CHAPTER 1

"The Other ILO Founders": 1919 and Its Legacies

Dorothy Sue Cobble[1]

The International Labour Organization (ILO), charged in Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles with formulating international labour standards to ensure peace, prosperity, and social justice, held its inaugural International Labour Conference (ILC) in October 1919 in Washington, DC. After four weeks of deliberations, the voting delegates, representing 40 nations, agreed on six Conventions, later dubbed the Washington Conventions.[2] Subsequently adopted by nations and employers all over the world, these Conventions raised living and working standards for millions of men, women, and children. The men who fashioned the ILO at Versailles in the spring of 1919 and those who gathered in October at the historic Washington ILC are often exclusively credited with founding the ILO and with articulating its early vision and first set of international labour standards.[3] This 'origin story' has much to recommend it.[4] After all, only men sat on the Commission of International Labour Legislation that drafted the ILO Constitution at Versailles, and only men held voting rights at the Washington conference.

Yet there were two Washington conferences in 1919 that took as their ambitious mission the setting of global labour standards. And although the second conference, the International Congress of Working Women (ICWW), is rarely included in accounts of the founding of the ILO, this second meeting, though unofficial, and the trade union women and their allies who participated in it, profoundly affected the direction and vision of the early ILO.[5] This chapter recovers some of these unrecognised ILO founders: labour women who neither served on the Commission of International Labour Legislation nor voted at the first Washington ILC. It shows how, despite their formal exclusion (and in

1 My thanks to Pascale Voilley and Joel Rainey for translations from French, to Yurika Tamura from Japanese, to Karin Carlsson from Swedish, and to Eloisa Betti from Italian.

2 League of Nations (1920) *International Labour Conference. First Annual Meeting October 29–November 29, 1919* (Washington, D.C: ILO), 5–10; Hetherington 1920, 59–96.

3 For example, see the ILO's own account of its history and founding at http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/history/lang--en/index.htm.

4 For a recent historical treatment of 'origin stories' and the power they exert, see Tetrault 2014, introduction. See also Wright 2004, 3–23, for the political functions of foundation narratives.

5 I use the phrase 'labour women' in this chapter to refer to trade union women and their allies.

 | DOI 10.1163/9789004360433_003

some instances *because* of it), trade union women and their allies raised their voices in 1919, and with significant effect. They influenced the scope and language of key Washington Conventions. They also drew worldwide attention to questions of democracy and representation in international governance.

I begin the chapter by chronicling how women's marginalization in the creation and governance of the ILO spurred trade union women and their allies to call their own separate international labour conference. I then examine the debates at both Washington conferences, the unofficial and the official, and revisit the question of whether, and in what ways, women influenced the ILO's first set of labour standards. I pay particular attention to the maternity policies labour women formulated at the ICWW and how they shaped the Maternity Protection Convention, 1919 (No. 3) at the ILC. I also analyze women's impact on ILC debates over holding 'lesser developed' ILO member States to the same night work and child labour standards as other nations—what would become, respectively, Night Work (Women) Convention, 1919 (No. 4) and Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5).[6]

In revisiting the 1919 debates over international labour standards, I am concerned with what they reveal about sexual politics, or the divisions between men and women, as well as what they illuminate about other political allegiances held at the time, such as those based on nation and class. As we shall see, although labour women at times disagreed on policy specifics, the majority embraced a political vision dedicated to gender and industrial justice—a politics I have termed 'labour feminist'[7]—that brought them into sustained conflict with many of the male ILO founders. Yet labour women, like men, had their own nationalist loyalties and geographic parochialisms, what poet Adrienne Rich famously called a "politics of location".[8] Moreover, class identities proved equally salient in 1919. As I detail, bitter disputes erupted along class lines *within* national delegations at the ILC, and, equally telling, labour women forged notable class-based solidarities across sex and nation on labour standards, including east–west alliances between labour delegates representing Asian and Western nations.

The chapter concludes with reflections on the legacies of 1919 and how the ILO served as a key site for forging a powerful international network of

6 Article 19 of the ILO Charter allowed the modification of labour standards for countries "in which climatic conditions, imperfect development of industrial organization or other special circumstances make industrial conditions substantially different". Hetherington 1920, appendix.

7 On the term 'labour feminist', see Cobble 2004, Introduction.

8 Rich 1986, 210–232.

social democratic labour women reformers. Labour women's internationalism was not new in 1919: in the decades before the First World War labour women participated in the Second Socialist International and other transnational political groupings, in international trade union bodies, and in various international peace and suffrage organizations.[9] Still, as this chapter shows, spurred in part by the birth of the ILO, trade union women and their allies articulated their own international social justice agenda in 1919 and created an all-female international federation to advance it. Although the formal institutional ties they forged in 1919 unraveled, informal bonds persisted, enabling social democratic labour women to exert considerable influence on international and national social policy into the interwar era and beyond.

The Rise of Labour Women's Internationalism

People organize when they have a sense of injustice and of possibility. In 1919, both were present. As the old social order crumbled, demands surged among women, working people, and other disenfranchised groups for a new, more egalitarian world. Women's suffrage gained ground across Europe and elsewhere, part of a general upsweep of democratic reform emphasizing self-representation and inclusion. Worker movements regrouped with renewed vigor. A global reshuffling of state and imperial power was underway, with the Bolsheviks poised to secure the new Russian communist regime under Lenin, the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires dissolved, new nation states emerging in Central Europe and the Middle East, and non-Western powers like Japan claiming a place alongside older Western empires.[10]

Labour women, along with many others, journeyed to Paris in the spring of 1919, eager to influence the peace talks and ensure recognition of the rights and needs of women and workers in the new international institutions under construction.[11] They believed domestic social and economic problems could not be solved without international organization and cooperation, and they insisted on women's right to political representation and an equal voice with men in formulating global policy.

On March 18, the Commission on International Labour Legislation, charged with drafting the ILO Constitution, heard from a delegation of women's

9 Among others, Zimmermann 2014; Hannam and Hunt 2002; Jonsson et al. (eds) 2007; Rupp 1997; Paletschek and Pietrov-Ennker (eds) 2004; Sklar, Schüler and Strasser (eds) 1998.

10 For the historical and political context, see Offen 2000, 251–377; Eley 2002; Large 1972.

11 See, for example, Jordão 2011, 41–45. On the Paris talks, see Macmillan 2003.

groups for the first and only time in its two-month deliberations. Representatives spoke from the International Council of Women (the large, politically moderate, association of women's groups, with affiliates worldwide, dedicated to raising women's status); the Inter-Allied Suffrage Conference (a coalition of suffrage groups from Allied countries formed in February 1919 to lobby in Paris); and four prominent French organizations, including a group affiliated with the *Confédération générale du travail* (CGT), the General Confederation of Labour, led by French clothing worker unionists Jeanne Bouvier, a former Lyon silk worker and dressmaker, and her young associate Georgette Bouillot. Outspoken French feminist and labour syndicalist Gabrielle Duchêne also testified. In the years leading up to the war, Bouvier and Duchêne campaigned together for the rights of homeworkers, and, in 1913, they founded the *Office français du travail à domicile* (French Homework Office), which joined the French Division of the *Office international du travail à domicile* (International Homework Office) in 1914.[12]

Unfortunately, the various women's organizations disagreed over the efficacy of sex-specific night work laws and other special legislation, resulting, as some historians note, in a "disparate set of demands" that "lacked focus".[13] Still, speakers united in stressing the "principle of equal pay for equal work" and full political representation for women in policy deliberations. In addition, French labour feminists Bouvier, Bouillot, and Duchêne spoke passionately on behalf of shorter hours for men and women, social wages for pregnant and nursing women, and "a minimum wage sufficient not just for material but for moral, intellectual, and social needs". American Federation of Labour leader Samuel Gompers, the elected President of the Commission, "congratulated" and thanked the women, adding somewhat defensively "that if the Commission was composed solely of men, it was not the Commission's fault since they had not appointed themselves". He assured the visitors that because "reforms of interest to women" were among those under discussion, "there would be women in the organization which this commission was going to propose to the Peace Conference".[14]

12 "Minutes of Proceedings No. 27—March 18, 1919" in Shotwell 1934, vol. 2, 273–291; Strachey, R. (1919) "The Inter-Allied Conference", *The Common Cause,* 21 February 1919. On Bouvier, Bouillot, and Duchêne, see Coons 1993, 54–59 and Carle 2004, 291–314. On Bouvier, see also Jeanne Bouvier Papers, Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris (BHVP), Paris, France and Bouvier 1983.

13 Lubin and Winslow 1990, 21.

14 "Minutes of Proceedings No. 27—March 18, 1919", in Shotwell 1934, 273–285; quotes on pp. 275, 277, and 284.

British labour women received similar assurances from Britain's representative on the Commission, George Barnes, a Scottish Labour Party leader and member of Lloyd George's wartime Government. British Trades Union Congress (TUC) leader and Labour Party stalwart Margaret Bondfield lobbied Barnes on more than one occasion, seeking guarantees of female ILO staff appointments and women's representation in ILO governance.[15] A former retail worker and union organizer, Bondfield shared leadership of the British women's trade union movement with charismatic Scottish-born Mary Macarthur, the rebellious daughter of a prosperous draper. When asked by her father to find out more about the Shop Assistants' Union he feared, Macarthur ended up joining herself. She rose rapidly through trade union ranks, becoming secretary of the British Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) in 1903, and, in 1906, the founder and first president of the National Federation of Working Women (NFWW), the influential all-female British trade union federation.[16]

American trade unionists Mary Anderson and Rose Schneiderman traveled to Paris as well, representing the US Women's Trade Union League, a close ally of the British WTUL and the largest women's labour organization in the United States. Both Anderson and Schneiderman had migrated to the United States as impoverished young girls: Anderson from a farm near Lidköping, Sweden, and Schneiderman from Saven, a small village in Russian Poland. Both became national union officers and WTUL leaders. Anderson held a succession of low-paying domestic and factory jobs in Chicago before joining the Boot and Shoemakers' Union and accepting a paid WTUL position as a labour organizer. In 1920, when the US Women's Bureau was established, US President Woodrow Wilson would appoint her its first director. Schneiderman organized her fellow cap makers in New York City in 1903 while still in her teens and, a year later, gained national union office. Renowned for her impassioned and effective leadership in the 1909 city-wide uprising of New York City garment workers and her outspoken support for suffrage and socialism, Schneiderman accepted the presidency of the New York WTUL in 1917.[17]

Anderson and Schneiderman brought an ambitious set of American WTUL-endorsed proposals to Paris that included women's "full enfranchisement" (described as "political, legal, and industrial equality") as well as specific demands for working women's voices in the new global governance structures.

15 For more on Bondfield's specific proposals, see Lubin and Winslow 1990, 21–22.

16 "Mary and Margaret", *Life and Labor* (May 1919), 111–112; Soldon 1978, 51–77; Bondfield 1948. See also Margaret Bondfield Papers, Vassar College Special Collections, Poughkeepsie, New York, USA, as well as Hunt 2014, 1–5, 95–106.

17 Cobble 2014a, 1060–1061.

They arrived too late to appear before the Commission, but they secured a meeting with President Wilson, who promised women's representation from the United States at the upcoming Washington conference. This promise was not to be fulfilled.[18]

Before Anderson and Schneiderman left Paris, French labour women feted them at a ceremonial dinner. The evening ended with speeches and toasts to comradeship and to future plans for a trade union women's international conference. "Dear American comrades", Jeanne Bouvier began. "Today women demand to be represented" and "to take part" in developing the "international labour statutes" that would "serve as the base for a new world". She continued: "This date will be engraved in the history of the social evolution of women". Bouvier then reiterated the sentiments already agreed to by American and European labour women in a far-seeing document, "The International Charter of Work", drafted by the *Comité féminin français du travail*. In this working women's charter, the signers took as their "base" the labour platform elaborated at the February 1919 Berne Conference organized by the Socialist Second International, but "thought it necessary to incorporate the principal interests of women". They called for a generous 12-week maternity "indemnity" for "any woman, whether gainfully employed or not"; a mother's "right to a half-time schedule"; equal living wages for men and women; guarantees of women in the Governing Body and "Executive Committee" of the ILO; and official women's commissions to meet *before* each ILC to formulate international labour standards.[19]

In the end, the Labour Commission ignored many of the labour women's demands. True, the Commission's endorsement of the need for "recognition of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value" ended up in the preamble of the ILO Constitution (and hence became part of the Treaty of Versailles). Further, the Commission expanded the agenda of the upcoming Washington conference to include a consideration of *income support* for maternity rather than the more limited issues of whether and when pregnant women and mothers should leave employment. But much to the chagrin of many women's groups, the 1919 ILO Constitution in Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles failed to *guarantee* female representation in setting global labour standards. Instead, Article 395 required the ILO Director appoint a "certain

18 Cobble 2014a, 1059–1063.

19 Bouvier, "Dear American Comrades", April 1919, Bote 21, JB, BHVP. Comité Féminin Français du Travail, *Charte International du Travail* (Paris, Secrétariat du C.F.F.T, 1919), 3–6, 17–23. Accessed on 8 June 2014 at https://archive.org/stream/charteinternatiooocomi#page/4/mode/2up. On the Berne Congress, see Van Goethem 2006a, 20–22.

number" of women to the ILO's staff, and Article 389 merely *recommended* that nations chose "at least" one woman as an adviser—a nonvoting status —"when questions specifically affecting women are to be considered by the Conference".[20] Then, to make matters worse, *none* of the 40 nations sending representatives to the Washington Conference appointed a woman as a voting delegate. British, French, and US labour women promptly announced their own Washington conference to set global labour standards and advance "ideals of humanity, freedom, and justice".[21]

At the 1919 Women's Labour Congress

On 28 October 1919, a day before the official ILC opened, over two hundred women from 19 nations gathered in Washington for the International Congress of Working Women, often called the Women's Labour Congress. Voting delegates came from Argentina, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, India, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and the United States. Visitors and guests arrived from Cuba, Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, and Switzerland. Reflecting postwar political realities, almost all the former Allied nations sent representatives, as did many of the new nations that had been carved from the dissolved Austro-Hungarian Empire. Neither German nor Austrian women participated. There were also no women from Russia, Africa, or the Middle East.[22]

Trade union women who had lobbied in Paris—Bondfield and Macarthur from Britain, Bouvier and Bouillot from France, Schneiderman and Anderson from the United States—attended the Congress, as did many others. Wealthy US social reformer Margaret Dreier Robins, the President of the American WTUL, chaired the Congress. Because the US WTUL covered lodging and other costs for American as well as many international participants, drawing largely on funds contributed by Robins, more trade union women participated in the conference than would have otherwise.[23] In addition to Anderson and

20 The original 1919 ILO Constitution can be found online under Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles or in ILO, *Official Bulletin* 1919–1920, 1, Chapter VI, "Part XIII of the Treaty of Peace of Versailles", 332–345.

21 "The Call", n.d., folder 2, IFWW, SL.

22 Cobble 2014a, 1065. On the 1919 ICWW, see also Jacoby 1994, 149–187; Van Goethem 2006b; Cobble 2009, 44–57; Wikander 2010, 67–89; Vapnek 2014, 160–184.

23 The class barriers to international activism are understudied. Working-class women frequently lacked sufficient financial resources for international conferences: they could neither pay for themselves nor expect financial support from male-dominated unions.

Schneiderman, for example, the United States sent glove-maker Agnes Nestor, printer Maud O'Farrell Swartz, and garment unionist Pauline Newman, who like Schneiderman was a veteran of the 1909 general strike and a longtime suffragist and socialist party activist. Newman's life-long partner, economist and social reformer Frieda Miller, attended as an observer and volunteer, as did Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of future US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Although the United States and Britain sent the largest delegations to the ICWW, US women did not formally participate in the ILC meeting a few blocks away, because the United States failed to ratify the Versailles Treaty.[24]

The Women's Labour Congress brought together some of the most prominent socialist and social democratic women reformers of the time. Britain, France, and the United States sent leading national figures. So did a host of other countries. Physician, socialist writer, and suffragist Alicia Moreau (de Justo) from Argentina had founded the powerful *Union Feminista Nacional* (National Feminist Union) in 1918 and edited its journal, *Nuestra Causa* (Our Cause). Italy's socialist-feminist reformer and writer Laura Casartelli Cabrini, representing the formidable 60,000-member Federation of Textile Workers, had been in the forefront of the *Unione Femminile Nazionale* (National Women's Union) campaign creating Italy's *Cassa Nazionale di Maternità* (National Maternity Fund).[25] Tanaka Taka, a professor of social work at Japan Women's University and the only woman on the large 60-person Japanese delegation to the ILC, was a well-known Japanese advocate of democratic reform, expanded suffrage, and women's rights.[26] Betzy Kjelsberg, representing the *Kvindelige Telegraffunktionærers Landsforening* (Women's Telegraphers' National Association), was Norway's first woman factory inspector, an activist in Liberal Party politics, and the initiator of major industrial reform legislation. Among the first women to run for parliamentary election in Norway, she won her first political post, a seat on the Drammen City Council, in 1905.[27]

In addition, most lacked access to the educational and language opportunities that facilitated international politics. Still, working-class immigrant women often spoke multiple languages and many had acquired, of necessity, cross-cultural capacities that enabled their internationalism.

24 Cobble 2014a, 1064–1065.

25 Smith, E.M. (1919) "International Congress of Working Women", *The American Child* 1, 3, 193–195; Buttafuocco, 1991, 178–195; Casartelli Cabrini, L. (1920) "Rassegna del movimento femminile Italiano", in *Almanacco della Donna Italiana,* 133–153.

26 Nolte 1987, 118–130; Cobble 2016.

27 *Life and Labor* 11, 8 (October 1921), 225; "Betzy Kjelsberg", Arkivverket Riksarkivet Og Statsarkivene, Oslo, Norway. Accessed 3 June 2014.

Many at the conference held or would hold high political office in their home countries. The new nation of Czechoslovakia sent Parliament member Louisa Landova-Stychova and Prague's municipal counselor Marie Stivinova Majerova, both newly elected following women's enfranchisement in 1918.[28] Others, like Margaret Bondfield and Kerstin Hesselgren, would occupy top national political positions within a few years. In 1923, Bondfield was among the first group of women, most from the Labour Party, elected to the British Parliament. In 1929, a year after British women secured equal voting rights with men, she became the first woman in the British cabinet, serving as Minister of Labour in Ramsey Macdonald's minority Labour Government. Already a prominent Swedish suffragist and social reformer in 1919, Hesselgren joined the Lower Chamber of the Swedish Parliament after women gained the vote in 1921. Frequently re-elected throughout the interwar years, she became the first woman to preside over the Swedish Parliament in 1939.[29]

Over the course of the next ten days, the Women's Congress hammered out an extraordinary set of resolutions. They demanded, for example, paid maternity benefits, an eight-hour day and a 44-hour week, the prohibition of night work for women *and* men, abolition of labour for children under 16, "equal rights and equal wages for foreign workers", a women's bureau in the ILO, and an amended ILO constitution with voting rights and proportional representational guarantees for women.[30]

Agreement on these issues did not always come easily. When delegates from Norway and Sweden urged the Congress to reject the 1906 Berne agreement prohibiting night work for women, representatives from other nations responded angrily. Rose Schneiderman from the United States accused the Nordic women of perpetuating a false "equality", adding that the "equality of women to kill themselves by night work is not equality to us". But her fellow American, Margaret Dreier Robins, chairing from the podium, admonished her: "That [kind of equality] is not what they [the Nordic delegates] are talking about", Robins explained; "they have succeeded in prohibiting night work for men as well as women". Eventually, delegates united behind Bondfield's substitute proposal that the Women's Congress support the 1906 Berne agreement limiting night work for women and add that night work *also* be prohibited for men.[31]

28 Feinberg 2006.

29 Bondfield 1948; Buchert 2004.

30 "Resolutions Adopted by First International Congress of Working Women", Washington, DC, October 28 to November 6, 1919, Folder 2, International Federation of Working Women (IFWW) Records, 1919–1923, Schlesinger Library (SL), Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA.

31 "First Congress—Stenographic Reports", parts 9–10, Folder 3, IFWW, SL.

Other issues provoked strenuous debate as well. Nonetheless, delegates reached agreement on every agenda item except maternity policy. As a result, the Congress decided to include both a majority and a minority report on maternity in its set of published resolutions. The dispute centered on which mothers should be covered by maternity insurance and how much each should receive. The majority report, supported by delegates from France, Britain, Sweden, Norway, and the United States, favoured more generous and inclusive maternity provisions and called for *every* mother's entitlement to a "monetary allowance and free medical, surgical, and nursing care". The minority report, supported by representatives from Canada, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, recommended smaller benefits and limited entitlements by class: monetary allowances and state services were reserved for wage-earning mothers and the wives of wage earners.[32] It is important to note, however, that *both* reports favoured an ILO maternity Convention that included paid benefits, a commission in each nation dedicated to improving "maternity and infant care", and a bureau within the ILO to advise nations on maternal health programmes. Moreover, after Jeanne Bouvier presented medical evidence from "feminist associations in Paris", delegates united in endorsing six rather than four weeks of paid leave before and after childbirth.[33]

Labour feminists at the ICWW shared a commitment to a broad set of principles. They desired what they called "industrial justice" or "a higher standard of life for all workers, men and women" through international labour law, democratic governance, and collective organization of workers. At the same time, they sought women's full political, social, and economic rights or "gender justice". Sometimes that meant being treated the same as men; at other times, it meant being treated differently. Their concern was with equality of results, not of means—what we would now refer to as "substantive equality". Because they wanted gender justice *and* industrial justice, they were never fully at home in elite-dominated women's organizations with a single-minded focus on sex equality and "equal treatment". But neither were they satisfied with the male trade union movement's limited agenda of female "protection" and its inability to recognise gender-specific forms of class exploitation.[34]

32 "Resolutions Adopted by First International Congress of Working Women", Washington, DC, October 28 to November 6, 1919, Folder 2, IFWW, SL.

33 "First Congress—Stenographic Reports", Parts 7–9, Folder 3, IFWW, SL; Bouvier 1983, 126–133; Cobble 2009, 49–50.

34 Cobble 2014a, 1054–1058, 1065–1070.

Although they were staunch defenders of women's right to employment outside the home, labour feminists did not romanticize market work. Not all paid work was liberating, they pointed out. Employers and the state should recognise the full humanity of workers, including their right to a life apart from employment and time to care for and about others—hence their advocacy of paid maternity benefits. As historian Susan Zimmermann has observed, the demand of trade union women for better maternity policies was not just about replacing women's market wages and removing obstacles to paid work for mothers but acknowledging the unpaid work of caregiving and the social right to motherhood.[35]

But what effect did the Women's Congress have on the ILC? Were the ICWW resolutions respectfully received by the ILC but ultimately ignored, as some scholars conclude?[36] There is evidence certainly to support this assessment. The ICWW dutifully forwarded each resolution to the ILC's Secretary General, Harold Butler. He referred them to the appropriate committee or, in some cases, printed and distributed them to ILC participants along with other daily briefings. None, however, were publicly debated as such.[37]

Further, the ILC passed more conservative international labour standards than those proposed by the Women's Congress. The ILC set weekly maximum hours at 48, for example, rather than the 44 recommended by labour women. The night work standard adopted by the ILC covered only women instead of protecting men *and* women as labour feminists desired. Other items on the ICWW agenda—emigrant rights or changes in the ILO Constitution to guarantee more female participation—were not even among the topics the ILC formally debated.

Still, it is entirely possible that without the Women's Congress, the Washington Conventions would have been even *more* conservative. ILC delegates were aware of the hundreds of women reformers gathered down the street, and it is likely that, impressed by the size and unity of the Women's Congress, many gave its resolutions serious consideration. Of equal importance, a *majority* of the women attending the ILC also participated in the Women's Congress. And as their writings attest, by meeting separately with other women to formulate policies as a group, they left emboldened, inspired, and better prepared to defend those positions at the ILC.

35 Zimmermann 2013.

36 Lubin and Winslow 1990, 27.

37 League of Nations 1920, *International Labour Conference*, 5–10; International Labour Conference, *Delegates' Official Guide* (Washington, DC, 29 October 1919), no pagination.

At the International Labour Conference

Only twenty-three of the 269 participants at the Washington ILC were women. The ILO constitution specified that each nation should send four voting delegates—an unusual tri-partite and public-private mix of two from government, one from workers and one from employers. Nations also could send an unspecified number of non-voting advisers to assist each voting delegate. All twenty-three women came as non-voting advisers: fourteen government, eight worker, and one employer.[38] Significantly, all eight of the women assigned to worker delegates and at least six of those assigned to government delegates participated in the Women's Congress.[39]

Women's second-class status at the ILC was most evident in their lack of formal voting rights and their inability to participate fully in debate. As advisers, they were in subordinate positions to the delegates they assisted, and some national delegations—as more fully explored in subsequent sections of this chapter—restricted women's participation in plenary and other official conference meetings, insisting they speak only when authorized by a male voting delegate to do so.

But those were not the only indignities. At the opening day of the conference, held in the Pan American Union building's vast Hall of America, even the seating arrangement reflected women's marginalization. As one prominent Japanese daily newspaper described it: "Seats were arranged in a horseshoe shape with the podium in the center, participants in alphabetical order of nations starting with Argentina. In the first rows sat the delegates; then around them seats for the advisers. Next came tables for the newspaper journalists and behind them seats for the general audience. Many of the women advisers", the reporter added, "sat behind the journalists with the general audience".[40]

The situation facing women at the 1919 ILC was not quite like the infamous June 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London that spurred the growth of the nineteenth century women's movement, but the parallels are striking. In 1840, women were seated behind a curtain, and their exclusion from a

38 The large number of women government advisers is not surprising given the disproportionate number of government delegates at the ILC: of the member States participating, all 40 appointed either one or two government delegates; only 25 sent worker and employer delegates. League of Nations 1920, *International Labour Conference*, 5–10.

39 *Ibid.* There is no full list of the over two hundred women who attended the ICWW, but at least fourteen of the ILC women advisers are either recorded as speaking in the ICWW proceedings and/or appear in other ICWW documents that indicate their presence.

40 "Labour Conference Has Opened", *Asahi Shimbun*, 6 November 1919.

convention premised on the human rights of all peoples prompted them to organize on their own behalf. In 1919, the curtain had disappeared but, once again, women were treated as 'other' and excluded from full participation at a pivotal international rights conference, this time involving worker rights.

Incensed at their treatment at the ILC and energized by the Women's Congress, labour women redoubled their efforts to fight for their own rights as well as the rights of all workers. For the next month, as ILC delegates deliberated, labour women lobbied behind the scenes, took on key committee roles, and spoke—often forcibly and persuasively—in committee meetings as well as in plenary sessions, defending many of the resolutions the Women's Congress had passed.[41] Although women lacked formal voting power and other privileges at the ILC, they had informal power, and they used it.

Women's influence on the Maternity Protection Convention (No. 3) from 1919, for example, was considerable. As already noted, in large part because of women's lobbying in Paris, the International Commission on Labour Legislation expanded the ILC agenda to include a discussion of income support for mothers and pregnant women, a departure from the usual narrow focus on "protecting" wage-earning mothers by prohibiting their labour market participation. At the ILC itself, labour women led the campaign for an expansive, generous maternity policy. On the Commission on Women's Employment, the committee responsible for drafting the Maternity Convention, sat Women's Congress participants Bouvier of France, Bondfield from Great Britain, Cabrini Casartelli of Italy, and Stivinova Majerova of Czechoslovakia, all officially representing their respective nations. They joined other women on the Commission, such as Britain's Government adviser Constance Smith, elected Commission Chair, to lobby vigorously for an international maternity convention guaranteeing, among other provisions, six weeks of income support before and after childbirth that would be sufficient for the health of mother and child. Later, they successfully defended the Commission's majority report, signed by all six women on the Commission, before the ILC plenary. They spoke of motherhood as a right for all women, and as social labour necessary for the continuation of society. They also emphasized the need for attention to the health and overall well-being of mothers and children.[42]

In all likelihood, the majority of male delegates arrived at the ILC in favour of statutes restricting women's employment during and after childbirth. But in contrast to the positions promulgated by female advisers, many either rejected

41 In addition to the sections of this chapter detailing examples of women's influence at the ILC, see also Butler 1920.

42 League of Nations 1920, *International Labour Conference*, 39, 102, 171–178, 243–246.

or remained skeptical of the idea of *paid* maternity leave. Some supported paid leave for only a small subset of women, generally industrial wage-earning women; others proposed limiting paid leave to four instead of six weeks before birth. Even those who favoured generous maternity benefits often justified it as a response to the devastation of war, not to the rights and needs of women and children. They saw mothering more as a duty to which all women should adhere rather than a social right all women could claim.[43]

In her 1919 diaries, Swedish Government adviser Kerstin Hesselgren detailed the standoff between men and women inside the Commission on Women's Employment over the length of paid maternity leave. According to Hesselgren, French worker adviser Bouvier proposed six weeks of paid leave before birth. French Government adviser, industrial inspector Gabrielle Letellier, and British worker adviser Macarthur backed her up. But Sigfrid Edstrom, Swedish employer delegate and President of the Federation of Machine Industries of Sweden, countered with four weeks. His position lost in committee vote, called by Committee Chair Smith, but he persevered and wrote a minority report for submission to the ILC plenary. Six male delegates on the committee signed the report; there were no female signatories.[44]

In the ensuing plenary debate, according to Hesselgren, Edstrom did not defend his position well, and Macarthur effectively rebutted him, taking the conference "like a storm". Then it was Hesselgren's turn to speak. The official proceedings of the conference reveal how Hesselgren took issue with Macarthur's advocacy of six weeks and defended Edstrom's minority report. In her dairy, however, Hesselgren wrote: "I spoke against my deepest feelings" and gave only a "weak speech". Then, seemingly to explain why she spoke at all, she added: "our government had not agreed to accept more than 4 weeks". Thus, although Hesselgren did not favour the official position of her Government, she was not prepared to speak publicly *against* it. At the same time, she found a way of offering a dissent from her government's stance and lending her support to Macarthur. When presenting the official state position, she chose to "speak weakly" and aid the opposition.[45]

---

43 League of Nations 1920, *International Labour Conference,* 171–180.

44 Kerstin Hesselgren, "Washington Konferensen 1919", no pagination, Kerstin Hesselgren Papers (KHP), Kungliga Biblioteket, National Library of Sweden, Stockholm, file 61, Collection L-55. For the official abbreviated report from the committee, League of Nations 1920, *International Labour Conference*, 243–245. The official minutes of the committee are missing from the ILO Archives.

45 Hesselgren, "Washington Konferensen 1919", no pagination, KHP; League of Nations 1920, *International Labour Conference*, 92–98.

Persuaded by the powerful speeches of Bouvier, Macarthur, and others, the male delegates voted in favour of the higher standards proposed by labour women, including six weeks of paid benefits available before and after childbirth sufficient for "full and healthy maintenance" of mother and child and nursing breaks during employment of a half hour twice a day. They also adopted a resolution proposing that the next ILC consider the question of the right of "every working woman" to *additional* time away from her job after the birth of a child and sufficient benefits "enabling her to remain with and to nurse her child".[46] Maternity benefits, the final version of the Maternity Protection Convention specified, should be available to "any female person, irrespective of age or nationality, whether married or unmarried" in "any public or private industrial or commercial undertaking".[47]

The ILC thus adopted key aspects of the maternity policies labour women advocated. Delegates accepted the principle of income support for mothers and agreed to the 12-week standard desired by labour women. They voted to consider improvements in these standards at a future conference, and they made maternity benefits broadly available to wage-earning women.

Yet the ILC did not extend income support to *all* mothers as the majority report of the Women's Congress stressed. Unpaid household and informal sector workers were not covered by the Convention. And although there was some discussion within the ILO of setting up an ILO Bureau and national commissions for maternal and infant care, plans were soon abandoned.[48] Indeed, at the deepest level, the ILC rejected the expansive vision of labour women and their call to broaden the proper domain of the ILO. The ILO's mission, in the view of labour feminists, was to set *social* not just *labour* standards and to defend the right to caregiving as well as breadwinning. Maternity policy, Mary Macarthur argued, was "no mere industrial or economic matter". It was a "social fundamental". The maternity resolutions of the Women's Congress, as historian Ulla Wikander concludes, challenged the ILO to redefine work and rethink how the labour of social reproduction should be valued and regulated. These issues, as pressing today as in 1919, remain unresolved.[49]

46 Zimmermann (2017 forthcoming).

47 Article 2 and 3, Maternity Protection Convention, 1919 (No. 3).

48 Zimmermann 2013.

49 League of Nations, *International Labour Conference*, 171; "Mary Macarthur", *New York Times,* 11 May 1919; Wikander 2010, 81–82, 86–87.

Japan's Tanaka Taka and the Night Work Convention

Like Sweden's Kerstin Hesselgren, Japan's Tanaka Taka disagreed with the Japanese Government delegate she advised and made a choice to act on her beliefs. Although Tanaka Taka was a middle-class social reformer and Japanese university professor educated in the United States at Stanford University, she saw herself as a labour "ally" and a feminist whose political priority was addressing the pressing problems of low-income women. Her appointment to the Japanese delegation had been controversial in Japan, though hostility to her was subdued compared to the mass protests launched by *Yūaikai* (Friendly Society), the dominant Japanese trade union federation, against Masumoto Uhei, the chief engineer and factory supervisor selected as Japan's ILC worker delegate.

Before setting sail for the United States, Tanaka traveled extensively throughout Japan, meeting with women factory workers and their organizations, hoping to gain their trust. At one gathering, a chaotic mass meeting in Tokyo sponsored by the Yūaikai Women's Division, the largest Japanese organization of wage-earning women, Tanaka surprised a skeptical audience by standing up to hecklers and insisting that she would make sure working-class women's expressed concerns of overwork, injury, ill health, and disrespect were heard in Washington. Convinced she would need someone who could speak from first-hand factory experience in Washington, she petitioned the Japanese Government to allow her to invite another woman to accompany her as an aide and companion. The Government agreed. After all, Tanaka was the only woman among the 60-person delegation, and by September, when the boat sailed, her four-month pregnancy was the subject of much speculation and gossip. She chose Ogata Setsu, who had worked as a factory operative at Kanegafuchi Spinning Company, one of the biggest textile companies in the world. Not coincidentally, the Japanese employer delegate, Mutō Sanj, was Managing Director of the Kanegafuchi Spinning Company.[50]

Once in Washington, Tanaka was determined to fulfill her promise to present the views of Japanese women factory workers to the world. The leaders of her delegation thought otherwise. Day after day passed without Tanaka being consulted or asked to speak. Still, the press hounded her wherever she went. As a somewhat notorious woman reformer, she was a novelty. But the reporters were also responding to the intense interest internationally over what stance

50 Cobble 2015; "Awakening of Japanese Women", *The Japanese Weekly Chronicle,* 16 October 1919; "Yūaikai hujinbu taikai ni mezametaru jokō", [Worker's Union Yūaikai Women's Meeting], *Asahi Shimbun,* 6 October 1919.

Japan, the principal Asian power, would take on uniform labour standards. Would Japan accede to the higher minimums being pushed by the Western powers or, along with other ILO member countries from the East (India, Siam, Persia, and China), seek "special exemptions" and lower standards? And, if the latter, how would Japan reconcile its earlier call for equality among nations at the Paris peace talks with its pursuit at the ILC of what some perceived as a lesser, inferior status reserved almost wholly for the Asian nations?[51]

On November 8, as the Commission on the Employment of Women met to draft night work standards for the full assembly to consider, the press got the news story it wanted. The Japanese employer delegate spoke first. Known in Japan for his opposition to regulatory labour legislation and his defense of Japan's paternalist ideology of "affectionism" (onjō shugi), or family-like attention to employee needs, he did not disappoint. Government regulation was unnecessary, he proclaimed: Japanese employers treated their workers well and protected them from overwork.

The Japanese Government delegate, Kamada Eikishi, was scheduled next. Perhaps embarrassed by his lack of English proficiency—Japanese negotiators in Paris had been mocked for this perceived deficit—Kamada asked Tanaka, a flawless English speaker, to read his written remarks. This she agreed to do, but after the first few sentences she pulled her own pages from beneath his, and in rapid-fire English launched a scathing attack on Japanese employers and their ill treatment of young women. Young girls, especially in the textile industry, were being sacrificed to capitalist avarice, she announced. They were ruined in body and spirit. In her view, Japanese paternalism had failed. Japan should adopt the night work standard recommended by the Commission, she proclaimed, and stop the shameful treatment of its women.

Bedlam broke out. Once the Japanese delegates realized what Tanaka was saying, they stood up to remove her from the podium. Unable to maintain order, Commission Chair Smith gaveled the meeting adjourned. But the controversy spilled out into the hall, as dozens of scribbling reporters sent news of the incident worldwide. Beside himself with rage, Mutō accused Tanaka of disloyalty to her country and of not being in her right mind due to her pregnancy. The next day, the Japanese Government dismissed Tanaka from the delegation.[52]

---

51 Cobble 2015; Shimazu 1998.

52 In reconstructing this event, I draw primarily from "The International Labour Conference", *The Japan Weekly Chronicle,* 27 November 1919, 831–833; "Tanaka daikien [Great Flame Tanaka]", *Asahi Shimbun,* 20 November 1919, 2; Allen 1958, 152; and Hesselgren, "Washington Konferensen 1919", KHP.

Although the full story cannot be told in this short chapter, suffice it to say that Tanaka did not relent. She rallied support from many of the women she had met at the ICWW, including Americans Mary Anderson and Margaret Dreier Robins, who interceded on her behalf with the Japanese delegates. Gradually, public opinion shifted in her favour as news accounts began to praise Tanaka's "moral courage" and mock Mutō for losing control and shaming Japan before the world. In the end, the Japanese Government reinstated Tanaka to the delegation and agreed to a compromise position in regard to night work. Japan did not adopt all aspects of the Night work (Women) Convention in 1919, but it acknowledged the need for international regulatory standards and it agreed to move toward ending night work for women. Japanese adherence to regulatory law and international labour standards, albeit gradually, had been accepted.[53]

Labour Women and the Minimum Age Convention

A third and final example of labour women's impact on the ILC involves Margaret Bondfield's intervention in the debate over whether India should adhere to the proposed child labour convention. Prohibitions on child labour occupied a central place in labour reform movements and in such organizations as the International Association for Labour Legislation in the early twentieth century, and not surprisingly, the ILO sections in the Versailles Treaty identified child labour as a concern as did the proposed agenda for the ILC. When ICWW delegates took up the question, they quickly reached consensus: only children age 16 or older who had completed elementary school and were medically certified as fit should be employed. The Women's Congress also urged shorter hours for "young persons between 16 and 18" than for adults. At the ILC, however, the ICWW recommendations did not prevail. The ILC ended up prohibiting the employment of children under 14, not 16, and failed to require educational or medical standards.[54]

Moreover, as with the case of Japan and night work, the debate over whether countries with "special circumstances" like India should abide by the same child labour standard as other nations was bitter and prolonged. The Commission on Child Labour, after much deliberation, recommended that India be

53 Cobble 2015; Anderson 1951, 128–129; Wilson 1932.

54 "Resolutions Adopted by First International Congress of Working Women", Washington, DC, October 28 to November 6, 1919, Folder 2, IFWW, SL; ILO Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5).

exempted altogether from the Convention. Nevertheless, when the Commission's recommendation, presented by the British Government delegate, came before the ILC plenary session, Margaret Bondfield objected. She joined with British worker delegate, G.H. Stuart-Bunning, former chair of the Trades Union Congress Parliamentary Committee, and broke with her own delegation. She offered a substitute clause to the effect that no child under 12 would be employed in large factories, mines, or quarries—a proposal that raised the legal minimum age of child labour from nine to 12 in the regions where laws already existed. Narayan Malhar Joshi, India's worker delegate, like Bondfield, defied the rest of his national delegation, which consisted of the Chair of the Indian Jute Mill Association and two Government delegates from India's London Office and from India's Provincial government. He rose and seconded Bondfield's motion. A renowned labour reformer, politician, and trade union leader, Joshi would found the All India Trade Union Congress in 1921 and serve as its General-Secretary for over a decade. He was also "probably the most significant representative of the interests of non-metropolitan labour on the various bodies of the ILO".[55]

The cross-national, cross-cultural, cross-gender alliance between Bondfield and Joshi is notable. The British colonial state had a long history of regulating Indian labour to privilege the economic interests of Britain, and, at times, British trade unions supported such imperial policies.[56] Yet it would be a mistake to assume that British workers and the British state were always aligned or that solidarity between workers in imperial Britain and British India was always the exception. In this case, two worker representatives, Bondfield and Joshi, broke with their national delegations and joined forces in a highly controversial move.

Interestingly, the plenary debate over child labour centered less on the economic aspects of the issue and more on the rights of children to emotional, physical, and intellectual development. As with the Maternity Convention, the standard was not seen as merely economic. It is, of course, difficult to know the motivations of those pushing either for higher or lower labour standards, just as it is difficult to judge the effects of various labour standard proposals. But the labour speakers from Britain and India who sought to raise employment standards in India did not stress the need to end unfair competition or protect Western jobs and labour standards. Both Bondfield and Joshi, for example, emphasized how raising the age of employment fostered more schooling and

55 League of Nations 1920, *International Labour Conference*, 92–98; "Narayan Malhar Joshi, 1879–1955", *The Hindu,* 31 May 1955; Zimmermann 2010, 230–231.

56 Van Goethem 2006a*;* Sukthankar and Kolben 2007, 57–77.

opened up possibilities for childhood development and growth. The Convention was needed to protect the moral and social rights of children, not simply to ensure jobs for adults. In their framing of the debate, human rights and needs took primacy in decision-making. The Bondfield amendment carried. India lost its bid for total exemption: it agreed to raise the minimum age of employment to 12 years in certain sectors of the economy.[57]

Legacies of 1919 and the Persistence of Labour Women's Internationalism

Labour women departed Washington with a sense of accomplishment. Although they had not reached consensus on every issue at either the Women's Congress or the ILC, they had articulated an inspiring international agenda for gender and industrial justice and left their mark on the first set of ILO Conventions. These achievements would legitimize and strengthen their reform efforts for decades to come.

Yet 1919 was a turning point in another way as well. On the last day of the Women's Congress, delegates enthusiastically launched what they judged to be the first international federation of working women. The new organization, which they hoped would be permanent, would coordinate the efforts of trade union women and their allies as they continued to lobby international organizations like the ILO and push for the rights of women and workers at home and abroad.

As a first step, the Women's Congress established an international secretariat in Washington and elected provisional officers: Robins as President; Bouvier, Kjelsberg, Landova-Stychova, and Bondfield as Vice-Presidents. Eventually, Anna Boschek—a textile unionist and feminist leader since the 1890s, and one of the first Social Democratic Party women elected to the Austrian National Assembly in 1919—agreed to fill the Vice-Presidential slot the Congress had reserved for the "Central Powers". The new organization translated and distributed thousands of copies of the Women's Congress resolutions and the Washington Conventions, and it monitored ratification campaigns in member nations. It also published news bulletins of working women's political and economic struggles around the world and sought to keep the 1919 network intact. In 1921, the organization, now officially called the International Federation of Working Women (IFWW), held a second congress in Geneva, timed to coincide with the third Session of the ILC. In 1923, it met for a third congress in Vienna.

57 League of Nations 1920, *International Labour Conference,* 92–98.

Yet the organization faced formidable obstacles as an international working women's federation: divisions over who could join, what its priorities should be, and what its relationship should be to male-dominated trade union organizations. National chauvinism, racial prejudice, and cultural parochialism took their toll. The deepening economic crisis in Europe, escalating rivalry between socialist- and communist-leaning groups, and a growing anti-feminist backlash weakened the organization as well. By 1925, the formal organization collapsed. It affiliated with the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), the major European-based organized labour confederation, and devolved into a small and under-resourced IFTU women's advisory committee.[58] Nevertheless, although the *formal* organization lasted only a few years, the *informal* international network of labour women continued. Indeed, for many of the labour women, the personal and political bonds they forged in 1919 persisted into the interwar era and beyond.

European trade union women, particularly those politically identified as socialist or social democratic, kept in touch through the IFTU women's advisory committee, which included former IFWW women from France, Belgium, and Britain as well as German women such as Gertrud Hanna, who had remained aloof from the IFWW. In addition, many of these women were active in the ILO and the reconstituted Women's Committee of the Socialist and Labour International (LSI).

Margaret Bondfield, Betzy Kjelsberg, and Kerstin Hesselgren, for example, were among a small handful of women leaders in ILO affairs in the interwar era, serving multiple times as advisers and as voting delegates.[59]

Yet European-wide cooperation among labour women proved difficult to sustain. The bitter rivalry between the 'Amsterdam International' and the 'Red International' meant that alliances between social democratic women active in the IFTU and the ILO and those who identified with the Communist International, including Russian and Eastern European women, were minimal, if non-existent. The rise of fascism and the collapse of parliamentary

58 For more on the ICWW after 1919 and the reasons for the dissolution of the IFWW, see Cobble 2014a and Van Goethem 2006a. On Boschek, see Bischof, Pelinka, and Thurner 1998, 63–74; Lewis 1995, 121–122; and Hauch 2011. On interwar women's internationalism more generally, see Zimmermann 2012.

59 German women had not attended the 1919 Women's Labour Congress, nor did they join the IFWW. Robins, among others, hoped to convince Gertrud Hanna to accept the vice-presidential slot reserved for the "Central Powers", but she refused. See Cobble 2014a; Neunsinger 2007; Lubin and Winslow 1990, 32–40; Natchkova and Schoeni 2013.

governments in Germany, Italy, Austria, and elsewhere in the interwar era proved enormously destructive as well.[60]

Transnational ties persisted between European and North American labour women, however. Labour women in the United States were not initially active in the ILO or the IFTU after the demise of the IFWW, in part because neither their government nor their male-led labour federation (the American Federation of Labor) had joined either of these European-based labour organizations. Still, they stayed in close contact with European labour women by exchanging long letters and periodic visits. Margaret Bondfield, Rose Schneiderman, Mary Anderson, and others, for instance, dubbed themselves the "Stone Turners' Gang", perhaps signaling the long, slow, arduous path of reform, and kept in close contact until Bondfield's death in 1953.[61]

American women also pressured the United States Government to end its isolationist policies and, among other steps, establish formal relations with the ILO. Anderson, director of the US Women's Bureau from 1920 to 1944, sailed to Europe in 1931, eager to participate in ILO debates as one of the first official observers from the United States. The US State Department canceled her authorization at the last moment, but she returned in 1933 with the first visiting US delegation. She and Frances Perkins, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor, were among the most prominent voices pushing for the United States to join the ILO, which it did in 1934.[62]

Women activists in Latin America, Asia, and elsewhere continued their international work after 1919, with Latin American women taking the lead in Pan-American feminist organizations in the interwar period, for example, and Pan-Pacific women's organizations emerging as well. Although there were notable exceptions, few women from these regions were active in European-dominated organizations like the ILO or the IFTU until after World War II.[63]

Labour women's international activism was indeed difficult to sustain in the interwar years, and at times it did feel like chiseling in stone. Their continuing efforts, however, to transform both the ILO and the IFTU led to significant policy breakthroughs in the post-World War II decades. At the ILO, those advances included the revised Night Work (Women) Convention, 1948 (No. 89), the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the 1952 amended and improved Maternity Protection Convention (No. 103), and Convention No. 111 from 1958, promoting policies to eliminate discrimination

60 Van Goethem 2006a, 28–30; Gruber and Graves 1998.

61 For the persistence of transatlantic ties, see *Life and Labor,* 1921–1939; Cobble 2014a.

62 Anderson 1951; Eisenberg 2014.

63 Miller 1991; Cobble 2014a; Cobble 2014b.

on the basis of "race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin". In 1956, after sustained pressure from labour feminists, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the IFTU's successor, finally set up a women's committee, which flourished and became more fully international.[64]

A founder of the IFTU's Women's Committee, US garment lobbyist and New Deal feminist Esther Peterson, wrote Sweden's Kerstin Hesselgren in 1956 to find out more about the 1919 Women's Labour Congress. The ICFTU had asked her to write a pamphlet about women and the international trade union movement, and she wanted to get the story, including the history of labour women's activism and their impact on labour organizations, right. "Dearest Kerstin", she began, "since the International Congress of Working Women was the first world gathering of trade union women, it must not be forgotten. Please tell me your memories of it so I can write about it with some accuracy". Hesselgren, now 84, shot back a detailed letter, with anecdotes drawn from her 1919 diaries, and appended a list of other women from 1919 to whom Peterson should write. Thrilled, Peterson penned a long account for the ICFTU of the 1919 Women's Congress, what it had accomplished, and the rise of trade union women's internationalism. But it was an origin story that never go tpublished. When the ICFTU issued the pamphlet, Peterson's tribute had been cut back to just a few lines.[65] It is time at long last for the ILO to claim labour women among its founders and expand its origin story.

---

64 ILO (2009) "Women's Empowerment: 90 Years of ILO Action!" (Geneva: ILO); Boris and Jensen 2013; Richards 2014.

65 Peterson to Hesselgren, April 1956, folder 382, box 21, Peterson Papers, SL; Hesselgren to Peterson, April 27, 1956, *ibid;* Cobble 2014b.