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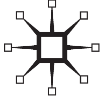

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1
Introduction

When Caroline Spurgeon, professor of English literature at Bedford College, London, stepped off her ocean liner in New York, the end of World War I was imminent. It was October 12, 1918, and armistice negotiations with Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire would begin two days later; Germany's capitulation was only a matter of time. Caroline Spurgeon had traveled from Britain to the United States to further the Allied war effort against the Central Powers. Along with her younger colleague Rose Sidgwick, a lecturer in ancient history at Birmingham University, Spurgeon was part of the official British Educational Mission: a committee of seven respected British university lecturers that had been appointed by the Foreign Office in summer 1918 and was in the United States at the invitation of the US government and the American Emergency Council on Education.[1] The committee's task was to visit 46 American colleges and universities over the subsequent six weeks and, based on their observations, to draw up proposals for enhancing exchange between British and American students, teachers, and scholars. The initiative ultimately sought to disengage the United States from its close academic ties with the German Reich.

The arrival of the British professor and her young colleague in New York in October 1918 marks the beginning of women academics' transnational networking. Prompted by wartime educational policy requirements, Spurgeon's tour introduced the British women to leading American colleagues. Subsequent discussions on what the inter-Allied work on higher education would mean for female students and teachers, and how their concerns could best be given a voice, culminated in the idea of establishing a new network of academic women, initially within the Allied sphere.

The Versailles peace negotiations, the founding of the League of Nations, and the introduction of women's suffrage after hard years of campaigning fueled ambitions to achieve more than an inter-Allied female educational alliance. Instead, American and British initiators envisaged the formation of a multinational female educational elite that would lay claim to a role in global politics. The new international affiliation of university- and college-trained women would call on its members to commit to the values of a

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"world community" then forming around the League of Nations, to act for world peace, and, at the same time, to ensure women's access to science and higher education worldwide. To this end, the international association was to establish a dense web of personal friendships among female academics across national and disciplinary boundaries; promote international exchange between women students, teachers, and researchers; and support women's advancement in the academic sphere.

The International Federation of University Women (IFUW) was founded in London in spring 1919. By 1922, its coverage had grown from 8 to 22 national member associations; by 1930, the IFUW united twenty-four thousand academic women from 30 countries. The organization joined the spectrum of non-state actors arising around the League of Nations, a landscape that has aptly been described as a "transnational civil society."[2] A German organization of university women, the Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund (DAB), was formed in 1926 and joined the IFUW the same year.

My study takes as its starting point the birth of the IFUW and the 30 member associations it rapidly acquired. I explore how the idea of the IFUW gained focus and substance, and reconstruct the growth and workings of the new organization, which for the first time brought together women academics from many different, mainly European, countries. I also investigate the degree to which the organization succeeded in realizing its goals over the subsequent four decades, in the face of turbulent global economic and political conditions. Which actors, models, and visions carried the organization forward, and how should we locate them within the international context of the politics of gender and scholarship during the twentieth century?

Tracing the history of this international umbrella organization is, then, one key focus of the present study. Equally important is the question of what the IFUW, dominated as it was by Britain and America, meant for those members who had been socialized within the academic systems of Continental Europe. The interface of international objectives and principles with national interests, needs, and convictions proved remarkably fraught, as the case of the German organization illustrates. For the entire period under study, the relationship between the IFUW and German academic women was one of particular tension—a tension that offers vivid insights into both the potential and the limitations of transnational networking. This study focuses especially on the degree to which German women scholars' entry into the new, international female academic community enabled them to forge new professional or political opportunities and personal bonds—before, during, and after the Nazi dictatorship.

The interest in transnational relationships has expanded markedly in recent years, a trend common in German and English-language historiography.[3] This transnational turn has encouraged renewed interest in women's international activities.[4] And yet, little attention has so far been devoted to the IFUW and its national member organizations.[5] The IFUW lies at the intersection of several fields of research rarely addressed in common: the cultural and gender history of science and the history of higher education, the history of international

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relations, and the history of national and international women's movements. Historians of science investigating women's access to higher education and their academic contributions have explored specific institutional or disciplinary contexts within national frameworks.[6] Similarly, historical studies of the women's movement in Britain, the United States, Germany, and elsewhere in Europe have tended to focus on national contexts.[7] Research on the international women's movement, in turn, has concentrated on women's politics more generally.[8] Finally, the history of international relations has accorded only limited attention to gender history; the same can be said for the history of international education and scientific networking.[9] In terms of specific national, disciplinary, and biographical literature, my study builds on excellent work in all domains; it aims to draw those fields together to tease out relationships between national and disciplinary, as well academic and non-academic contexts. My study highlights the way the IFUW functioned and intervened as an international women's organization and as a transnational, gender-specific academic network. Tracing overlapping national and international commitments, the study presents a new approach to the cultural history of international relations.[10]

In this book, I approach the IFUW—in the spirit of its founders—as an academic network. This means that the biographies of historical actors are of critical importance, as they cast light on the ways that personal connections and informal links arose and flourished via the IFUW's networks. To a considerable extent, the female academic network I explore here was built on personal ties and traditions, social practices whose origins took shape in the last decades of the nineteenth century with the emergence of national and international women's movements. Since the publication of Carrol Smith-Rosenberg's groundbreaking paper on "The Female World of Love and Ritual," these emotionally intense, long-lived friendships have offered gender historians a fruitful means to analyze women's networks and organizations.[11] "Friendship" in this sense was, as Edith Saurer has argued, both a personal and a public commitment.[12]

Especially in its foundation phase, the IFUW was shaped by personal attachments and emotional synergies of this kind. The combination of personal affection and public obligation is exemplified by the relationship of the IFUW's Anglo-American founding couple, the New York college dean Virginia Gildersleeve and the British professor Caroline Spurgeon. The women met in fall 1918 during the British Educational Mission's tour through the United States, and entered into a lifelong transatlantic companionship that proved highly productive in terms of both scholarship and the politics of science. Their bond persisted until Caroline Spurgeon's death in 1942.[13] The founders of the IFUW also declared friendship in general to be an essential pillar of their international organization. One of the central concerns of this book is the extent to which friendships and other personal encounters and bonds, as well as professional and academic contacts within and outside the organization, contributed to the structure, stability, and continuity of the IFUW and its member associations.

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The IFUW was a product of the immediate post–World War I era, and its founding statement in 1919 established academic internationalism as a binding ethical maxim.[14] According to the federation's leading representatives, it was their sex that made them particularly well qualified to stand up for general international understanding in the name of academic objectivity. With this claim, they positioned themselves within a colorful array of intellectuals, writers, scholars, and politicians—women and men alike—who supported the League of Nations and successfully argued for the League to be granted responsibility not only for political and economic concerns, but for intellectual and scientific matters as well.[15] In 1922, the efforts of this internationalist circle bore fruit with the establishment of the League of Nations Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, and it emphatically welcomed the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation that was formed shortly afterward in Paris. The IFUW managed to ensure that women were included among those appointed to the institute's new academic posts. In line with David Livingstone's advice to see internationalism in science as "a social achievement, not the inevitable consequence of some inherent scientific essence,"[16] this book explores the form of internationalism pursued by the IFUW in the politically turbulent period following World War I. How far did the organization succeed in convincing its own multinational academic membership to commit to the conceptual triad of science, womanhood, and international community, and how far did it manage to mediate between internationalism and the various nationalisms of the member associations? Did the member associations, especially the DAB, accept the IFUW's principles in this respect, or were some academic women inclined to develop models that altered the balance of priorities between internationalism and nationalism?

In 1922, Elise Richter, a 54-year-old Viennese teacher of Romance languages, was asked by a British acquaintance whether she would be prepared to found an Austrian association of women academics and enter the international federation. Richter confessed that she did not personally know a single woman who had pursued a path similar to her own. Richter, who was appointed Austria-Hungary's first female lecturer in 1907 and in 1922 became the new Austrian republic's first female associate professor, may have been exaggerating the point slightly in her memoirs for effect. Her observation is all the more surprising in view of the liberal attitude toward women that prevailed in Viennese academia around 1900, a climate portrayed so convincingly by Maria Rentetzi's study.[17] But Richter's comment does point to gender-specific differences between the academic cultures of Continental Europe on the one hand and Britain and the United States on the other. Women scientists in Central Europe barely knew each other; they did not nurture intensive personal ties. This is not to say that the phenomenon of female friendship was necessarily unknown to them; quite the contrary. Elise Richter, for example, lived with her elder sister Helene, a self-taught expert on Shakespeare and a respected theater critic. Nor were Richter's views far removed from the objectives of the women's movement. As a scholar, however, she cultivated intense relationships solely with men; indeed, she actively avoided contact with women,

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especially those reputed to be involved in the women's movement. Drawing additional attention to her gender seemed to her to carry the risk of damaging her prospects within the university.[18] It is remarkable that before the end of World War I, collegial friendship among women academics was virtually unknown within the German-speaking universities. Rather, women focused on proving their worth as individuals in a masculine world: almost without exception, women in the German academic system struggled in isolation.

The reasons why Elise Richter nonetheless decided in 1922 to found the Austrian association of academic women and thus enter the public limelight as a woman and as an academic will be explored in subsequent chapters. In the case of Germany, I will outline why and how academic women sought to convince their female colleagues inside and outside the universities to join together as educated women under the umbrella of the DAB and the IFUW. At issue was the decision to participate in an international initiative at all—a politically explosive choice in Germany at this time. An equally important facet of any analysis of German academics' attitude to the international community is the extent and manner in which the Anglo-American model of female academic networking was adopted and anchored in German academic life from the 1920s onward.

This account draws on a range of archival sources, most of them held in American and British archives. In the German case, unpublished source material is more difficult to find. The very sparseness of the DAB's business papers for the Weimar period, which form part of the Helene Lange Archives in the Berlin state archives (Landesarchiv Berlin), illustrates the precarious financial situation of the young DAB in the 1920s: at the time, a lack of money and of paper meant it was virtually impossible even to send out newsletters. The DAB archive material also shows marks of having been moved from place to place each time the association's presidency changed. For the Nazi period, we must rely exclusively on sources published by the organs of the Deutsches Frauenwerk, the National Socialist "German Women's Agency." And for the period after 1945, the holdings of the German Federal Archives in Koblenz do not, at least with regard to the initial postwar years, suffice to piece together the networks that were then being rebuilt between women in West Germany. It is rare that a woman scholar's personal papers survive in a German public archive; the most fruitful sources in this respect have proved to be the papers of certain DAB presidents, members of the Reichstag, and later members of the West German Bundestag, notably those of Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, the cofounder of the DAB and later honorary president of the Bundestag.

In contrast to the dearth of German sources, the richness of sources in the United States indicates how differently women's academic networks in America were structured and anchored in society. The archives of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) have been housed in the organization's Washington offices since 1917. They contain not only extensive material on the AAUW's history, but also important documents from the early years of the IFUW. The correspondence of the AAUW's International Relations Committee offers insight into the network of personal friendships

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and mutual assistance linking many different parts of Europe and America, especially during the period of National Socialism and the persecution and emigration of European women scholars. Important documents can also be found in the extensive and well-ordered papers of former college deans, many of whom were the most committed protagonists of the new, transnational female educational elite. These sources have enabled me to reconstruct in detail the organization and policies of the IFUW. Of special value here are the personal papers of Dean Virginia Gildersleeve at Barnard College and Columbia University, New York, and of M. Carey Thomas, the longtime president of Bryn Mawr College in Philadelphia.

Using German-language sources alone, the Nazi period, in particular, would have been impossible to investigate in any detail, in terms either of the train of events within Germany or of the subsequent careers of the DAB's Jewish members, who, in 1933, were excluded by their colleagues, dismissed from their employment, and forced into emigration. Fortunately, the British Federation of University Women's archives contain documents on the BFUW's assistance for emigration and for the refugees, enabling a detailed understanding of the organization of rescue operations and the personal decisions, and later professional lives, of academic women in exile. Until the mid-1990s, the BFUW archives were housed in the association's international hall of residence, Crosby Hall; when the hall was closed, the papers were moved to the Portsmouth University library. The BFUW subsequently transferred the entire holdings to the Women's Library in London, with the aim of keeping them in appropriate archival conditions and making them more easily accessible. Unfortunately, however, the collection remained closed for more than a decade after the move.[19] It was reopened in early 2014, when the Women's Library found a new home in the library of the London School of Economics. As this book goes to press, the BFUW archives are in the process of being recatalogued. In the following, my citations indicate both the new references and the old Portsmouth filing.

This study is divided into seven main chapters, arranged chronologically to address different aspects of the international network and its interface with the German member association. Chapter 2 follows Caroline Spurgeon and Rose Sidgwick on their official tour through the United States at the end of World War I, reconstructing the motivation and context of the IFUW's formation. This chapter examines in detail how the IFUW's founders achieved such rapid success in their organization's networking and growth. It applies a gender-historical perspective to the emergence of the Anglo-American predominance within international science and education policy after World War I: in the initial stages of the IFUW's development, women academics from the former Central Powers were excluded from the organization.

In chapter 3, I turn to the IFUW's agenda and policies during the 1920s, with a particular focus on the federation's two most important initiatives. The first of these is the IFUW's establishment of three international guesthouses—in Washington, Paris, and London. Each offered accommodation for around 50 traveling women academics and provided good, reasonably priced meals,

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a well-furnished library, and spacious clubrooms. The second is the federation's creation of an international fellowship program for women scholars, which during the 1920s was already lending the IFUW a high degree of credibility as an institution of nonpartisan academic internationalism. The IFUW's policy of promoting scholarship, as practiced within this program, laid the foundations for its later rapprochement with former wartime enemies.

In chapter 4, the book's perspective shifts from an international to a national context. I explore the protracted disputes within Germany on the question of whether, and when, German women academics should take part in the new female network. These debates reflected the bitter feuds around science policy and national academic sensibilities that characterized the international situation in the years following World War I. This chapter also reveals the deep crisis in which female academics found themselves at the beginning of the Weimar Republic. This is the context for my discussion of the extent to which women academics in Germany managed, more quickly than their male colleagues, to grasp the academic internationalism proposed after World War I by new international organizations as an opportunity—on the one hand, to benefit from the resources of the IFUW and promote Germany's political interests internationally, and on the other, to tap into the momentum of the IFUW's energy to create a new form of female networking within Germany. I examine the founding of the DAB as a transnational project and ask how far this female academic umbrella organization should be regarded as an attempt to transfer to the German context an essentially Anglo-American model of nurturing female academic traditions.

Chapter 5 addresses the extraordinary political challenges that faced the DAB, its members, and the IFUW as a whole in the wake of the National Socialist "seizure of power" in January 1933. I show first of all that the DAB's political survival in Germany was inextricably tied to its membership in the IFUW. I outline the process by which the association underwent *Gleichschaltung*, or alignment with the regime's policy and ideology, describing this process in terms of both the IFUW's stance and German women's personal connections with their colleagues abroad. I am interested here in the form in which the transnational networking of female academics survived under the conditions of the Nazi dictatorship. The DAB remained in the IFUW until 1936. Shortly thereafter, it was dissolved into a larger Nazi women's organization, the German Women's Agency. I also pursue the question of whether, and how, female academic networks within Germany continued to exist in isolation from the international community, and show how women once associated with the DAB protected their own interests by distancing themselves energetically from the values of the bourgeois, civic world community, by allying themselves to female forms of the racist science of the day, or by seeking out new networks within Nazi structures.

Chapter 6 sets these developments against the IFUW's reactions to the National Socialist revolution within Germany. I show that the practical continuation of an international federation functioning outside Germany, and its transnational network, was vitally important for those women academics

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in Germany (and in Germany's growing sphere of influence) who had been dismissed from public service positions and barred from the DAB. This chapter highlights a development long overlooked in science studies and exile studies: between 1933 and 1945, the academic networks of the female international community functioned efficiently to assist persecuted members in escaping Nazism. I indicate the specific areas where the aid of the IFUW and its member associations was concentrated, identify the individuals who carried out and funded that aid, and show which academic women benefited from it.

Chapter 7 asks how Jewish women academics within Germany, and later German-dominated Europe, reacted to the Nazi persecution. Through the correspondence housed in the BFUW and AAUW archives, I retrace individual women's dilemmas, their options—or lack of options—and the choices they pursued.

Chapter 8 shifts attention back to Germany. In this chapter, I focus on the ways in which academic women there sought to recast national and international networks. By exploring German developments in larger international contexts, I go beyond myths of a "completely new beginning" after May 1945 to confront questions of connections and continuity, of national and transnational memory—areas of scholarly investigation that deserve further attention in the years to come.

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