	M
Mme Julia Ward-Howe	American	F
Dr. Georges Wickham	French	M

Source: 1878 proceedings, 8-10. Names listed as in original document.

9.2 1889 French and International Congress of the Rights of Women

Appendix 4: 1889 organisers

Name	Sex	Role
Clémence Royer	F	Honorary President
Léon Richer	M	Honorary President
Maria Deraismes	F	President
Virginie Griess-Traut	F	Vice-President
Madame Christin	F	Vice-President
Madame Petti	F	General Secretary
Louise Kopp	F	Adjoint Secretary
Monsieur Viviani	M	Adjoint Secretary
Léon Giraud	M	Adjoint Secretary
Anna Féresse-Deraismes	F	Treasurer
Madame Léon Richer	F	Adjoint Treasurer

Source: 1889 proceedings, vi. All members of the committee were French.

Appendix 5: 1889 contributors

Name	Nationality	Sex	Title (where applicable)
Maria Deraismes	French	F	
Clémence Royer	French	F	
Élisa Bloch	French	F	'Some considerations on Woman's different Roles in Society'
Dr. Verrier	French	M	'On Woman's Role during Prehistoric Times; what she could be in the modern era'
Dr. Léonce Manouvrier	French	M	'Anatomic and Physiological Indications Relative to Woman's Natural Attributes'
Pauline Koutschalska-Reinschmit	Polish	F	'The Woman Question in Poland from a Historic Point of View'
Nelly Lieutier	French	F	'A Woman's Council during the Ninth Century'
Rosalie Olivecrona	Swedish	F	'Snapshot of Woman's Condition in Sweden'
Léon Giraud	French	M	'The Woman in Contemporary Politics'
Stéphanie Feinkind	Polish	F	
Marie Zelinska	Polish	F	'Woman's current economic situation in Russian Poland'
Mme Vattier d'Ambroyse	French	F	
Flora Goldschmit	Danish	F	
Louise Kopp	French	F	
Pauline Koutschalska-Reinschmit	Polish	F	
Mme Griess-Traut	French	F	
Léon Giraud	French	M	'The Two Viewpoints on Women's Work'
Maria Martin	French	F	
Mme Petti	French	F	'The female teacher'
Mme Petti	French	F	'Women employed in French administration'
Mme Vincent	French	F	
Mme Ménier	French	F	
Miss Marie Studace	English	F	
Dr Conta	Italian	F	'Some Considerations on Social Order concerning Men and Women'
Kate Mitchell	English	F	'Woman's Influence with regard to intemperance'
Maria Chéliga	Polish	F	'On the Influence of Marriage'
Jules Allix	French	M	
Maria Deraismes	French	F	'Morals and Prostitution'
Marie Goegg	Swiss	F	
Hubertine Auclert	French	F	
Mlle de Grandpré	French	F	
Mme Griess-Traut	French	F	'Mixed schooling, and its rehabilitation'
Edmond Potonié	French	M	'The advance of justice through women to achieve peace'
Mme Ratauld	Polish	F	'The Moral Situation of Women in Poland during the Nineteenth Century'
Mme Astié de Valsayre	French	F	'Research on the dissolution of morals and the ways to remedy it'
Rev Amanda Deyo	American	F	'On the Moral Influence of a Woman in

			Politics’
Mme Marie Bréon	French	F	
Louise de Lassère	French	F	
René Viviani	French	M	
Marie Popelin	Belgian	F	
Florence Balgarnie	English	F	‘The Electoral Question in England’
Mme Potonié Pierre	French	F	
Mme Friess	Swedish	F	‘Woman’s Situation in Sweden’
Marya Cheliga	Polish	F	‘On Polish Woman before Legislation’
M. Beauquier	French	M	‘Reforms concerning Woman’
Mme Christin	French	F	‘Some Reflections on Article 340: Research into Paternity is Forbidden’
M. Davenne	French	F	‘Prospective Project Presented to the Congress’
Léon Giraud	French	M	‘The Origin of Article 340’
Mlle Popelin	Belgian	F	‘The Prevention of the Brussels Court of Appeals from Banning Women Becoming Lawyers’
Léon Richer	French	M	‘On Woman’s Situation in Marriage’
Mme Esquiron	French	F	‘On the Violation of the Law to the Detriment of Women’
René Viviani	French	M	‘On Woman Outside of Marriage’
Mme Mina Kruseman*	Dutch Indies	F	
Maria Deraismes	French	F	
Léon Richer	French	M	
Mme Callirhoé Parren	Greek	F	
Clémence Royer	French	F	
M. Colfavru	French	M	
Louise Koppe	French	F	
M. Clovis Hugues	French	M	

Source: 1889 proceedings. *Not permitted to speak because of lack of time; her proposal was still voted upon.

Appendix 6: 1889 subscribers

Name	Nationality/associated country	Sex
Mme Ernest Lefèvre	French	F
Mme de Hérédia	French	F
Mme Yves Guyot	French	F
Mme Eugène Delattre	French	F
Mme Beauquier	French	F
Mme Jeanne Deroin	French	F
Mme Gatineau	French	F
Mme Gagneur	French	F
Mme Desautoy	French	F
Mme Eugène Mayer	French	F
Mme Thibault	French	F
Mme Rouzade	French	F
Mme Béliard d’Etampes	French	F
Mme Eugénie-Pierre Potonié	French	F
M. Jean Macé	French	M
M. Couturier	French	M
M. Georges Martin	French	M
M. Auguste Vacquerie	French	M
M. Ernest Lefèvre	French	M
M. Anatole de la Forge	French	M
M. Montaut	French	M
M. Yves Guyot	French	M
M. Eugène Delattre	French	M
M. de Hérédia	French	M
M. Beauquier	French	M
M. Paul Barbe	French	M
M. Jullien	French	M
M. Frédéric Passy	French	M
M. Colfavru	French	M
M. Victor Poupin	French	M
M. Eugène Mayer	French	M
M. Paul Viguier	French	M
Léon Donnat	French	M
Dr. Chassaing	French	M
Dr. Thulié	French	M
M. Ernest Hamel	French	M
M. Lucien Puteaux	French	M
M. Béliard	French	M
Mme Maria Deraismes	French	F
Mme Féresse-Deraismes	French	F
Mme Edouard Goudchaux		F
Mme Berthoin		F
General Thibaudin		M
M. Puteaux		M
M. Cuif		M
M. Martinie	French	M

Mme Masson		F
Mme Fonsèque		F
M. Hippolyte Rodrigues	French	M
Mme Bonnaire		F
Mme Day Fallette		F
Mme Parpalet		F
Mme Simon Bloch		F
Mme Iza Zelinska		F
M. Nicolle	French	M
Mlle Charlotte Duval		F
Mme Jules de la Madelène		F
Mme Schmal		F
M. Georges Petti		M
Mme Gaucher		F
M. Garnier		M
Mme Mathilde Audrat		F
Mme David		F
M. David		M
Mme Mauriceau		F
Mme Vincent		F
Mme Griess-Traut	French	F
M. Eugène Breton		M
Mme Jarret de la Mairie		F
Mme Lefebre-Roncier		F
Mme Wiggishoff	French	F
M. de Gasté	French	M
Mme Houry	French	F
Mme Barberousse	French	F
Mme Pillouse		F
Mlle Anna Greck		F
Mme Vattier d’Ambroyse	French	F
Mme Thibaud		F
Mme Lingé		F
Mme Cazamajor		F
Mme Alix Deschamps		F
Mme Petit		F
Mme Ameuille		F
Dr. Lutaud		M
M. Charles Millet	French	M
Dr. Verrier		M
M. Schneider		M
Mme de A.		F
Mme Giraud-Bouttier		F
M. Baer		M
Mme Amélie-Paul Leboeuf		F
Mme S. L.	French	F
Mme Martin	French	F
Mlle Dupont	French	F
Mme Amélie-Henriette Hembaet		F
Mme Veuve Dié		F

M. Jacques Wiggishoff	French	M
Mme Petti	French	F
Mlle Lindsay		F
Mme Daloz		F
Mme Ignace Weil		F
Dr. Conta		F
Mme Edouard Marc		F
Mme Ordonez		F
Mme Felling		F
M. Boudarou		M
M. Sauvé		M
Mlle Decors		F
Mme Olivier		F
Mme Bloch		F
M. Duranton		M
M. Heider		M
Mme Lefranc		F
Mme Pierrot		F
Mme Piervieil		F
Mme de Fayette		F
Mme Piettre		F
Mme Veuve Van Quatrebeck		F
Mme Maurice Lévy		F
M. Georges Margaine	French	M
Mlle Dziersanowska	Polish	F
M. Georges Pascal		M
Mme Marc Sée		F
M. Léon Richer	French	M
Mme. Léon Richer	French	F
Mme L. J.	French	F
M. Paul Richer	French	M
Mme Quéroy		F
Mme Amélie Ragon		F
Mlle Jeanne Perrot		F
Mlle L. Blandin		F
Mme Margain	French	F
Mme Christin	French	F
Mme Isabelle Bogelot		F
Mme Émilie de Morsier		F
M. Desportes		M
Dr. H. Thulié		M
M. René Viviani	French	M
M. Auguste Dietrich	French	M
M. P. Davenne	French	M
Mme Naudin	French	F
Mlle Louise Heutte	French	F
M. Émile Schoesing	French	M
Mme Boussuat-Robinson		F
Dr. Autan	French	M
Mme Rivet-Minguet	French	F

Mme Rouyer-Barbier	French	F
Mme Vve Durand	French	F
M. Ch. B		M
Mlle Vérenet	French	M
Mlle Anna Reutz	French	F
Mme le Grand		F
Baron L.	Alsace-Lorraine	M
Mme Veuve R.		F
Mlle Marie Longchamp	French	F
M. Émile Roy	French	M
Dr. Caroline Schultz		F
Dr. Mourlet	Algeria	M
Mme Mourlet	Algeria	F
Mlle H. Wild		F
Mme Veuve Depaulis	French	F
Mme Depuis-Vincent	French	F
M. Bodin		M
Mme Bodin		F
Mme Amelia Laforgue	French	F
M. Léon Moureu	French	F
Baroness de Bieberstein	Belgian	F
Mlle Grulher	Belgian	F
Mlle Durand	French	F
Mme Vaillant	French	F
Dr. Blanche Edwards	French	F
M. Goron	French	M
Mlle Léontine Régnault	French	F
Mme Olivetti-Modana		F
M. Herbert	French	M
Mme Collard		F
Mme Bariol		F
Dr. Huguet	French	M
Dr. Mesnard	French	F
Mme Vve Godin	French	F
Mme Dallet	French	F
Mlle L. P.	French	F
Mme Villemin	French	F
Mlle Cécile Desroches	French	F
Mlle A. Basset		F
M. Mario Ajuti		M
M. M.-A. Nielly	Algeria	M
Mme Moutier	French	F
Mme Lecompte	French	F
Mlle Eudoxie Lemoine	French	F
Mme Mouchet	French	F
Mlle Chevalier		F
Mlle Didier		F
Mme Héléne Viviani	Algeria	F
Mme Léon Béquet	French	F
Mme Valette	French	F

Mme Maria Martin	French	F
Mme Térisse	Swiss	F
M. Potonié-Pierre	French	F
Mlle Haaz	Alsace-Lorraine	F
M. Letermelier	Algeria	M
Mme Marie la Cécilia	French	F
Mme Renée Marcil	French	F
Mme Veuve Loré	French	F
M. Eugène Soulier	French	M
M. Boudeville	French	M
Mme Boudeville	French	F
Mme Ferrand	French	F
Mme Bonnemain	Vietnam (French Indochina)	F
Mme Nelly Lieutier	French	F
Mme Astier	French	F
M. Barodet	French	M
Dr Van Diest	Belgian	F
Mlle Popelin	Belgian	F
Baron R. de Riberstein	Belgian	M
M. Jules Pagny	Belgian	M
Mme Olivetti	Italian	F
Mme Modona	Italian	F
Mlle Louisa de Virte	Italian	F
Mme Annie Besant	English	F
Mme Chapman	English	F
Mme Crawfort	English	F
Dr Elisabeth Blackwell	English	F
Miss Greatorex	English	F
M. Bradlaugh	English	M
Dr Chapman	English	M
Mlle Thulia Schoug	Swedish	F

Source: 1889 proceedings, v-x. Names are spelt as in original. Countries left blank where none was noted.

9.3 1900 International Congress of the Condition and Rights of Women

Appendix 7: 1900 organisers

Name	Nationality	Sex	Role
Mme Clémence Royer	French	F	Honorary President
Mme Féresse-Deraismes	French	F	Honorary President
Mme Maria Pognon	French	F	President
Mlle Marie Bonnevial	French	F	Vice-President
Mme Vincent	French	F	Vice-President
M. René Viviani	French	M	Vice-President
M. Audré Weiss	French	M	Vice-President
Mme Marguerite Durand	French	F	General Secretary
M. Lucien Leduc	French	M	Adjoint general secretary
Mme Maria Martin	French	F	Session secretary
Mme Laffite	French	F	Session secretary
M. H. Lelorrain	French	M	Session secretary
M. Jules Gerbaud	French	M	Session secretary
Mlle Harlor	French	F	Treasurer
Mme Allpeter	French	F	Committee Member
Mme Hubertine Auclert	French	F	Committee Member
Mlle Camille Bélilon	French	F	Committee Member
Mme Louise Belmant	French	F	Committee Member
Mlle Marguerite Belmant	French	F	Committee Member
M. Henri Berenger	French	M	Committee Member
M. Henry Bartelemy	French	M	Committee Member
Mlle Stephanie Bouvard	French	F	Committee Member
M. F. Buisson	French	M	Committee Member
Mme Chapman	English	F	Committee Member
Mlle Jeanne Chauvin	French	F	Committee Member
M. Edmond Coignet	French	M	Committee Member
Mme Edwards-Pilliet	French	F	Committee Member
Mme Gevin-Cassal	French	F	Committee Member
Mlle Pauline de Grandpré	French	F	Committee Member
M. L. Guérin	French	M	Committee Member
Mme Amélie Hammer	French	F	Committee Member
Mme Hudry-Menos		F	Committee Member
M. Jean Bernard	French	M	Committee Member
Mme Jacobi	French	F	Committee Member
Mme Caroline Kauffman	French	F	Committee Member
M. Kleine		F	Committee Member
Mme la Cécilia	French	F	Committee Member
M. Hippolyte Laroche	French	M	Committee Member
Mme Mary Leopold-Lacour	French	F	Committee Member
Mme Mauriceau	French	F	Committee Member
M. Ch. Morizot	French	M	Committee Member
Mme Jeanne Oddo	French	F	Committee Member
M. Léonce Ribert	French	M	Committee Member

Mme Rouillard	French	F	Committee Member
Mlle de Sainte-Croix	French	F	Committee Member
M. Edmond Turrel	French	M	Committee Member
Mme Wiggishoff	French	F	Committee Member

Source: 1900 proceedings, vii-ix. Names as written in original source. Nationality left blank where none listed.

Appendix 8: 1900 contributors

Name	Nationality	Sex	Section
Mlle Harlor	French	F	Opening
Mme Maria Pognon	French	F	Opening
Mme Féresse-Deraismes	French	F	Opening
Mme Maria Pognon	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mlle Marie Bonnevial	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Gelez	French	M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Elisabeth Renaud	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Lucien Brunswick	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Dr. Sosnowka	Austrian/German	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Henri Lefort	French	M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Pauline Kergomard	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Pilenco		M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Vincent	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mlle Bouvard		F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Gauttard		M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Tarbouriech	Austrian/German	M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Camille Bélilon	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Theodora Schook-Haver	Dutch	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Corvin	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Brucker	Dutch	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Emilia Mariani	Italian	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Marguerite Durand	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mlle Camille Vidart	Swiss	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Gabriel Debor	French	M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Comolet		M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Dr Edwards-Pilliet	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Vice-Admiral de Lanessan	French	M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mlle de Sylva	Portuguese	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Mieg-Baumgartner	Alsace-Lorraine	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Flor Mauriceau	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Wiggishoff	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Bogelot		F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Séverine	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme de Sainte-Croix	Swiss/French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Bazire		M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Raoul Boudeville		M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Hubertine Auclert	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mlle Leder		F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mlle Outchinnikowa	Russian	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Caroline Kauffman	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Paul Passy	French	M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Ranvier		M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Jacobi		F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Féresse-Deraisme	French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
M. Bauquier	French	M	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mme Savoiz de Sante-Croix	Swiss/French	F	Economic, Moral, Social Questions
Mlle Bonnevial	French	F	Education

Mlle Harlor	French	F	Education
Mme Louise Debor	French	F	Education
M. Ruben		M	Education
Mme Pauline Kergomard	French	F	Education
M. Lucien Brunswick	French	M	Education
Mlle Lizzie van Dorp	Dutch	F	Education
M. Henri Lefort	French	M	Education
M. Rama		M	Education
M. Ribert		M	Education
Mme Lydie Martial	French	F	Education
Dr Edwards-Pilliet	French	F	Education
Mme Kaufmann	German	F	Education
Mme Desparmet-Ruello	French	F	Education
M. Fremiet		M	Education
Mlle Malvina Lévy	French	F	Education
Dr Fauveau de Courmelles	French	M	Education
Mme Vergne		F	Education
Mme Cécilia Meyer	Italian	F	Education
M. Tessandrier		M	Education
M. Bazire		M	Education
M. Bauquier	French	M	Education
Mlle Fresnois		F	Education
Mme Brémontier		F	Education
Mlle Deluc	Belgian	F	Education
Mme Dubien	French	F	Education
Mlle Camille Bélilon	French	F	Education
Mme Mary Léopold-Lacour	French	F	Education
Mme Hammer		F	Education
M. Kownacky		M	Education
M. Léopold-Lacour	French	M	Education
Mme Séverine	French	F	Education
Mme Renaud		F	Education
Mme Dora B. Montefiore	English	F	Education
Mme Schook-Haver	Dutch	F	Education
Mlle Flavia Steno	Italian	F	Education
Mme Marguerite Durand	French	F	Legislation
M. René Viviani	French	M	Legislation
M. Lucien Brunswick	French	M	Legislation
Mme Hubertine Auclert	French	F	Legislation
M. Lucien Le Foyer	French	M	Legislation
M. von Gerlach	German	M	Legislation
Mme Maria Pognon	French	F	Legislation
M. Bazire		M	Legislation
M. Gabriel Debor	French	M	Legislation
Dr Aars	Norwegian	M	Legislation
M. Henri Lefort	French	M	Legislation
M. Leduc		M	Legislation
M. Rabelin		M	Legislation
Mme Cécilia Meyer	Italian	F	Legislation
Mme Blanche Schweig		F	Legislation

Mme Kaufmann	German	F	Legislation
Mlle Hubert		F	Legislation
Mlle Lizzie van Dorp	Dutch	F	Legislation
Mlle Camille Bélilon	French	F	Legislation
Dr Fauveau de Courmelles	French	M	Legislation
Mme Renaud		F	Legislation
Mme Wiggishoff	French	F	Legislation
Mlle Bonnevial	French	F	Legislation
Mme Pauline Kergomard	French	F	Legislation
M. Gilbert		M	Legislation
M. Israel		M	Legislation
M. Bauquier	French	M	Legislation
Mlle Malvina Lévy	French	F	Legislation
Mme Doria		F	Legislation
Mme Jeanne Oddo-Deflou	French	F	Legislation
Mme Gricourova		F	Legislation
Mlle Belmant		F	Legislation
M. Téry		M	Legislation
Mme Séverine	French	F	Legislation
Mme Féresse-Deraisme	French	F	Legislation
Mme Dora B. Montefiore	English	F	Legislation
M. Roig		M	Legislation
Mme Maria Pognon	French	F	Closing
Mme Vincent	French	F	Closing
M. Hoyois	Belgian	M	Closing
Mlle Ottilie Hoffmann	German	F	Closing
Mme Rose Méryss	French/Brazilian	F	Closing
Lady Grove	English	F	Closing
Mme Cécilia Meyer	Italian	F	Closing
Mme Maria Pognon	French	F	Banquet
Prof. Gariel	French	M	Banquet
Mme Féresse-Deraismes	French	F	Banquet
Mme Marguerite Durand	French	F	Banquet
M. René Viviani	French	M	Banquet
Mme Louise Laffitte	French	F	Banquet
Mme Amélie Hammer	French	F	Banquet
M. Léonce Ribert	French	M	Banquet
Mlle Marie Bonnevial	French	F	Banquet
Mlle Reynaud	French	F	Banquet
Dr Edwards-Pilliet	French	F	Banquet
Mme Séverine	French	F	Banquet
M. Léopold-Lacour	French	M	Banquet
M. Novicow	Russian	M	Banquet
Mme Schook-Haver	Dutch	F	Banquet
Dr Aars	Norwegian	M	Banquet

Source: 1900 proceedings. Since there was so much unstructured discussion recorded in the proceedings, I have left the sections of the contributions clear; but have only noted each contributor once within each section they spoke.

Appendix 9: 1900 official delegates

Name	Country	Sex
M. Charles Henrotin	USA	M
Mme Helen Campbell	USA	F
Rebeka Kohut	USA	F
Miss Hannat Clarke	USA	F
Mary Hallowell Campbell	USA	F
M. Julio Poulat	Mexico	M
M. Hoyois	Belgium	M
Mlle Strelakopp	Russia	F
Mme Semetschkine	Russia	F
Baron J. de Berwick	Russia	M
M. Paul l'Espanol de la Tramerye	Equador	M
M. Ferdinand Ghika	Romania	M
M. Léon Perier	France	M
M. René Viviani	France	M

Source: 1900 proceedings, 11.

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