

“Great Social and Economic Questions Await her Interference”:  
Women Educators’ Contribution to and Use of Economic Thought, 1890–1930

Katja A. Koehnlein

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Reading Committee:  
Nancy Beadie, Chair  
Joy Williamson-Lott  
Susan Kemp  
Maresi Nerad

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Katja A. Koehnlein

University of Washington

**Abstract**

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Over the past hundred years neoclassical economics has maintained its position as the predominant school of thought in economics departments and business schools, perpetuating the idea that economics is a science that focuses solely on the market and its mathematical predictabilities. This singularity in economic approaches was not always the case. In the 1890s and early 1900s, before neoclassical economics rose to near-hegemony, a broad range of economic approaches and methodologies coexisted and rivaled. Women participated substantially in this pluralistic discourse. Self- and formally trained in the social sciences, women challenged the universal, ahistorical understanding of economics put forth by classical and neoclassical economic approaches; questioned the principle of *homo economicus* and its underlying ethos of individualism; and developed alternative visions of the economy. Moreover, women applied this economic expertise to other their areas of work, especially social reform work and education.

This dissertation examines the economic thought of three women educators and asks how their economic expertise shaped their educational philosophies and practices. In three individual

chapters, it follows the work of Anna Julia Cooper, an African American scholar, teacher, and activist born in the American South in 1858; Emily Greene Balch, a white American, middle-class social scientist, reformer, and college teacher, born on the East Coast in 1867; and Alice Salomon, a Jewish-born, German social work pioneer, economist, and teacher born in 1872. The analysis of their work is based on a close reading of the women's writings, speeches, and lectures, as they pertained to economic and educational questions, and is placed against the backdrop of the transatlantic economic debate of the Progressive Era. Situated within the context of the socio-political conditions in Germany and the US as well as the respective institutional conditions of knowledge production, all of which were strongly shaped by race, class, and gender, the three studies examine further how the women's different social locations informed their economic thinking and produced similarities as well as differences and blind spots.

The study of the three women's economic thought expands our knowledge about the institutional and intellectual histories of the social sciences. The cases of Cooper, Balch, and Salomon show that women not only de-naturalized and historicized economic relations in their research but also theoretically connected economic questions to questions of race and gender (although they did so to different degrees). They used the economic knowledge—increasingly made available to them on women's college campuses and through women's networks—to transgress a single focus on class relations. They developed pioneering, intersectional approaches that exposed the intertwined workings of capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy, and insisted that economic research ought to be guided by a moral vision of a more just society. The women's ideas thus ran counter to the emerging neoclassical paradigm, which, pushed by representatives of businesses and the capitalist state who increasingly controlled universities' governing boards, insisted that economics was an abstract, ahistorical science. As such, the

marginalization of women's ideas became part of a bigger project that separated economic questions from political, social, and ethical questions, and considered economic relations as free from power relations.

The dissertation further calls attention to the significance of economic thought for women's educational work, indicating a flow of ideas between economics and education particular to the Progressive Era. While neoclassical economics' underlying narrative of reckless individualism and greed as the "natural" drivers of economic growth lends itself at best as a rationale for education for individual social mobility, the women's historical and relational understanding of the economy informed educational approaches that highlighted civic agency as social responsibility (Balch and Salomon) and Black solidarity (Cooper). Knowledge about the historical (and thus changeable) nature of economic relations, the women thought, was a prerequisite for students to understand themselves in relation to others, recognize the power structures of which they were part, and develop strategies for social change.

## Acknowledgements

“Life is obviously not an individual affair,” Emily Greene Balch once wrote. As our lives are interwoven with that of others, our achievements are never solely the product of our own efforts. They are just as much a result of what others have invested in us—a testament to the strength of the communities of which we are a part and of the people who care for us. I am beyond grateful for the support I received.

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for loving my children, and for always being there for me; and Jisoo Hyun, my writing buddy and my closest ally, thank you for your advice, your friendship, and endless support, I truly could not have finished this dissertation without you.

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Beyond those of the present, I feel tremendous gratitude for those of the past on whose shoulders we stand. The women whose work I studied in this dissertation—Anna Julia Cooper, Emily Greene Balch, and Alice Salomon—were visionaries of a better world and warriors for justice and peace. They were not always perfect, but they were fearless, they persisted, and they built powerful networks. To the long line of archivists, including the amazing people at Howard University’s Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, and the Alice Salomon Archive in Berlin, thank you for keeping the legacies of these three women others alive. We need their voices today.

I dedicate this dissertation to my two children, Franka and Frieda, who connect the past and the future. You are smart, you are compassionate, and you are fierce. May you continue to spread your wings and make your own contributions to the world.

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## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

In September of 1885, a group of young scholars, university administrators, clergymen, and public figures gathered in Saratoga, New York, to inaugurate the American Economic Association (AEA). Formally connecting a loose group of progressive American thinkers, many of whom had been trained at German universities, the founding of the organization marked a new era in the history of economics. It was as much a “proclamation of emancipation” from classical economics, as AEA founding member Richard Ely wrote, as it was a push to further establish and institutionalize economics as an academic discipline.<sup>1</sup> Historically, economics had been part of universities’ philosophy departments, but it was about time, Ely and his colleagues proposed, to establish economics as an independent discipline, rethink the classical approach in the tradition of Adam Smith, and establish methods equipped to address the burning questions of the late nineteenth century. The AEA functioned as the institutional home for the debate around a new school of economic thought, in this dissertation called “new economics,” which sharply critiqued the dogma of the self-regulating market, its underlying ethos of the freely acting self, and the resulting laissez-faire politics. Rejecting the principles of classical economics, new economics promoted a decidedly scientific approach to economic questions, based on empirical methods. The organization’s first report declared that its goal was to “be ready to give a respectful hearing to every new [economic] idea,” be impartial, and “should make the collection, classification and interpretation of facts its chief task.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Ely, *Ground Under Our Feet, An Autobiography* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 138.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Ely, “Report of the Organization of the American Economic Association,” *Publications of the American Economic Association* 1, no. 1 (1886): 6.

The revolt against classical economics, expressed in the founding of the AEA, had been a long time in the making. Burning issues threatened to tear the thin fabric of social peace in the United States and other industrializing countries. Rapidly growing industries, fueled by new production technologies, had drawn massive numbers of workers to the cities, and low wages and long work hours—in combination with poor housing conditions—led to declining health and dire living situations for workers. While business owners reaped the fruits of the exponential growth of the national economy, creating a vision of a prosperous society, workers grew increasingly frustrated as their families struggled to survive, and tensions between labor and capital grew. In the United States and in Germany, workers' anger and frustration culminated in dramatic strikes, such as the Pullman Strike in the American Midwest in 1894 and the Hamburg Port Strike in 1896–97. Across the Atlantic the “labor question” now dominated public debates and created a new set of reform ideas and political alliances.

In response to the challenges that arose from these massive transformations, politicians, scholars, social gospel-inspired activists, socialists, and feminists alike discussed how and why uncontrolled capitalism and laissez-faire politics had not, in fact, produced the kind of economic order that could support a stable democracy and sustain social peace and justice. What united the often controversial scholarly and reformist efforts was the rejection of classical and emerging neo-classical economic principles. This included, for example, the repudiation of a-priori assumptions such as the *homo economicus*—the rationally thinking and independently acting man—and the notion of the market equilibrium as naturally arising from the exchange of goods and services between independent and self-interested economic agents. Based on these principles, supporters of laissez-faire politics argued that any kind of imposed regulation would throw the economy out of balance because it interfered with the universal, natural law of the

market or an organic evolutionary process. Countering this approach, social-reform oriented scholars and new economists developed a number of new thought traditions that today are often classified as “heterodox economics.”<sup>3</sup>

Although mostly obscured from intellectual histories of economics today, women contributed substantially to the rich body of economic thought that was built during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United States and in Europe. Women’s increasing access to higher education, the specific openness of the new economics discipline to women, as well women’s expertise in social reform work—an area of the public which they had been able to carve out for themselves—encouraged women to formally and informally train in economics, conduct research (especially in labor studies), and propose new ideas. Over the past two decades, both feminist historians of the social sciences and feminist economists have begun to point out women economists’ erasure from the history of economics and have started a recovery project. Historians of sociology, especially, have worked to decenter male voices by bringing awareness to the women founders of sociology, especially their use of scientific methods and their commitment to social justice.<sup>4</sup> More recently, historians of economics have started to collect and reinsert women economists’ legacies in the field.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This debate is well explained in the literature, for example in Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Julie A. Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 145–157; and Thomas C. Leonard, *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics, & American Economics in the Progressive Era* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Patricia M. Lengermann and Jill Niebrugge-Brantley, *The Women Founders: Sociology and Social Theory, 1830–1930: A Text/Reader* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example Robert W. Dimand, “The Neglect of Women’s Contributions to Economics,” in *Women of Value*, eds. Mary Ann Dimand, Robert W. Dimand, and Evelyn L. Forget (Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1995), 1–24; Evelyn L. Forget, “American Women and the Economics Profession in the Twentieth Century,” in *OEconomia* 1, no. 1 (2011), 19. Among the first scholars to approach the topic were Bette Polkinghorn and Dorothy Lampen Thomson, who portrayed the life and work of eight women economists, born between 1769 and 1927. See Bette Polkinghorn and Dorothy Lampen Thomson, *Adam Smith's Daughters: Eight Prominent Women Economists from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 1998); and

This dissertation asks what happened and what was lost—to the economics discipline and to the world—when women’s economic ideas were sidelined and subsequently cut from the history of economic thought. To uncover how women contributed to, modified, challenged, and transgressed the dominant economic discourse of the Progressive Era and to understand what happened to their ideas, I take an approach that foregrounds individual intellectual biographies. In three chapters, this dissertation follows the economic ideas of three women with expertise in economics, who, navigating the gendered and racialized conditions of knowledge production and searching for ways to engage in social change, pursued a careers in education: Anna Julia Cooper, a teacher and principal at Washington DC’s prestigious M Street High School for African Americans; Emily Greene Balch, professor for economics at the Wellesley College for women in Massachusetts; and Alice Salomon, founder and director of Berlin’s Social Women’s School and German social work pioneer. The studies of these three women further ask what happened when women with expertise in economics and an interest in social justice (which was both a motivator and a result of their economic training) were also dedicated teachers. This dissertation carefully traces how these women’s economic thoughts shaped their educational ideas and practices, especially in their concepts of social justice education. The analysis of the flow of ideas between economics and education in the women’s work, I argue, recovers an important aspect of the history of social justice education.

Although the work of these three women sits at the center of this dissertation, the goal is not so much to establish individual intellectual biographies (although, as the chapters will show, their ideas have so far rarely been considered as *economic* thought and as such each chapter contributes to the scholarship on the individual women). More so, it will bring together

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Robert Dimand, Mary Ann Dimand, and Evelyn Forget, *A Biographical Dictionary of Women Economists* (Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, Mass: Edward Elgar, 2000).

institutional and intellectual history by asking how the gendered and racialized conditions of knowledge production of the Progressive Era, inside and outside of institutions of higher education, shaped the intellectual spaces from where women developed their economic thought. Built on the history of higher education and the social sciences, this dissertation argues that the formative years of the social sciences constituted a particular moment in time that encouraged women's critical and innovative participation in the public and scholarly economic discourses. The institutional openness of the emerging economics discipline to women and the connection between social reform organizations and the social sciences created practical opportunities for women to engage in economic research. At the same time, the nature of new economic ideas, expressed in a focus on human interdependence as the ontological unit of research instead of the independent, rational man, built a great point of entrance for women to insert their own critical examination of power relations. The women's identities as middle-class women with different racial and geographical backgrounds, this dissertation maintains further, significantly structured the space from where they generated their economic knowledge. Situated at the margins of universities and informed by their social reform work and work as teachers, their intellectual location shaped their theoretical perspectives and methods.

The studies presented in this dissertation further ask how the women's economic expertise translated to their educational work. For one, the transfer of knowledge was an effect of their triple function as scholars, teachers, and activists, which encouraged interdisciplinarity and the flow of ideas between the three fields of work. For two, the application of economic expertise was an expression of their belief that the social sciences needed to be used to change society for the better—a distinctly moral approach to economics that the new economists and social reformers had advanced. Trained in the 1880s and 1890s, the women carried the demand that the

social sciences and morality needed to be connected to their research and their practical, educational work; a principle they held onto even as mainstream economics increasingly demanded to separate science and values. The studies will show that the women formulated complex, detailed concepts for social justice education that included students' knowledge of social and economic relations, the understanding and reflection of their positionalities, and the development of social responsibility and solidarity.

### ***Contributions to Existing Scholarship***

The recovery and analysis of women educators' production and use of economic thought makes several contributions to existing bodies of scholarship. First, it adds to feminist scholarship on the gendered history of the social sciences, as presented in *Gender and American Social Science*, a collection of articles edited by Helene Silverberg. Silverberg argues that women's rising presence in the social sciences during the discipline's first decades was counteracted and increasingly controlled by the gendered power structures in academia. Scholars and administrators helped to strengthen and reestablish male dominance through organizational processes, for example hiring and funding practices, as well as a paradigmatic shift towards positivism. The latter worked together with a dualistic understanding of gender characters, producing the argument that women's nature precluded them from being "objective."<sup>6</sup> Nancy Folbre, in the same book, argues that the male founders of economics departments used the framing of masculinity as independent, competitive, and rational to conceptionally separate markets from families and economics from morals. This secured male dominance in the social

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<sup>6</sup> Helene Silverberg, "Introduction: Toward a Gendered Social Science History," in *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years*, ed. Helene Silverberg (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 3–32.

sciences and at the same time supported the emergence of neoclassical economics and its focus on markets.<sup>7</sup> Mary Ann Dzuback further deepened this important work on the gendered politics of knowledge in the social sciences at universities. She studied women social scientists who contributed significantly to social reform policies from within social science departments, using an array of strategies to access, create, and remain in research positions.<sup>8</sup>

A few authors have called attention to women's interventions in the social sciences from the place of social reform work, for example the work of social reformers Elsie Clews Parsons, Mary van Kleeck, and Jane Addams.<sup>9</sup> Addams, especially, figures prominently in historical analyses of women social scientists in other scholars' work as well.<sup>10</sup> My own work builds on and expands this body of work by exploring two aspects that have not yet been systematically studied. For one, I add teaching as an important cornerstone of the intellectual space women created and which they used to produce social science knowledge, expanding a view that has so far focused on social reform work as the one alternative site of social science research. Teaching, I will show, was not just a means for women scientists to sustain their independent lives as unmarried or widowed women, but also a place that generated practical knowledge and, most

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<sup>7</sup> Nancy Folbre, "The 'Sphere of Women' in Early Twentieth-Century Economics," in *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years*, ed. Helene Silverberg (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 35–60.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Ann Dzuback, "Gender and the Politics of Knowledge," *History of Education Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (2003): 171–195.

<sup>9</sup> Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Jane Addams, Hull-House Maps and Papers: Social Science as Women's Work in the 1890s," in *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years*, ed. Helene Silverberg (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 127–155; Desley Deacon, "Bringing Social Science Back Home: Theory and Practice in the Life and Work of Elsie Clews Parsons," in *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years*, ed. Helene Silverberg (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 265–292; and Guy Alchon, "The 'Self-Appraising Sincerity' of Overreaching Theory, Biography as Ethical Practice and the Case of Mary Van Kleeck," in *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years*, ed. Helene Silverberg (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 293–326.

<sup>10</sup> Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Feminism and Pragmatism, Reweaving the Social Fabric* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Marilyn Fischer, *Jane Addams's Evolutionary Theorizing: Constructing "Democracy and Social Ethics"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

importantly provided the opportunity bring their visions of justice and change in educational concepts to fruition through education.

This dissertation further adds to the gendered history of the social sciences by transgressing a view on women social scientists that focuses exclusively on white American, middle-class women. This dissertation juxtaposes the work of three women with very different racial, socio-economic, and national backgrounds, and asks how their biographical experiences encouraged them to intentionally employ gender, class, race, and ethnicity as categories of economic analysis but, at times, also produced blind spots and omissions. By doing so, I propose that the women produced pioneering models of intersectional research that are so far missing from accounts of women's economic intellectual history.

Secondly, the study of women's economic thought further illuminates the institutional conditions that sidelined women's thought and at the same time enabled the ascendance of neoclassical thought and thus adds to a line of scholarship that brings together intellectual history and the institutional history of higher education. Clyde Barrow, for example, has provided an in-depth account of the effects of American university reform and corporate America's increasing influence on knowledge production. In *Universities and the Capitalist State* Barrow examined how the governance of American colleges and universities shifted from churches to corporate America. Over the course of the last nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, lawyers and local business owners increasingly took control over universities' boards of trustees and shaped the institutions' course. The predominance of business leaders undermined the newly formed principle of academic freedom via hiring and funding practices that encouraged scholars who were critical of capitalism to tame their political engagement and strictly separate it from their

scholarly work.<sup>11</sup> The new power dynamics not only laid the groundwork for the introduction of efficiency models at American universities but also the rise of neoclassical thinking in economics departments.

The marginalization of women in economics, this dissertation shows, was part of the project in which American universities and their leadership removed, or least seriously sidelined, the scholarly critique of capitalism within their institutions. By keeping women like Cooper and Balch on the fringes of academia, this dissertation shows, universities pushed aside alternative conceptions of the economy that included critical analyses of class and more so, pioneering work that examined the intertwined nature of capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy. While the women's participation in economic knowledge production from alternative intellectual spaces provided them with some of the intellectual freedom that Barrow saw wane at universities, the same powers that secured corporate influence and male hegemony at universities also reaches into women's spaces as well and infringed on their intellectual freedom via the educational institutions the women worked for.

The study of the three women's work also deepens our understanding of the history of university reform, the changing conditions of the social science discipline, and both developments' effects on teaching. Doing so, my work specifically draws on and further develops Julie A. Reuben's historical account of the disappearance of morality from universities' curricula and research, presented in her book *The Making of the Modern University*.<sup>12</sup> The process of universities' secularization and modernization, Reuben shows, involved a step-by-step separation of truth and morality, of facts and values. While religion and morality had played a

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<sup>11</sup> Clyde Barrow, *Universities and the Capitalist State, Corporate Liberalism, and the Reconstruction of American Higher Education, 1894–1928* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

<sup>12</sup> Julie A. Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

central role in classical colleges via a construction of truth that unified facts and religion, the social sciences became, although only for a few decades, the place that kept morality and truth connected as the discipline rigorously employed empirical methods with the explicit goal of serving the betterment of society. Social science skills, especially the ability to think critically, thereby became democratic virtues, making social science education a form of “indirect” moral education. However, social sciences’ marriage of truth and morality ended with the rise of the positivist paradigm in the social sciences over the course of the first decades of the twentieth century, and universities successfully moved moral education to the extracurricular realm by the 1930s.

The study presented in this dissertation argues that the effects of university reform were even more far-reaching. The divorce of truth and morality in the social sciences also sidelined systematic, theoretical connections between class, gender, and race as intertwined, historically produced categories of oppression. Cooper, Balch, and Salomon brought intersectional analyses of power relations to the table that the positivist scientists now in control deemed as “moral” and thus “unscientific,” because they were rooted in experiences of injustice, and propelled by (moral) visions of racial, gender and economic justice. The demand for “neutral” science and positivist methods effectively sidelined this kind of research in economics and instead put a focus on markets, separated from societies’ social power dynamics, squarely at the center. Moreover, as the studies will show, the women’s economic research delivered an important foundation for concepts of social justice education which, too, disappeared with the separation of morality from the social sciences.

## *The Rise and Decline of New Economics in the Progressive Era*

The ascendance and subsequent eclipse of women's contributions to economics was embedded in two historical phenomena. One was the rise and subsequent near disappearance of new economics, or more generally, heterodox economic thought, within economics departments and mainstream economic discussion over the course of the Progressive Era, manifesting in a near-hegemony of neo-classical economics. Women, shaped by their biographical experiences as women in a male-dominated society as well as their expertise in social reform work, had been particularly drawn to heterodox economic approaches that critiqued classical economics. The marginalization of these critiques and new approaches therefore indirectly and negatively affected women's participation in economics. This development worked in tandem with a second phenomenon: the patriarchal and white supremacist interests that governed universities' power structures and sought to secure white, male dominance in knowledge production, marginalizing women, and even more so women of color, within the economics departments and business schools.

Born between 1858 and 1872, Cooper's, Balch's, and Salomon's intellectual coming-of-age—both inside and outside of institutions of higher education—fell into the formative decades of the social sciences. Massive economic, social, and political changes industrialization had prompted a lively public and scholarly debate about how to solve the challenges of the changing world and propelled the emergence of economics as an independent discipline. Hitherto treated as a subfield of philosophy, economics developed from an “obscure topic struggling for survival in the curricula of American colleges and universities” to a university discipline between the 1870s and the 1920s, a process that originated in German universities and was imported to the

United States by the AEA's new economists.<sup>13</sup> Many of them had been trained in German universities where economics, then mostly called "national economics" (Nationalökonomie) (National Economics), had already been established as an academic discipline.

The German historical economists who trained American students were outspoken in their support of social reform and instilled in their students the principle that social sciences should be ethically driven and commit to the betterment of society. Economic professors Adolph Wagner and Gustav Schmoller, for example, were members of the Association for Social Politics (Verein für Sozialpolitik),” abbreviated as “Verein,” an association that was founded in opposition to the Economic Congress (Volkswirtschaftlicher Kongress), which had proposed economic liberalism.<sup>14</sup> The members of the Verein, a group of scholars, priests, journalists and public figures supported social reform in the form of state intervention in order to solve “the social question,” even if they differed in their opinions about the degree of intervention. American students brought these ideas to the United States, but adapted them to the American liberal tradition, often romanticizing Germany as a haven of democracy, national unity, and social welfare in order to create momentum for their American reform agenda.<sup>15</sup> Far from being radical, but also, as Rosanne Currarino states, “hardly . . . complacent apologists for the *status quo* either,” the American new economists rejected narratives that tied poverty and misery to individual failure and instead emphasized structural problems.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> John B. Parrish, “Rise of Economics as an Academic Discipline: The Formative Years to 1900,” *Southern Economic Journal* 34, no. 1 (1967): 1.

<sup>14</sup> Irmela Gorges, “The History of the Verein für Sozialpolitik,” in *Handbuch Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Soziologie [Handbook history of german-speaking sociology]*, eds. Sabine Moebius and Andrea Ploeder (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2018).

<sup>15</sup> Axel Schäfer, *American Progressives and German Social Reform, 1875-1920: Social Ethics, Moral Control, and the Regulatory State in a Transatlantic Context* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Rosanne Currarino, “The ‘Revolution Now in Progress’: Social Economics and the Labor Question,” *Labor History* 50, no.1 (2011): 3.

The institutionalization of economics and the field's establishment as a science was accompanied by a lively battle of ideas that spanned across Europe and the United States. In the early phase of this process, the social sciences were a heterogeneous field in which classical economics was both continued and contested, and new schools of thought evolved. In the United States, within and between departments, members of the new school of thought battled with proponents of classical economics, disagreeing mostly about the nature of scientific inquiry but also about general understandings of human nature and, most vividly, what kind of intervention evolved from the respective approaches. In Germany, the German Historical School of Economics, abbreviated as Historical School, had gained strong influence in economics. Its representatives were now publicly challenged by proponents of the Austrian School, a debate famously called "argument about methods" (*Methodenstreit*), a discussion that augmented methodological differences and evolved into a fierce intellectual battle. Antagonists were Berlin's Professor Gustav Schmoller, who defended his historical-empirical approach, including the use of rigorous empirical methods and an ethical framework, and Austrian Professor Carl Menger. The latter proposed a more abstract-theoretical approach to economics, which returned to some of the principles of classical economics and hoped to establish universal economic laws. Menger also introduced the theory of marginal utility, which suggests that the value of a good is determined by the subjective needs of the consumers rather than by inert qualities of the good. Menger's theory also prepared the way for the development of neoclassical economics, although this went rather unnoticed at the time, when his ideas were primarily seen as a rejection of classical theory.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For a more detailed account of the *Methodenstreit*, see Currarino, "The Revolution Now in Progress"; and Volker Kruse, "Von der Historischen Nationalökonomie zur Historischen Soziologie, Ein Paradigmenwechsel in den Deutschen Sozialwissenschaften um 1900 [From the Historical School of Economic Thought to historical sociology, a change of paradigm in the German social sciences]," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 19, no. 3 (1990): 149–65.

Although the 1880s marked the start of neoclassical economics' rise to dominance, the decades between 1880 and 1910 were, in fact, defined by a broad diversity of heterodox ideas, including classical, historical, marginalist, and Marxist schools of thought. However, between 1900–10 most of the heterodox economists had stopped radical critiques of the capitalist model, scared by what they perceived as a powerful labor movement and impending social unrest, and/or discouraged by power dynamics within universities that hired only neoclassical thinkers. In all but a few universities (Pennsylvania and Wisconsin), neoclassical economics assumed intellectual hegemony.<sup>18</sup> The process was accelerated by the positivist turn within the social sciences and its desire to model itself after the natural sciences, as well the evolution of the modern American research university and the rising influence of corporate America on university boards. In Germany, the Historical School maintained its influence longer, but after World War I, lost its power, too. As universities had historically been under the governance of the state, economics, although rivaled by newly developing professional business schools with a much more orthodox economic approach, still held on to the important role the social sciences had assumed in state-led social reform.<sup>19</sup> However, not all professors supported Schmoller's and his colleagues' approach and even the new generation of German economists in Berlin were less dogmatic and open to different schools of thought.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1880s and 1890s, however, the influence of the Historical School on American economists was strong. Many of the AEA founding members had been trained in Germany,

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<sup>18</sup> Frederic Lee, *A History of Heterodox Economics: Challenging the Mainstream in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 27.

<sup>19</sup> David F. Lindenfeld, "The Professionalization of Applied Economics: German Counterparts to Business Administration," in *German Professions, 1800–1950*, eds. Geoffrey Kocks and Konrad Jarausch (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 16.

<sup>20</sup> Marynel Ryan, *Between Essence and Expertise: German Women Economists, 1890–1933, and the Shifting Ground of Social Reform* (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2006), 42.

where universities had offered more and earlier opportunities for graduate training than in the United States, and introduced, modified, and adapted the new ideas they had learned about. They hoped, for example, to further develop and use scientific methods to “forestall violent revolution and to find an alternative to a society divided.”<sup>21</sup> Central to the new way of thinking were historical and statistical methods that pushed back against notions of preexisting, universal economic laws.<sup>22</sup>

Notably, a small but influential number of women was amongst the cohort of American social science pioneers who went to study abroad, for example Florence Kelley who studied in Zurich, and Emily Greene Balch and Mary Kingsbury Simkovitch, who studied together at the Historical School in Berlin, even though they are rarely represented in histories of economic thought. Paradoxically, German universities were closed to women until the early twentieth century, but with special arrangements for international women students who were able to enroll as auditors.<sup>23</sup> Although rare in numbers, women like Kelley, Balch and Kingsbury had important roles as they brought their economic knowledge from Switzerland and Germany to the United States and applied it to their work in social reform organizations, educational institutions, and women’s networks.

United in their rejection of classical economics, especially the principles of the self-regulating forces of the capitalist market, the autonomous individual agent, and the anticipation of natural and universal economic laws, this transatlantic generation of new economic thinkers, men and women, had very different economic visions. They disagreed specifically over the role

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<sup>21</sup> Currarino, “The Revolution Now in Progress,” 2.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Koslowski, “Economics as Ethical Economy in the Tradition of the Historical School, Introduction,” in *The Theory of Ethical Economy in the Historical School*, ed. Peter Koslowski (Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1995), 1–11.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (London: Harvard University Press, 2000): 82.

of the state in economic interventions, debated if and how economic relations should and could be organized cooperatively instead of competitively, and had different views on the evolving socialist ideas and movements. In the early stages of this economic “revolt,” in the 1870s and 1880s, but spanning into the new century, the desire to transform values was central to economic thought. If German or American societies could reinstate the importance of the social and prioritize relations over individual success, then the damage that the individualistic and competitive nature of the capitalist industrialized society had generated could be averted. The term “socialism” was thereby intentionally vague and “drew from the well of displaced religious sentiments” that had motivated many of the young economists in the first place.<sup>24</sup> As the socialist movement unfolded in the United States around the turn of the century and the economic moved the responsibility for social questions to sociology, “socialism” became more exclusively attached to organized socialism. The search for new models of economic and social relations that emphasized interdependence, cooperation, and justice, however, continued in social reform work, international movements, and education.

### ***The Gendered and Racialized Politics of Economic Knowledge Production***

In the United States, women’s interest in economic and social questions coincided with the expansion of secondary and higher education, including the opening of women’s colleges, leading to a high number of women, especially white middle class women, enrolled in economics courses at women’s colleges and universities between the 1880s and the 1910s. Over the course of the next few decades, the percentage of women with dissertations in economics grew, with

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<sup>24</sup> Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 100.

numbers peaking in 1920 at 19.29 percent, only to continuously fall thereafter.<sup>25</sup> But, even as women poured into economics programs, for most of them their academic journey ended after graduation, and they were hardly ever hired for university faculty positions—a mechanism that was even more prevalent for Black women.<sup>26</sup>

That the original presence of women in economics departments waned over the course of the Progressive Era was not so much a matter of open exclusion as it was a product of the gendered power dynamics that evolved within the social sciences and manifested in organizational strategies. As Mary Ann Dzuback demonstrated, newly established requirements for faculty positions put women at a disadvantage, and the creation of sub-disciplines within the social sciences generated a landscape along the lines of gender.<sup>27</sup> The latter was tied to a hierarchy of subfields in which women's research interests were more closely aligned with newly created lower-status fields, such as home economics and social work. In addition, the advancement of new methods reinforced patriarchal structures by defining women as naturally more emotional and less able to adhere to the principle of objectivity.<sup>28</sup>

The access to and degree of participation in economics departments was not just regulated via gender but also, heavily, by race. As white women entered economics programs in the 1880s and 1890s, massive entry barriers blocked Black women's access as many women's

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<sup>25</sup> Evelyn Forget, "American Women;" and Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

<sup>26</sup> Lynn Gordon, *Gender, and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); Francille Rusan Wilson, "'All of the Glory . . . Faded . . . Quickly,' Sadie T.M. Alexander and Black Professional Women," in *Sister Circle: Black Women and Work*, eds. Sharon Harley and Black Women Work Collective (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 164–183.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Ann Dzuback, "Gender and the Politics of Knowledge," *History of Education Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (2003): 178. See also, Mary Ann Dzuback, "Women Scholars, Social Science Expertise, and the State in the United States," *Women's History Review* 18, no. 1 (2009): 71–95 and Margaret Rossiter, *Women Scientists in America: Struggles and Strategies to 1940* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

<sup>28</sup> Helene Silverberg, "Introduction: Toward a Gendered Social Science History;" and Linda M. Shoemaker, "Early Conflicts in Social Work Education," *Social Service Review* 72, no. 2 (1998): 182.

colleges categorically refused to enroll Black women. Black institutions, on the other hand, often focused on men. Institutions of higher education for Black women such as Spelman College were extremely rare in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> By 1898, only a total of 252 Black women had graduated with a college degree, and it was not until 1921 when the first Black woman was able received her PhD. Notably, however, the first doctoral degree awarded to an African American woman was in economics, indicating the importance of economics (and expertise) in Black women's knowledge production.<sup>30</sup>

Black women's gender heightened the racism that was pervasive in the social sciences. The economics departments of white institutions regularly excluded African Americans from economic knowledge production and to this day ignore them in intellectual histories of the field, including the work of the first Black economist with a PhD, Sadie Alexander, whose work has recently been studied by Nina Banks.<sup>31</sup> Despite these massive exclusionary practices, Black scholars made groundbreaking contributions to economic studies. W. E. B. Du Bois came very close to completing a PhD in political economy under Professor Schmoller at the University in Berlin, but here, too, residency requirements and funding challenges made this impossible. When moving back to the United States in 1894, Du Bois continued to push for and engage in the development of Black labor studies, eventually finding an institutional home at the University of Atlanta.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Linda Perkins, "'Bound to Them by a Common Sorrow:' African American Women, Higher Education, and Collective Advancement," *Journal of African American History* 100, no. 4 (2015): 721–47.

<sup>30</sup> Francille Rusan Wilson, *The Segregated Scholars: Black Social Scientists and the Creation of Black Labor Studies, 1890–1950* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 103 and 112.

<sup>31</sup> Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander and Nina Banks, *Democracy, Race, and Justice: The Speeches and Writings of Sadie T.M. Alexander*, ed. Nina Banks (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021).

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth D. Barkin, "'Berlin Days' 1892–1894: W. E. B. Du Bois and German Political Economy," *boundary 2/27*, no. 3 (2000): 79–101; and Robert E. Prasch, "W. E. B. Du Bois' Contributions to U.S. Economics," *Du Bois Review* 5, no. 2 (2008): 309–324.

Racism and sexism not only ran deep in the structures of universities and colleges, but also defined academic organizations like the AEA. Amongst the network's founding members was just one woman, Katherine Coman, who at the time was a professor for political economy at Wellesley College.<sup>33</sup> And even though the organization initially attracted and employed many women, the AEA's recruitment of new members focused increasingly on men, mostly because the organization sought to augment the discipline's status. The segmentation of the social sciences into gendered subfields further contributed to the downward trend in women's membership, dropping from 10.7 percent in 1888 to 2.4 percent in 1903.<sup>34</sup>

The racism that ran deep in the AEA's history further exacerbated the organization's gender barriers, which led to the complete exclusion of women of color. Racism had marred the relationship between male economic experts of color and the organization, as several of the AEA presidents published and/or supported the publication of articles grounded in scientific racism.<sup>35</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, for example, who contributed numerous, very important studies to the field of economics and frequently worked with the AEA after returning from Germany, encountered dismissal and outright hostility when he confronted his white peers with the racial biases and open racism of AEA-supported research.<sup>36</sup> Considering the treatment of DuBois's contributions, arguably the most powerful African American voice in the community of economists at the time,

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<sup>33</sup> Coman remained an important member of the AEA; twenty years later she also wrote the lead article in the inaugural issue of the *American Economic Review*, the organization's journal. Katherine Coman, "Some Unsettled Problems of Irrigation," *American Economic Review* 1, no. 1 (1911): 1–19.

<sup>34</sup> Ann Mari May and Robert Dimand, "Women in the Early Years of the American Economic Association," *History of Political Economy* 51, no. 4 (2019): 674.

<sup>35</sup> For example, AEA president Walter Wilcox published research on Black crime, which argued that white control over Black Americans inhibited the raise of Black crimes. He also gave a platform for Frederick L. Hoffman's openly racist "Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro," published in the organization's journal in 1896.

<sup>36</sup> Wilson, *The Segregated Scholars*, 75–82.

it is not surprising that women of color stood no chance in participating in the AEA or the public economic discourse it sustained.

In Germany, a gender-conservative culture barred all women from university access well into the twentieth century. German states slowly and hesitantly permitted women to formally enroll in university programs between 1900 and 1909, even though women had managed to audit lectures before that, and others had successfully graduated abroad.<sup>37</sup> Ironically, international women students, including students from the United States, frequently studied at German universities in the last decades of the nineteenth century, although they needed to work their way in through special permits, too. Just as in the United States, the first generation of German women students' road ended with graduation, and most professions barred. Remarkably, women political economists, alongside women medical doctors for women and children as well as women teachers were excepted from this rule, as they fit more neatly into the traditional gender expectations of women's maternal qualities. This provided women economists with a career path, which, however, soon started to narrow until it closed completely during the Weimar Republic, when economic crisis and gender competition stifled women's opportunities on the job market.

### ***Women Creating an Intellectual Space Between Universities, Social Reform Work, and Education***

Historians of economic ideas have started to include women who did not work at universities but developed their economic thought outside of academia, arguing that a narrow

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<sup>37</sup> Edith Glaser, "Die Erste Studentinnengeneration—ohne Berufsperspektiven?" [The first generation of women students—without professional prospects?], in *Geschichte der Frauen und Mädchenbildung* [History of women's and girls' education], eds. Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 1996): 310–324.

definition of the field perpetuated the omission of women's perspectives.<sup>38</sup> Drawing on historian of the social sciences Helene Silverberg, this dissertation argues that a definition of economic knowledge as tied to universities obscures the fact that women produced economic thought outside of the academic centers.<sup>39</sup> This dissertation follows women's contributions to economic thought in the intellectual spaces they created under the specific conditions of the Progressive Era. Facing an uphill battle or outright exclusion from universities' social science departments, women with formal academic or autodidactic training in economics found more freedom to think, work, and engage in activism in social reform organizations and/or teaching. The latter, especially, was not only a space where women could engage in social change; it also provided an opportunity for them to live their lives as independent women with regular salaries and retirement plans. From this space, the women actively participated in the production of economic ideas, conducted scientific studies on labor, poverty, and immigration and circulated knowledge in schools, reform organizations, and the public.

For Black women, blocked by racist and sexist regulations that mitigated access to positions in academia or government institutions (with a few exceptions like Elizabeth Ross Haynes, who volunteered for the US Women's Bureau and worked for the United States Employment Service), social reform work was the place from where they practically, theoretically, and empirically addressed the social and economic problems their communities experienced and spoke back to the racist violence white supremacy inflicted on their communities.<sup>40</sup> Women organized in Black women's clubs on the local, state, and national level

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<sup>38</sup> Kirsten Madden, Janet A. Seiz, and Michèle A. Pujol, *A Bibliography of Female Economic Thought to 1940* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>39</sup> Helene Silverberg, ed., *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>40</sup> Iris Carlton-LaNey, "Elizabeth Ross Haynes: An African American Reformer of Womanist Consciousness, 1908–1940," *Social Work* 42, no. 6 (1997): 573–83.

to push for community programs, especially for support of women and children through health and education projects.<sup>41</sup>

As Francille Rusan Wilson has documented in her work *The Segregated Scholar*, Black club women had a strong interest in the social sciences in the nineteenth century and Black female college students were enthusiastically studying sociology around the turn of the century. Self- and formally trained, Black women scholars conducted empirical studies, presented their work at the Atlanta University Conference, and published their work in African American female-owned newspapers. The journal *The Women's Era*, for example published a report on the social survey Victoria Earle Matthews developed, and in 1895 Matthews toured the Southern states to investigate the work conditions of Black women workers.<sup>42</sup> Ida B. Wells-Barnett famously conducted an important study on lynching, in which she researched how the brutal, state-sanctioned, public murders related to whites' perception of economic competition from black businesses.<sup>43</sup>

While Black women reformers' conducted community work from within Black women's clubs, YWCAs, and religious organizations, white middle-class women reformers, equipped with more resources and power, were able to establish more centralized reform projects such as settlement houses, which they also used as research centers. Making use of their academic training and with the help of private donors, reformers like Florence Kelley and Jane Addams conducted large-scale studies, published in the famous *Hull House Maps and Papers* in 1895. The white women-led settlement house movement has been widely examined by historians of

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<sup>41</sup> Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

<sup>42</sup> Wilson, *The Segregated Scholars*, 93.

<sup>43</sup> Wilson, *The Segregated Scholars*, 94.

social work, the social sciences, and women's organizations alike, showing how settlement houses shaped up to be sites of research independent from university affiliations.<sup>44</sup> Dorothy Ross for example argued that Addams' work at Hull House and her engagement in social reform furthered the development of a gendered sociological approach and developed interpretive approaches that were distinctly different from those of her male contemporaries.<sup>45</sup> Barbara Levy Simon's study about Greenwich House in New York City demonstrated how "sense and sensibilities," or in other words, both interpretive and positivist approaches, were developed.<sup>46</sup>

Many of the women social reformers were able to use their expertise to claim authority over the emerging field of social reform work as "women's work." They used the demand for new solutions to social and economic problems to engage in what Robyn Muncy described as the creation of a "female dominion"; a project in which white, middle-class women established an "interlocking set of organizations" which allowed them to participate in state power through controlling child welfare.<sup>47</sup> As Kathryn Kish Sklar described in her study of Florence Kelley's work they were specifically predisposed to participate in this project as they were considered "not so deeply implicated in the war between capital and labor" and not so much involved in the urban political machinery.<sup>48</sup> In what Nancy Folbre named "a kind of Ladies' Auxiliary of Political Economy" that operated outside of the academy, including the Children's Bureau, an

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<sup>44</sup> Mary Jo Deegan, *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892-1918* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988).

<sup>45</sup> Dorothy Ross, "Gendered Social Knowledge: Domestic Discourse, Jane Addams, and the Possibilities of Social Science," in *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years*, ed. Helene Silverberg (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 235–64.

<sup>46</sup> Barbara Levy Simon, "Sense and Sensibility: Dual Knowledge Bases of Greenwich House, NYC, 1902–1920," *Qualitative Social Work* 17, no. 6 (2018): 814–31.

<sup>47</sup> Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>48</sup> Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), xii.

institution established in 1912, and the Women's Bureau in 1921, women social reformers successfully produced and published research that informed public policies.<sup>49</sup>

In Germany, middle-class women social reformers used social reform work in similar ways. The development of professional social work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries offered a rare opportunity for women to engage in knowledge production, especially as they were still barred from higher education until the early twentieth century. Inspired by British and American examples of settlement work and the rise of surveys, they started to conduct their own scientific studies. Much like their American counterparts, German women social science scholars considered the structures of society as man-made and thus changeable and envisioned their research as the empirical foundation for social reform efforts and a more just society. Historian Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen emphasizes women's outsider status in her study of German women's contributions and describes their differing approaches to social science research compared to their male colleagues in the first three decades of the twentieth century.<sup>50</sup>

German social reform work was mostly based on voluntary work and rarely offered women a secure income for women, with the exception of a few women who gained access to the government position of a factory inspector.<sup>51</sup> If unmarried and without family wealth, teaching was one of few professional options for middle-class women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Historically a men's domain, German women's access to the teaching profession was tightly intertwined with the women's movement and its focus on women's access to education, and with the growth of girls' secondary schooling—the prerequisite for entering

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<sup>49</sup> Folbre, "The 'Sphere of Women,'" 39.

<sup>50</sup> Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen, "Frauen in den Anfängen der Empirischen Sozialforschung" [Women in the beginnings of empirical social research], in *Geschichte der Frauen und Mädchenbildung [History of women and girls' education]*, eds. Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 1996): 354–370.

<sup>51</sup> Else von Richthofen, one of Germany's first women economists, for example, became a factory inspector in 1900.

universities—women were able to secure teaching positions in higher girls' schools.

Unsurprisingly, some of Germany's early women social scientists entered their careers via teaching, for example Elisabeth Gnauck-Kühne, who gained training in a teacher seminary, taught for a while, and then worked for women's organizations and conducted empirical studies about women workers.<sup>52</sup>

While a few American women succeeded to enter university positions in the social science departments at universities before German women could even enroll at universities (for example, economist Jessica Peixotto joined the Berkeley faculty in 1904) or managed to establish their own institutions within universities (like Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott did in Chicago), many women economists entered teaching positions. The choice was both pragmatic and idealistic. On the one hand, this was a viable career path that promised financial security while still providing limited opportunity for research activities. On the other hand, many of the women reformers felt a real calling for teaching, as it allowed them to make meaningful contributions to their communities and prepare the next generation with tools for social change. Women's colleges constituted an especially attractive workplace. As female-dominated spaces, they offered women refuge from the hostility of the universities and established an academic culture that centered around women's research needs by "allowing them to teach courses in their research areas, offering regular sabbaticals, expanding library collections" and more.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Sabine Hering, "Frühe Frauenforschung: Die Anfänge der Untersuchungen von Frauen über Frauen Frauen" [Early women's studies: The origins of studies by women about women], in *Handbuch Frauen und Geschlechterforschung: Theorie, Methoden, Empirie* [Handbook women and gender studies: theory, methods, empirical work], eds. Ruth Becker and Beate Kortendiek (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften), 286.

<sup>53</sup> Dzuback, "Gender and the Politics of Knowledge," 183. Also described in Patricia Ann Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

For African American women social reformers, the benefits of becoming a teacher were even more compelling than for their white peers, as access to higher education was far more limited and career choices even narrower. While some white social reformers were paid for their work and eventually profited from the positions created in the “Ladies’ Auxiliary of Political Economy,” Black women’s social work was almost entirely based on volunteer work, with very few exceptions.<sup>54</sup> In addition, the Black liberation movement understood teaching as the central tool in the project of “racial uplift,” and women were needed to increase the teacher pool, especially in the nation’s South, making teaching the most respected form of Black women’s activism.<sup>55</sup> For many Black women social scientists, teaching thus became a natural career choice. Still, some of them continued to engage in research. Educator Lucy Craft Laney, for example, submitted papers to the first two Atlanta University conferences and continued her training in summer sociology classes at the University of Chicago, all while heading the Haines Institute in Augusta, Georgia.<sup>56</sup> For Anna Julia Cooper, whose work will be examined in this dissertation, teaching was a significant opportunity to make a living as a highly educated young widow without family wealth, while also continuing her work as a public intellectual.

### ***Structure and Method of the Dissertation***

This dissertation traces the economic ideas of Anna Julia Cooper, Emily Greene Balch, and Alice Salomon in three individual chapters, situates each of them and their work within the context of their respective intellectual biographies and the gendered and racialized conditions of

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<sup>54</sup> Wilson, *The Segregated Scholars*, 110–13 and 188–89.

<sup>55</sup> Linda Gordon, “Black and White Visions of Welfare: Women’s Welfare Activism, 1890–1945.” *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 2 (1991): 559–90.

<sup>56</sup> Wilson, *The Segregated Scholars*, 25–26 and 44.

knowledge production of their time, and asks how their economic expertise corresponded with and shaped their educational work. Each study excavates and examines the women's ideas through a close reading of the women's writings, published and unpublished, including books, articles, lectures, and speeches as far as they speak to economic questions, and further takes pieces on education, teaching material, and curricula into account as well.

The three women were carefully selected based on the following criteria: comparability in time period, academic training, and expertise in economic questions on the one hand, as well as differences in their social backgrounds and standpoints on the other hand. Born between 1858 and 1872, the three women all came of intellectual age during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, a tumultuous time in the history of economics. Public interest in economic questions was high, new ideas rivaled and merged with old ideas, the social sciences formed as a discipline, and social reform work offered a wide field of research opportunities. In addition, the accessibility of primary sources played a role in selecting the women to keep the project feasible. While the women faced challenges in the wide distribution of their knowledge at the time (albeit to different degrees), much of their work is today available today in the archives.

While the women share these characteristics, they differ significantly in the way that class, race, and geopolitical location shaped their lives and the educational and professional opportunities available to them. Anna Julia Cooper was a Black woman born in Raleigh, North Carolina just before the Civil War. Her mother, who had been enslaved, strongly supported her daughter's education and insisted that she became part of the first cohort of Black students in the Reconstruction era South. Gifted and disciplined, Cooper was trained in the classics and became a teacher with a MA in mathematics from Oberlin College. Later Cooper moved to Washington DC where she joined the faculty of the country's most prestigious Black high school, M Street

High School. Interested in philosophical, political, social, and economic questions, Cooper further strengthened her expertise in economics through self-study and faced many obstacles in the pursuit of a doctoral degree. It was only in 1925 at the age of sixty-six that she finally was able to graduate from the Sorbonne with a thesis on Haiti from a historical-economic perspective. Emily Greene Balch, born in 1867, just after the Civil War, was the daughter of a white Protestant New England family who grew up in the comfort of a Boston suburb. Taking advantage of the growing educational opportunities for women, she studied at Bryn Mawr College, studied abroad, including graduate studies at Berlin's Historical School, and eventually became a teacher at Wellesley College as well as an international peace activist. Alice Salomon was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1872, to a Jewish middle-class family. Facing a gender-conservative culture and very restricted educational opportunities, she came to the social sciences via social reform work. Mostly trained through women's organizations and in self-study, she was able to pursue a PhD in economics when universities opened to women. A leader in women's social reform work, she founded and led Germany's first Social Women's School.

The decision to include a German educator in the mix is not so much motivated by a desire to fully compare women's economic ideas in Germany and the United States. More so, it helps for one, shed light on how national contexts shaped women's intellectual work, and better understand the effect of geopolitical space on ideas. It also shows that the economic debate, as well as women's role in it, was not exclusive to the United States. Rather, their ideas were part of a bigger project of transatlantic exchange of economic ideas that both, men and women carried back and forth through study abroad, international intellectual networks, social reform movements, and women's organizations.<sup>57</sup> On both sides of the Atlantic, women's participation

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<sup>57</sup> Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*.

in social reform work and their propensity to become teachers were phenomena that evolved from similar political and social structures and encouraged a flow of ideas between economics and education.

Two overarching questions guided the study of the three women's ideas. The first one points to the specific quality of the three women's economic thought. It explores how the women's different backgrounds and social locations shaped their economic ideas and asks what was lost to the history of economic thought when women's contributions were sidelined from mainstream economics. The second question turns to the interdisciplinary nature of the women's work and investigates how their economic expertise shaped their educational ideas, specifically their ideas on education for social justice.

***Guiding Question 1: What was Lost? Women's Contributions to Progressive-Era Economic Thought***

Tracing Cooper's, Balch's, and Salomon's economic thought, the three studies ask how the women responded to, aligned with, and contested the ideas negotiated in the public and scholarly economic discourse of the Progressive Era. Looking at these three examples, this dissertation describes the women's critiques of classical and new economic ideas, outlines their understandings of what constituted an economy, what kind of questions the social sciences should address, and what kind of methods they should use. Furthermore, it discusses if and how the women developed alternative models of economic organization and forms of communal living that represented their visions of a socially just and moral society.

The studies pay specific attention to the question of how women used the alternative intellectual space they created between universities, social reform, and teaching to engage *intersectional* economic analyses that helped them develop holistic, relational models of the

economy and transgressed both (neo)classical and new economic ideas. Using feminist standpoint theory, I will show how the women's social locations, which were heavily structured by gender, race, and class, shaped their personal experiences, regulated educational and professional opportunities, and subsequently informed their analytical perspectives on economic questions. Following feminist philosopher Sandra Harding's argument that knowledge production is always socially situated and not free of the researcher's social and political position, I will ask what in kind of economic problems each of the women were interested in, how they understood the economic relationship between the individual, the social and the state, and what kind of economic order they envisioned for the future of their communities.<sup>58</sup>

An analysis that takes the women's social locations into account does not preclude objectivity. In fact, as Harding argues, the recognition of the effects of social power relations produces higher degrees of objectivity, while ignoring them omits the way they change perspectives.<sup>59</sup> According to standpoint theory, marginalized perspectives that arise from one's social position can become sites of epistemic privilege when knowledge producers are aware of the power relations that shape these positions, and when they have arrived at this recognition in a collective process with others in similar positions. Those who achieve this kind of epistemological privilege become capable of a "double vision," that allows them to understand the perspective and logic of those in power, while they can also read situations from the standpoint of the oppressed.

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<sup>58</sup> Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); and Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99.

<sup>59</sup> Sandra Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is "Strong Objectivity?"" *The Centennial Review* 36, no. 3 (1992): 437–70.

Patricia Hill Collins, author of *Black Feminist Thought*, coined the term “outsider within” for Black women intellectuals in academia who are able to move between the perspective of the oppressed and the academic views developed by white male.<sup>60</sup> Importantly, Collins extends feminist standpoint theory that focused primarily on gender and suggests an intersectional model that allows for an analysis of situated knowledge along the lines of multiple social categories, including race, class, and gender. Her model of the “matrix of privilege and oppression” situates individuals, including knowledge producers, within these axes, explaining that one can be placed in a position of privilege on one axis (for example, class) while experience oppression on another (for example, race).<sup>61</sup>

Collins’ concept of intersectionality is in two ways relevant for this dissertation. For one, I use the concept as an analytical tool to identify how the women’s knowledge production was shaped by their positionalities. For two, it helps identify in which ways the women themselves conceptualized their educational philosophies and practices in intersectional ways. Although the term “intersectionality” only emerged in the late 1980s, Collins suggests that Black women scholars developed analytical approaches that corresponded with the concept much earlier. She highlights, for example, Anna Julia Cooper as a pioneer of intersectional analysis. Building on this understanding, I argue that the three thinkers presented in this dissertation put forth intersectional perspectives in their economic thought production and in their educational concepts. Cooper, for example, paid close attention to the effects of race, class, and gender in her work at M Street High School and Frelinghuysen University, and Balch and Salomon developed

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<sup>60</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, “Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought,” *Social Problems* 33, no. 6 (1986): 14–32.

<sup>61</sup> Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2016); and Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

their concepts for social education with a specific eye to middle-class women's social location within power relations structured by class.

***Guiding Question 2: How Did the Women's Economic Expertise Inform Their Educational Work?***

The second research question looks at the flow of ideas between economics and education and examines the women's use of economic expertise in their educational thought and pedagogical practices. As self- and academically trained social scientists, social reform workers, and committed teachers, Cooper, Balch, and Salomon had expertise in all three areas, developed interdisciplinary views, and applied their knowledge across disciplines. Their triple function as social scientists, activists, and teachers put them in a prime position to apply the connection between the social sciences and morality characteristic of the formative years of the discipline, not just in their social reform work but also in their educational philosophies and pedagogical practices.

The individual studies of these women's work will thus ask specifically how the nexus between truth and morality opened the way for the women to integrate questions of class and economic inequality with questions of race and gender and encouraged them to apply their intersectional analyses to their educational work in the pursuit of a moral society. The women's economic expertise, these studies will demonstrate, significantly informed their teaching. They sought to instill in their students the skills of critical, independent thinking, scientific literacy, the ability to systematically understand power structures and recognize structural inequality. This, they hoped, would allow them to become aware of their own positionality and reflect on their privileges, including considerations of the best—most moral—ways to use their power. In

Cooper's case, this informed her education for Black liberation and solidarity across class and gender, as well as in Balch's and Salomon's case, education for social responsibility across class difference.

In short, the studies presented ask how women educators' morally guided economic expertise informed educational concepts that, I argue, constitute pioneering forms of social justice education. So far, historians of education have done important work by bringing the traditions of social justice education, developed by communities of color, to our attention. The Progressive Era was a time in which educators of color sought to foster and encourage difference in culture and language, challenged white supremacy and segregation, and used segregated and desegregated spaces to resist increasingly powerful, nationalist calls that demanded education for assimilation.<sup>62</sup> Anna Julia Cooper's education for Black liberation is one such example of Progressive Era social justice education.<sup>63</sup>

Historians of education have not yet considered white women social reformers' educational concepts as forms of social justice education but have described them more generally as forms of civic education and/or education for democracy.<sup>64</sup> I argue that educators like Emily

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<sup>62</sup> See for example, Joy Ann Williamson, Lori Rhodes, and Michael Dunson, "A Selected History of Social Justice in Education," *Review of Research in Education* 31 (2007): 195–224.

<sup>63</sup> See for example, Karen Johnson, *Uplifting the women and the Race: The Educational Philosophies and Social Activism of Anna Julia Cooper and Nannie Helen Burroughs* (New York: Routledge, 2000); V. Thandi Sule, "Intellectual Activism: The Praxis of Dr. Anna Julia Cooper as a Blueprint for Equity-Based Pedagogy," *Feminist Teacher* 23, no. 3 (2013): 211–29; and Carl A. Grant, Keffrelyn D. Brown, and Anthony L. Brown, *Black Intellectual Thought in Education, The Missing Traditions of Anna Julia Cooper, Carter G. Woodson, and Alain LeRoy Locke* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>64</sup> This has been studied extensively in the case of Jane Addams, for example in Mary Jo Deegan, "Jane Addams on Citizenship in a Democracy," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 10, no. 3 (2010); and Louise W. Knight, "Jane Addams's Theory of Cooperation," in *Jane Addams and the Practice of Democracy*, eds. Marilyn Fischer, Carol Nackenoff, and Wendy Chmielewski (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 65–85. For a general overview of the history of civic education, see Nancy Beadie and Zoë Burkholder, "From the Diffusion of Knowledge to the Cultivation of Agency: A Short History of Civic Education Policy and Practice in the U.S.," in *Educating for Civic Reasoning and Discourse*, eds. Carol D. Lee, Gregory White, and Dian Dong (Washington D.C.: National Academy of Education, 2021), 109–56.

Greene Balch and Alice Salomon generated models of social justice education tailored to the mostly young white, middle-class women they taught. Their concepts were guided by their visions of a moral society and an understanding of the social sciences as a place of moral instruction. They hoped to instill in their students the ability to understand and critically interrogate how power shaped economic and social relations, to develop empathy across difference, and to build their own visions of a socially and economically just society. I contend that women's educators' training in the social sciences allowed them to formulate visions of social justice that included explicit reflections of class privilege and moral uses of power—an awareness they hoped to also encourage in their students as well. However, the juxtaposition of Balch's and Salomon's work with Cooper's work also brings to light the limitations of white women's social justice education, generated from the complications that arose from their use of social reform work as a means for participation in racialized and class-based power structures. It also exposes their blind spots, especially their near-complete omission of racial power relations and shows the importance of Black women's perspectives and leadership in the social sciences and in social justice education.

## CHAPTER 2: Anna Julia Cooper's Economic Thought and Education for Black Solidarity and Liberation

Education, then, is the safest and richest investment possible to man. It pays the largest dividends and gives the grandest possible product to the world—a man.

-Anna Julia Cooper, 1892

In 1892, Anna Julia Cooper, a young African American intellectual and teacher, published *A Voice from the South*. In the collection of essays and speeches, Cooper, who had been born as the daughter of an enslaved mother on a Southern plantation just before the Civil War, delivered an artfully crafted, astute analysis of American race and gender relations. The book received broad recognition across the country. “There has been no book on the race question that has been more cogently and forcibly written by either white or black authors,” the *Detroit Plaindealer* reported, and the *Kingsley (Iowa) Times* declared it to be “one of the most readable books on the race question of the South.”<sup>65</sup> Cooper’s book was a powerful critical inventory of the American society in the Post-Reconstruction Era. Engaging a deep historical analysis of the intertwined histories of slavery, capitalism, and democracy, she dismantled racist and sexist power relations and called attention to the centrality of Black contributions to the American economy. Cooper pushed back on essentializing theories of white superiority and exposed how the ongoing economic exploitation of Black Americans and white supremacist violence stood in blatant contradiction to the sanctified American values of equality and freedom, effectively undermining the idea of American meritocracy.

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<sup>65</sup> Cited in Louise Daniel Hutchinson, *Anna Julia Cooper: A Voice from the South* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), 104.

Cooper's publication was timely. As conflicts between capital and labor continued to erupt—the Pullmann Strike was just two years away at the time of the publication—economic questions were hotly debated and the public's concerns about big businesses' monopolization and deteriorating living conditions in the cities' poor neighborhoods grew. At universities, the newly emerging discipline of the social sciences encouraged new approaches to economics and introduced empirical methods in the study of labor relations. Anna Julia Cooper, this chapter will show, brought a distinct perspective to this debate. As public and scholarly attention rested almost exclusively on the tensions between powerful white business owners and white (often European immigrant) workers, she directed the reader's view to the situation of African American workers, including women, and put forth a critique of classical economics that exposed the biases and contradictions in both classical and "new" economic ideas.

The study presented in this chapter argues that Cooper made pioneering contributions to economic thought that included a holistic understanding of the economy. She transgressed a focus on the market and included reproductive work, art, and service work as fundamental parts of the economy, centered an understanding of the nature of labor as inherently human, and foregrounded the interdependency between the individual and the social. Secondly, the study presented in this chapter demonstrates how her economic knowledge functioned as a theoretical frame for her educational philosophy and significantly shaped her pedagogical practice in two institutions: M Street High School, a prestigious Black high school and Frelinghuysen University, an evening school for Black workers, both in Washington DC. Methodologically, the study builds on a close reading of Cooper's writings, most importantly those that address economic and educational topics, and situates them in the context of her intellectual biography

and the institutional conditions of knowledge production that limited the funding, distribution, and scholarly acknowledgement of her research.

So far, intellectual histories of economics have ignored Cooper's writings. The gendered and racialized power interests at work in the formative years of the social sciences (and certainly thereafter) all but blocked Black women's access to the centers of knowledge production at universities, and relegated scholars like Cooper to alternative intellectual spaces. This, of course, further cemented their exclusion from the history of economics. However, it did not keep Cooper from engaging in economic research. With high-quality academic training in the classics, Cooper further developed her economic expertise mostly in self-study and through exchange in Black intellectual networks and women's social reform organizations, using her deep philosophical and historical knowledge to think about economic questions. She used methods she had acquired in her classical training to challenge existing economic theories, especially philosophical and historical methods, and intentionally employed her perspective as a Black woman. The methods might not have fit the mold of empirical labor economics or the mathematical nature of the emerging neo-classical economics, but they firmly built on the origin of economics as a sub-field of moral philosophy.

Using a philosophical approach, Cooper deconstructed the economic theories undergirding academic and public discourses and developed alternative understandings of labor and the economy. Her contributions to economics preceded the large empirical, socio-economical study that W.E.B. Du Bois, another young Black scholar, conducted four years later and published through Atlanta University in 1899.<sup>66</sup> In 1892, the year Cooper published *A Voice*, Du Bois had been on his way to Germany to pursue graduate studies at the German Historical

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<sup>66</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois and Elijah Anderson, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

School of Economics, abbreviated as Historical School. The two years he spent at the University of Berlin under Professor Gustav von Schmoller's mentorship—a leading thinker of Germany's Historical School—greatly shaped his intellectual work and laid the foundation for his ambitious project, the building of Black labor studies.<sup>67</sup> The future professor of economics was impressed by the German economists' fierce critique of laissez-faire capitalism, embraced their historical approach to the "labor question," and applied the training he had received in his research in the United States. Over the next years, Du Bois built and finally institutionalized Black Labor Studies at the University of Atlanta, securing a position as the first Black economist at an American university.

Today Du Bois stands tall in the history of Black Labor Studies. Cooper, ten years older than him and with few institutional resources, voiced a lesser-known but similar critique of classical economics and developed a historical, intersectional approach that married economic and race questions in a manner similar to the ideas Du Bois formulated shortly thereafter. However, as a Black woman from the South with a university research career out of reach for her, Cooper turned to high school teaching, a field to which she was highly committed. Black high schools, and especially the prestigious M Street High School, where Cooper taught for forty years, functioned as academic centers for Black Americans and prepared a high number of highly educated future leaders across professional and scientific fields.<sup>68</sup> Until the 1880s, only few American children attended high schools and even fewer remained at the school for a full

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<sup>67</sup> Francille Rusan Wilson, *The Segregated Scholars: Black Social Scientists and the Creation of Black Labor Studies, 1890–1950* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006); Robert E. Prasch, "W. E. B. Du Bois's Contributions to U.S. Economics (1893-1910)," *DuBois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 5, no. 2 (2008), 309–324; Kenneth D. Barkin, "Berlin Days," 1892-1894: W. E. B. Du Bois and German Political Economy," *boundary*, vol. 27, no. 3 (2000): 79–101.

<sup>68</sup> Alison Stewart, *First Class: The Legacy of Dunbar, America's First Black Public High School* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013).

four-year span of instruction, making high schools an important place for high-level academic training.<sup>69</sup> Teaching at M Street thus provided Cooper with a place that was intellectually stimulating and one in which she could engage directly in social change.

Situated outside the academic centers of knowledge production, Cooper built her knowledge on a strong line of strong Pan-African Black intellectuals and grounded it in a tight network of Black women social reformers, teachers, and activists. She spoke with the authority and expertise of a Black woman from the South, a perspective she argued was desperately needed, albeit she feared that the world, including Black men, was not ready to acknowledge that indeed “great social and economic questions await her [a woman’s] interference.” Few believed in Black women’s capacity for social and economic analysis, she explained further, and many doubted “that she [a woman] could throw any light on problems of national import,” or “that she has a word worth hearing on mooted questions in political economy, that she could contribute a suggestion on the relations of labor and capital or offer a thought on honest money and honorable trade.”<sup>70</sup> Not afraid to speak truth to power, Cooper did just that: she interfered.

Cooper’s writings did not follow strict standards of any particular discipline but instead treated economic, social and political questions as interwoven. Similarly, her style of writing did not adhere to academic guidelines. Limited in access to the centers of academic knowledge production but also free of university departments’ restraints, Cooper addressed the urgent questions of her time in literary style and often used irony, analogies, and humor to powerfully speak back to the ideas established and circulated in white dominant discourse. As feminist

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<sup>69</sup> William J. Reese, *The Origins of the American High School* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).

<sup>70</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, “The Status of Woman in America (1892),” in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 113.

scholar Vivian May argues, African American women (and men) “chose to participate in the public discourse despite considerable Anglo-American resistance to their doing so.”<sup>71</sup>

Fearlessly and intentionally, Cooper employed her perspective as a Black woman, and made extensive use of strategic “code-switching” that resembled Du Bois’ concept of “double consciousness.”<sup>72</sup> Cooper was able to switch swiftly and for the reader often unexpectedly from the dominant mainstream perspective to the perspective of the oppressed, speaking multiple theoretical languages and putting forth a rhetoric that was “flexible, kinetic, comparative, multivocal, and plurisignant.”<sup>73</sup> Cooper’s theoretical “code-switching” has often been misinterpreted as contradictory because it did “not always match up to traditional notions of theoretical “coherence.””<sup>74</sup> Instead, May suggests that Cooper’s style should be understood as a “decolonizing strategy” and read as rhetorical activism rather than a representation of uncertainties and ambiguities.<sup>75</sup>

By reading Cooper’s social thought as a contribution to economic history, this chapter expands both the history of economic ideas as well as the scholarship on Cooper’s intellectual work. So far, Cooper’s legacy has been claimed mostly by historians of sociology. Patricia M. Lengermann and Gillian Niebrugge, for example, have established Cooper as an important sociologist in their work *The Women Founders*, arguing that she introduced standpoint methodology to analyze of systems of domination and oppression and an equilibrium-based

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<sup>71</sup> Vivian M. May, *Anna Julia Cooper, Visionary Black Feminist: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 71.

<sup>72</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois described the concept of “double consciousness” in a 1903 publication. See W.E.B Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1994).

<sup>73</sup> May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 185.

<sup>74</sup> May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 51 and 83.

<sup>75</sup> May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 185.

model of a society.<sup>76</sup> Black sociologist Patricia Hill Collins emphasized how Cooper's intellectual activism was grounded in the collective experience of Black women as "part of a wider struggle for human dignity, empowerment and social justice," and of distinctly intersectional nature.<sup>77</sup> Building on this work, I argue that it also important to highlight Cooper's legacy as an economist. I will show that Cooper spoke distinctly to economic questions and addressed the dominant discourses intentionally and effectively from a Black woman's perspective. Inserting her work not just in the history of sociology, but also in economics, adds an important voice to the history of a field in which heterodox thought has systematically been sidelined.

Historians of the gendered history of the social sciences have opened the view to women's economic knowledge production in alternative spaces and urged us to redefine who counts as an authority in economics.<sup>78</sup> Feminist studies of the Progressive Era have long focused on the work of white women social scientists and social reformers and ignored Black women's work, but more recently Black scholars have started to bring much needed attention to the work of Black women economists. Francille Rusan Wilson's *Segregated Scholars* dedicates a full chapter to the history of Black women social scientists who participated in the study of Black labor.<sup>79</sup> As early as the 1890s, Wilson shows, Black clubwomen, self-trained in the social sciences, put forth numerous economic studies and actively participated in the Atlanta University

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<sup>76</sup> Patricia M. Lengeremann and Jill Niebrugge-Brantley, "Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964) and Ida B. Wells (1862-1931), The Foundations of Black Feminist Sociology," in *The Women Founders: Sociology and Social Theory, 1830-1930: A Text/Reader*, eds. Patricia M. Lengeremann and Gillian Niebrugge, (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 149–176.

<sup>77</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 46; Patricia Hill Collins, "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought," *Signs* vol. 14, no. 4 (1989): 745–773.

<sup>78</sup> Helene Silverberg, "Introduction: Toward a Gendered Social Science History," in *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years*, ed. Helene Silverberg (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 3–32.

<sup>79</sup> Wilson, *Segregated Scholars*, 2.

conference. In an important publication, Black economist Nina Banks recovered Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander's significant work as the first Black American woman to graduate with a doctoral degree and the first African American with a PhD in economics.<sup>80</sup>

Historians of other disciplines have also folded in analyses of Cooper's economic ideas in their respective research, highlighting Cooper's emphasis on human interdependency and Black solidarity. Kathy Glass's study on Cooper's socio-political thought and activism, for example, understands her ethic of care and collaboration as a concept that ran counter to the "ruthless economic ethic of narrow self-interest," and reinforces the connections and solidarity between wealthy and economically challenged members of the Black community.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, Carol Wayne White describes Cooper's social thought as rooted in an "ethics of interdependence" which was reflected in Cooper's "politics of radical relationality" and connected the fate of individuals to all.<sup>82</sup> In the perhaps most in-depth analysis of Cooper's social thought, Vivian May discusses Cooper's historical, transnational critique of American economic relations that explained the nation's reliance on an expansionist capitalist empire.<sup>83</sup> May elaborates how Cooper uncovered the paradox of American democratic values that conflated economic profit with liberty and used it "to justify slavery, labor exploitation, imperialist expansion and the uses of violence as a means of social control, including rape, lynching and war."<sup>84</sup> This chapter builds

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<sup>80</sup> Sadie Mossel Alexander and Nina Banks, *Democracy, Race, and Justice: The Speeches and Writings of Sadie T.M. Alexander*, ed. Nina Banks (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021).

<sup>81</sup> Kathy L. Glass, "Tending to the Roots: Anna Julia Cooper's Sociopolitical Thought and Activism," *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2004): 29.

<sup>82</sup> Carol Wayne White, "Anna Julia Cooper, Radical Relationality and the Ethics of Interdependence," in *African American Political Thought: A Collected History*, eds. Melvin L. Rogers and Jack Turner (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2021): 192–211.

<sup>83</sup> May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 112.

<sup>84</sup> May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 53.

on this body of work but focuses on Cooper's ideas from a distinctly economic perspective and asks how Cooper's ideas responded directly to the economic debate of the Progressive Era.

Furthermore, the study on Cooper's economic work expands the scholarship on Cooper's educational thought. Studies have so far emphasized Cooper's understanding of teaching as intellectual activism and as a practice of freedom, challenging and resisting hegemonic domination. Scholars further situate Cooper's work in the tradition of Black pragmatism, which merged experience, theory-building, and application in educational and community-work practices, leading her to implement a broad-based curriculum in which liberal arts and Black history had core roles.<sup>85</sup> Carl A. Grant, Keffrelyn D. Brown, and Anthony L. Brown highlight in particular how Cooper embedded her educational thought into the socio-historical analysis of American democracy and insisted that democracy needed to be inclusive of all people.<sup>86</sup> This growing body of scholarship builds the foundation of my own work which examines how Cooper's analysis of economic relations, her reconceptualization of Black labor and its centrality for the American economy as well as her emphasis on Black economic solidarity functioned as the theoretical framework for her educational work.

In the following pages I present an analysis of Cooper's economic work in three parts. In the first part, I introduce a (short) intellectual biography of Ann Julia Cooper, including the

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<sup>85</sup> Karen Johnson, *Uplifting the Women and the Race: The Educational Philosophies and Social Activism of Anna Julia Cooper and Nannie Helen Burroughs* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Karen Johnson, "The Educational Leadership of Anna Julia Haywood Cooper," *Advancing Women in Leadership Online Journal* 22 (Winter 2007), <https://awl-ojs-tamu.tdl.org/awl/index.php/awl/article/view/248>; V. Thandi Sule, "Intellectual Activism: The Praxis of Dr. Anna Julia Cooper as a Blueprint for Equity-Based Pedagogy," *Feminist Teacher* 23, no. 3 (2013): 211–29; Stephanie Y. Evans, *Black Women in the Ivory Tower, 1850–1954: An Intellectual History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016); and Derrick P. Alridge, "Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism: The Educational Ideas of Anna Julia Cooper and W. E. B. Du Bois, 1892–1940," *History of Education Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (2007): 416–46.

<sup>86</sup> Carl A. Grant, Keffrelyn D. Brown, and Anthony L. Brown, *Black Intellectual Thought in Education: The Missing Traditions of Anna Julia Cooper, Carter G. Woodson, and Alain LeRoy Locke* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 58.

educational, professional, and activist aspects of her life, to situate her intellectual work in the context of her life and practical work. In the second part, I describe the economic thought that she developed in her writings and speeches over time. In part three, I illustrate how her economic thought informed her educational philosophy, her educational activism, and her teaching.

My analysis of Cooper's economic and educational ideas is based on a close reading of her writings, published and unpublished. It draws especially from the collection of work published by Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan, titled *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, and the digitized material archived at Howard University's Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. To contextualize Cooper's ideas, the study also draws from Louise Daniel-Hutchinson's detailed biography, which includes reprints of original documents, articles, letters, poems, photos and more as well as later studies that include biographical accounts.<sup>87</sup>

That Cooper's texts are accessible to students and scholars today is only possible because a long line of dedicated African American historians, bibliographers, and biographers—well as contemporary feminist scholars—ensured that Cooper's work was kept in the records.<sup>88</sup> Unlike Du Bois, who, despite the massive racism he faced in academia, had access to institutional resources and ways to widely circulate his knowledge, Cooper faced additional sexist publishing practices. Despite the wide recognition her 1892 publication, *A Voice From the South*, had earned, she continued to face extreme obstacles in her search for publishers and had to come up with creative alternatives to share her knowledge. In 1925, for example, she had some of her PhD research published in Paris after numerous rejections in the United States and privately

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<sup>87</sup> Hutchinson, *Anna Julia Cooper, A Voice from the South*; and Mark Giles, "Dr. Anna Julia Cooper, 1858–1964: Teacher, Scholar, and Timeless Womanist," *Journal of Negro Education* 75, no. 4 (2006): 621–34; May, *Visionary Black Feminist*.

<sup>88</sup> Shirley Moody-Turner, "Prospects for the Study of Anna Julia Cooper," in *Resources for American Literary Study*, eds. Nancy F. Sweet and Paul Thifault, vol. 40 (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2018), 3.

printed some of her work.<sup>89</sup> In the 1930s, she collected the articles she had published in local newspapers and personally archived them in a scrapbook.<sup>90</sup>

### ***“This Right to Grow is Sacred and Inviolable”*: Cooper’s Intellectual Biography**

Cooper’s contributions to the economic discourse of the Progressive Era were informed by her biographical experiences as a Black woman from the South. Growing up as the daughter of an enslaved mother who she loved dearly and showed “the highest praise and undying gratitude,” white supremacist and patriarchal structures regulated Cooper’s access to educational institutions and professional opportunities. Born just before the Civil War, she came of age during the Reconstruction Era and was amongst the first cohorts to enter the newly opened St. Augustine Normal School and Collegiate Institute.<sup>91</sup> The school, founded and operated by the Black Episcopal Church in cooperation with the Freedmen’s Bureau, was a teacher training school that epitomized the promise of Reconstruction: that education was the foundation for African Americans’ political and economic citizenship. The schooling of Black Americans was a project pursued with “intense desire,” as Booker T. Washington described it in his autobiography, and constituted a core measure for Black liberation.<sup>92</sup> The young student Anna Julia Cooper embodied this story of hope: her mother, who herself had been deprived of education, insisted that her daughter learned how to read and write, and with her support young Anna flourished under St. Augustine’s education, went on to college, graduated with a B.A. and M.A from

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<sup>89</sup> Moody-Turner, “Prospects for the Study of Anna Julia Cooper,” 2.

<sup>90</sup> “Scrapbook No.2, 1931–1940 (2017). Scrapbooks and Albums. 3. Anna Julia Cooper Collection, Digital Howard@Howard University, Washington, DC, accessed September 24, 2020. [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_scrap/3/](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_scrap/3/).

<sup>91</sup> Hutchinson, *Anna Julia Cooper*, 21.

<sup>92</sup> Washington T. Booker, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1901).

Oberlin College and entered a successful career as a teacher and later as a principal of the country's most prestigious high school for Black students.

Cooper's training at St. Augustine built the intellectual foundation for her future work. It introduced her both to the classics and Black thought traditions, two bodies of knowledge that informed each other. She immersed herself in the Western classical canon with passion: she studied and taught math, Greek, Latin, modern languages, and history. Cooper's study of the classics from a Black perspective was part of the collective project of recuperating Black experiences in classical work. Like others she used the classics' universal humanism to reconstruct "black pasts, presents and futures," while also dismantling the appropriation of classical legacies by European cultures—a critical approach that is reflected in her economic thinking as well.<sup>93</sup> Eric Hairston points out that studies on Cooper have so far either dismissed or underestimated the centrality of classics to her work, losing "a significant tool for discerning the aims and intent of Cooper's writing."<sup>94</sup> Cooper's classical training, he argues, provided her with the strong rhetorical skills she used to challenge white supremacy and expose the contradictions between democratic values and political practices.<sup>95</sup> St. Augustine School, as part of the Black Episcopal network, also introduced her to Black nationalist thinkers such as Reverend James Theodore Holly, who later became Bishop of the Haitian Episcopal Church and enrolled his sons at the school.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ian Moyer, Adam Lecznar, and Heidi Morse, *Classicisms in the Black Atlantic* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020), 4–5.

<sup>94</sup> Eric Ashley Hairston, *The Ebony Column* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013): 126 and 129.

<sup>95</sup> Hairston, *The Ebony Column*, 130 and 139–40.

<sup>96</sup> David W.H. Pellow, "Anna Julia Cooper: The International Dimensions," *Recovered Writers/Recovered Texts: Race, Class, and Gender in Black Women's Literature*, ed. Dolan Hubbard (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 63.

The seeds for Cooper's teaching career were also sown at St. Augustine, where she quickly became a tutor to other students. This work was not so much a choice than a required part of her funding package, but it nevertheless did not keep her from developing a love for teaching. The two-fold function of teaching as stable source of income for educated single Black women on the one hand and a matter of the heart and opportunity for intellectual activism on the other hand remained a constant in Cooper's life. After graduation, Cooper became a teacher at the school, which provided her with a strong sense of belonging and an understanding of the importance of education for individual and collective liberation.<sup>97</sup> She also met her husband at St. Augustine and was "married and widowed just two years later in this "world of a school church," as she summarized it in a survey sent out by Fisk University.<sup>98</sup>

After her husband's death just a few years later, Cooper was forced to secure a career that would sustain a reliable income, and, in 1881, she continued her education at Oberlin College, majoring in mathematics. In another "first" in her educational career, she became part of the first cohort of Black women at the school, along with community leaders Mary Church Terrell and Ida Gibbs Hunt.<sup>99</sup> Oberlin provided Cooper with the opportunity to deepen her classical knowledge and acquire the degrees that helped her find a secure position as a teacher. It also exposed her to the thinking of (white) Progressive social reformers and the debate around classical and "new economics" that had just started to emerge on US college campuses. Cooper's cohort was the first to attend the college's newly implemented economics program.<sup>100</sup> The course

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<sup>97</sup> Pellow, "Anna Julia Cooper," 63.

<sup>98</sup> *Negro College Graduates Individual Occupational History [1937]. Bibliographical Data. 2*, Anna Julia Cooper Collection, Digital Howard @Howard University, Washington, DC, accessed August 12, 2020, [https://dh.howard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=ajc\\_bio](https://dh.howard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=ajc_bio).

<sup>99</sup> Mary Jane Patterson had been the trailblazer as the first African American woman student at Oberlin in 1857, but it took twenty-four years for Cooper's cohort to be able to follow her footsteps.

<sup>100</sup> Oberlin College, *General Catalogue of Oberlin College, 1833 [-] 1908*, Internet Archive, accessed October 3, 2022, <https://archive.org/details/generalcatalogue00oberrich>.

was taught by James Monroe, a professor who had been newly appointed. Like other Oberlin faculty members, Monroe was a supporter of moderate reform ideas that aimed to restore the harmony between classes. Similarly, most students favored reform-oriented ideas such as fair wages, profit-sharing plans, co-operatives, and trade unions over revolutionary ideas.<sup>101</sup>

Oberlin's embrace of moderate Progressive economic ideas, which were undergirded by the college's Protestant mission and the evangelical spirit of its founding years, went hand in hand with an increasingly outspoken anti-immigration stance, veiled by a language of service to the common good—a contradiction Cooper was attentive to in her social and economic thought. The college's historical support of the abolitionist movement and racial justice also seemed to have slowly dissipated and by the time Cooper attended, Black students found themselves increasingly segregated on campus.<sup>102</sup>

After graduation, followed by a few years of teaching at Wilberforce University and again St. Augustine, Cooper moved to Washington, DC in 1887, where both her teaching career and her scholarly work gained momentum. She had been recruited by the superintendent of the Colored Schools of Washington city and Georgetown as a teacher at the city's only black high school, the prestigious M Street High School, then called Preparatory High School for Negro Youth.<sup>103</sup> The nation's capital was a hub of Black political, social and cultural activities and Cooper became invested in many of the city's Black cultural organizations such as the Hampton

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<sup>101</sup> Monroe was also known for his unconventional teaching methods, with which he was able to evoke his students' interest in social and economic questions, even if the content of his classes was rather traditional. See John Barnard, *From Evangelicalism to Progressivism at Oberlin College, 1866–1917* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969), 60.

<sup>102</sup> Robert Samuel Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College* (Oberlin: Oberlin College, 1943); Waite, Cally L, "The Segregation of Black Students at Oberlin College after Reconstruction," *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2001): 345.

<sup>103</sup> From 1891 on the school was known as and eventually renamed Dunbar High School; Hutchinson, *Anna Julia Cooper*, 45.

Folklore Society, the Washington Negro Folklore Society and the Bethel Literary and Historical Association, to name just a few. In addition, she organized and attended conferences and spoke to diverse audiences. Doing so, Cooper fearlessly entered privileged spaces reserved to white women or Black men. In May of 1893, for example, she spoke at the Chicago Women's World Congress as one of a handful Black women, and in 1897 she addressed the American Negro Academy, where she was the only woman speaker invited.<sup>104</sup>

Cooper's work at M Street not only provided Cooper with a secure income but also offered her a space that was intellectually stimulating and allowed her to engage in the social and economic studies. Vice versa, the school was a place where she could apply her knowledge in her daily practical work. Founded in 1870, the school was the country's first high school for African Americans, initiated and supported by DC's Black community with the help of a few influential white supporters, and was successfully brought to realization despite thin funding and political resistance. At the time, high schools across the country catered mostly to a white, native-born, middle-class audience, which made M Street High School's success even more extraordinary: equipped with outstanding leadership, a high-class faculty, and a strong classical curriculum, the school "became synonymous with black achievement in education" in the nation. It produced a multitude of prominent graduates, many of whom became leaders of national and international communities and were highly successful in professions which had hitherto been closed to African Americans.<sup>105</sup> Cooper further solidified the trajectory that the school's

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<sup>104</sup> African American women speakers were only admitted to the conference after massive protests by women of color had led to a public outcry over the exclusion of African American women from the exhibition and congress. See Claudine Raynaud, "African American Women's Voices at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair," *Women in International and Universal Exhibitions 1876–1937*, eds. Rebecca Rogers and Myriam Boussahba-Bravard (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>105</sup> Donald Roe, "The Dual School System in the District of Columbia, 1862–1954: Origins, Problems, Protests," *Washington History* 16, no. 2 (2004): 29; and Henry S. Robinson, "The M Street High School, 1891–1916," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, Washington 51 (1984): 119–43.

leadership had already established for Washington's Black students: to equip future leaders with high-quality academic education. Under Cooper's principalship, students excelled and scored better than their white peers.<sup>106</sup> Many were able to directly pass the rigid entrance exams of New England's colleges, skipping the preparatory schools normally needed.<sup>107</sup>

Cooper's intellectual work was also strongly influenced by the Black women's club movement of which she became a key leader. Established mostly by middle-class women (often teachers), the clubs were dedicated to the improvement the Black communities' living conditions under the motto "lifting as we climb." Cooper not only contributed much to the movement's success but her work also allowed her to observe and address the living conditions of DC's poor neighborhoods in systematic ways. The clubs instituted kindergarten teacher training, organized poor relief, installed courses for women's industrial and domestic work training, and worked to alleviate the living conditions of so called alley dwellers, Black migrants from the South who had moved to DC after the Civil War but faced difficulties finding adequate work and housing.

As the co-founder of the Colored Women's League of Washington, DC, Cooper and her colleagues collaborated with churches and other organizations to create opportunities especially for women to find ways to better their situations. Cooper, for example, chaired the League's Alley Sanitation Committee.<sup>108</sup> The Alley Sanitation Committee was a direct predecessor of DC's Colored Settlement House, a project that Cooper helped establish in 1902 and of which she became its supervisor four years later—work that further informed her economic thinking.

Operated solely through volunteer work until 1934, the center provided a nursery daycare for the

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<sup>106</sup> Thomas Sowell, "Black Excellence: The Case of Dunbar High School," *The Public Interest* 35 (1974): 3–21; Stewart, *First Class*, 43–44.

<sup>107</sup> Robinson, "The M Street High School," 122.

<sup>108</sup> Hutchinson, *Anna Julia Cooper*, 93–4.

infants of working mothers, a free kindergarten, sewing classes for girls, a boys' military club, a library, arts and music classes, a Sunday school, a garden project, and more.<sup>109</sup> The Colored Settlement House was generated as a self-help project in response to the poor living conditions of the city's Black neighbors, caused by migration, segregation, and severely limited access to resources.

Cooper discussed critically how white social reformers, including women reformers, ignored their Black neighbors' dreadful situations and explained that although claiming to work for the betterment of the poor's living conditions, they never gave a thought "to the pinched and down-trodden colored women bending over wash-tubs and ironing boards . . . !"<sup>110</sup> Taking note of white settlement house work in institutions like New York's University Settlement and Chicago's Hull House, Cooper exposed the racist biases inherent to this work and argued that paradoxically" the "widespread activity in uplift movement and intensest devotion to social service" went hand in hand with "the hard wall of race prejudice against Negroes."<sup>111</sup>

Cooper's engagement in D.C.'s Black cultural and social reform work was accompanied by a growing interest in the Pan-African movement. Cooper's education at St. Augustine had already exposed her to Black transatlantic thought, that, as David Pellow describes, provided her with "an understanding of the world's complexities, of the interconnectedness of the centers of power and finance—particularly those on both sides of the Atlantic which engineered the exploitation of the Americas, the rise of Europe, the destruction of Native American civilizations, and the pillage of Africa."<sup>112</sup> Pellow argues that Cooper's geopolitical

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<sup>109</sup> Hutchinson, *Anna Julia Cooper*, 117.

<sup>110</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, "What Are We Worth (1892)," in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 173.

<sup>111</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, "The Social Settlement: What It Is, and What It Does (1914)" in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998): 219.

<sup>112</sup> Pellow, "Anna Julia Cooper," 61.

understanding was further influenced by her travel experiences to Canada in 1891 with a cultural exchange-program for teachers and the Pan-African network of intellectuals.<sup>113</sup> In DC, Cooper got to know Black scholars invested in African history, including Martin Delany, Alexander Crummell, and W. E. B. Du Bois, who pushed for the study of African history from a Black perspective and deconstructed the myth of white superiority. Cooper became invested in the movement and attended at the first Pan-African conference in 1900 in London, where she also spoke.<sup>114</sup>

Cooper's work and life were significantly disrupted by the political backlash she experienced in response to her successful work as M Street's principal, which escalated into a smear campaign supported by the Washington Post. Eventually, the pressure led to her dismissal as head of school, causing her to leave DC for a period of five years and accept a position as professor of languages at Lincoln University in Missouri. When she had become principal in 1901, Cooper had used the position to further push the school's legacy as a place of Black excellence and insisted on keeping the institution's focus on classical education. Soon, Cooper faced battles on two fronts: (1) the powerful "Tuskegee Machine," a political interest group led by Booker T. Washington that advocated for broadly accessible vocational training and industrial education for African Americans; (2) a white school board that did not tolerate Cooper's ambition and success in African Americans' classical education. Investigations into her work and recommendations to cut back on algebra and English followed.<sup>115</sup> A barrage of allegations unfolded, including fraudulent graduation practices, tolerance of deviant student behavior on campus, and, finally, accusations of an improper romantic relationship with her foster son. As a

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<sup>113</sup> Pellow, "Anna Julia Cooper," 64.

<sup>114</sup> Unfortunately, Cooper's conference paper titled "The Negro Problem in America" has not yet been found.

<sup>115</sup> Stewart, *First Class*, 47.

result, the board decided not to hire her back in the fall of 1906. Five years later, when the new board of education rehired Cooper and she spent twenty more years at the school teaching Latin, but never regained her position as principal.

Despite the immense workload as a teacher, Cooper sought out opportunities for graduate studies. She spent the summer months of 1911, 1912, and 1913 at La Guilde Internationale in Paris, where she took summer courses in French literature, history, and phonetics.<sup>116</sup> Encouraged by her achievements, Cooper enrolled at Columbia University in 1914, where she pursued doctoral studies in French linguistics for three years and was ready to graduate with a finished thesis—a translation of *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* (The Pilgrimage of Charlemagne, also called Charles the Great). Although her work received excellent feedback, Columbia rejected to formally accept it because Cooper had not been able to fulfil the New York, one-year residency requirement. The latter was an impossible endeavor for Cooper who depended on her teaching job at M Street High School as her only source of income and as prerequisite for retirement. In addition, she had also adopted her late half-brother's five young children in the winter of 1915.

An opportunity finally opened at the Sorbonne University in Paris, where Cooper's prior work at Columbia was counted toward a doctoral degree. Because she had fallen ill at this time, Cooper was able to use some of her sick leave days as well as a scholarship from the sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha to go and work in the French archives. She was now formally enrolled in a history program, which meant that she needed to complete an entirely new thesis. Despite all these challenges, Cooper successfully defended her dissertation in 1925 at the age of sixty-six.

In a special ceremony at Howard University, where the PhD was conferred to her, Cooper declared that all individuals had a “right to grow” that was “sacred and inviolable, based on the

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<sup>116</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, “The Third Step,” in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 321.

solidarity and undeniable value of humanity itself,” a right for which she herself had had to fight for at every step of her way.<sup>117</sup> Education had been so central to her personal growth that ensuring that everyone had the right to education became even more central in her post-retirement career in 1930. After ending her work at M Street, she presided over Frelinghuysen University for eleven years, an evening school for African American adults who had little or no basic literacy skills. Not a university in the traditional sense, Frelinghuysen offered a much-needed educational opportunity for DC’s Black community with the aim “to enable men and women who cannot make their leisure time fit into the schedule of a Grade A College or university to pursue under competent instructors the higher and broader education in such lines that seem suited to their several capacities and aspirations.”<sup>118</sup>

The idea of Frelinghuysen University had been born in 1906, when a group of clergyman and educators met to organize a branch of the Bible Education Association. The group conducted empirical studies about the living conditions of DC’s Black population, many of whom lived in the alleys. Their investigations discovered that only one third of the Black population attended church and that many of the adults worked around the clock to provide their children with a better life. In doing so, they had neglected their own education. The group identified the need for educational opportunities and opened Frelinghuysen University in 1917 in the form of small satellite-schools, operated from private homes and businesses. The school moved it into a permanent building in 1921.<sup>119</sup> By 1926, Frelinghuysen University had consolidated and offered programs ranging from high school education to business classes, and from junior college to

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<sup>117</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, “Souvenir” (n.d.), in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 339. Cooper privately printed this speech.

<sup>118</sup> “Decennial Catalogue of Frelinghuysen University (2017),” *Frelinghuysen Memorabilia*, 1:66, Anna Julia Cooper Collection, Digital Howard@Howard University, Washington, DC, accessed December 8, 2020, [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_freling/1](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_freling/1)

<sup>119</sup> Hutchinson, *Anna Julia Cooper*, 157.

college-level classes in liberal arts, sociology, applied science, arts, theology, law, and pharmaceutical studies.<sup>120</sup>

Frelinghuysen University reflected Cooper's call to invest in the Black community, and her becoming the school's president represented a full-circle moment in her life. In homage to her mother, Cooper named one of the school's programs, the Hannah Stanley Opportunity School, after her, as an expression of individual gratitude and a symbol of the power of education to Black liberation.<sup>121</sup> Despite her old age, Cooper remained committed to Frelinghuysen and continued teaching after the end of her presidency in 1941. In 1964, at the age of one-hundred-and-five, Cooper died in her home in DC.

### ***“What Are We Worth”: Cooper's Economic Ideas***

Trained at St. Augustine and Oberlin College and firmly rooted within a network of Black intellectuals, social reformers, and educators, Cooper powerfully spoke back to the economic ideas carried out in public and academic debates of the Progressive Era. The Gilded Age had seen massive industrial expansion accompanied by corruption scandals, increasing wealth concentration in the hands of a few, and growing labor unrest. The new generation of economists, many of them founders and members of the American Economic Association (AEA), set out to respond to the social problems that “the conflict of labor and capital [had] brought to the front.”<sup>122</sup> Their focus, however, rested mainly on the situation of white workers in America's Northern urban centers, many of them European immigrant workers, thereby

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<sup>120</sup> Hutchinson, *Anna Julia Cooper*, 160.

<sup>121</sup> “Advertisement for Frelinghuysen University” (2017), *Frelinghuysen Memorabilia* 5, Anna Julia Cooper Collection, Digital Howard@Howard University, accessed September 17, 2020, [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_freling/5](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_freling/5). Also cited in May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 35.

<sup>122</sup> American Economic Association, *Publications of the American Economic Association* 1, no. 1 (1886): 7.

dismissing the dire situation of Black workers in the South and the continued racism in the North. In fact, a majority of the AEA's economists did not just downplay the role slavery had played in the history of the American economy and the effects that the post-Reconstruction economy had especially on Black workers; they made the organization a platform where racist theories could flourish.<sup>123</sup>

Cooper's first publication, *A Voice from the South*, published in 1892, illustrated her intellectual resistance to mainstream economic discourses. In her essays and speeches collected in the book, she masterfully called out the inconsistencies and contradictions in American classical thought traditions and criticized both the classical economists' and white Progressive reformers' "new economic" arguments alike. Like Du Bois, Cooper employed a historical approach to economic questions that the Historical School had made popular on both sides of the Atlantic. However, she transgressed the narrow focus of the German school on class by far and used it to examine the historical intersections of race, gender, and class. Criticizing Progressive economists self-declared "objectivity," Cooper insisted that a historical approach needed to acknowledge and center the history of slavery and its legacy, suggested a concept of labor that radically humanized the nature of work and the worker, and proposed a holistic understanding of the economy that highlighted interdependence between the individual and the social.

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<sup>123</sup> Robert Cherry, "Racial Thought and the Early Economics Profession," *Review of Social Economy* 34, no. 2 (1976): 147-62; Bradley W. Bateman, "Race, Intellectual History, and American Economics: A Prolegomenon to the Past," *History of Political Economy* 35, no. 4 (2003): 713-30; Lawrence J. Oliver, "W.E.B. Du Bois and the Dismal Science: Economic Theory and Social Justice," *American Studies* 53, no. 2 (2014): 49-70.

*“Mere Sentiment Governed by Ideas”*: Exposing Racist Biases in Empirical Work and Challenging “Objectivity”

In her 1892 essay “What Are We Worth,” Cooper clearly and comprehensively addresses economic questions and challenges how mainstream (white) economic thought—classical *and* “new economics”—perpetuated and justified racism. Engaging the philosophical method of logic, she opened the piece by deconstructing a quote by Henry Ward Beecher’s about Africans’ role in the world. The prominent abolitionist and brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe asked provocatively, if Africa and the Africans were “to sink to-morrow [*sic*], how much poorer would the world be” and claimed that “not a poem, not an invention, not a piece of art would be missed from the world.”<sup>124</sup> Cooper used this blatantly racist statement, which postulated European (-American) cultural and economic superiority, as a starting point for a thorough discussion about value that exposed the biases in empirical labor studies and the flaws in classical economic theories alike.

Rhetorically mimicking social scientists’ empirical approach and “purely mathematical style” that left “no room for sentiment,” Cooper dismantled how easily racist ideologies of white researchers who claimed neutrality, distorted “objective” data. On the one hand, she showed, labor statistics conveniently omitted racial differentiation when it came to Black contributions to the American economy but included it when looking at illiteracy or crime rates. She called out white scientists and administrators: “Our efficient and capable census enumerators never draw the color line on labor products. You have no trouble in turning to the page that shows exactly what percentage of colored people are illiterate, or just how many have been condemned by the

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<sup>124</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth (1892),” 161; Henry Ward Beecher, brother of Harriett Beecher Stowe, was a congregationalist preacher and abolitionist.

courts.”<sup>125</sup> To further corroborate evidence for racist distortions in economic statistics and to recover the immense contributions of Black Americans to the economy, Cooper recuperated statistics about the Black economy despite the difficulties of a highly inconsistent, biased database. For example, she showed that even “exclusive of the billions of wealth *given* by them to enrich another race prior to the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, the colored people of America to-day [*sic*] hold in their own right \$240,000,000 of taxable property.”<sup>126</sup> Adding in the dramatic financial loss that the collapse of the Freedman’s Bank had brought—another well-intentioned project of Reconstruction that had betrayed African Americans and robbed them of their money—Cooper estimated that in 1888 “two-thirds of the 6,940,000 bales of cotton” were produced by Black Americans, alongside major contributions to the tobacco, molasses, corn, and wheat industries, and the many (most often unrecognized) inventions by Black Americans.<sup>127</sup>

Cooper used these statistics to illustrate Black economic power and encourage Black self-help rather than trying to make a white audience understand its racist distortions. She was aware that despite the espoused objectivity white Americans’ biases were, in fact, steeped in emotions that could not be undone through a simple demonstration of facts. Racism, she explained, was “mere sentiment governed by ideas,” and immune to rational explanations. Just as “it does no good to argue with the poor sea-sick wretch, who, even on land after the voyage, is nauseated by the sight of clear spring water,” she explained to her fellow African American intellectuals, “your rhetoric cannot annihilate his feelings.”<sup>128</sup> Because “the man who is dominated by the

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<sup>125</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth (1892),” 179–80.

<sup>126</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth (1892),” 179–80.

<sup>127</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth (1892),” 179.

<sup>128</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth (1892),” 162–63.

sentiment of race prejudice” was impervious to reason, Cooper suggested that “you can only consign him to the fatherly hand of time.”<sup>129</sup>

Cooper’s insight about the deep emotional entrenchment of racism predated Du Bois’ recognition that white Americans’ ability to change their mind through confrontation with scientific data was limited. Influenced by the Historical School and its emphasis on science-based social reform, Du Bois had hoped that rigorous empirical studies and “hard” facts about the situation of southern Black Americans would lead to political change. His Philadelphia study about the living conditions of Black Americans had been an attempt to advance racial justice via scientific knowledge—an effort which did not bear much fruit. However, it was not until 1910 that he gave up on this project and acknowledged that the majority of white Americans was immune to such a strategy.<sup>130</sup> Cooper, who had not been formally trained in economics like Du Bois, had been more skeptical of this strategy throughout. This did not mean that she generally rejected empirical methods, but rather that she had warned that white scientists’ research was guided by interests and preconceived notions and as such not “neutral.”

*“No Animal, the Scientists Tell us, Is in Infancy so Utterly Helpless as is Man”: Challenging Dehumanizing Concepts of Labor*

Cooper did not just call out ideological distortions in the empirical methods advanced by new economists, but also deconstructed racial prejudice ingrained in classical economics theories. Her critique especially targeted the dogma of ahistorical, universally applicable economic laws, showing that the economic agency of the *homo economicus* granted to the white man was, in fact, a result of historical conditions. In “What Are We Worth,” Cooper revisited John Locke’s

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<sup>129</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth (1892),” 163.

<sup>130</sup> Barkin, “Berlin Days, 100–101.

and Adam Smith's theories on labor, material, and value, Cooper, "What Are We Worth (1892)," 162–63 without, however, naming or citing the two directly. Cooper echoed some of Locke's ethical considerations, for example that resources needed to be held in common and that waste of material should be avoided. Her involvement in the Black women's club movement had given her first-hand experience that the local government did not respect this principle, and she took specific note of the unequal distribution of natural resources. Poor Black people were cut off from access to existential resources such as water through segregation, Cooper argued, writing that it was "one of the stultifying humiliations of American manners that the group that pariahed as the great Unwashed are not only not encouraged to be clean, but are actually barred from water."<sup>131</sup> While African Americans were barred from almost all public amenities, unless it was in white businesses' interest, she pointed out that they were given access to saloons and drinking halls where white business men profited from Black people's alcohol addiction.

While Cooper highlighted how the American, neo-classical version of capitalism had substantially altered classical economic theory by freeing the homo economicus from the social responsibility that Smith had originally ascribed, Cooper did not generally support classical economists' ideas.<sup>132</sup> She especially took aim at classical theories' focus on material resources and criticized Locke's narrow focus that left the factor of human labor out of the equation. Cooper instead suggested that human labor be put at the center of economic thought. People, not material, were the most important resource in the production process, and all understanding of the economy needed to start from there, she argued.

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<sup>131</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, "The Social Settlement: What It Is, and What It Does (1914)" in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 221.

<sup>132</sup> See Alena Wolflink's discussion of value in Alena Wolflink, "What's the Matter with Value? Anna Julia Cooper's Political-Economic Thought," *Critical Philosophy of Race* 9, no. 1 (2021): 111.

Cooper also took aim at Smith's labor theory of value. He included labor and argued that the value of goods derived from the number of hours of labor that went into the production of a good. Cooper countered that while the theory called attention to labor, it was stripped of its human nature and was no more than a mathematical factor to Smith. Cooper contrasted his static conceptualization of labor by foregrounding the dynamic, that is developing and dependent character of labor. Exposing a logic that understood human labor as a good but did not invest in it, she ironically argued that at the very least human labor should receive the same level of care granted to other "material." For example, if investment increased the value of wood (turning it into goods), then human labor needed at least the same amount of investment.

Cooper's concept of the economy foregrounded the human nature of all work and highlighted the historical (and evolving) nature of one's economic position, grounded in an understanding of human nature as dependent. "No animal, the scientists tell us, is in infancy so utterly helpless, so completely destitute of the means of independent existence, so entirely worthless in itself as the world estimates values, as is man," she wrote.<sup>133</sup> Only through thorough investment by others—material, personal and cultural—one could develop their full labor potential. This was not just a matter of the cost needed to bring up a child but also a matter of generational wealth, Cooper explained. "The materials that go to make the man, . . . the conditions and circumstances of his growth, and his quantum of resistance and mastery are the resultant of forces which have been accumulating and gathering momentum for generations."<sup>134</sup> Thomas Meagher points out that Cooper's concept reversed the sentiment that depicted Black people as dependent on white guardianship, proving that the opposite was the case. Cooper, he

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<sup>133</sup> Cooper, "What Are We Worth (1892)," 167.

<sup>134</sup> Cooper, "What Are We Worth (1892)," 164.

argues, demonstrated that “whites have erected a world in which they are licensed to be infantile by way of parasitic dependence on oppressed blacks.”<sup>135</sup> While Black Americans contributed more to the economy than they consumed, white Americans, for the most part, consumed more than they contributed.

*“Immortal Thoughts, Invaluable Inventions, New Facilities, Heroic Deeds of Loving Self-Sacrifice”*: *Reconstructing the Value of Black Labor*

Cooper’s concept of human labor as developing and dependent on investment also allowed for a holistic understanding of the economy that no longer excluded reproductive and service work. Parenting, community work, teaching, art, and military service all became pillars of the (human) economy. Although Cooper knew well that a minimum of financial wealth was the prerequisite for survival, she argued that care work, service work and cultural contributions were also necessary to develop a society that could then help individuals actualize their full human potential. The legacy of writers, inventors, scientists, “the Shakespeares and Miltons, the Newtons, Galileos, and Darwins” should not be underestimated, she argued, as they had provided the world with “immortal thoughts, invaluable inventions, new facilities, heroic deeds of loving self-sacrifice.”<sup>136</sup> Again pointing to the omissions in cultural histories, she named the contributions of African American inventors, poets and scholars, such as Granville Woods, Phillis Wheatley, and General Bassett.

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<sup>135</sup>Thomas Meagher, “Black Issues in Philosophy: On Teaching Anna Julia Cooper’s “What Are We Worth” in Introductory Courses,” *Blog of the American Philosophical Association APA*, May 30, 2018, <https://blog.apaonline.org/2018/05/30/black-issues-in-philosophy-on-teaching-anna-julia-coopers-what-are-we-worth-in-introductory-courses/>.

<sup>136</sup> Meagher, “Black Issues in Philosophy,” 182.

Cooper's conceptualization of human labor as historical and dependent allowed her to debunk ahistorical post-Reconstruction era arguments that linked African Americans' economic situation to natural intellectual and/or moral inferiority. Instead, she highlighted how deprivation, maltreatment and violence were central principles of the slave economy, in which those in power willfully withheld existential resources such as housing, education and the possibility to accumulate wealth from Black Americans. Much like W.E.B. Du Bois argued a few years later, Cooper situated the current political and economic conditions for African Americans in the history of slavery and the continuation of exploitation of Black labor in the post-Reconstruction era, demonstrating how it "had left African Americans with formidable competitive obstacles" rather than a level playing field.<sup>137</sup> She shared the white "new economists'" critique of American exceptionalism but also exposed their racist biases. Taking aim at their exclusive focus on the effects of industrialized capitalism on white laborers, Cooper employed an intersectional critique that emphasized how race, gender, and class worked as intertwined, mutually reinforcing categories of oppression.

Cooper continued the counterargument to essentializing theories of white superiority by arguing that if there was a race that had demonstrated superiority, it was African Americans who, despite hostile conditions, had contributed majorly to the economic success of the United States. Cooper combined African nationalist thought with evolutionary theory, sarcastically arguing that "certainly the original timber as it came from the African forests was good enough"<sup>138</sup> and that in fact "the past two hundred and fifty years of working up the material we now inherit, has depreciated rather than enhanced its value."<sup>139</sup> Again, she turned a rationale that ascribed

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<sup>137</sup> Prash, "W.E.B. Du Bois' Contributions."

<sup>138</sup> Cooper, "What Are We Worth (1892)," 165.

<sup>139</sup> Cooper, "What Are We Worth (1892)," 166.

passivity to African Americans on its head by pointing out the white majority's lack of investment in Black labor.

*“Have I a Margin?”: (Re-)Investment in the Community as Economic and Moral Responsibility*

By offering a radically humanizing concept of labor and the economy, Cooper defined economic and social growth as a circular process of investment and reinvestment in humanity tied to a form of moral responsibility, which Cooper described as “debts” owed to the community that has brought one up. Progress, in this understanding, was only possible if one contributed to the world more than one consumed. She urged everyone to ask themselves: “Have I a margin outside of consumption for surplus consumption? We owe it to the world to give out at least as much as we have taken in, but if we aim to be accounted a positive value, we must leave it a little richer than we found it.”<sup>140</sup>

Although Cooper constructed humanity as the overarching social unit to which everyone belonged, Cooper called on Black Americans to reinvest in the Black community. As the history of slavery and the persistence of white supremacy during post-Reconstruction showed, African Americans could expect no investment in their labor, and thus their humanity, from white Americans. Starkly pointing out the lack of responsibility and accountability from of white Americans in power, she called for Black solidarity and the investment of Black resources, including social and cultural capital, in the Black community, especially education.

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<sup>140</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth (1892),” 178.

*“Utilize the Margins!”: Black Women’s Work as Resistance to White Capitalism*

Cooper’s concept of labor further allowed her to place Black women’s work at the center of the economy. A common theme throughout Cooper’s written work is her emphasis of Black women’s contributions to the American economy in general, and the Black community in specific, as workers (in agricultural, domestic, and industrial work), professionals (teachers and nurses), community leaders, mothers, and caretakers. An article titled “Colored Women as Wage Earners” published in 1899 in *The Southern Workman*, the journal of the Hampton Institute in Virginia, for example, shows how Cooper pushed back on sexist discourses in the Black community that dismissed or openly devalued Black women’s productive and reproductive work.<sup>141</sup> She argued that women’s work was essential for the Black economy—a much needed source for Black capital-building as well as a pillar of Black culture and resistance to a white capitalist consumer culture that held Black people poor.

Citing statistics on Black labor from Atlanta University, Cooper called attention to the fact that Black women represented a majority of Black household leaders, with 57.17 percent of Black households wholly or in parts supported by female heads. One could or could not find women’s work in domestic and industrial field appropriate, Cooper contended, regardless it was clear that the Black economy relied heavily on women’s wage work. She called out essentialist arguments and demanded that “women, if they are not artificially advantaged, must not at any rate be artificially disadvantaged.”<sup>142</sup> Much like she had refused to accept naturalizing notions of

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<sup>141</sup> Cooper had worked as an interim editor for the Hampton Journal in the mid-1890s; Anna Julia Cooper, “Colored Women as Wage-Earners,” *The Southern Workman* 28, no. 8 (August 28, 1899): 295–98; May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 22.

<sup>142</sup> Cooper, “Colored Women as Wage Earners,” 295.

racial inferiority, she spoke back to essentializing assumptions about women's nature and instead insisted that the human potential to learn and grow was what characterized human nature.

Just as important as women's gainful work, Cooper explained, was their household leadership, either as the single head of a household or the married "indoor partner of the firm."<sup>143</sup> Women made important daily household decisions, she argued, that functioned as resistance to a white consumer culture that perpetuated Black poverty. Not only were African Americans placed at a (historically created) economic disadvantage because they had to start "from a chasm below zero to build up (their) fortunes," she wrote, but it was also impossible to ever build wealth if they followed the white imperative of consumption. "Economically considered," she explained, "the colored people in this country are a society of wage-earners, but their standards of living and their judgment of one another are as if they are a race of capitalists." She called on women to resist the capitalist imperative that asked Black families to reach "the impossible height [of] the standard of life," which effectively kept them from building wealth and perpetuated poverty.<sup>144</sup>

Capitalist calls for consumption were often directed specifically at the Black female body, Cooper explained: "She must be too wary to be lured on with the chaff of flattery. When her fine appearance or that of her daughter is commented upon, let that be a signal for retreat." Instead, she encouraged women to understand how a capitalist economy worked, and reinvest their capital thoughtfully, writing: "Study economy. Utilize the margins."<sup>145</sup> Read in the context of Cooper's economic concept and her call to reinvest in the Black community, her encouragement of women to act as gatekeepers of a simple and "pure" life in the home thus can be read as a political strategy and as an act of resistance rather than acquiescence to Victorian

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<sup>143</sup> Cooper, "Colored Women as Wage Earners," 295.

<sup>144</sup> Cooper, "Colored Women as Wage Earners," 297.

<sup>145</sup> Cooper, "Colored Women as Wage Earners," 298.

ideals of true womanhood to which her language often seemed to allude.<sup>146</sup> By emphasizing women's ability to "practice plain living and high thinking" she also hoped men would see them as partners in business planning and economic decision making, helping to lower their fears of not reaching an "extravagant and unattainable standard of life."<sup>147</sup>

*"The Great Gulf Between the Nation's Professions and its Practices": Uncovering the Contradictions in Western Thought Traditions*

Over the course of the next decade Cooper continued to engage in the historical analysis of American economic and social relations. She repeatedly and sharply pointed out how the democratic principles of individual social, economic, and political rights stood in opposition to the history of slavery and its afterlife of continued anti-Black violence, Jim Crow laws, and the perpetuated exploitation of Black labor. Economic theory and its underlying ideology, she argued, had been used to justify these blatant contradictions. In a speech to the Quaker Society of Friends in New Jersey in 1902, Cooper described the horrific ways in which white supremacy had undermined Reconstruction, reminding the audience that "in the face of a colorphobia that heeds neither reason nor religion" the struggle was far from over.<sup>148</sup>

The contradiction between ideals and practices, Cooper explained, was part of the country's origin story. The use of an economic rationale, mixed with racist ideology, naturalized the white man's economic self-interest and justified the dismissal of African's individual rights (and humanity), allowing Europeans to dismiss the obvious contradiction that "the Negro was

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<sup>146</sup> For a summary of the scholarly debate on Cooper's take on Victorian ideals see May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 65.

<sup>147</sup> Cooper, "Colored Women as Wage Earners," 298.

<sup>148</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, "The Ethics of the Negro Question," in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 208.

transplanted to this continent in order to produce chattels and beasts of burden” while they claimed that the nation was “conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”<sup>149</sup> Nevertheless, the contradiction underlying this narrative remained unresolved, and the existence of Black Americans remained a “silent rebuke to the Nation’s Christianity, the great gulf between its professions and practices.”<sup>150</sup>

Cooper called to attention the fact that white Americans’ struggle for political and economic independence—for which they “revolted against the mother country for a trifling tax of tea, because they were not represented in the body that laid the tax”—was paradoxically tied to the forceful exploitation of African people.<sup>151</sup> American values, Cooper laid out, were guided by principles of universal justice and equality on the one hand and a “petrifying spirit of commercialism” that elevated greed to the height of an ethical business code and allowed for racist oppression under the guise of an economic rationale on the other. In order to deal with this contradiction, Cooper argued, America had created a “special place” for African Americans, as Cooper ironically called it (“special kinds education, special forms of industry, special churches”), so that “the American conscience [could] take a rest from the black man’s ghost,” now that the country was in an era of “good feeling, self-complacency, . . . commercial omnipotence and military glorification.”<sup>152</sup>

Economic theory of self-interest, greed, and dominance—as natural and foundational for equality—had become even more important after the Civil War and reconstruction, Cooper maintained. Now that Black Americans had formally become “free,” the abolitionist movement

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<sup>149</sup> Cooper, “The Ethics of the Negro Question,” 207.

<sup>150</sup> Cooper, “The Ethics of the Negro Question,” 206.

<sup>151</sup> Cooper, “The Ethics of the Negro Question,” 207.

<sup>152</sup> Cooper, “The Ethics of the Negro Question,” 209.

had faded, and it had become “no popular task to voice the black man’s woe.” New myths of meritocracy now undergirded essentializing arguments in new ways, blaming poverty on lack of work ability, making it easy to say that “the wrong is all in him.”<sup>153</sup>

*“Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionist”: Cooper’s Studies on Global Economic Relations*

Cooper’s analysis of American history as African history and her insistence on the centrality of the middle passage for the origin story of the United States constituted a central element of her economic work in *A Voice from the South* and other early publications. In her doctoral studies at the Sorbonne, she deepened her transnational approach on economic relations. Written in French, her dissertation titled *L’Attitude de La France à légard de l’Esclavage Pendant La Revolution*, translated by Frances Richardson Keller as *Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionists: 1788–1895*, was the culmination of her ongoing historical analysis of race relations and a masterpiece of postcolonial studies.<sup>154</sup> The study “mapped the intersection of slavery, race, and imperialism” by looking at the intertwined histories of France and Haiti (then St. Domingue).<sup>155</sup> Cooper’s dissertation, as Vivian May argues, transgressed the framework of Western thinking and “should be considered an important intellectual and political contribution to Black modernism, to the Harlem renaissance, and to the development of a comparative anticolonial methodology.”<sup>156</sup> More so, as Lemert and Bhan propose, Cooper’s dissertation

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<sup>153</sup> Cooper, “The Ethics of the Negro Question,” 209.

<sup>154</sup> <sup>154</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, *L’Attitude de La France à L’Égard de l’Esclavage Pendant La Revolution* [The attitude of France in regard to slavery during the revolution] (Paris: L. Maretheux, 1925); and Anna Julia Cooper and Frances Richardson Keller, *Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionist: L’Attitude de La France à L’Égard de l’Esclavage Pendant La Revolution* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publisher, 2006).

<sup>155</sup> Pellow, “Anna Julia Cooper,” 61.

<sup>156</sup> May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 33.

anticipated dependency theories that gained popularity in the 1960s and 70s, and she understood the economic fate of the colonies as a product of the exploitative colonizing powers that “exert[ed] their influence from within the very colonies from which they simultaneously extract[ed] natural and human-labor resources,” rather than a failure of the colonized nation.<sup>157</sup>

Cooper’s dissertation comprised an important analysis of economic relations under colonial conditions and illustrated how an economic system based on slave work, once installed, developed a life of its own. It baked human rights violations so solidly into its system that slavery could not be easily abolished—not even in a nation like France, freshly invigorated by a revolution and proclaiming the values of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*. Because the French nation as well as groups of the Haitian population depended on the slave economy, the theoretical ideal of equality incited fear of economic loss and destabilization and caused a plethora of practical obstacles that could not be easily resolved. Cooper looked closely at the negotiation processes the nation’s human rights doctrine created in the colonies as well as in France. To such ends, she analyzed the discourses of pro- and anti-slavery groups in France and Haiti and demonstrated how theoretical ideas of universal rights failed to change the powerful complex economic and political structure built on slave trade—in France as well as in Haiti. Cooper also examined the dynamic nature of the negotiations between whites, *gens de couleur*, free Blacks, and slaves in Haiti, which made “color prejudices, rightly abhorred by philanthropists, . . . easier to hate in theory when one did not live in the places where they had been perpetuated for centuries, . . . where they had grown so deep that they were stronger than all

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<sup>157</sup> Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan, “World Politics, Race, and Slavery: The Historical Studies,” in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998): 269.

other distinctions . . . to the point where a mulatto slave would have refused to obey a free negro.”<sup>158</sup>

Although the two groups—French supporters of abolition and colonists supporting slavery—followed seemingly opposing ideologies, Cooper demonstrated that in the end, they both agreed to accept an economic imperative that justified the continuation of slavery, even if they followed different rationales. Because it was not just French merchants in Haiti who depended on the sugar trade but also France’s ports at home, narratives of impending economic loss and the threat of bankruptcy served to justify slave labor as a means for national well-being. Thus, while the merchants highlighted their individual rights to make profits, the latter group justified the slave economy and exclusion of Black people from universal rights with the well-being of the common (national) good, undergirded by supremacist hierarchical ontology.<sup>159</sup>

France, Cooper concluded her study, “paid for her attitude toward slavery [with] disaster.”<sup>160</sup> Economically, the country had made itself fully dependent on sugar trade. Politically, the colonists (and groups of Blacks in Haiti) never accepted France’s new regime and remained royalists, threatening the political order at home.<sup>161</sup> Just as the unjust French system had erupted in a bloody revolution in France, a majority of the Black Haitian population continued to fight against the French regime in an ongoing violent struggle.

In conclusion, Cooper suggested slow change towards equality as a much more sustainable solution. Her study had established that in France’s case, slavery had been so deeply embedded in France’s economy and political structure that “it was impossible to reverse

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<sup>158</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, “Black Slavery and the French Nation,” in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 289.

<sup>159</sup> May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 133.

<sup>160</sup> Cooper, “Black Slavery and the French Nation,” 287.

<sup>161</sup> Cooper, “Black Slavery and the French Nation,” 289.

completely the regime of colonial slavery from one day to the next.” Her hope rested on development over time, and she pointed to the fact that “if the attitude of Revolutionary France does not first appear to be sufficiently in accord with her principles, we shall see that [those principles] nonetheless triumphed half a century later—because . . . they are immortal principles.”<sup>162</sup>

***“Education Pays the Largest Dividends and Gives the Grandest Possible Product to the World”: Cooper’s Use of Economic Knowledge in Her Educational Work***

Cooper’s intersectional, historical analysis of economic relations and her reconceptualization of the economy and labor significantly informed her educational work. When Cooper arrived in Washington DC in 1887, the debate about how Black education could best serve the liberation of Black Americans was already in full swing. Six years prior, Booker T. Washington had launched the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, where he provided high-quality vocational training for Black students, preparing them for domestic, industrial and trade work. At this point in time, it had become increasingly that America’s promise of Black political and economic citizenship, formulated in the fourteenth amendment, would not materialize without a strategic, long-term struggle, and Washington called on his fellow Black Americans to advance vocational training. This, he claimed, would help Black Americans build wealth and generate the kinds of independent economic power that matched their de jure position as American citizens.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Cooper, “Black Slavery and the French Nation,” 290.

<sup>163</sup> Booker T. Washington, “The Standard Printed Version of the Atlanta Exposition Address,” in *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 3: 1889–95*, ed. Louis R. Harlan (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 583–7.

In 1895, Washington famously addressed a multi-racial audience at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, calling for more work opportunities for Black Americans in industry and agriculture to advance economic growth for all. The “Atlanta Compromise” speech made him a nationally acknowledged leader. W.E.B. Du Bois, who had then just returned from his graduate studies in Germany, emerged as Washington’s opponent. He argued that what the Black community needed was a highly educated elite, the “talented tenth,” to effectively lead African Americans to political and economic equality rather than cementing their position as workers.

Cooper participated substantially in this debate, although her role today is often minimized by the historical focus on Washington and Du Bois. Initially, Cooper shared Washington’s strategy. Like her peer, who was just two years older, she came from a poor background and shared his concern that broad access to work needed to be given to all African Americans. Because Cooper had personally experienced poverty and was still strongly connected to the Black urban communities in Washington DC through her work with the Colored Women’s League, she understood the urgency for a political strategy that focused on immediate poverty relief and capital building as she, too, thought this was a prerequisite for Black education and liberation: “Work must first create wealth, and wealth leisure, before the untrammelled intellect of the Negro, or any other race, can truly vindicate its capabilities,” she wrote in 1892.<sup>164</sup>

Cooper’s support for Black-led industrial training was also rooted in her skepticism towards white labor unions which threatened to drive Black workers out of historically Black professions. With an eye on the precarious work conditions in the South, she wanted to make sure that Black Americans were able to remain in control over the areas in which they had

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<sup>164</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth,” 176.

developed expertise and skills. Vocational education thereby served as a prerequisite to retain control at least over parts of the market, but also a prerequisite to gain independence from white employers' goodwill and to invest in Black businesses.

However, Cooper was increasingly doubtful that the push for vocational training would lead to (and sustain) economic freedom. She increasingly advocated more strongly for classical education. Historian of education Derrick Alridge, comparing the educational philosophies of Cooper and Du Bois, points to commonalities in Washington's and Cooper's work, as they shared the notion that a solid classical education was a necessary tool to "reverse the destabilizing impact of slavery and discrimination."<sup>165</sup> I argue that Cooper's understanding of the human nature of labor and related idea of education as a collective investment and reinvestment in the Black community brought an urgency to the education of all African Americans, especially the "submerged tenth," that was missing from Du Bois's concept of education.

Cooper's deep belief in classical education emerged from her holistic and humanistic understanding of labor, in which education served as a tool for the actualization of human potential and the development of Black economic power. Cooper argued that education for self-development was not an endeavor for individual gains only, but that self-actualization increased one's ability to work and subsequently return investment to the Black community through money, cultural contributions, service work, and other forms of labor. Cooper's human-centered understanding of labor thus connected economic success with the need for human development, for which she thought both (classical) education *and* vocational training were prerequisites. Education thus became central to the intergenerational, circular project of investment and

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<sup>165</sup> Alridge, "Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism," 437.

reinvestment. “Education,” Cooper wrote, “is the safest and richest investment possible to man. It pays the largest dividends and gives the grandest possible product to the world—a man.”<sup>166</sup>

*“We Must Insist on Those Studies Which Are Calculated to Train Our People to Think”:  
Implementing a Black Curriculum*

Cooper’s critical historical analysis of American and global economic relations, her holistic understanding of the economy as well as her conceptualization of the value of Black labor, strongly informed her educational practices. At M Street High School, Cooper sought to provide students with the critical thinking skills needed to deconstruct historically developed political structures, decipher myths of white superiority, and redefine the value of Black work and economic citizenship. While the “old education,” as she called it, had focused on training African Americans for manual work, she supported the teaching of logical, critical thinking and the building of morality. “We must,” she explained, “whatever else we do, insist on those studies which by the consensus of educators are calculated to train our people to think, which will give them power of appreciation and make them righteous.”<sup>167</sup> Her curricula also included literature, plays and poetry, and religious education, centering the experience and contributions of Africans and African Americans. To such ends, Cooper herself created plays and poems that highlighted Black history and identity.<sup>168</sup>

Cooper also hoped to instill in her students a sense of belonging to the Black community as well as a moral impetus to support others. Embedded in her concept of the dependent nature of

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<sup>166</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth,” 168.

<sup>167</sup> Cooper, “On Education,” 251.

<sup>168</sup> Grant, Brown and Brown, *Black Intellectual Thought in Education*, 64–68; See also Monica White Ndounou, “Drama for ‘Neglected People’: Recovering Anna Julia Cooper’s Dramatic Theory and Criticism from the Shadows of W.E.B. Du Bois and Alain Locke,” *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 27, no. 1 (2012): 25–50.

human labor was the recognition that one's success was not only a product of individual achievement but also as a result of the investment of others, an insight she hoped would help students develop a feeling of "indebtedness" and willingness to reinvest in the education of the next generation. Deeply skeptical of white America's promise to provide education for African Americans, Cooper educated her students for Black solidarity and care across classes and generations.

As the principal of M Street High School, Cooper's insisted on a rigorous classical education for Black students, even as Washington's "Tuskegee Machine" (a term Du Bois had coined) gained power and D.C.'s white school board became increasingly hostile towards her, which ultimately culminated in her dismissal. When she eventually returned to the school as a teacher, she doubled down on the importance of a classical education for all Black students and continued to do so in her post-retirement work. At Frelinghuysen University, Cooper fully dedicated her time and energy to the education of the "submerged tenth" and combined vocational and professional training and classical education. Every classroom was provided with dictionaries, encyclopedias and other books, "in short," as she wrote in a report, "the sort of equipment that constitutes the atmosphere of a place to study and contacts through intelligently sympathetic teachers always ready to point the way."<sup>169</sup> Cooper also continued to incorporate Black history and Black cultural studies in the curriculum, as she had done at M Street School, and included her own doctoral research, which she personally translated and privately printed it for instructional purposes.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> *Decennial Catalogue of Frelinghuysen University*, 26–27.

<sup>170</sup> Cooper, "Equality of Races," 291.

*“The Educative Comes Before the Occupative” : Challenging Social Efficiency Ideology*

Cooper was a staunch critic of neoclassical economics’ focus on the market, its treatment of labor as an abstract variable, and its meritocratic definition of individual success. In particular, she exposed the underlying ethics of the right of the strongest, which glorified dominance and personal economic success regardless of its effects on others. Existing racist structures, Cooper argued, impeded the realization of equality for all. Booker T. Washington, for example, had advertised his push for vocational training with the metaphor of the five fingers of a hand, each of which worked separately but with the same goal, serving the same greater good, and were equally important for the American economy. Cooper warned that the assumption of equality in difference was deceptive, since the “dominant thumb among very unequal fingers” had more power and could easily hold back the fingers.<sup>171</sup> For a democratic society to work, Cooper asserted that individual recognition, real appreciation of difference and political equality was necessary to achieve “universal reciprocity.”<sup>172</sup>

Cooper’s critique of both classical and neoclassical economics did not prevent her from calling out “new economic” ideas, Progressive ideologies that promoted the morality of the common good on the one hand while simultaneously using it to propel the marginalization of communities of color and women on the other hand. Such ideas, she argued, justified racial and gender stratification in the job market with service to the greater good and dismissed the individual rights of people of color and women. Aware of the effects of racially biased policies that funneled Black children into vocational training and perpetuated the assumption of white

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<sup>171</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, “Angry Saxons and Negro Education,” in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper: Including A Voice from the South and Other Important Essays, Papers, and Letters*, eds. Charles C. Lemert, and Esme Bhan (Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 260.

<sup>172</sup> May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 167.

superiority, she argued that workers, too, needed to be provided with a classical educational foundation. The decision for vocational training, she explained, should arise from one's individual abilities and interests, and not be defined by the interest of employers and business owners. For her, the development of human potential had priority over the production of goods. "The educative comes before the occupative," she wrote, arguing that *all* Black students, children, and adult learners, should be provided with a minimum of a liberal education.<sup>173</sup>

Cooper also challenged the social efficiency policies that gained momentum in the 1920s. Social efficiency policies had been introduced to modernize a schooling system ill-equipped for the challenges of a rapidly industrializing society. As described by historian of education David Tyack, policymakers and administrators sought to transform America's school system from village schools to urban education in the pursuit of one best system. To such ends, they borrowed heavily from the market-oriented methods developed by big businesses. In addition, American businesses, facing depression, heavily propelled this project. They stopped the financial flow they had previously invested in public education (in essence they ordered that their loans be repaid immediately) and, in concert with political interest groups and the help of many social reformers, pressed for even more efficiency in education. Schools, the new guidelines demanded, should focus on high-quality education for a small elite and job training for the rest. Although announced as a democratic project, Tyack maintains that the bureaucratization of schools, in the search for more efficiency and participation in the labor market, continued and even exacerbated socio-economic hierarchies.<sup>174</sup> Newly emerging psychological testing tools, distorted by racism,

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<sup>173</sup> Cooper, "On Education," 256.

<sup>174</sup> David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

helped establish a race- and ethnicity- based sorting of students into different work areas claiming this was good for the individual and the common good.

Cooper challenged this ideology with her educational work at M Street High School, where she insisted on classical education for all, particularly at Frelinghuysen University. Providing adult African American workers with this kind of general education (in addition to vocational training) went against the idea of social efficiency and its inherent racialized classification of work. Her work for the institution was not easy. Financially and structurally, Frelinghuysen was on shaky ground after the DC Board of Education had refused to recognize and accredit the school, citing a lack of funding and the small number of students as reasons for the denial. Potential private donors, on the other hand, refused funding because of a lack of accreditation. In the *Decennial Catalogue of Frelinghuysen Catalogue*, Cooper meticulously documented and published her ongoing struggle with the school board, including the many letters she wrote to the school board and private organizations (e.g. the Carnegie Foundation), asking for funding for her school.<sup>175</sup> The obstacles Frelinghuysen faced made once again made it clear that the white society and its institutions refused to invest in the Black community, leaving Cooper with no option other than invest her private resources in the school: she moved Frelinghuysen University into the rooms of her own home.

Cooper's material commitment to the school was an example of how she applied the principle of indebtedness, the moral responsibility to reinvest in the Black community, in her own life. Understanding her own success and financial independence as an effect of the investments of others in her education, most of all her mother, the school's financial struggles invoked this sense of responsibility and solidarity. When Cooper was asked on a graduate survey

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<sup>175</sup> *Decennial Catalogue of Frelinghuysen University*.

sent out by Fisk University what she considered her most outstanding accomplishment, she described this moment as significant: “Perhaps others will think first of the Defense in French before a jury of French Doctors at the Sorbonne of my thesis on the attitude of France on Slavery, March 23/1925. My own preference is the building of a beautiful home at the Capital from unsubsidized earnings to be dedicated in the name of my slave mother to the education of colored working people.”<sup>176</sup>

*“The Training of Head, Hand, and Heart:” Cooper’s Pedagogy for Individual and Collective Growth*

Cooper’s relational understanding of the economy was reflected in an educational philosophy that focused on the relationship between the wellbeing of the individual and society. She leaned into evolutionary theory, a paradigm that had become very influential over the course of the nineteenth century, to develop her educational philosophy. While she strongly rejected a deterministic reading of the nation as an organism, often used to justify eugenics and nationalism, she used this analogy to show that both the individual and the society were learning, growing organisms that relied on mutual care. This informed a holistic model of human connectedness and interdependency. The whole community was unwell if one part of it was neglected, she argued, writing that “as long as the wretchedest hovel may culture germs of disease and misery against which the proudest place is not immune, the submerged tenth take on a terrible significance in the building of men, and the only salvation lies in leaving the ninety nine in the wilderness and going after that which is lost.”<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> *Negro College Graduate Survey.*

<sup>177</sup> Cooper, “On Education,” 250.

The biological paradigm emerging over the course of the Progressive Era also informed the pedagogical practices that emphasized learning as individual growth and a focus on holistic methods. She argued that students could only develop their full potential if they were allowed and encouraged to follow their talents (not what was needed or dictated by the industry), so that the most gifted could pioneer in different fields of the economy and become leaders in their communities. Giving individuals the time to learn and self-actualize was thus an investment in both the individual as well as communal success. “Let it follow its bent and develop its talent as far as possible,” she argued, “and the whole community might well be glad to contribute its labor and money for the sustenance and cultivation of this brain.”<sup>178</sup>

Cooper warned that standardized measurements of student achievement were ill-equipped to promote educational success. “We have been so ridden with tests and measurements, so leashed and spurred for percentages and retardations that the machinery has run away with the mass production and quite a way back bumped off the river,” she wrote.<sup>179</sup> Instead of lecture-style teaching and generalizing standards, she suggested that educators pay attention to the individual situation of students and give them room for “real thinking.” Comparing education to industrial mass-production, she criticized measures of the “machine age” that threatened to take over the educational system with a “craze for speeding” and insisted on time to observe, reflect, and appreciate, a process that she considered the “an essential condition of that genuine mental growth which we call education, and which is power.”<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth,” 177.

<sup>179</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, “The Humor of Teaching (1930),” in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*. eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998): 235.

<sup>180</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, “Educational Chit-Chat,” in “Scrapbook No. 2 1931-1940” (2017), *Scrapbooks and Albums*, Anna Julia Cooper Collection, Digital Howard@Howard University, accessed September 17, 2020, [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_scrap/3](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_scrap/3).

It was especially important, Cooper maintained, that rational, scientifically based educational programs were developed, which applied the highest standards of educational knowledge to *all* education. The only “sane education,” she argued, was “that which conserves the lowest stratum,” and the most economical education was “what gives to each individual, according to his capacity, that training of ‘head, hand and heart,’ . . . which converts him into a beneficent force in the service of the world.” Cooper insisted therefore that, after “all the good ladies in the country have had a hand in prescribing” what they thought was best and after “every journeyman tinker thinks he can tell you what to do with the Negro,” it was not a “special” educational program that Black Americans needed, but programs that applied standing educational knowledge to the situation of Black Americans.<sup>181</sup>

For Cooper, vocational training and classical education were not mutually exclusive. In fact, she contended that classical education helped strengthen the humanity of workers and dignified the laborer. The historical ideological connection between the dehumanization of people of African descent and labor exploitation in the name of the white economy made this an especially urgent project. She explained that it was “fundamental” to “build men, not chemists or farmers, or cooks, or soldiers” and that after centuries of just training the “hand,” education needed to train “head, hand and heart” or “more literally, . . . mind, body, and spirit.”<sup>182</sup> “Learning by doing” was often misunderstood as a one-way street from the hand to the brain, she stated, when in fact it went both ways as “brain power insures hand power” as well. “Enlightened industrialism,” Cooper wrote, “does not mean that the body who plows cotton must study nothing but cotton.”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Cooper, “What Are We Worth,” 250.

<sup>182</sup> Cooper, “On Education,” 250.

<sup>183</sup> Cooper, “On Education,” 257.

***Summary: Anna Julia Cooper's Contribution to and Use of Economic Thought in Her Educational Work***

Equipped with a high-quality, classical education and firmly grounded in Black intellectual, political, and social reform networks, Cooper was part of a cohort of Black scholars who critically and powerfully intervened in the white-dominated economic discourse of the Progressive Era. Academically trained in the classics, Cooper acquired economic expertise via her undergraduate studies, extensive self-training, and peer discussions in Black networks. Using the methods of logic and historical analysis, she astutely identified the contradictions and logical inconsistencies in both classical and Progressive economic thought; exposed the intertwined workings of capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy; and created pioneering, alternative economic knowledge from a decidedly intersectional perspective.

Cooper made important contributions to the economic discourse of the Progressive Era. For one, she developed a dynamic, human-centered labor theory of value which contested the classical and neoclassical axiom that labor was an abstract, static variable. Calling out an economic rationale that had historically justified the slave economy and the dehumanization of Black labor (and continued to undergird economic relations post-Reconstruction), she insisted on an understanding of labor that respected its decidedly human, dependent, and developing nature. Secondly, Cooper developed a holistic understanding of the economy that transgressed a narrow, market-oriented definition and included reproductive care work, art, and military service as constitutive elements of the economy. This enabled her to center Black women's work as an important part of the Black economy. Third, Cooper's redefinition of the economy and labor supported a notion of indebtedness and moral responsibility for (social, cultural, and economic) reinvestment in the Black community.

On a political level, Cooper's economic analyses led her to reject reckless capitalism and its underlying ethos of greed and dominance as natural drivers of growth. Instead, she conceptually established the mutual interdependency of individuals and society. However, Cooper was also highly critical of socialist, and especially communist movements, which, in her perspective, risked the perpetuation of white supremacy under a new banner. She also openly rejected early twentieth-century Progressive reforms that promoted social efficiency and challenged visions of the common good that dismissed the individual rights of Black workers (granting individuality only to a small elite).

The study presented in this chapter showed that economic thought significantly shaped Cooper's educational work. For one, it provided her with a distinct perspective on the debate about Black education and its role in Black economic and political liberation. Her emphasis of the human nature of labor and the recognition of humanistic education as a prerequisite for the development of one's full potential made her an outspoken supporter of classical education for all African Americans, especially the "submerged tenth."

On a practical level, Cooper's economic thought manifested in her defense of M Street High School's classical education against mounting political pressure, and her passionate, persistent advocacy for the recognition and funding of Frelinghuysen University. Pedagogically, her understanding of the developing nature of humans resulted in an emphasis on individual growth and learning timelines, holistic methods that addressed students' "head, hand, and heart," as well as the critical thinking skills needed to dismantle the myths of white superiority. Moreover, she developed a Black curriculum that centered Black contributions to the American economy and established a new understanding of the value of Black labor.

Cooper's economic expertise also informed a concept of civic education as education for moral responsibility and Black solidarity. Because the development of human productivity was inherently dependent on investment in the child through care, healthy living conditions and education in a thriving community, she argued it was important to foster the moral responsibility in students to reinvest in the community. Facing the continued failure of the white majority to invest in the Black community (as white Americans did not even acknowledge the blatant contradiction between America's democratic principles and oppressive structures), she called attention to Black solidarity and encouraged Black Americans to support each other.

## CHAPTER 3: Emily Greene Balch's Economic Thought and Education for Cooperation and Peace

Fundamental to all else is the need that men should grow to understand and practice patience and tolerance, and come to substitute for the clumsy, cruel, uncertain tool of violence, the methods of reason and cooperation.

-Emily Greene Balch, 1933

In 1946, American economist, women's educator and international activist Emily Greene Balch received the Nobel Peace Prize for her lifelong work for peace. John Dewey, who had passionately campaigned for her nomination, held a speech in which he praised the seventy-nine-year-old for her intellectual leadership, her fearless questioning of popular opinions and her relentless engagement for peaceful cooperation.<sup>184</sup> Balch was only loosely connected to Dewey through their mutual friend Jane Addams, but the two shared a notion of the nature of social relations: they prioritized interdependence over individual autonomy and common interest over natural antagonism and saw cultural difference as productive rather than destructive. Despite the violent escalations that two world wars had brought, Balch was convinced that peaceful relations between groups, and nations, were possible and that the "clumsy, cruel, uncertain tool of violence" could indeed be replaced by methods of reason and cooperation.<sup>185</sup> Conflict, she maintained in her Nobel Prize speech, was not an endpoint to relations but fundamental to growth. "Differences as well as likeness are inevitable," she declared, as an "unchallenged belief

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<sup>184</sup> John Dewey, "Emily Greene Balch, An Appraisal," *Nobel Peace Prize Speech*, 1946, Emily Greene Balch Papers, Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.

<sup>185</sup> Balch, "Working for Peace," *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Bulletin* 8, no. 5 (1933): 15.

or idea is on the way to death and meaninglessness.” However, she warned that no one should tolerate that such “clashes of ideals and purposes” led to war.<sup>186</sup>

Balch was awarded the highly regarded Nobel Prize for her peace work, especially her leadership in the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), work she had started during World War I and continued throughout the interwar years and World War II. She had, however, developed her pacifist ideas and praxis over the course of a much longer career. Before her involvement in the WILPF, Balch had been trained at Bryn Mawr College and the Sorbonne University in Paris, had dipped her toes in Boston’s settlement work for a few years, had been engaged in labor movement and union work, had pursued graduate studies in economics in Germany, and had eventually become a professor for economics at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. In 1919, just one year short of being able to claim a pension, the Wellesley College board of trustees ended her contract because of her ongoing pacifist activities in war-time America. Left without job and financial security at age fifty-four, she took on the position as secretary of the WILPF and over the next decades worked for the organization in different capacities.

This chapter will examine how Balch’s training in economics, in tandem with her experiences in settlement work, the labor movement, and international peace activism, shaped her educational work, specifically her ideas on citizenship education. I argue that her expertise in economics, built under the specific disciplinary and political circumstances of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, informed an understanding of human interdependency, cooperation, and collective growth that was constitutive for her educational ideas. Balch’s

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<sup>186</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “Toward Human Unity or Beyond Nationalism,” *Nobel Lecture Part 1* (Oslo, 1948), reprinted in *Beyond Nationalism, The Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch* by Mercedes M. Randall, (New York: Twayne Publisher Inc., 1972), 130–38.

exposure to heterodox economic ideas led her to reject the classical economic axioms of the autonomous man and the natural economic equilibrium, and to cautiously (and critically) embrace socialist ideas. However, Balch also insisted on the importance of individual agency and cooperation with others in service of the community, which made her vision of a dynamic, cooperative economy a distinctly pedagogical project. To analyze the flow of ideas between economics and education in her work, this study will follow Balch's economic thought over time and analyze how she applied her economic ideas in two educational projects: the education of young, mostly white, middle-class women at Wellesley College, from 1896 to 1918, and the international audience at the WILPF international summer schools, from 1919 to 1922.

The study presented in this chapter builds on three scholarly discussions: the history of American women economists, the work on women social reformers' ideas for civic education, and the growing body of scholarship on Balch's life and work. Historian of the social sciences Mary Ann Dzuback has done extensive work in recovering the work of women economists in institutions of American higher education between 1890 and 1930. Her studies of the struggles and strategies of women economists in a discipline highly structured by gendered power relations are foundational for this chapter. Her work on economists in women's colleges is especially important for the exploration of Balch's work at Wellesley College. Like the women in Dzuback's study, Balch used her position to "ensure strong economics programs in their institutions, to train young women in economics, to push their institutions to accommodate their research commitments, and to use their research to influence policy at the local, national, and international levels."<sup>187</sup> In a similar manner, Marianne Johnson argues in her study of women

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<sup>187</sup> Mary Ann Dzuback, "Women Economists in the Academy, Struggles and Strategies, 1900–1940," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Women's Economic Thought*, eds. Kirsten Madden and Robert Dimand (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), 211.

institutional economists at Wisconsin University that women, even though economists' position within the discipline became increasingly marginal, made important contributions through publications, teaching, as well as policy work in government institutions and social reform organizations.<sup>188</sup> Situating Balch's work within the institutional context of women in the discipline of economics, this chapter shows how Balch's position at Wellesley allowed for (but also limited) her economic thought production and pushed her to further develop and articulate pioneering ideas on citizenship education.

Second, this chapter adds to the literature on women social reformers' educational ideas, in particular education for citizenship, democracy, and cooperation. On a broader basis scholars have explored how the education of the "new woman" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century sought to equip women with civic agency. Their entrance into public realm was based on a maternalist rationale—partly used strategically and partly by conviction—that allowed women to participate in the building of the welfare state, but it was also a distinctly white and middle-class project, often to the detriment of working-class women.<sup>189</sup> More specifically relevant for this study is Patricia Palmieri's work on Wellesley's first-generation faculty. She explores how the women college teachers collectively create a concept for the education of "new women" as a female cultural elite of activists, intellectuals, and professionals who would promote change.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Marianne Johnson, "Daughters of Commons, Wisconsin Women and Institutionalism," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Women's Economic Thought*, eds. Kirsten Madden and Robert Dimand (Abingdon, Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), 229–249.

<sup>189</sup> Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890–1935* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880–1920," *The American Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (1990): 1076–1108; and Barbara Antoniazzi, "Mothering the Nation, Unmothering the Self," *Inventing the Modern American Family: Family Values and Social Change in 20th Century United States*, ed. Isabel Heinemann (Frankfurt, Germany: Campus Verlag, 2015), 82–102.

<sup>190</sup> Patricia Ann Palmieri, "Symmetrical Womanhood: The Education Ideology of Activism at Wellesley," *Academe* 81, no.4 (1995): 18.

Individual studies on women social reformers' ideas on education for democracy and cooperation have so far mostly focused on Jane Addams's work. Feminist scholars, in particular, have shown Addams's affinity to pragmatism and presented her social thought as a model for pragmatist-feminist (global) communitarianism and situated her philosophy in the tradition of cooperation theory.<sup>191</sup> Mary Jo Deegan highlighted the role of education in Addams's dynamic concept of citizenship more explicitly, explaining that it united liberal rights-oriented values with a "cooperative, nurturing and cooperative model of the self, the other and democracy."<sup>192</sup> More recently, Marilyn Fisher published an extensive study on Addams' construction of democracy and ethics in the tradition of evolutionary theory.<sup>193</sup> Much like Balch, Addams was drawing from experiences in settlement work and her work with unions, local government agencies, and international peace organizations, and both women were awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>194</sup>

However, Addams's and Balch's careers and interests also differed significantly. Balch, who had pursued graduate studies economics in Berlin, Germany, had a strong focus on economics and was formally trained in social science methods, including empirical methods, while Addams was a mostly self-trained sociologist (although she also integrated labor studies and economic questions in her work as well).<sup>195</sup> Moreover, Balch's left settlement work early on

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<sup>191</sup> Judy Whipps, "Jane Addams's Social Thought for a Pragmatist-Feminist Communitarianism," *Hypatia* 19, no. 2 (2004): 118–133; and Louise W. Knight, "Jane Addams's Theory of Cooperation," *Jane Addams and the Practice of Democracy*, eds. Marilyn Fischer, Carol Nackenoff, and Wendy Chmielewski (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 65–85.

<sup>192</sup> Mary Jo Deegan, "Jane Addams on Citizenship in a Democracy," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 10, no. 3 (2010): 219.

<sup>193</sup> Marilyn Fischer, *Jane Addams's Evolutionary Theorizing: Constructing "Democracy and Social Ethics"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

<sup>194</sup> Mary Jo Deegan explains Addams's greater popularity and earlier award of the Nobel Peace Prize with her more extroverted temperament and her comfort in being a public leader; See Mary Jo Deegan, "A Very Different Vision of Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch," *Journal of Women's History* 8, no. 2 (1996): 121.

<sup>195</sup> Mary Jo Deegan, "Jane Addams, the Hull-House School of Sociology, and Social Justice, 1892 to 1935," *Humanity & Society* 37, no. 3 (2013), 248–58.

to pursue a career in college teaching and eventually became a Professor of economics, while Addams remained dedicated to her work at Hull House, the settlement house in Chicago she had co-founded. Balch's training and continued research in economics, in combination with her educational work at Wellesley College, offers a clear view into women social reformers' contributions to the history of economic ideas and offers an opportunity to explore how economic expertise shaped educational ideas and practices.

Third, this study builds on scholarship about Balch's life and work. To this day Balch is the only woman economist and the only American economist who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Publications about her life and work, however, are scarce. Notably, Balch is almost completely absent from histories of the social sciences, with the exception of those who specifically aim to restore women's contributions, such as Mary Jo Deegan's *Women in Sociology*, Robert Dimand's *Biographical Dictionary of Women Economists*, as well as his entry about Balch in the *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*.<sup>196</sup> Melinda Plastas provides a rare in-depth study on Balch's social science work, especially her work on Slavic immigration, which challenged the scientific racism employed by many of the progressive economists.<sup>197</sup> Outside of historical studies, Balch's work has caught attention from sociologists, theologians, political scientists, and scholars of international relations who provide interesting insight, such as her emphasis of pluralism, mutual understanding and cooperation as means for social change.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Mary Jo Deegan, "Emily Greene Balch," in *Women in Sociology, A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*, ed. Mary Jo Deegan (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 55–62; Robert Dimand, Mary Ann Dimand and Evelyn L. Forget, *A Biographical Dictionary of Women Economists* (Cheltenham, Gloucestershire: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2000); and Robert Dimand, "Emily Greene Balch, Political Economist," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 70, no. 2 (2011), 464–79.

<sup>197</sup> Melinda Plastas, "A Different Burden: Race and the Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch," *Peace & Change* 33, no. 4 (2008): 469–506.

<sup>198</sup> Catherine A. Faver, "'Creative Apostle of Reconciliation': The Spirituality and Social Philosophy of Emily Greene Balch," *Women's Studies* 18, no. 4 (1991): 335–51; Judy D. Whipps, "The Feminist Pacifism of Emily Greene Balch, Nobel Peace Laureate," *National Women's Studies Association Journal* 18, no. 3 (2006): 122–32; and Catia C. Confortini, "Race, Gender, Empire, and War in the International Thought of Emily Greene Balch," in

This chapter draws from two biographies about Balch, one written by Mercedes M. Randall in 1964 and one by Kristen Gwinn in 2010.<sup>199</sup> Randall was a friend and colleague of Balch, to whom Balch bequeathed her private archive. The biography, written shortly after her death, is therefore to be read with caution in light of the two women's deep personal connection. However, the comprehensive book gives great insight into Balch's life, provides helpful timelines, and makes extensive use of primary material, including Balch's autobiographical drafts. Kristen Gwinn's biography, on the other hand, is a decidedly scholarly account, the first and only one of its kind so far. The detailed study seeks to understand Balch in the context of her three careers—settlement worker, professor, and peace activist—by closely looking at the decisions she made when she moved from one area to the other. The book delivers important insights for this chapter as it describes Balch's decision to start a teaching career at Wellesley and to not pursue a PhD as a conscious (and complicated) choice. In contrast, her transition to full-time peace activism was a direct consequence of her dismissal from Wellesley and a need to sustain herself. Despite the fractures, Gwinn shows how Balch's peace work, especially her focus on international mediation and global citizenship was a continuation and expansion of the economic ideas she had developed over the course of her career, an assessment that this study confirms.

The structure of this chapter follows a chronological logic. It traces Balch's economic and educational ideas over time and in the context of her personal, educational, and professional biography, and places them against the backdrop of the tumultuous social and political events of

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*Women's International Thought*, eds. Patricia Owens and Katharina Rietzler (Cambridge, UK: University Press, 2021), 244–65.

<sup>199</sup> Mercedes M. Randall, *Improper Bostonian: Emily Greene Balch, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1946* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964); Kristen E. Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch: The Long Road to Internationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

the American Progressive Era, including two world wars. Because the study of Balch's educational work focuses on her teaching position at Wellesley and her role in the WILPF 1920 summer schools, this chapter will not provide an in-depth after this time, even though she produced much of her writing on international peace in the 1930s and 1940s.

The analysis of Balch's economic and educational ideas builds on a close reading of Balch's publications and puts them in conversation with autobiographical material and sources related to her teaching, such as course catalogues and reports. Because Balch was an economist by training and only developed educational expertise over time, the writings in the two fields are different in nature. Her economic writings were of scholarly and/or political character, spoke to a variety of topics (ranging from reports to journal articles to full empirical studies), and addressed a wider audience of social reformers, social workers, politicians, administrators, and the public. The platforms that published her work ranged from academic organizations such as the American Economic Association (AEA) to the periodical *Charities and Commons* (later known as *The Survey*), to journals for the general public such as *Home Progress*. Her writings about education targeted a much smaller audience. They addressed mostly faculty, students, and alumnae of Wellesley and were mostly published in campus publications such as the *Wellesley Magazine* or the *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Bulletin*.

### ***“In the Service of Goodness”: Growing up in Boston***

Born in 1867, “just after the Civil War,” as she wrote in an autobiographical draft, young Emily Greene Balch grew up in a well-to-do East Coast family in the comfortable space of

Jamaica Plain, a suburban town just outside of Boston.<sup>200</sup> Emily's mother, a teacher, and her father, a lawyer, made sure their six children received a solid classical education and were raised with the evangelical zeal that fueled social reform: they hoped their children would help build a "Kingdom of Heaven on Earth" and become educated, socially responsible adults who lived their lives in the service of the greater good.<sup>201</sup> The family belonged to the Unitarian Church and from a young age Emily was introduced to spiritual leaders such as Charles Fletcher Dole. Dole was an outspoken pacifist and anti-imperialist, and actively welcomed poor and working people into the church, which left a lasting impression on her.<sup>202</sup> Balch later remembered that she had promised Fletcher to commit to a life "in service of goodness."<sup>203</sup> Although she changed her religious affiliation in 1921 when she became a Quaker, a religion that aligned with her pacifist convictions, her Unitarian upbringing shaped her deep spirituality and belief in applied Christian ethics.

Balch's sheltered childhood was severely disrupted by her mother's early death, a sudden event in the last year of her secondary education. Concerned with his daughter's declining mental health, her father arranged for Emily to join a small group of young women in their Grand Tour, a traditional trip of Europe, undertaken originally by upper-class young European men and adopted by Americans, both young men and women.<sup>204</sup> Although these trips were usually of an educational nature, Balch's father planned Emily's participation in the hopes to

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<sup>200</sup> Emily Greene Balch, "Autobiographical Draft," Emily Greene Balch Papers, Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA; also cited in Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 11.

<sup>201</sup> Patricia Ann Palmieri, "The Simplest of New England Spinners: Becoming Emily Greene Balch, 1867–1961," in *Women of the Commonwealth: Work, Family, and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts*, ed. Susan L. Porter (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996): 183–206.

<sup>202</sup> Balch, "Autobiographical Draft;" also cited in Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 48 and Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 11.

<sup>203</sup> Balch, "Autobiographical Draft. "

<sup>204</sup> Bess Beatty, *Traveling Beyond Her Sphere: American Women on the Grand Tour 1814–1914* (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, 2016).

distract her and avert mental crisis. However, this trip became “more than a literary pilgrimage” to the young student and marked the start of her interest in international relations and peace work, a perspective that increasingly shaped her work as a social scientist, reform and peace activist, and teacher.<sup>205</sup> Upon her return, Balch finished schooling and successfully applied to the newly opened Bryn Mawr College, a Quaker College for women, where she started her undergraduate studies in 1886.<sup>206</sup> Still, college enrollment was not a natural step for young Emily. Women’s higher education, even for middle-class daughters, was far from common in the 1880s; in fact, Balch had only known of one woman with a college degree prior to her own enrollment.<sup>207</sup>

***“No Time for ‘Idle Singers of an Empty Day’ but for Efforts to Study and Better Conditions”:  
Social Science Training at Bryn Mawr College and the Sorbonne***

At Bryn Mawr Balch was first introduced to the social sciences and discovered her passion for the field. As the sixth of the “Seven Sisters Colleges,” a group of privately funded colleges, Bryn Mawr offered a high-standard education for women, on par with Ivy League colleges. Balch started her undergraduate training with a focus on literature, but she soon found the discussions about social and economic questions more interesting—an affinity in line with her social justice-oriented religious upbringing. In the newly developing social sciences, she found the tools to approach social, economic, and ethical questions systematically, and hoped to

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<sup>205</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 60–61; and Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 14–15.

<sup>206</sup> The decision to apply to Bryn Mawr College instead of the nearby Radcliff College (also called the Harvard Annex) was driven by Balch’s desire to study together with her friend Alice Gould. Alice’s father objected to a local college choice because he feared the criticism for letting his daughter pursue a higher education.

<sup>207</sup> Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 18.

use her undergraduate studies not as a “time for ‘idle singers of an empty day’ but for efforts to study and better conditions.”<sup>208</sup>

Franklin Giddings, then professor of political economy and method at Bryn Mawr, supported young Emily in her decision to enroll in the study of economic problems. Known today primarily as a founding father of sociology, Giddings was an early member of the AEA, where he joined his colleagues in the critique of laissez faire ideology and pushed for the systematic study of the conflict between labor and capital.<sup>209</sup> In addition, Balch also delved into the literature of the 1880s social reform movement, intrigued by the social reform spirit that had spread rapidly across American campuses. Amongst other authors, she read Charles Booth’s study about the living and work conditions in London, Jakob Riis’s study of New York tenements, and Helen Campell’s *Women Wage Earners*, a pioneering work in the field of home economics.<sup>210</sup>

Balch, a gifted and disciplined student, received Bryn Mawr’s first European Fellowship award, which she used to pursue graduate studies in Paris. Once there, she was quickly disillusioned by the rigid restrictions French universities imposed on women but nevertheless managed to enroll in two political economy classes at the Collège de France, where she signed up for an independent study under the tutelage of Emile Levasseur.<sup>211</sup> The professor of geography, who was a trained economist and historian, had famously introduced social science methods into the study of history and vice versa, and he shared Balch’s historical approach to social and economic questions. Although he was not very supportive (which Balch linked to her

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<sup>208</sup> Balch, “Autobiographical Draft.” Also cited in Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 70.

<sup>209</sup> Giddings left Bryn Mawr in 1894 upon his appointment as professor of economics at Columbia University. See Cristobal Young, “The Emergence of Sociology from Political Economy in the United States: 1890 to 1940,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 45, no. 2 (2009): 95.

<sup>210</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 70; and Gwinn, *Emily Green Balch*, 21.

<sup>211</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 74–75; and Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 23.

gender), Levasseur agreed to be the advisor for her first major research project, a study which was later published by the AEA under the title *Public Assistance of the Poor in France*.<sup>212</sup>

Balch's first published work provides important insights into her early economic thought and indicates her interest in questions of cooperation between individuals, non-governmental organizations, and state institutions in the pursuit of economic justice. Methodologically modeled after work she knew from her undergraduate training, she examined the history, quality, and outcome of the French poor relief programs, and diligently collected data from an extensive archive of state and local government reports. Balch found that despite strong legislation, the principle of *égalité* did not translate into adequate state support of the poor. Instead, it was mostly local organizations that voluntarily carried out the work.<sup>213</sup> Her main critique was the lack of cooperation caused by hostility and competition between local religious and public institutions, rendering the law powerless.

The French study left Balch with two insights for her economic research. For one, she thought that her purely archive-based method was insufficient, and she hoped to build in more experience-based knowledge in future research and include the perspective of the poor. Even though she had successfully applied the methods that the “new economists” suggested—empirical data collection and historical analysis—she was unhappy to have drawn her data solely from government reports with no representation of those who had been studied. Second, her study gave rise to a dynamic, relational understanding of economics, specifically the dynamic connection between the individual and the community. Wondering why the French state-led reform had not produced individual access to economic well-being nor greater economic

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<sup>212</sup> Emily Balch, *Public Assistance of the Poor in France* (Baltimore, MD: Publications of the American Economic Association 8, nos. 4 and 5, 1893).

<sup>213</sup> Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 25.

equality, she believed that the top-down strategy and the static nature of laws had poorly translated the principle of *égalité*. It had generated rather inflexible one-for-all programs that did not fit local conditions nor individual needs and discouraged individual agency. More effective, she thought, were the local, privately organized programs that complemented state programs, even if inter-organizational quarrels often impeded the work.<sup>214</sup>

***“I Had Read Much of L’Ouvrier (Worker) but Had Never Known One to Talk With”: Social Reform Work in Boston, 1891–1895***

Balch returned to Boston in 1891 as a newly trained social scientist. Unhappy that she “had read much of l’ouvrier [worker] but had never known one to talk with,” she was intrigued by Boston’s lively social reform scene, which offered opportunities to combine theory and praxis.<sup>215</sup> Over the course of the next four years, she engaged in a variety of projects: she worked with immigrant children in Boston’s North End, co-founded and helped run Denison House, Boston’s women-led settlement house, supported efforts to organize women factory workers, and joined the Federal Labor Union.

Balch’s activities in Boston were part of a bigger push to find practical solutions for growing social conflict. The city faced a plethora of social problems resulting from its transformation from a commercial to a manufacturing center. Its growing industry attracted waves of workers, many of them immigrants, and between 1870 and 1890 alone, Boston’s population more than doubled. In the process of rapid urbanization, the city had become starkly divided into working-class and wealthy neighborhoods, with often horrific living conditions for

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<sup>214</sup> Balch, *Public Assistance of the Poor*, 177–78, also discussed in Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 25.

<sup>215</sup> Balch, “Autobiographical Draft.”

the poor.<sup>216</sup> In the factories workers faced dire work conditions while powerful corporations amassed financial power, increasing social tensions. In response to these conditions, social reform ideas gained momentum, labor organized, and social work projects emerged.

Balch continued her interest in the social sciences, combining her practical work with theoretical, academic knowledge and emulating pragmatist methods by applying experience to knowledge and vice versa. It was no coincidence that Balch's entrance into settlement house work had been initiated at a 1892 summer school that brought together questions of religion, ethics, methods and economics, hosted by the School of Applied Ethics in Plymouth, Massachusetts and organized by the Ethical Culture movement. At one of the sessions, Balch was first introduced to Vida Scudder and Kathleen Lee Bates, two social reform leaders with whom she co-founded Denison House the very same year. The program gathered some of the most influential progressive thinkers of the time, including her former teacher and mentor Franklin Giddings, economics professor and future AEA president Henry C. Adams. Adams, at the time professor for political economy at the University of Michigan, reiterated the importance of the social sciences as a prerequisite for social change. He declared that it was "not enough to urge right conduct or high motives upon those who control the business affairs of the day," but what was needed instead was structural change and new "'legal and social conditions' to bring about economic justice."<sup>217</sup>

Jane Addams, founder of Chicago's Hull House, was invited to give her now famous lecture on the subjective necessity of settlements at the School of Applied Ethics' summer

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<sup>216</sup> Meg Streiff, *Boston's Settlement Housing: Social Reform in an Industrial City* (LSU Doctoral Dissertations, 2005), [https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1217&context=gradschool\\_dissertations](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1217&context=gradschool_dissertations).

<sup>217</sup> Henry Carter Adams, "Introduction," in *Philanthropy and Social Progress, Seven Essays by Jane Addams [and others], Delivered Before the School of Applied Ethics at Plymouth, Mass.*, ed. Jane Addams (College Park, MD: McGrath Publishing Company, 1892), vi-vii.

school—it was her presentation that had ignited Balch’s interest in the conference in the first place. Addams brought a pragmatist approach to economic problems: she proposed a dynamic, developing understanding of social change that leaned into the idea of social practice as democratic practice, “to make the entire social organism democratic.”<sup>218</sup> Much like Balch had concluded in her French study, Addams highlighted the importance of cooperation in lieu of a static understanding of equality focused on individual rights, refusing positions that “believed that political equality alone would secure all good to men.”<sup>219</sup> Following the example of the British settlement house Toynbee Hall, Addams hoped to create more economic and social justice through cooperation in her own project, the Hull House settlement house in Chicago.

Encouraged by Addams’ talk, Balch and her colleagues founded Boston’s women-led settlement house, Denison House. Institutionally it was part of the College Settlements Association (CSA), an organization run by women’s college graduates. While the CSA had formed parallel to and unknowingly of Jane Addams’ settlement house work efforts in Chicago, it followed similar goals: to provide social and educational services to the poor—mostly immigrant population of Boston’s South Cove neighborhood—to bridge the gap between women of different classes, and to further the education of college women.<sup>220</sup> Denison also offered Balch, Scudder, and their colleagues the opportunity to explore alternative forms of social

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<sup>218</sup> Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements,” *The Social Thought of Jane Addams*, ed. Christopher Lasch (Indianapolis, New York, Kansas City: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965), 29. Balch’s pragmatist approach is discussed, for example, in Mary Jo Deegan, “An American Dream: The Historical Connections Between Women, Humanism and Sociology, 1890–1920,” *Humanity & Society* 27, no. 3 (2003): 378–89.

<sup>219</sup> Addams, “The Subjective Necessity,” 30.

<sup>220</sup> Joyce E. Williams and Vicky M. MacLean, *Settlement Sociology in the Progressive Era: Faith, Science, and Reform* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2016), 238.

science research. Although the CSA did not prioritize research as the other settlement houses did, the women incorporated socio-economic research as an important part of their program.<sup>221</sup>

Balch's work at Denison House allowed her to be in direct contact with the communities she had heretofore only studied through the lens of state reports. Now she could observe the economic and social problems first-hand, while also establishing communication and cooperation between classes. Balch discovered her interest in teaching and developed classes for Denison House's Social Science Club.<sup>222</sup> The club not only offered lectures and discussions for residents on topics like capitalism or organized labor, but also occasionally met with clergymen, labor leaders, and students.<sup>223</sup> Very invested in the practical work at Denison House, Balch did not publish much during her settlement house years, with the exception of a bibliography she used in her classes.<sup>224</sup> However, her work experience, exposure to the world of the working class as well as the opportunity to study of the method of cooperation in application, significantly shaped her future research.

Working with European immigrants at Denison House strengthened Balch's interest in questions of immigration that she would later pursue more in depth, and her settlement house experience further informed her particular attention to the intersections of class, ethnicity, and gender. At the same time, the work also fostered a blind spot in her research that led her to ignore how race shaped economic conditions and relations. Most settlement houses run by white social reformers either excluded Black Americans or only offered segregated activities,

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<sup>221</sup> Williams and MacLean, *Settlement Sociology*, 242.

<sup>222</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 86.

<sup>223</sup> Williams, *Settlement Sociology*, 243.

<sup>224</sup> Emily Greene Balch, *A Study of Conditions of City Life, with Special Reference to Boston* (Boston: Geo H. Ellis Co., Printers, 1903).

perpetuating racist ideology and segregation practices.<sup>225</sup> Balch neglected race as a category, at least in the first two decades of the twentieth century. While she focused on the deconstruction of native whites' superiority and Eastern and Southern European immigrants' inferiority, she ignored racism against Black or Indigenous Americans until her later work with the WILPF.

Balch's time at Denison House was instrumental in creating her professional, intellectual, and activist network. Amongst other connections, it introduced her to the labor movement and created lasting collaborations. Like other settlement houses in New York and Chicago, Denison House hosted labor discussions and provided space for union organizing. The United Garment Workers of America, for example, met at Denison House in 1893. One of these meetings planted the seeds for the founding of the Women's Trade Union League in 1903, a project in which Balch participated.

The possibility for cross-class cooperation was particularly appealing to Balch. In 1892, she had already met labor representatives Mary Kenney (later married O'Sullivan) and John O'Sullivan at Denison House, who both had been heavily involved in the American Federation of Labor.<sup>226</sup> The couple's enthusiasm for union organizing encouraged Balch to join the union herself in 1894.<sup>227</sup> That middle-class women "were allowed to join on equal terms with those who were manual laborers" excited her, even though when reflecting back on the time in her autobiographical writings she thought that her and her middle-class peers' "sense of adventure" with which they entered the unions was "rather troublesome."<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

<sup>226</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 83.

<sup>227</sup> Emily Greene Balch, "Diary Entry from March 3, 1894," Emily Greene Balch Papers, Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.

<sup>228</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 83.

Balch's work with labor unions strengthened her understanding of economic relations as dynamic and instilled in her a belief in education as a constitutive part for successful cooperation between different groups of a society. In a contribution to *The Boston Daily Globe* in 1894, Balch discussed the function of education as a prerequisite for democratic negotiations (and cooperation) and the role of unions in this process. For one, she thought unions had a compensatory function in the modern capitalist society. Because industrial work had systematically deprived workers of an education, Balch argued that they were likely to "fail lamentably both in intelligence and in public spirit." Unions therefore needed to prepare workers for labor negotiations by teaching them their rights and "quicken[ing] their wits," so that they could express themselves effectively and dismantle propaganda. Second, unions provided spaces for mutual learning between workers who needed to find common sense and develop "a sense of brotherhood." And lastly, she argued that unions educated employers. Balch hoped that the meetings between unions and businessmen would help combat their ignorance and indifference, so that they learned to overcome conflict in the name of their "mutual interest in the prosperity and good name of their common home."<sup>229</sup>

During her years in Boston, Balch continued to seek out academic training to quell her intellectual curiosity and to complement her practical knowledge. In 1893, she spent a semester studying at Radcliffe, the Harvard Annex for women, where she worked with Sir William Ashley, English historian and economist, trained in Germany. Her drive for intellectual work perhaps accelerated her loss of interest in practical social work. She had never lived at Denison House in the first place but had moved in with her family—an unusual break with the settlement house residency principle. Now, as she explained in her autobiographical writings, the nature of

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<sup>229</sup> Emily Greene Balch, "Labor as Educator," *The Globe* February 11, 1894.

social work seemed increasingly “powerless” to her, and she left her position as headworker in 1894.<sup>230</sup> Instead, she decided to hone her research skills through graduate studies and then combine economic research and teaching—two forms of intellectual activism she hoped could help establish new (and fairer) social and economic structures.

In 1895, she enrolled at the University of Chicago for eight months to learn from the conservative-leaning economist Laurence Laughlin and the more progressively thinking sociologist Albion Small (a Germany-trained sociologist and rival of her mentor Franklin Giddings).<sup>231</sup> Balch scholars Gwinn and Johnston agree that the relatively broad spectrum of schools of thought Balch exposed herself to was intentional and demonstrated her desire to understand different perspectives—a principle that would continue to guide her work in research as well as in teaching. At the end of the same year, Balch traveled across the Atlantic again to pursue graduate studies in economics, this time in Berlin, Germany.

### ***“Remembering My American Principles”: Graduate Studies in Germany, 1895–96***

The year in Germany was intellectually, personally, and professionally formative for Balch. She renewed her love for the social sciences and academic research, reshaped her economic ideas and methods, observed German and international socialist activism, and built new connections. At the University of Berlin, she followed the footsteps of a long line of

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<sup>230</sup> Balch, “*Autobiographical Draft*.”

<sup>231</sup> Albion Small, a Germany-trained political economist-turned-sociologist also pushed for the state’s leadership in regulating social inequality through social policies, even though by the mid-1890s he and other left-leaning social scientists had abandoned radical demands because of institutional pressure and fear of socialist radicalization. See Virgile Chassagnon and Guillaume Vallet, “Albion W. Small’s Neglected Progressive Views: Reducing Inequalities for a Reasonable Capitalism,” *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 41, no.1 (2019): 77–98; and Andrew M. Johnston, “The Disappearance of Emily G. Balch, Social Scientist,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 13, no. 2 (2014): 177. Balch was also critical of Small, whose subject of sociology she found “excessively inchoate.” See Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 86.

American economists who had traveled to Germany since the 1870s and were trained at the German Historical School of Economics, abbreviated as Historical School. Amongst them were, for example, her former teachers Sir William Ashley and Albion Small, and Black scholar W.E.B. Du Bois. In contrast to the men before her, however, Balch struggled to be admitted to the program as Germany's universities still barred women until the early twentieth century. However, exceptions were made for international women students and together with her friend Mary Kingsbury (later married Simkhovitch), the two were able to get permission to audit lectures and work on assignments.<sup>232</sup>

The Historical School's concern with the effects of industrialization and its direct involvement in sweeping social reform were particularly attractive for American students. Professors Adolph Wagner and Gustav Schmoller, two of Historical School's leading thinkers, were directly involved in the "Verein für Sozialpolitik" (Association for Social Policy), an association that housed economists, a research institute, and a social reform advocacy organization. The Verein heavily pushed for state-led social reform on the basis of expert information. Schmoller and his colleagues criticized Adam Smith's principle of the *homo economicus* and the resulting laissez-faire politics, arguing that the consequences of rapid industrialization in Germany had exposed the failure of self-regulation. They proposed a historical approach to economic problems, which understood economic relations as historically developed, culturally embedded, and thus subject to change. Empirical studies, they argued further, provided a clear insight into economic conditions and could help steer reforms.

The German economists' work resonated with Balch, who had already been introduced to this thought tradition by her American teachers and had emulated their historical and empirical

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<sup>232</sup> Sandra Singer, *Adventures Abroad: North American Women at German-Speaking Universities, 1868–1915* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).

method in her French study. However, she also disagreed with the German economists on a few major points, more than the American economists who had studied in Germany before her. In fact, in her autobiographical writings she even explicitly identified herself as a follower of the Austrian School of Economics—a thought tradition that was in an open rivalry with the German Historical School at the time. While Balch’s self-positioning is puzzling at first glance, especially since the Austrian School is seen today as the historical root of libertarianism, a closer look reveals what this might have meant for Balch.

For one, the controversy between the German and the Austrian was heightened in its public display, but a closer look reveals that the argument was mostly over methods (famously called the “Methodenstreit” in German), but both shared a critique of Smith’s classical economics. Second, the Austrian School of Economics challenged the Germans’ government-focused approach to intervention, which reflected Balch’s own skepticism towards the static nature of state-sanctioned social reform.<sup>233</sup> Balch’s American identity nurtured her belief in individual agency, and in her autobiographical notes she described her discomfort with her German teachers’ perspective with the following words:

As my professors spoke of the State Government as if it were an independent entity, I remembering my American principles would remind myself that it is after all only an instrument to do for the public what the people will. It was only gradually that I began to understand how far this was from being the case in Germany, where the body of expert

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<sup>233</sup> Marek Louzek, “The Battle of Methods in Economics: The Classical Methodenstreit—Menger vs. Schmoller,” in *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 70, no. 2 (2011): 439–63.

civil servants constituted mainly the state and were an almost independent more or less self-perpetuating body.”<sup>234</sup>

German social reform, she realized, was carried out in an authoritarian, one-way-street fashion and had divided the state from its citizens, which ran counter to her belief in the dynamic relationship between individuals and the state.

Balch’s differing opinion in comparison with earlier American students was also a matter of timing. Balch had arrived in Germany more than a generation after the first cohort of American progressive economists had already left. They had witnessed the success of social reform reach its peak in the 1880s and early 1890s, including the introduction of laws such as progressive income tax and labor protection legislation. By the time Balch arrived, proponents of further social reform already experienced massive backlash, organized mostly by industrialists, and further social reform efforts failed.

Just as intellectually stimulating as Balch’s academic experience was, perhaps, her exposure to Berlin’s socialist movement. Through her work with labor activists and unions in Boston, she had already been introduced to the American labor movement, but in Berlin she witnessed the international dimension of the socialist movement as well as the socialist student movement. Balch and Kingsbury frequently attended socialist lectures and discussions of the student led “Sozialwissenschaftlicher Verein” (Social Science Association), where they regularly were two of only a few women in the audience.<sup>235</sup> They listened to a variety of international speakers and were especially impressed by Wilhelm Liebknecht, a German socialist who had

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<sup>234</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 90.

<sup>235</sup> Balch, in letters to her father, cited in Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 91–94.

been close associate of Marx and founder of the German Democratic Party. Balch's encounter with Berlin's socialist scene further invigorated her general interest in socialist ideas and made her skeptical of some aspects of the socialist movement; she found, for example, the dogmatic style of some of the speakers and their emphasis on class struggle appalling.

On her way back to the United States in 1896, Balch made a stop in London to attend the International Socialist Workers and Trade Union Congress, an experience that deepened her ambivalent feelings about socialism. A report about the conference she wrote for the *Lincoln Review*, illustrates this. Balch described the assembly as a somewhat chaotic event, where enthusiastic, sometimes "irresponsible" reformers on one side found themselves head-to-head with conservative unionists on the other side and moderate leaders of the German Social Democrats caught in between.<sup>236</sup> The oppositional character of the attending groups, she wrote, made it difficult to proceed with any practical outcomes beyond the study and comparison of conditions and the passing of resolutions. While she was deeply impressed by individual speakers, the irreconcilability and inability to cooperate she witnessed certainly increased her skepticism towards radical Marxist perspectives.

The year in Berlin was academically, personally, and professionally formative for Balch. She had left Boston with a desire for intellectual challenge but unsure about the next step in her career. Aptly, this year in Germany ended with a door opening. On the boat back to the United States, Balch met Katherine Coman, who was then a professor of economics at Wellesley College. Coman offered Balch an assistant position in her department. Torn between this work opportunity and her plans to pursue a PhD, Balch eventually accepted Coman's offer as it allowed her to live with her family and attain the financial independence and security she

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<sup>236</sup> Balch, "The International Socialist Workers' and Trade Union Congress, London 1896," *Lincoln House Review* 2, no.1 (1896): 107–14.

desired. Balch biographer Gwinn remarks that although Balch retrospectively stated that she “gladly gave up [her] degree,” the decision was probably much more difficult for her.<sup>237</sup> Balch probably knew quite well that a university career in the social sciences was extremely difficult for women at the time, and she recognized that the Wellesley offer was “in any case . . . a Godsend when opportunities for a woman to teach economics were rare indeed.”<sup>238</sup> Even more so, Balch searched for work with purpose and societal impact, and since social work had not been the right field for her, teaching was a promising alternative.

***“There Are People on the Other Side of the Mountains, Too”: Economic Thought Production at Wellesley, 1896–1914***

Like other women economists teaching at women’s colleges, Balch was able to use the institutional affiliation and tap into resources for her research (for example in the form of unpaid leave, for example).<sup>239</sup> During her time at Wellesley, she made rich contributions to the social sciences, most notably her groundbreaking study on Slavic immigration, which marked a shift in research focus from labor to immigration studies, and eventually to international relations. Balch’s courses reflected her research interests and often offered new, pioneering topics in the evolving field of social sciences. Her Wellesley courses on social pathology, for example, which resulted from her experience as a social worker, predated similar classes at social work schools, and her 1909 course on immigration which was likely also the first of its kind across American colleges.<sup>240</sup> Balch did not shy away from controversial topics, and she continuously offered a

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<sup>237</sup> Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 49.

<sup>238</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 101.

<sup>239</sup> Dzuback, “Women Economists.”

<sup>240</sup> For course descriptions see Wellesley College, *Calendar*, Vols. 1898–1916 (Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College), Wellesley College Digital Repository, Wellesley College, <https://repository.wellesley.edu/collections/wellesley-college-catalogs>.

class titled “Socialism,” which included the reading of Marx’ *Capital*, at Wellesley. Over the next decade, Balch moved up the ranks from being Coman’s assistant teacher to associate professor, and in 1912 she was awarded full professorship for political economy and political and social science.<sup>241</sup>

Still embracing the connection between theory and practice, between thinking and doing, Balch stayed involved in local reform work and labor activism despite her extensive teaching load. She actively supported strikes, such as the 1899 Boston shoe strike (with negative consequences for her promotion at Wellesley), and she remained an active member of the Central Labor Union. She was particularly interested in labor projects that represented the kind of cross-class cooperation she advocated for in her writings. One such project was the Women’s Trade Union League; Balch actively supported women labor leaders Mary Kenney O’Sullivan, Lillian Wald, and Jane Addams in the founding of the organization in 1903 and presided over its Boston branch from 1908 to 1911.<sup>242</sup> In addition, she worked with the Consumers’ League. Balch was a fervent advocate of the organization’s mission to educate consumers about unfair work conditions, chaired committees like the minimum wage committee,<sup>243</sup> and represented the organizations before the Massachusetts’s legislature in a testimony on unfair labor conditions.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 53.

<sup>242</sup> Balch’s presidency over the Boston branch was a period of controversy (untypical for her otherwise highly diplomatic leadership style); she stubbornly insisted on a strategy that pushed for legal reform over co-organizing with the trade union, hardening the divide within the organization. See Kathleen Nutter, *The Necessity of Organization: Mary Kenney O’Sullivan and Trade Unionism for Women, 1892–1912* (New York: Garland, 2000); and Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 73.

<sup>243</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 108–9; Emily Greene Balch, *Personal History Written for Background Material for Nobel Peace Prize*, December 1945, Emily Greene Balch Papers, Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.

<sup>244</sup> Kathleen Nutter, “Women Reformers and the Limitations of Labor Politics in Massachusetts, 1874–1912,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 42, no. 1 (Winter 2014), 81–107.

Despite Balch's desire to cooperate across class it is unclear how much her vision materialized in collaborations with working women beyond political alliances with union leaders. Middle-class women like Balch, well-educated and equipped with knowledge, often assumed positions in government institutions that served their access to power, just as much as they helped poor working women.<sup>245</sup> At times, middle-class women's advocacy even worked to the detriment of poor women. The protection of women through the reinforcement of the model of the family wage, for example, reinstalled men's position as bread winners.<sup>246</sup> Clearly, Balch and her colleagues navigated difficult waters when they spoke on behalf of the working class. Kathleen Nutter shows how Balch argued for protective laws by emphasizing the threat of social unrest in a testimony before the Boston Committee on Relations Between Employer and Employee in 1903.<sup>247</sup> However, it is hard to know if this rhetoric was strategic and speaking to the logic of employers, or if this was her own approach.

Balch's involvement in the labor movement went hand in hand with her support of socialist ideas, even as her relationship with the socialist movement remained complicated. In 1906 she publicly self-identified as a socialist after returning from a trip to south-eastern Europe, where she had witnessed extreme poverty. She was careful to announce and explain this controversial step beforehand, seeking to maintain a positive professional relationship with the Wellesley College board. She never considered herself a radical but rather sought to apply the socialist principle of constructive cooperation in her life and work. Nevertheless, she was outspoken about her support. For example, she co-organized the conference "Socialism as a

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<sup>245</sup> Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*.

<sup>246</sup> Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>247</sup> Nutter, "Women Reformers," 86.

World Movement” with her colleague and friend Vida Scudder in Boston in 1909.<sup>248</sup> Despite her support of socialist ideas, however, she always remained skeptical of the idea and method of class struggle. Eventually, Balch rescinded her self-proclamation as a socialist; witnessing the events of World War I unfold, her skepticism towards governments increased and she also felt increasingly uncomfortable with how much socialism had become identical with Marxist ideology.<sup>249</sup>

While Balch’s contributions to labor studies came mostly in the form of studies for organizations and committees, she also published theoretical writings about labor, such as a special issue on the economic position of women, presented by the *Academy of Political Science* in 1910.<sup>250</sup> In her piece, she tied a historical analysis of the industrialized economy to questions of gender and education. She showed how the gendered separation of home and workplace had also divorced education from work, with far-reaching consequences for women of all classes (except for the single professional woman and the family woman who controlled her own work) as well as for working-class children. It left working women not just strained with the double task of family work and wage work but also without training for either of the two work fields. In addition, middle-class women’s work potential remained unused. Even more dramatically, it left working children not just exploited but uneducated, “out of all real work until we are ready to have them do nothing but work.”<sup>251</sup> The deprivation of education for women and children that resulted from the modern capitalist economy, Balch concluded, was not just unhealthy but also uneconomical. For her, reforms were thus no more than short-term solutions until a new

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<sup>248</sup> Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 74.

<sup>249</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 125.

<sup>250</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “The Education and Efficiency of Women,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York* 1, no.1, *The Economic Position of Women* (October 1910): 63.

<sup>251</sup> Balch, “The Education,” 68.

economic model could be established. Because such the capitalist economic model had “sinned in its foundations,” moving forward she envisioned a “social direction of capital,” one that could only be reached through a “long and painful evolution.”<sup>252</sup>

Balch’s studies on women’s work did not radically challenge women’s responsibility for child-rearing, and her advocacy for protective laws was often rhetorically grounded in biological arguments about (potential) motherhood. Her historical analysis of the gendered labor system, however, indirectly challenged essentialist notions by highlighting the social (and changing) nature of gendered labor division. Similarly, she argued in other places that women’s lack of teamwork skills and their interest in individual relations over competitive team spirit was based on or at least exacerbated by a lack of training opportunities rather than nature.<sup>253</sup> Occasionally, Balch engaged a maternalist rhetoric, for example when she suggested a “maternal government” which “acted on the principles of the mother of a great and busy household,” but read in the context of her economic analyses, this usually served to illustrate an economy grounded in care and not as an argument for women’s nature.<sup>254</sup>

Over time, Balch’s theoretical focus shifted to immigration studies. Encouraged by her experience at Denison House, her own experiences traveling abroad, and her belief in the global application of the religious-ethical principle of “love thy neighbor,” Balch was a staunch proponent of intercultural cooperation, and her research was a direct rebuttal of the smoldering anti-immigration atmosphere of the Progressive Era. Over the course of the 1880s and 1890s and into the twentieth century, campaigns to end or at least seriously restrict open immigration emerged and gained momentum, powerfully pushing for new legislation. Using eugenics to

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<sup>252</sup> Balch, “The Education,” 68.

<sup>253</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “Citizenship in College,” *The Wellesley Magazine* 9, no. 5 (1901): 228.

<sup>254</sup> Balch, “Education and Efficiency,” 71.

prove their point, these efforts manifested in a number of far-reaching anti-immigration policies, ranging from the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 to the 1917 and 1924 immigration acts. Many of the new economists who pushed for social reform, actively supported anti-immigration policies, producing numerous racist studies in the name of science.

The American Economic Association, too, stood firmly behind the anti-immigration campaign. In 1888, for example, the organization offered an award for the “best essay on the evils of unrestricted immigration.”<sup>255</sup> AEA President Francis Amasa Walker openly presented race-suicide theory in his presidential address of 1890, setting in motion the organization’s long-standing support of race-suicide ideology, while others later supervised and shaped the Dillingham Commission’s work.<sup>256</sup>

Balch’s pro-immigration advocacy and immigration research set her apart from other social reformers of the early twentieth century, some of whom had been her teachers.<sup>257</sup> In the early twentieth century, anti-immigration efforts targeted especially immigrants from southeastern Europe. With her decision to study Slavic immigration, Balch explicitly pushed back on theories that pictured the Slavic immigrant as “inferior” compared to the “superior” immigrant from northern Europe.<sup>258</sup> Balch conducted her Slavic study in 1904–1905, just a few years before the government implemented the Dillingham Commission, which set out to examine the causes and effects of eastern and southern European immigration to the United States. Scientific racism, fueled by the eugenics movement guided much of the commission’s work, and

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<sup>255</sup> Thomas C. Leonard, *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics, and American Economics in the Progressive Era* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 143.

<sup>256</sup> Leonard, *Illiberal Reformers*, 149.

<sup>257</sup> Dimand, “Emily Greene Balch,” 468.

<sup>258</sup> Joseph Roucek, “The Image of the Slav in U.S. History and in Immigration Policy,” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 28, no. 1 (1969): 29–48. Also discussed in Confortini, “Race, Gender, Empire, and War,” 248; and Leonard, *Illiberal Reformers*, 149–158.

its 1911 report painted a picture of Slavic immigrants as prone to religious fanaticism, alcoholism, violence, and socialist agitation. Balch's study, that had been published in a 500-page book just one year earlier, contested this view. She had hoped that an in-depth study could help clear up stereotypes and set the ground for productive economic relations and intercultural cooperation. To such ends, Balch put forth a painstakingly detailed, rigorous study, published first as a series of articles in *Charities and the Commons*, and then in book form.<sup>259</sup> Her data collection was extensive; she conducted numerous interviews, fielded archival material, and made observations for which she traveled extensively to southeastern Europe as well as to immigrant tenements and settlement houses across the United States.

The title of the book, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens*, indicated Balch's emphasis on cooperation and a non-hierarchical understanding of cultures. Methodologically, the book was constructed to provide an understanding of immigrants' experience. It presented the variety of reasons for emigration amongst different ethnic groups of Slavs in the first half and discussed effects of immigration in the second half. The underlying narrative in Balch's study presented Slavic emigration as part of a bigger storyline: one that understood migration as a logical and necessary step in a globalizing economy. Framing migration as part of growth, she argued that migration per se was not threatening, but that it depended on societies' abilities to establish successful transitions. The book culminated in the last chapter called "The Question of Assimilation," which diligently and staunchly argued against nativism and one-sided assimilation politics. Balch ended with a strong call for cooperation across differences, a principle that she thought should guide not just individual interactions but also relations between

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<sup>259</sup> Emily Greene Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910). First published as a series of articles in the journal *Charities and the Commons* (which in later years was known as *The Survey*) in 1906 and 1907.

different ethnic and cultural groups in democratic societies. She envisioned immigration as *fusion* rather than assimilation, which, she argued, could not be forced but needed time to develop organically on all sides.<sup>260</sup>

For the most part, Balch disputed biological racial dispositions in her work, for example by showing how experts widely disagreed on the consequences of interracial relationships, or on linking low wages and high rents to poor living conditions rather than lack of morals.<sup>261</sup> Her critique was not always consistent, however, and in some instances, although rare, she supported eugenic ideas.<sup>262</sup> In a discussion of the American Economic Association about “Western Civilizations and the Birth-Rate” in 1907, for example, she cautioned against broadly distributed economic incentives such as free school lunches for children. Her argument, that the measure would only bring up the overall birth rate of a population, but not the birth rate of the “right kind of people,” certainly showed that Balch, too, was not free of eugenic thinking.

### ***“We Are Not to Be Robinson Crusoes”: Educating Young Women at Wellesley, 1896–1916***

Balch came into her position at Wellesley as an economist, but also as an educator with a strong vision. Discouraged from becoming a teacher during her undergraduate studies, with a graduate fellow arguing she should leave teaching positions to those women who could not otherwise sustain themselves, she gradually developed the insight that a teaching position could give her the possibility to push for social change outside of social reform work. She thought that through educational work she could awaken the desire of women students to “work for social

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<sup>260</sup> Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens*, 48.

<sup>261</sup> Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens*, 404; and Confortini, “Race, Gender, Empire, and War,” 250.

<sup>262</sup> Nancy Folbre, *Who Pays for the Kids? Gender and the Structures of Constraint* (London: Routledge, 1994), 185–86.

betterment and . . . help them find the best methods worked out at the time.”<sup>263</sup> She came to the realization that “teaching social-economic subjects” was her calling as it gave her a “point of leverage” in her pursuit of social change. Her time in active social work, she hoped, would help her in this endeavor as it had “colored and widened [her] teaching.”<sup>264</sup>

Balch arrived at Wellesley just in time to help establish and expand the school’s economics department under Katherine Coman’s leadership, a response by the college board to the high demand amongst students. Interest in the field of economics had risen over the 1890s, as, in Wellesley President Hazard’s words, “the child labor problem, the Roosevelt politics, so called —the Pure Food Laws, regulation of transportation and of trusts, conservation of coal and woodlands . . . stimulate[d] the desire to study economics and sociology.”<sup>265</sup>

Balch was not a philosopher of education, but she developed a distinct concept of education that guided her teaching as well as her activist work. Her position at Wellesley gave her the possibility to reflect on and further develop these ideas through daily teaching practice and through writing. Between 1901 and 1917 Balch published a handful of articles, published in *The Wellesley Magazine* and other college-affiliated outlets, in which she laid out her educational ideas to students, faculty, and alumni, often touching specifically on citizenship education. Her writings provide a window into her thinking about education and offer an opportunity to examine how her economic thinking translated into an educational concept in the context of her work at Wellesley College.

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<sup>263</sup> Balch, cited in Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 86.

<sup>264</sup> Balch, “Autobiographical Draft.”

<sup>265</sup> Jean Glasscock, *Wellesley College 1875-1975: A Century of Women* (Wellesley, Mass.: Wellesley College, 1975), 145, Wellesley College Digital Repository, Wellesley College, <https://repository.wellesley.edu/object/wellesley14321>.

When Balch accepted the teaching position at Wellesley College, she knew that it would not be easy to instill in her students the will to actively participate in public affairs. The Gilded Age had brought on corruption and scandals that had left young Americans suspicious of politics and its morality. New York's Tammany Hall, a political machine notorious for corruption, was one powerful example of how wealth, power and political decision were enmeshed and left many feeling powerless. Balch hoped to counter such responses through education for critical thinking and civic agency. In a piece from 1901 she declared: "To suppose Tammany and the notorious corruption of so much of our governmental activity to be typical of American standards outside of politics would be to misjudge American character." She emphasized that American cities were still constituted by their citizens and warned that it was "the indifference of the mass of the citizens" that caused the demise of democracy.<sup>266</sup>

The typical Wellesley student, a middle-or upper-class young white woman, was not necessarily prepared for political awareness and civic engagement in the first place. When Balch started her position in 1896, women in Boston were still more than two decades away from gaining the right to vote, and most of the young women had been raised with a focus on marriage and household. At Wellesley they were exposed to new ideas. As Patricia Palmieri stated in her study on the first Wellesley faculty cohort, the college's teachers sought to transcend the Victorian ideal of domestic womanhood and empower a generation of "new women." By teaching their students a new set of cultural ideas, Palmieri concludes, faculty members aimed to create a female cultural elite of activists, intellectuals and professionals who would contribute to social change and create a new social order, thereby functioning as mediators between classes.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Emily Greene Balch, "Citizenship in College," *The Wellesley Magazine* 9, no. 5 (1901): 232.

<sup>267</sup> Patricia Ann Palmieri, "Symmetrical Womanhood," 18.

Balch's concept for young women's civic education not only mirrored this collective vision, she also theoretically tied it to economics. Her educational ideas, geared towards the cultivation of social spirit, were rooted firmly in a critique of laissez-faire individualism, the belief in the historicity (and malleability) of economic structures, and an understanding of difference as a motor of growth. The kind of economic order that she hoped to establish centered on the principle of interdependence and cooperation, in which the individual and the greater community were organized through dialogue and understanding. Balch argued that the principle of (economic) self-interest had been preached "by three generations of economists and philosophers," and had permeated the public opinion in general, causing a focus on individual advantage and a common disinterest in the public good.<sup>268</sup> If social spirit was not practiced, Balch feared that communities would become atomistic, incoherent, and ineffective and dissolve into a "crowd of self-centered individuals."<sup>269</sup>

Balch's educational approach emulated much of the pragmatic spirit of progressive education: she sought to advance students' learning through a combination of first-hand experience, observational and practical field work, and theoretical training. The daily life on campus, she suggested, created learning by doing in the first place. The college campus, Balch showed, was "a great field for the preparation for life" and as such an ideal place to practice "social spirit."<sup>270</sup> Balch conceptualized the "social spirit" as three forms of care: care for the material environment, including the goods of others; care for fellow community members; and care for the common ideal, including the collective effort towards it. All three forms of care were substantial parts of a functioning college: they shaped the relations between students and faculty

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<sup>268</sup> Balch, "Citizenship in College," 232.

<sup>269</sup> Balch, "Citizenship in College," 229.

<sup>270</sup> Balch, "Citizenship in College," 229.

on campus, between generations of students, and between the college and other institutions. In order to develop a social spirit on campus, she explained, students needed to recognize they “were all in debt” to those who had funded their education: “Our education is not paid for us in the main but given to us—as a charity if we like to call it so—by strangers on whom we have no claim.”<sup>271</sup> She emphasized that students received their education as a trust and reminded them not to just use it for themselves. This debt or trust was not just coming from their tuition fees or the current funders of Wellesley College, but also from the generations before them, who had provided the material and ideational foundation for their generation.<sup>272</sup>

Second, Balch hoped that observational and practical field work, in other words, exposure to the world of the poor and the working class, would provide her students with insights about economic structures and their effects on the working class. Using her connections with Denison House and the labor movement, she organized field trips, field studies, lectures, and conferences, so that students could get to know “all sorts of people and all sorts of ideas” and engage in the research of social conditions.<sup>273</sup> Often to their parents’ dismay,<sup>274</sup> she urged students to see “the ugly and deeply rooted evils of our own society,” so that they could acquire first-hand knowledge about contemporary facts and develop a “sense of social justice and responsibility.”<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Balch, “Citizenship in College,” 231.

<sup>272</sup> A study of Alice Walmsley from 1907 showed that wealthy students (which made about 80 percent of all students) spent about \$900 on tuition, boarding, clothing etc. Cited in Patricia Ann Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden, The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 207.

<sup>273</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “College Settlements and the Opportunity to Gain Social Intelligence,” *Wellesley College Magazine* 24, no.1 (1915): 12.

<sup>274</sup> Palmieri, *Adamless Eden*, 170–71.

<sup>275</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “Developing the Sense of Social Justice and Responsibility,” *Intercollegiate Community Service Quarterly* (July 1917): 9–10.

The settlement work at Denison House, she hoped, would offer her students this experience. She strongly recommended, however, that the students who went to work in the settlements were equipped with knowledge about social conditions and cultures beforehand, or else she warned that they could ruin the relationship that reformers had built with settlement residents and “create misunderstandings that years of democratic living can hardly make good.”<sup>276</sup>

Balch also arranged encounters between women union leaders and Wellesley students. During the Biennial Convention of the National Women’s Trade Union League in Boston in 1911, for example, she initiated a visit of union members on her campus, hoping that “the girls that lead the sheltered life” could learn from “the women of the real world.” The real world, according to Balch, was a world in which people depended on wages and did not, like her privileged Wellesley students, “get their wage in advance.” The working women, she thought, could learn something from the students, too. Since Wellesley students were given “the leisure to study and learn,” she encouraged them to share what they had learned from books. Most importantly for Balch, she hoped that both groups came to understand that the labor movement was not a class movement, but “a movement for the whole people” and “essential . . . to maintain our democracy.”<sup>277</sup>

Third, Balch emphasized that theoretical knowledge was a necessary element in students’ education, and particularly important for American students. In a piece for the *Wellesley Magazine* from 1907, she agreed with British Fabian H. G. Wells who had traveled the United States and written about his observations from an outsider (and socialist) perspective. He wrote

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<sup>276</sup> Balch, “College Settlements,” 403.

<sup>277</sup> The National Women’s Trade Union League, “Proceedings of the Third Biennial Convention, June 12–17, 1911,” *Women Working 1800–1930*. Curiosity Collections, Harvard University, <https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/women-working-1800-1930/catalog/45-990024907430203941>.

that Americans showed a “snobbery of ignorance, . . . which despises learning and discounts experience and training, to which chance amateur attack and expert scientific skill are equally respectable, unless indeed the former be preferred.”<sup>278</sup> American students’ training in social and economic history was especially important, she found, as it allowed students to understand modern social and economic structures, and thus find feasible solutions to social problems. Balch wrote that her students could “only trace the curves of development, only understand our own epoch, or any others in the lights of it.”<sup>279</sup> Because the future depended on an in-depth understanding of the historically grown social and economic structures of a society, it was a “misfortune” to her that there was such “a preponderance of undergraduate work in language and literature” amongst the young women at Wellesley at the time (using the statistics from 1905) and relatively few students enrolled in history, economics, and sociology.<sup>280</sup>

As a social scientist and researcher, Balch also hoped to instill the principle of multiperspectivity in her students’ learning, which guided her own research as well as her activist work. For her, understanding a problem from multiple perspectives was the foundation for rigorous science. Multiperspectivity had been important for her not just in her academic training, she had also recognized the principle in successful economic and social relations, having witnessed it in the intercultural encounters at Denison House, the cross-class cooperation in the labor movement, and during her field work in southeast Europe. In her teaching at Wellesley this translated into a broad range of course offerings, some of them controversial and

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<sup>278</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “What’s Hecuba to Me or I to Hecuba? Or Thought Impressions on Wellesley College,” *Wellesley Magazine* 15, no. 4 (January 1907): 150.

<sup>279</sup> Balch, “What’s Hecuba to Me,” 151.

<sup>280</sup> Balch, “What’s Hecuba to Me,” 152.

with the intention to provide her students with diverse ideas as well as enough historical context to build their own opinions.

This was also the spirit speaking from Balch's own textbook, *Outline of Economics*, which not only established her as a serious scholar in the field, but also provided students with a variety of ideas and schools of thought.<sup>281</sup> To set them up for a variety of discussions, she described a number "principles of economics" (i.e. production, consumption, value) in a brief and factual manner and then added "notes" that encouraged students to think more deeply. For example, she instructed students to critically look at J. S. Mill's definition of productive labor as "labor productive of wealth" and encouraged them to think about "what labor is excluded by the former definition, by the latter?"<sup>282</sup>

### ***"Co-operation and Mutual Aid are Important Factors in Evolution": The Internationalization of Balch's Economic Thought, 1914–1918***

The outbreak of World War I again shifted Balch's focus once more during her time at Wellesley, and she turned to the issues of nationalism, international relations, and peace. She did not abandon her interest in labor and immigration studies, however, but instead theoretically connected the topics with questions of nationalism and militarism. Building on her earlier work that had highlighted interdependence, multiperspectivity, and cooperation across differences, she became a fervent opponent of the rising nationalisms that were further propelled by World War I. Prepared by her work on immigration, Balch challenged the use of evolutionary theory to justify nationalism in a 1915 article in *The Survey*. Herbert Spencer's version of Social Darwinism had gained immense popularity across the disciplines over the course of the late nineteenth and into

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<sup>281</sup> Emily Greene Balch, *Outline of Economics* (Cambridge, MA: The Co-operative Press, 1899).

<sup>282</sup> Balch, *Outline of Economics*, 9.

the twentieth century, and social scientists' attraction to it was no exception. Balch did not refuse the biological paradigm but instead offered an alternative reading that framed difference as a precondition for growth rather than a threat. She explained that while it was true that the desire for cohesion was a deep-rooted principle of human nature, these instincts were "offset by others equally authentic." A certain degree of sameness was necessary, she agreed, but too much of it was harmful, just as for example inbreeding was destructive for the survival of humanity. Difference, on the other hand, drove progress. She feared that the nationalisms paired with eugenic ideas of racial superiority could flatten out cultures and ideas, and lead to dead ends. Difference, if made fruitful through mutual understanding and cooperation, on the other hand, could lead to dynamic and therefore lasting peace. "Let us enlarge our hearts," she concluded in her article, "and rejoice in the otherness of others."<sup>283</sup>

Balch's thoughts about war and peace were not just theoretical. Deeply disturbed by the outbreak of the war in Europe and personally encouraged by Jane Addams, Balch joined the Women's Peace Party in 1915 and attended the Women's Peace Conference in The Hague the same year.<sup>284</sup> There, she joined one of the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace's (ICWPP) envoys, which traveled across Europe to offer mediation plans to governments. When voices in the United States that called for American intervention became louder, Balch's pacifist activism extended to her home country. Balch staunchly opposed America's war plans. Growing into her leadership position within the American peace movement, she participated in several talks with President Woodrow Wilson, openly supported New York's anti-Preparedness Movement, and became part of the Emergency Peace Federation. She eventually joined the

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<sup>283</sup> Emily Greene Balch, "Racial Contacts," 610.

<sup>284</sup> Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 81.

People's Council of America, an organization that mobilized workers and intellectuals against President Wilson's decision to participate in the war.<sup>285</sup> In 1919, Balch's name was put on the infamous "Stevenson list" of sixty-two "dangerous, destructive, and anarchistic individuals" that lawyer Archibald Stevenson handed over to the US Senate.<sup>286</sup> Balch, who had always identified as a moderate and been seen as such, was now a radical in the public eye.

Still, Balch had been cautious to keep Wellesley College officially in the loop about her activities in the international peace movement. Before she left for the conference in The Hague, she had asked for a leave to which Wellesley President Ellen Pendleton had agreed. Jane Addams had advised Balch to do so in a letter, suggesting that "nothing could be better for the college in which you are teaching economics than the experience with the conference at The Hague would give you."<sup>287</sup> After she had returned to teach for a few semesters, eventually Balch became eligible for a sabbatical in 1916–17 which she decided to also use for her peace work as well.<sup>288</sup> In 1918, Balch asked for an extension of her leave of absence to which Pendleton agreed again. What Balch had not considered, however, was that her contract would run out at the end of this period. This set her up for a formal reappointment process which allowed the board to reconsider her employment without the need to fire her. Balch fought the decision, arguing that she was not radical and had no interest in obstruction but rather "could not reconcile war with the truth of Jesus teachings."<sup>289</sup> Although strongly supported by faculty and students, the board first

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<sup>285</sup> Emily Greene Balch, "Working for Peace," *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Bulletin* 13, no. 5 (May 1933), reprinted in Mercedes M. Randall, *Beyond Nationalism, The Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch* (New York: Twayne Publisher Inc., 1972), 77–82; and Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 97.

<sup>286</sup> The Legislative Committee of The People's Freedom Union, *The Truth About the Lusk Committee: A Report* (New York: The Nation Press, 1920): 4.

<sup>287</sup> Jane Addams to Emily Greene Balch, March 1915, Emily Greene Balch Papers, Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA; cited in Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 81.

<sup>288</sup> Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 96.

<sup>289</sup> Balch in a letter to Wellesley President Pendleton on April 3, 1918, published in Randall, *Beyond Nationalism*, 105–7.

delayed the decision and then, in 1919, decided to not reappoint her, effectively firing her from her position.

***“Self-examination Can be Very Salt and Bitter and Good”: Educating Wellesley Students, 1914–1919***

Balch’s experience in war-time Europe not only led her to refocus her research on international relations but also deeply shaped her outlook on education, especially citizenship education. Returning from the conference in The Hague and her peace tour around Europe with the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace, Balch addressed Wellesley students in a powerful speech titled “What it Means to be an American.”<sup>290</sup> The speech reiterated some of her main thoughts about education as a major element in the creation of peaceful relations and a sustainable economy. However, she now took on a much stronger tone, pointing out America’s racist past, its involvement in imperial projects, and the nation’s financial interest in the war. At the core of her speech sat an urgent call for introspection, a reformulation of citizenship, and the need to develop a new vision of a “new age.”<sup>291</sup>

Balch showed that the United States had arrived at a point where the civilizationist narrative of continuous economic and social progress could no longer be upheld. For one, she argued that Westward expansion and access to free land supply had come to an end and had increased workers’ dependence on employers. Second, the entanglement of racial violence and the American capitalist economic system had hardened class hierarchies, so that the country had

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<sup>290</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” lecture delivered at Wellesley College, February 22, 1916, Emily Greene Balch Papers, Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA, reprinted in Mercedes M. Randall, *Beyond Nationalism: The Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch* (New York: Twayne Publisher Inc., 1972), 34–40.

<sup>291</sup> Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” 39.

become “practically a land of caste.”<sup>292</sup> The stark contradictions between democratic ideals and “the ugliest types of racial prejudice and brutality and insolent lawlessness” were not new, she explained to her students.<sup>293</sup> Interest in cheap (or free) labor had been intimately tied to racial violence in America’s history, she said, listing the history of slavery, the ongoing lynchings of African Americans, and violence against Chinese immigrants as examples, omitting Native American genocide.

Balch warned her students to not rely on the illusion of American exceptionalism, but instead become aware that the ingredients that had produced the war in Europe were also to be found in the United States. “National self-complacency, commercial greed, narrowness, and prejudice these play at least their evil part here as there,” she proclaimed.<sup>294</sup> To prevent the “same old, perilous, ineffective, immoral way of dealing with international relations that has precipitated this slaughter” she encouraged her students to redefine “what it means to be American.”<sup>295</sup> For Balch, “going back to the fathers” was not possible; what was needed was “a new age” that was a “social age, an age of more fraternal relations between men, an age in which exploitation of class by class is outgrown” and “an age in which the unlikeness of other races will be conceived to be as much of an asset as the unlikeness of wind and string instruments in a symphony.”<sup>296</sup>

Democracy, Balch postulated in her speech, rested not just on the theoretical principle of equality guaranteed by a government but needed to be “activated and kept alive” by the governed

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<sup>292</sup> Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” 36.

<sup>293</sup> Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” 37.

<sup>294</sup> Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” 38.

<sup>295</sup> Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” 38–39.

<sup>296</sup> Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” 39.

and “their vigorous and reasonable labors as citizens.”<sup>297</sup> In order to do such labor, citizens needed to develop new ways of peaceful cooperation based on introspection, critical thinking, and renewed understanding of social relations. At the core of this process was the ability to recognize destructive ideologies, deconstruct stereotypes, and reflect on one’s own misconceptions. “If the difficulty were wholly an external one,” she explained, “if the poison were not in our minds, too, we could face [inequality and injustice] with less sense of pain.”<sup>298</sup> Change therefore needed to start with an examination of ideas, a process of individual and collective introspection that was “very salt and bitter and good.”<sup>299</sup> Citizenship education needed to provide the tools and knowledge for this process.

***“Building a New Economic Order”: Work for the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, 1919–1922***

Balch received the news that her position at Wellesley had been terminated just after her return from the second International Women’s Congress in Zurich, where she had been instrumental in planning the conference. Now fifty-two years old, she found herself in a precarious financial situation, without a pension and facing an uncertain future. Retrospectively she described her reaction as a mixture of sadness and acceptance (she had somewhat anticipated the decision), but at the time she must have also been upset. Not disputing the decision, she angrily wrote to President Pendleton that the newspapers misstated her dismissal as resignation.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” 35.

<sup>298</sup> Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” 37.

<sup>299</sup> Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” 39.

<sup>300</sup> Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch*, 118.

A new work opportunity helped Balch gain some financial security and immerse herself in a new field work. At the conference in Zurich, the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace (ICWPP) had decided to make the committee permanent in the form of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and Balch was hired as secretary-treasurer of the newly formed organization. From the WILPF's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, Balch worked tirelessly to set up a network on solid grounds. She established its international center, the *Maison Internationale*, administered funds, built a working relationship with the League of Nations, prepared publications, provided the structure for several campaigns, and recruited new members worldwide. One of the biggest projects she had already been in charge of but now organized professionally was the International Women's Congress, an event held every two to three years. For Balch, the congress emulated the WILPF's mission of "bringing about a new world order" by gathering women and men from different parts of the world to work on specific issues in a noncoercive, truly democratic fashion.

To run the network after democratic principles, however, turned out to be challenging, and racism and classism ran deep in the WILPF's culture, even as the organization presented unity to the public. White women dominated the organization and Mary Church Terrell was the only non-white woman to attend the Zurich Congress in 1919. She also was the only national board member of color elected in 1921 but was not reelected in 1923 after Balch and another colleague evaluated her board work as "futile" although board minutes show that she attended meetings and participated in business.<sup>301</sup> This was particularly concerning after Terrell had also been the only member to protest a 1921 WILPF petition that called for the removal of Black troops from Germany because of their rumored sexual harassment of white women. It was only

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<sup>301</sup> Melinda Plastas, *A Band of Noble Women* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 20–25.

after she threatened to resign that Jane Addams intervened and the petition was removed.

Following Terrell's education of her WILPF colleagues, the organization formulated a resolution passed a few months later (and presented by Balch), which argued that "the use of colonial troops was a new form of slavery, an extension of imperialism, and a way of evading the growing opposition to militarism amongst European men."<sup>302</sup>

Balch's relentless work for the WILPF was physically exhausting and, with the shock from her dismissal from Wellesley still reverberating, her health declined to the point that she needed to resign from her full-time position in the fall of 1922. No longer the organization's secretary-treasurer, she nevertheless continued to combine her scholarly and practical activist skills to support the organization's goals via part-time work. She served on committees, observed the growing nationalistic movements and emergence of right-wing leadership of the 1930s, and drafted peace proposals for the League of Nations, all while trying to hold together the organization that was under much internal pressure as well. With the onset of World War II, Balch advocated for productive neutrality rather than non-intervention and suggested forms of mediation rather than militarization even though she deferred from this path at the end of the war. Acknowledging that Germany's fascism could not be stopped with peaceful measures, she supported military intervention against Nazi Germany.

The outbreak of World War I in Europe had shaken American Progressives and deeply challenged the civilizationist narrative that had underscored their reform efforts. Women social reformers, many of whom shared Balch's belief that conflicts should and could be resolved peacefully, were particularly concerned, and leaders like Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, and Lillian Wald famously joined peace organizations alongside Balch. Now immersed in

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<sup>302</sup> Cited in Kathryn Kish Sklar, Anja Schüler and Susan Strasser, *Social Justice Feminists in the United States and Germany: A Dialogue in Documents, 1885–1933* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1998), 61.

international peace activism, Balch's writings increasingly focused on questions of international relations and peace, even though she kept them tied to issues of labor and immigration. To her, the war had blocked or even set back the development towards social change. Looking back at it in a piece from 1933, she described the war as "a tragic interruption of what seemed to me the real business of our times—the building of a more satisfactory economic order."<sup>303</sup> However, she was now keenly aware that the building of "new economic" order rested on international cooperation and a global movement.

Balch's writings following World War I maintained the methodological and theoretical principles of her previous work. They built on thorough historical analysis, anticipated the interdependent nature of economic relations, and suggested multiperspectivity and mutual understanding as the preconditions for conflict resolution. While she condemned imperial violence and exploitation as immoral, her suggestions moving forward were always pragmatic, usually focused on one specific conflict, and aimed for reconciliation. For example, Balch wrote two studies for the Committee on Constructive Peace, which was part of the 1916 Stockholm Neutral Conference for Continuous Mediation. The first described a plan for a rehabilitation fund paid by neutral countries to guarantee the process of restoration for all parties involved in the war.<sup>304</sup> The second was a proposal for an international colonial administration, which anticipated the mandates system of the League of Nations.

After the war, Balch continued to push for regulations of the global market that were free of "the alliance between business in pursuit of profit and the nationalist policies in pursuit of

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<sup>303</sup> Emily Greene Balch, "Working for Peace," *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Bulletin* 13, no. 5 (May 1933): 12.

<sup>304</sup> Emily Greene Balch, "A Plan for a Rehabilitation Fund Contributed by Neutral Countries as a Substitute for War Indemnities," pamphlet issued by Stockholm Neutral Conference (1916), reprinted in Mercedes M. Randall, *Beyond Nationalism: The Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch* (New York: Twayne Publisher Inc., 1972), 91–95.

power.”<sup>305</sup> Wherever businesses and governments were supporting each other in their interests, she argued, social relations would suffer. Instead of protective tariffs, Balch suggested the international supervision and administration of economic relations, modeled after the League of Nations, to allow for a free flow of goods and people between nations. She hoped, for example, to advance the international control of waterways, as well as a form of stable currency that simplified trade. However, what was needed to establish this new economic order, she explained in a speech at the Fourth International Congress of Women held by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, was a change in values. The belief in material possessions, prestige, and violence as legitimate tools was destructive to the process of internationalization. The only way to overcome this, she concluded, was to gather “every gain in public understanding of the situation” and “above all every gain in public determination to dissolve the unholy alliance of cannon and capital, and to end economic imperialism in all forms, and to end it soon.”<sup>306</sup>

### ***“Citizens of the World”: Educational Projects in the WILPF, 1919–1922***

Although the Wellesley College board had brought her teaching career to an abrupt end, Balch continued to place education at the center of her work. Just as she had expanded her vision of building a new social and economic order to the global level, she now made education for global citizenship an international pedagogical project. At the WILPF’s Fourth International Congress in Washington DC in 1924, Balch delivered a passionate speech about the “Economic

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<sup>305</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “Economic Aspects of a New International Order,” Address Delivered at the Fourth Congress of Women in Washington, 1924, organized by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, reprinted in Mercedes M. Randall, *Beyond Nationalism: The Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch* (New York: Twayne Publisher Inc., 1972), 112–115.

<sup>306</sup> Balch, “Economic Aspects of a New International Order,” 115.

Aspects of a New International Order,” in which she reiterated the importance of education for the process of “global reconstruction.” The implementation of new forms of government alone was not enough to secure peace, Balch argued, the restructuring process had to go hand-in-hand with a change in values that extended to the world community. A “gain in public understanding of the situation” was required to replace the belief in material possessions, prestige, and aggression with mutual understanding and the will to work together peacefully.<sup>307</sup>

Prerequisite for the “slow and difficult process” of rebuilding, Balch explained, was a recognition of “growing economic dependence of peoples on one another.” This insight was not just factual, she argued, but needed to have a “psychological or emotional counterpart” so that it could translate to a change in values.<sup>308</sup> She warned: “We drink our tea from China and our coffee from Arabia or Brazil, and dress in wool from Australia, and all the rest of it, without any sense of community of indebtedness, or any sense of personal relationship to the coolie who picked the tea leaves or the Australian bushman, if that is the proper name, who took care of his sheep.”<sup>309</sup> Balch now extended to the general public of the Western community the same “sense of responsibility” that she had hoped to instill in Wellesley students heretofore, then situated in the context of American class relations. Had she then understood her students’ recognition of their economic dependency on others as the foundation for their (national) citizenship, she now saw herself and others as a “citizens of the world,”<sup>310</sup> and thought that the understanding of

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<sup>307</sup> Balch, “Economic Aspects of a New International Order,” 115.

<sup>308</sup> Balch, “Economic Aspects of a New International Order,” 111.

<sup>309</sup> Balch, “Economic Aspects of a New International Order,” 112.

<sup>310</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “Our Call,” Editorial, *Bulletin of WILPF*, Feb (1922): 3, reprinted in Mercedes M. Randall, *Beyond Nationalism: The Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch* (New York: Twayne Publisher Inc., 1972), 109.

global economic relations would lead to a “planetary” citizenship, guided by a notion of “the earth as home.”<sup>311</sup>

On a practical level, Balch hoped to advance education for global citizenship and peace in a variety of WILPF projects. For one, the organization invested in the education of the public by regularly hosting events that explained and discussed issues of international conflict and peace. Second, Balch and her colleagues sought to implement an international teacher education program—a project that ultimately was not put into practice due to a lack of support from national branches.<sup>312</sup> To compensate for the program, however, the national sections voted to make “Education for Internationalism” at least one of the topics of the next international congress and Balch was part of the organizing team that discussed the arrangement of speakers.<sup>313</sup> The most successful educational projects were the organization’s summer schools, which Balch initiated, planned and organized in its first years.

The WILPF summer schools were held in different geographic locations between 1920 and 1931, often in connection with the International Women’s Congress. As a pioneer project, a summer school was held in Buckinghamshire, England in 1920, followed by the first official international summer school in Salzburg, Austria.<sup>314</sup> As was true for other summer schools, the site was carefully chosen: Austria was politically contentious, yet safe enough to hold an

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<sup>311</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “The Earth is My Home,” undated, reprinted in Mercedes M. Randall, *Beyond Nationalism: The Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch* (New York: Twayne Publisher Inc., 1972), 239–241.

<sup>312</sup> Maria Grazia Suriano writes about the WILPF’s effort to establish an International Council of Education, an idea that was eventually abandoned in parts due to the fact that the leading WILPF women were not schoolteachers. See Maria Grazia Suriano, ““Education is Better Than Poison Gas,”” *The WILPF’s Path to Peace (1919–1939)*,” unpublished paper discussed at the European Social Science History Conference, 2010 Women and Gender Network.

<sup>313</sup> Program of the International Summer School in Salzburg, Austria, August 1–15, 1921, WILPF Collection, Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA; Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, *Report of the Third International Congress of Women*, Vienna July 10–17, 1921, 30, WILPF Collection, Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore PA.

<sup>314</sup> Randall, *Improper Bostonian*, 295.

international event. Three hundred mostly young men and women from twenty-one nations attended, including numerous European countries, the United States, Mexico, China, Japan, India, and Ukraine. Balch was not only in charge of the event's scientific organization but also for negotiations with the city of Salzburg.

In public meetings with city officials and interested citizens, Balch ensured a smooth organizational process. At the same time, Balch used the opportunity to educate citizens about international peace efforts, a project which, according to the local press, was well received.<sup>315</sup> Geared towards a younger audience, but open to women and men of all ages, the WILPF summer schools were conceptualized as platforms for collaborative transnational thinking and learning through lectures, workshops, and informal activities. As the secretary, Balch ensured that the executive committee steered the program in a way that allowed for controversial topics and conversations but did not overly emphasize nationalistic issues that risked the alienation of specific groups of participants.<sup>316</sup>

The summer schools epitomized Balch's desire to better social and economic relations through learning about "the Other." The mixture of lectures, discussions, and time for informal mingling, she hoped, would allow participants to reconstruct misconceptions and enable cross-cultural conversation and cooperation. Feedback to the event signaled that her plan was successful. Evaluating the 1922 summer school in Lugano, Switzerland, Austrian delegate to the Fourth International Congress Lili Dank-Werner stated that it was not so much from the lectures, but from the personal discussions held at the summer schools that real change evolved. To underline her point, she quoted from a letter from a British Royal Navy officer, who "never in

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<sup>315</sup> Local newspaper clippings about the Salzburg International Summer School, WILPF Collection, Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.

<sup>316</sup> In 1924, Andre Jouve became the supervisor of the summer schools and was appointed the president of the Committee on Summer Schools. See Suriano, "Education is Better Than Poison Gas," 4.

his life before had known anything about pacifism and internationalism” and now praised his experience in Lugano emphasizing that it had “abolished the national prejudice with which we were born.”<sup>317</sup>

***“We are Asked to Equip Ourselves with Courage, Hope, and Readiness for Hard Work”:  
Balch’s Work After 1922***

In the fall of 1922, Balch resigned from her full-time position as the WILPF secretary-treasurer for health reasons. However, she continued to combine her scholarly and practical activist skills to support the organization’s goals in different capacities. Not only did she help organize conferences, establish new WILPF branches around the world, and engage in work with the League of Nations (for example in committees on disarmament, the internationalization of waterways and drug control), Balch also contributed brain power to the organization’s scientific work and engaged in research for the WILPF.

Notably, Balch placed anti-Black racism and its role in American imperialist projects much more squarely in her work in the mid-1920s. Even though she had been outspoken about American white supremacy and racism before, for example by urging white Americans to take accountability for racist crimes, especially the horrors of lynching, in her 1916 speech to Wellesley students, her conceptualization the power dynamics of global relations had focused more on the construction of American exceptionalism and superiority rather than on the role of anti-Black racism in it.<sup>318</sup> In 1925, however, Balch became part of an interracial WILPF committee which traveled to Haiti to investigate the effects of the American occupation on the country. Together with four other members of a committee, one of them Black activist and

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<sup>317</sup> Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, *Report of the Fourth Congress*, 94.

<sup>318</sup> Balch, “What it Means to be an American,” 37.

educator, Addie Hunton, Balch collected data and wrote and published a report that dismantled the myth that the United States had improved the living conditions for Haitians. The occupation had not been benevolent, the report stated, but had been a forceful take-over based on the racist rationale of Haitian inferiority, which ended the nation's right to self-determination and destroyed its self-government. At the same time, gendered and racialized myths of the threat of the Black man, she argued, had further been used as a justification for white men's domination in the name of safety, when in fact white men's presence had made the country much more dangerous for Haitian women.<sup>319</sup>

In the 1930s, the growing nationalistic movements and emergence of right-wing leadership disheartened Balch and the women of the WILPF. Balch worked tirelessly to draft alternatives to military intervention that she and her colleagues then presented to the League of Nations, all while trying to hold together the organization that was under much internal pressure as well. Throughout the war Balch advocated for productive neutrality rather than non-intervention, suggesting forms of mediation rather than militarization. She had always favored issue-related international organizations free of individual national interests instead of government agencies. As the events in Germany unfolded, however, Balch's initial demands slowly gave way to the realization that an exception might be necessary in the case of Nazi Germany. She concluded that Hitler posed a bigger threat to civilization than war and eventually supported the armed intervention of the United States. While this must have been a heartbreaking and sobering experience it did not stop Balch's relentless work for international cooperation and peace. When she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946, Balch closed her lecture with a call for pragmatic action *and* high ideals: "We are asked to be patient with necessarily slow and groping

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<sup>319</sup> Emily Greene Balch, *Occupied Haiti*, (New York: The Writers Publishing Company, 1927), also cited in Confortini, "Race, Gender, Empire, and War," 262–63; and Plastas, *A Band of Noble Women*, 116–118.

advance on the road forward, and to be ready for each step ahead as it becomes practicable. We are asked to equip ourselves with courage, hope, readiness for hard work, and cherish large and generous ideals.”<sup>320</sup>

***Summary: Emily Greene Balch’s Economic Thought and Use Thereof in Her Education for Cooperation, and Peace***

Emily Greene Balch made substantial contributions to Progressive Era economic and social thought, which corresponded with her political activism and distinctly shaped her educational ideas and praxis. The flow of knowledge between three fields—academic economic knowledge production, activism, and education—was encouraged by a confluence of factors at play during the 1890s. First, the discipline of economics was still evolving, and this allowed for the coexistence of a broad range of schools of thought, including heterodox economics, on which women social reformers could build their critique of laissez-faire individualism. Second, the gendered power dynamics within academic institutions made women’s colleges an attractive, accessible workplace for women economists and created an opportunity for Balch to combine research, activism, and teaching. Third, Balch’s time in settlement house and social reform work had exposed her to pragmatist philosophies which had laid the foundation for her desire to combine knowledge and action.

A variety of schools of thought shaped Balch’s economic ideas, most distinctly the German Historical School of Economics and the Austrian School of Economics. Insisting on multiperspectivity, she developed an understanding of economic growth early in her academic career that neither gave precedence to the individual over the social nor the other way around.

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<sup>320</sup> Emily Greene Balch, “Nobel Lecture,” Part II, Oslo, Norway, April 1948, reprinted in Mercedes M. Randall, *Beyond Nationalism: The Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch* (New York: Twayne Publisher Inc., 1972), 238.

Instead, she highlighted economic (and therefore social) interdependency, understood conflict as a motor for change, and proposed a model of conflict resolution that was processual, participative, and cooperative. Over time, Balch's research focus shifted from poverty and labor studies to immigration studies and finally to international relations, but she always kept these areas of research tied to the analysis of economic relations. Prepositioning "humanity's ontological unity," the productive use of difference remained a central moral and economic goal in all three fields. In an atmosphere of growing nationalisms, she increasingly pushed back against readings of evolutionary theory that suggested difference were a threat.<sup>321</sup> While her pacifist activism led to the loss of her teaching position, it encouraged her to focus more on international economic relations and what she called the "unholy alliance of cannon and capital," and to apply her vision of growth through cooperation to a global community.<sup>322</sup>

Balch's expertise as an economist shaped her educational ideas significantly. Her cooperative, participatory model for a sustainable economy demanded that the educated individual—who was self-reflected—understood multiple perspectives and was trained in cooperation. For her work at Wellesley, this meant that her students developed a historical understanding of economic relations and their own position within these power dynamics, knowledge about "the Other" (in this case related to class, ethnicity, and culture), multiperspectivity in theories and methods, and were provided with learning opportunities, in which they could observe differences and practice cross-class and cross-cultural cooperation. She hoped to foster these skills through a wide array of topics (including those considered controversial), field trips, and collaborations with Denison House and occasionally with unions.

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<sup>321</sup> Confortini, "Race, Gender, Empire and War," 246.

<sup>322</sup> Balch, "Economic Aspects of a New International Order," 115.

On the one hand, Balch's educational concept was specifically tailored to the young middle-class students at Wellesley. Still without the right to vote, the active engagement in the greater political body that Balch envisioned for her students offered young women a path to citizenship. However, despite the occasional use of maternalist rhetoric, Balch avoided a gendered, essentialist rationale for women's citizenship. Instead, this study suggests that her concept of education for social responsibility, mutual understanding, and cooperation was rooted firmly in her training and expertise as a social scientist who believed in the historical construction and thus malleability of socio-political structures. Moreover, when she started to work for the WILPF, her concept for civic (national) education seamlessly expanded to a concept of education for global citizenship and translated into the WILPF summer schools, open to participants of all genders and from all nations.

Balch's work was not without ambiguities. Although driven by an astute awareness of her own positionality and a genuine desire to establish supportive and cooperative relations with "the Other," her ideas at times included residues of civilizationist, colonial thinking and her actions were not always consistent with her ethos of equality for all. On the one hand, her vision of cooperation across differences clearly materialized in her political work, where she worked tirelessly on state or city committees, in her reconciliatory efforts on the Women's Peace Committee during World War I, and eventually in her work with the League of Nations, even if the work did not always lead to conflict resolution. Her desire to bring about cooperation across class and race, on the other hand, was much more difficult to put into practice. It seems that in her work on labor legislation committees she was at times working *for* women more than *with* them, although a closer analysis of her work with union women would be needed to get a better understanding of her cross-class collaborations. Similarly, her ideal of cooperation across races

never manifested in concrete interracial collaboration with African American women until her work on WLPF's Haiti committee in 1926. In fact, the WILPF's early work, under her leadership, exclusively centered white women. Infamously, Balch was instrumental in not reelecting the board's only Black member, Mary Church Terrell, and dismissing her critique of the organization's racism.

Despite these ambiguities and inconsistencies, Balch's contributions to economic and social thought were remarkable and went against the grain of her time. Sidelined in the history of economics—a discipline increasingly dominated by a positivist paradigm and a focus on neoclassical economics—her analyses of local, national, and international power relations were conducted in the pursuit of social justice and peace rejected the disinterested “neutrality” that the rising positivist paradigm demanded. Moreover, her case provides rich insights into women social reformers' ideas about democratic education and illustrates the influence of economic expertise on educational ideas. This study shows that Balch used the space of Wellesley College, and later her work for the WILPF, to combine intellectual, activist, and pedagogical work. Putting her economic thinking into practice she developed interesting and pioneering ideas on citizenship education that highlighted economic knowledge, socio-economic self-awareness, and an understanding of “the Other.” Remarkably, her teaching of economics included not just the development of the analytical and critical thinking skills needed to de- and re-construct economic, social, and political structures but also to develop the self-awareness and empathy needed to communicate and cooperate across differences and collaboratively work on new models for a more just and peaceful world.

## CHAPTER 4: Alice Salomon's Economic Thought and Education for Social Responsibility

Economics has become the most important [subject] because it is the most essential prerequisite for all social thinking; for just action towards all people with whom life connects us.

-Alice Salomon, 1908

On October 15 of 1908, Alice Salomon, social work pioneer, women's educator, and economist, opened Germany's first school for social work with the words: "Blessed be the one who found his work."<sup>323</sup> The quote, borrowed from British social philosopher Thomas Carlyle, highlighted a central goal of Salomon's ambitious project: to provide Germany's middle-class daughters with the opportunity for meaningful work and a place in society, while leveraging their underused work power to address Germany's pressing social problems. Catering to Germany's conservative public and fearful parents, Salomon argued that the school's two-year training for girls and women would not fundamentally alter women's "social" nature nor undermine their roles as future wives and mothers. The German bourgeois women's movement had long built the maternalist rationale underlying Salomon's words, and her school, built firmly on the idea that women's social work was just a natural extension, was a public version, so to speak, of women's ability to care. Salomon was therefore careful to construct her school's social education as a preparation for volunteer and professional social work *and* a form of civic training for young women who planned to become wives and mothers. Serving this vision, the Social Women's School's curriculum combined theoretical training and social work praxis in programs for the

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<sup>323</sup> Alice Salomon, "Zur Eröffnung der Sozialen Frauenschule" [The opening of the Social Women's School], *Die Frau*, 16. Jg., Nr. 2 (1908), reprinted in Adriane Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation und Soziale Verantwortung, Ausgewählte Schriften*, Band 1, 1896–1908 [Alice Salomon: Women's emancipation and social responsibility, selected writings, volume 1, 1896–1908] (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1997), 480.

poor. Salomon hoped that this specific mix of theory, experience and action would allow her students to understand the mechanics of social and economic relations and their own position within these structures, which in turn would help them develop a sense of social responsibility and the drive to engage in the civic society.

As a social science-based education for women, Salomon's social education set itself apart from religious education on the one hand, and the newly restructured public, state-led women's schools on the other. The latter, Salomon explained, offered only an unsystematic and arbitrary array of courses, with no real substance.<sup>324</sup> Religious education, regardless of denomination, Salomon thought, had also failed; it clearly had not prepared people to address the mass poverty produced by industrialization in any adequate form.<sup>325</sup> Salomon did not question that an ethics of care was rooted in religion, but she argued that the kind of social responsibility she hoped to forge in middle-class women needed to be grounded in economic and social knowledge.

Instead, Salomon made economics (*Volkswirtschaftslehre*, also translated as political economy) the core part of the curriculum. In addition to the pedagogical training the school provided (specifically for the work with children), Salomon argued that the women needed to know the "history and current state of our societal structures" so that they understood what their own position was, what their contribution could be, and how best to address the specific kind of poverty that industrialization had produced.<sup>326</sup> "Economics has become the most important subject," she stated, "because it is the most essential prerequisite for all social thinking; for just

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<sup>324</sup> For a more detailed analysis of Prussian school reforms see for example, James C. Albisetti, "Compromise and Containment, The Prussian Reforms of 1908 in Comparative Perspective," in *Ariadne: Forum für Frauen- und Geschlechtergeschichte*, vols. 53, 54 (2008): 8–17.

<sup>325</sup> Alice Salomon, "Die Soziale Ausbildung," 375.

<sup>326</sup> Salomon, "Zur Eröffnung," 482.

action towards all people with whom life connects us.”<sup>327</sup> The Social Women’s School’s curriculum reflected Salomon’s expertise as a social scientist. Germany’s gender-restrictive regulations for higher education had barred Salomon from pursuing graduate studies, but in 1906, two years before she opened the school, she had finally managed to get a PhD in economics from the University of Berlin, after more than a decade of self-training and peer mentoring in women’s networks.<sup>328</sup>

This chapter will explore the role and relevance of Salomon’s economic expertise for her educational work between 1893 and 1933, when the Nazis forcefully ended her work in Germany, and she was exiled to the United States because of her Jewish origin and her international relations. Salomon developed and institutionalized three educational projects over the course of the four decades: the Girls’ and Women’s Groups for Social Assistance (abbreviated as “Groups for Social Assistance”), an existing organization that Salomon further developed; the Social Women’s School, which she founded, opened, and led from 1908 to 1925; and the German Academy for Social and Pedagogical Women’s Work (abbreviated as “Academy”), an institution she also founded and presided over between 1925 and 1933. This study follows the changing role economics played in Salomon’s educational work during three time periods: (1) the period between 1893 and 1914, when Salomon gained access to, expanded, and institutionalized social work, thereby using economic knowledge to theoretically undergird her push for middle-class women’s education; (2) the era of World War I, between 1914 and 1918, during which Salomon mobilized economic thought to safeguard women’s education and preserve the civic agency women had gained heretofore; and (3), the tumultuous years of the

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<sup>327</sup> Salomon, “Die soziale Ausbildung,” 382.

<sup>328</sup> Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, *Geschichte der Universität Unter den Linden 1810–2010* [History of the University Unter den Linden] (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2010), 283.

Weimar Republic, between 1928 and 1933, during which a combination of changing socio-economic conditions, the expanding welfare state, and the turn towards a multi-disciplinary approach in social work ended the preeminence of economics in Salomon's social work education.

The analysis of Salomon's economic thought and the changing significance of economics for Salomon's educational work is placed against the backdrop of the intertwined histories of women economists in Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic and the history of social work as a women's profession. The contributions of women to the social sciences in Germany have long been ignored in histories of the field. Since the 1990s, feminist historians have started to unearth women social scientists' contributions and have situated their work in the triangle of the Germany's women's movement, the male-dominated social reform movement, and universities' economics departments.<sup>329</sup> Marion Keller's detailed study on women social scientists in Wilhelmine Germany, for example, shows how women engaged in empirical studies long before they were admitted to German universities and how they navigated alliances with male reformers and university economists as well as massive restrictions.<sup>330</sup>

Marylin Ryan Van Zee's work on German women economists in Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic is of particular importance for this chapter. Her study illustrates how in the late nineteenth century "an intertwining of discourses and priorities among participants in the movement for women's access to higher education, professors of economics and social reformers

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<sup>329</sup> Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen, "Frauen in den Anfängen der empirischen Sozialforschung [Women in the beginnings of empirical social research]," in *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenforschung [History of women and girls' education]*, eds. Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 1996), 354–72; Sabine Hering, "Die Frauenbewegung, der soziale Frauenberuf und die langen Schatten der Armenpflege [The women's movement, the social women's profession and the long shadow of poor relief]," in *Soziale Bewegungen [Social movements]*, eds. Diana Franke-Meyer and Carola Kuhlmann (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2018), 141–54.

<sup>330</sup> Marion Keller, *Pionierinnen der empirischen Sozialforschung im Wilhelminischen Kaiserreich [Women Pioneers of Empirical Social Research in Wilhelmine Germany]*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017).

offered women an entrée into the university study of economics and broader opportunities based on the acquisition of that expertise.”<sup>331</sup> University professors of the German Historical School of Economics, abbreviated as Historical School, hoped that women scientists would bring their specific “womanly expertise” to the study of women’s labor. In addition, they believed that women had better access to the strictly gender-segregated work spaces and could observe and speak with women workers in ways that men could not. At the same time, male social reformers thought that women scientists could help mobilize women’s networks in support of men’s social reform plans. Thus, middle-class women’s access to the discipline and subsequent employment opportunities were directly tied to their participation in one of social reform’s central projects, the regulation of working-class women’s labor. Following women economists from Imperial Germany to the Weimar Republic, Van Zee further shows how men economists pushed women’s specific economic expertise, which was historically rooted in social reform efforts, to the margins of the discipline over time, especially during the 1920s, a result of the discipline’s divorce from social reform, an orientation towards positivist methods, job market politics and higher education reform.<sup>332</sup>

Van Zee’s study provides an excellent framework for the understanding of the changing political and institutional conditions that mitigated Salomon’s intellectual work and the intricate, similarly shifting relations between social reformers, university economists, and the women’s movement that enabled the flow of ideas between the fields of economics and education. This chapter argues that Salomon’s economic expertise enabled her to build a rationale for middle-class women’s civic agency, establish social work as a woman’s profession, and justify the need

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<sup>331</sup> Marynel Ryan Van Zee, “‘Womanly Qualities’ and Contested Methodology: Gender and the Discipline of Economics in Late Imperial Germany,” *Gender & History* 22, no. 2 (August 2010): 342.

<sup>332</sup> Marynel Ryan Van Zee, “Shifting Foundations: Women Economists in the Weimar Republic,” *Women’s History Review* 18, no. 1 (February 2009): 98.

for women's social education. More specifically, her expertise helped her to theoretically connect the exploitation of women workers, especially women workers, with the lack of purposeful work opportunities for middle-class women, as related, gendered effects of the industrialized capitalist economic structure. Just as importantly, Salomon's economic knowledge instructed her social education. It deeply informed her pedagogical approach in which the understanding of economic relations created the moral impetus and skills for women's agency in the public realm, including social work.

This chapter's focus on the relevance of economics for Salomon's educational work also adds to the history of social work education. Studies have already explored how the founding of professional social work in Germany was embedded in the moderate Bourgeois women's movement and its concept of *geistige Mütterlichkeit*, a term translated either as "social" or "spiritual motherhood" in the literature.<sup>333</sup> Following this argument, women explained social work as a "natural" expression of women's maternal qualities, put in the service of society. Christopher Sachße's research, for example, points out how women merged the concept of "social motherhood" with "the scientific character of social reform" to build social work as a profession in which the use of social science set social work apart from traditional, religiously motivated philanthropy.<sup>334</sup> The evolving social sciences, especially the Historical School with its understanding of economics as a normative-ethical science, now provided a rationale for social work that highlighted the middle-class's responsibility for the nation as a whole. Elke Kruse, in her comprehensive history of social work education, also shows how early social work education

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<sup>333</sup> Christoph Sachße, "Social Mothers: The Bourgeois Women's Movement and German Welfare-State Formation, 1890–1929," in *Mothers of a New World*, eds. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (New York, London: Routledge, 1993), 136–58; and Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991).

<sup>334</sup> Sachße, "Social Mothers," 140.

emphasized the teaching of professional skills *and* the teaching of values and ethics, making early social work education a space for women to develop a sense of self and see themselves as socially responsible civic agents.<sup>335</sup> This chapter will extend on this body of work by examining the role that economics played in the development of social work education as a form of citizenship.

Lastly, the focus on Salomon's economic expertise and use thereof in her educational work contributes to the scholarship about her life and work. Scholars have established her legacy as the founder of social work in Germany; analyzed her work at the intersection of the women's movement, social reform and social work; and illustrated her pioneering roles in the professionalization of social work, social work theory, German social reform and national and international women's movements.<sup>336</sup> More comprehensive studies on Salomon's life and work have been published by Carola Kuhlmann, who foregrounds Salomon's efforts to establish social work as a human rights provision, and Adriane Feustel, the most prolific Salomon scholar in Germany, who has provided in-depth studies on Salomon's methodology and her social thought in the context of her biography. Feustel situates Salomon's work in the tradition of German idealism and American pragmatism and emphasizes her contributions to a methodology that

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<sup>335</sup> Elke Kruse, *Stufen zur Akademisierung – Wege der Ausbildung für Soziale Arbeit von der Wohlfahrtsschule zum Bachelor-/Mastermodell* [Steps to academization—Paths of social work education from welfare school to the Bachelor/Masters Model] (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004), 38.

<sup>336</sup> Manfred Berger, *Alice Salomon. Pionierin der sozialen Arbeit und der Frauenbewegung* [Alice Salomon: pioneer of social work and the women's movement] (Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel, 1998); Carola Kuhlmann, *Alice Salomon und der Beginn sozialer Berufsausbildung. Eine Biographie* [Alice Salomon and the start of social work education, a biography] (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2007); Carola Kuhlmann, "Nicht Wohltun, sondern Gerechtigkeit." *Eine Theorie sozialer Arbeit* ["Not doing good but justice": A Theory of social work] (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2008); Juliane Sagebiel, "Alice Salomon, Pionierin der Sozialen Arbeit in Disziplin, Profession und Ausbildung" [Alice Salomon, pioneer of social work in discipline, profession and training], in *Gendered Profession, Soziale Arbeit vor neuen Herausforderungen in der zweiten Moderne* [Gendered profession, social work facing new challenges in the second modernity], eds. Constance Engelfried and Corinna Voigt-Kehlenbeck (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010), 43–60. Rebecca L. Hegar, "Transatlantic Transfers in Social Work: Contributions of Three Pioneers," *British Journal of Social Work* 38, no. 4 (2008): 716–33; and Anja Schüler, *Frauenbewegung und soziale Reform: Jane Addams und Alice Salomon im transatlantischen Dialog, 1889–1933* [Women's movement and social reform: Jane Addams and Alice Salomon in transatlantic dialogue] (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004).

understood knowledge as grounded in practice and practice grounded in knowledge.<sup>337</sup> In a similar dynamic manner, Feustel shows how Salomon conceptualized the social as a process not as a static product; the social thus needed to be produced in constant negotiations between individuals.<sup>338</sup> Building on these insights, my own study focuses more specifically on Salomon's economic thought and discusses how it influenced her educational work over time.

This chapter follows Salomon's economic thought production over time and pays special attention to her use of economic thought in the conceptualization of her three main educational projects: the Groups for Social Assistance she ran from 1899 to 1908, the Social Women's School she founded in 1908 and presided over until 1925, and the Academy which opened in 1925 and which she directed until its closure in 1933. The study is based on a close analysis of Salomon's writings as well as curricula and reports from the three educational institutions and women's organizations she was part of. Salomon was a prolific writer, who wrote more than two dozen books and over 500 articles, most of them published in women's and professional journals.<sup>339</sup> Salomon's legacy further includes autobiographical writings, amongst them her autobiography *Character Is Destiny*, which she wrote in the 1940s in New York after she had been driven from her homeland by the Nazis. While her autobiography is an extremely helpful source in the understanding of her work, it must be read as the critical historical exegesis Salomon herself constructed it to be. She urged her readers to understand the happenings in her former life "not as individual and isolated," but as "products of the social fabric to which I belonged by birth," interpreting the conditions in Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic

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<sup>337</sup> Adriane Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen im Werk Alice Salomon's* [The concept of the social in Alice Salomon's work] (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2011).

<sup>338</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 240–41.

<sup>339</sup> Andrew Lee, "Preface and Acknowledgments," in *Character is Destiny*, eds. Andrew Lee and Alice Salomon (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press: 2004); and Joachim Wieler, "Alice Salomon," *Journal of Teaching in Social Work* 2, no. 2 (1988): 165–71.

retrospectively from the perspective of post–Nazi Germany.<sup>340</sup> As such she hoped that her autobiography would serve as a warning to see how the “germs” of fascism had already been embedded in Germany’s cultural and political structure before the Nazis rose to power.

Following Feustel’s argument that Salomon’s work can only be understood in the context of her life—and Salomon herself insisted on the interconnection and mutual influence between theory, praxis, and experiences—the analysis of Salomon’s ideas presented in this chapter proceeds chronologically. Similarly, a methodology that situates ideas against the backdrop of the cultural, political, and social conditions of the time, and includes questions of access to institutions, is apt to explore this dissertation’s bigger claims. The structure of the chapter will therefore correspond with the different educational and professional stages of Salomon’s life on the one hand, and the major political changes in Germany on the other hand, as the nation developed from a constitutional monarchy to a constitutional federal republic to a fascist state. The study ends in 1933 when the Nazis asserted power and forced Salomon into American exile, violently ending Salomon’s career as a social work pioneer and educator. Although her writings in exile are important pieces of work, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to include them.

### ***“I Never Thought That I, Too, Was a Citizen”:* Educational Opportunities in Imperial Germany**

Alice Salomon’s biographical experiences profoundly shaped her intellectual and practical work. Born in Berlin in 1872 as the fifth daughter of a Jewish family of merchants, her childhood and youth were filled with both privileges and restrictions. Salomon described her early childhood as a very happy period of her life. She was, as she wrote, “a child with a

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<sup>340</sup> Alice Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, ed. Andrew Lees (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press: 2004), 24.

garden”; her father’s decent income allowed her family to live in a spacious house with outside space and the freedom to roam and play.<sup>341</sup> Young Alice’s parents Albert and Anna were assimilated Jews, who, “without further investigation,” sent their children to a Christian school upon a neighbor’s recommendation.<sup>342</sup> While other women’s memoirs of the 1870s and 1880s describe their schooling experiences as boring, unchallenging, and with “little lasting impact,” Salomon thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to get out of the narrow borders of the home, engage in activities, and make connections.<sup>343</sup>

The relative freedom young Alice sensed in her life, however, came to an abrupt end when her father died in 1886; a traumatic event that coincided with the end of her secondary schooling at age fourteen. Not only was the family now left with little income and forced to move to a much smaller home, but Salomon was also stuck in the narrow walls of her home with the bleak prospect of perhaps getting married one day. Until the early 1900s, schooling for girls beyond tenth grade was extremely limited and public school-reforms that allowed for girls’ preparation for higher education unfolded slowly.<sup>344</sup> Salomon felt isolated and without purpose. Her mother did not support her educational aspirations to get into a teachers’ seminary, and the only available alternative Salomon could find was an art school for needlework. She enrolled but felt like all her dreams “were stitched into the canvas” as she was forced into what she described as a “luxury” activity rather than being able to make a meaningful contribution to society.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 11.

<sup>342</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 18.

<sup>343</sup> James Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls and Women: Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 52.

<sup>344</sup> Juliane Jacobi, *Mädchen- und Frauenbildung in Europa* [Girls’ and women’s education in Europe] (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2013), 289.

<sup>345</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 23.

An invitation to attend a meeting of Berlin's newly emerging Groups for Social Assistance fundamentally changed the course of Salomon's life. The organization had been initiated by a committee of liberal citizens, male social reformers, university professors, and leaders of Germany's women's movement. They prepared young middle- and upper-class women for social work and placed them in a variety of relief programs, such as for example daycares for the children of workers or soup kitchens.<sup>346</sup> The project perfectly merged the interests of the social reform movement and the bourgeois women's movement. While the first was in need of volunteer workers to ameliorate social problems via relief programs, the latter pushed for women's entry into higher education and the professions and embraced the opportunity to carve out a space for women in social work.

For young Alice, the work with the Groups for Social Assistance was a liberatory experience; not only did social work provide her with a purpose in life consistent with her Protestant education, but it also allowed her to transcend the narrowness of her home, step into society, and redefine herself. That a young woman could understand herself as part of a greater political body, be it a city or a nation, had been unknown to her heretofore. Looking back at it in her autobiography, she recalled that before her work with the Groups for Social Assistance she had "never heard the word 'social' before and didn't know what it was."<sup>347</sup> The insight of belonging to a greater community allowed her to imagine herself as a citizen, something she had never considered for herself, as she wrote in an autobiographical piece in 1928.<sup>348</sup>

The opportunity for middle-class women's emancipation came with a price, as male social reformers followed their own agenda in the project. They hoped for one, that bourgeois

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<sup>346</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 38–39; and Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 24–25.

<sup>347</sup> Salomon, "Lebenserinnerungen," 9.

<sup>348</sup> Alice Salomon, "Jugend- und Arbeitserinnerungen," 9.

women would gather women's broad support for social reform and secondly, that women's (free) labor could help ameliorate social problems, so that social peace could be restored, and an escalation of the conflict between labor and capital could be avoided. Bourgeois women, they thought, could also be instrumental in addressing the problem of women's factory labor, a hotly debated topic with radicalizing potential.<sup>349</sup> The specific amalgamation of interests that led to the Groups for Social Assistance's inception created a central tension in Salomon's work. On the one hand, her agency as a middle-class woman rested on her participation in the social reform project which ultimately sought social control over working women, while on the other hand she also hoped for true collaboration between classes.

A similar tension was inherent to Salomon's developing economic research, which her training in the Groups for Social Assistance had initiated. She profited immensely from the connection between university economists, male social reformers, and the representatives of the moderate bourgeois women's movement that had made the Groups for Social Assistance possible. Just twenty-one years old when she started the work with the organization, the scientifically based knowledge about economic and social structures she acquired there allowed Salomon to put her vague, religiously inspired moral obligation to help the poor on solid ground.

The Groups for Social Assistance's steering committee included two university professors, Ignaz Jastrow and Gustav Schmoller, who both were economists. The latter was professor at the University of Berlin and an economist of the Historical School who would, almost twenty years later, encourage Salomon to pursue a PhD under his advisory. Schmoller and Jastrow were also members of Berlin's powerful *Association for Social Politics* (*Verein für Socialpolitik*), an organization founded in 1873 in response to Berlin's growing economic and

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<sup>349</sup> Van Zee, "Womanly Qualities"; and Sachße, "Social Mothers."

social problems. The association defined itself as a platform for debate, where experts provided scientific economic knowledge to help analyze, understand, and improve the situation of the working class in order to support reform and sustain social peace, and as such was providing important impulses for social reform.<sup>350</sup> The idea that theoretical economic knowledge and empirical studies needed to inform social praxis also filtered into the Groups for Social Assistance's work, and lectures became part of the young women's preparation for their work in the field. Prominent speakers—such as Max Weber, who came to speak on “Foundations of the Modern Social Development”—made an appearance, and Salomon soaked up this new knowledge about Germany's social and economic conditions.<sup>351</sup>

The economic and social knowledge provided by collaborating social scientists was not the only intellectual influence on Salomon's training with the Groups for Social Assistance. She also profited from the knowledge that the Groups for Social Assistance's more experienced leaders passed on, and she gladly accepted their reading recommendations. The head of the organization, Jeannette Schwerin, became Salomon's mentor and role model. Schwerin introduced Salomon to the socially critical literature of Leo Tolstoy, British writers like John Ruskin, Charles Kingsley, and Charles Dickens, and made her aware of the social studies of Charles Booth and Sydney and Beatrice Webb. Moreover, Schwerin gave Salomon a passion for women's rights' activism, an interest in labor studies, and an international mind. Schwerin, who was also of Jewish origin, was very active in the German women's movement, and had assumed leadership positions in the Association of German Women Clubs (Bund Deutscher

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<sup>350</sup> Irmela Gorges, “The History of the Verein für Socialpolitik,” *Handbuch Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Soziologie* [Handbook History of German-Speaking Sociology], eds. S. Moebius and A. Ploder (Wiesbaden: Springer Verlag, 2018): 791–808. Part of the organization's agenda was to (successfully) inform state-organized reform such as Bismarck's social insurance for workers.

<sup>351</sup> Alice Salomon, *Zwanzig Jahre Soziale Hilfsarbeit* [Twenty years of social assistance work] (Karlsruhe: G. Braun, 1913), 86–7.

Frauenvereine, BDF) and the German Society for Ethical Culture (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ethische Kultur), which was the German counterpart to the British and American Charity Organization Societies.<sup>352</sup> Interested in labor questions, Schwerin was part of the BDF's committee for women workers' protection and encouraged Salomon to theoretically engage with women labor questions.<sup>353</sup> She also brought her along when she went to the International Workers' Congress in Zurich in 1897 and urged Salomon to attend the 1899 London International Congress of Women with her. When Schwerin passed away that same year, Salomon followed in her footsteps and joined the Groups for Social Assistance's leadership.<sup>354</sup>

***“The Curtain Was Pulled and Our View Opened to the World”: Training in Economics in the Groups for Social Assistance***

Salomon had already taken over organizational tasks soon after she had joined the Groups for Social Assistance, but with Schwerin's passing she now stepped into her first educational leadership position as head of the organization. She used the institutional and creative power she had asserted in the Groups for Social Assistance to solidify and expand the existing two-year-long program by implementing more systematic theoretical training units. Economics was a main pillar in the curriculum, followed by instruction in legal questions as well as courses in pedagogy and hygiene. Salomon used her own expertise in economic questions (at that point mostly self-trained) to teach economics in the upper tier of the school, using the rooms of the Berlin

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<sup>352</sup> Alice Salomon, “Jeanette Schwerin,” *Centralblatt des Bundes deutscher Frauenvereine* 1 (1899), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 7–17.

<sup>353</sup> Anja Schüler, *Frauenbewegung und soziale Reform: Jane Addams und Alice Salomon im transatlantischen Dialog, 1889–1933* [Women's movement and social reform: Jane Addams and Alice Salomon in transatlantic dialogue] (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004): 191.

<sup>354</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 34.

Women's Club.<sup>355</sup> Her syllabus comprised economic and social history, specifically the "history of France, England and Germany since the great revolution" as well as instruction on "the development of the modern worker questions," including the social and economic conditions for women workers.<sup>356</sup>

Since knowledge about social and economic relations had been central to Salomon's intellectual, social, and civic awakening, she hoped to create similar learning experiences for the Groups for Social Assistance's new students. In a speech for the organization's anniversary in 1904, she compared the protected domesticated life she and other members of the Groups for Social Assistance's first cohort had led to "living in a dark, narrow shed that was separated from wide spaces, without knowing these spaces existed."<sup>357</sup> "We had thought our own living space was all," she added, "all of life and all of the world." Getting the full picture of social relations felt to her as if "the curtain was pulled and opened the view to the world, the real life, the relations between people, our relations to the whole people, to citizenry."<sup>358</sup> The theoretical training in the Groups for Social Assistance was therefore a project of women's intellectual and social liberation that was intimately tied to the understanding of social relations and the ability to situate oneself in relation to others. Salomon was adamant to distinguish this approach from what she called an education for "high-end individualism," a liberal tradition which, in her opinion, focused on self-actualization only, in separation from others, and focused on rights without

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<sup>355</sup> Mädchen- und Frauengruppen für Soziale Hilfsarbeit zu Berlin [Girls' and Women's Groups for Social Work Assistance], *Jahresbericht und Programm für das Arbeitsjahr 1905/06* [Report and program for the work year 1905–1906], Alice Salomon Archive, Berlin, Germany.

<sup>356</sup> Mädchen- und Frauengruppen, *Jahresbericht und Programm für das Arbeitsjahr 1905/06*.

<sup>357</sup> Salomon, "Was die Mädchen- und Frauengruppen Bedeuten," 210.

<sup>358</sup> Salomon, "Was die Mädchen- und Frauengruppen Bedeuten," 210.

considering duties.<sup>359</sup> Contrary to that, Salomon imagined her education as a distinctly *social* education.

Girls' and women's education that lacked the teaching of social and economic relations, Salomon argued, led women to either feel isolated or indulge in self-absorbed activities. In either way, she maintained that it prevented them from building social responsibility and with that the possibility to engage as citizens. In addition, she thought that social science knowledge was a prerequisite for skillful social work. It provided women with a comprehensive view of dynamic societal structures so that they could view their work from "bigger point of views."<sup>360</sup> Leaning into a biological paradigm that had become increasingly popular in the early twentieth century, Salomon argued that "like a doctor who should not treat one limb without considering the whole organism, one cannot help the poor if you only see the misery of the individual without considering the situation of the whole organism, the situation of the whole family."<sup>361</sup> In addition, she urged that economic knowledge needed to be grounded in historical knowledge. The analysis of societies' organization over time enabled a deeper understanding of economic structures as socially constructed rather than a universal, natural law.<sup>362</sup>

Salomon conceptualized economic and social learning not as purely theoretical, however. Continuing the practical work that had been at the center of the Groups for Social Assistance's work from the beginning, she insisted that learning through experience and through "doing" was constitutive for social learning as well. Here, too, she drew from her own experience. One of

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<sup>359</sup> Alice Salomon, "Die Entfaltung der Persönlichkeit und die sozialen Pflichten der Frau" [The development of personality and the social responsibilities of the woman], *Die Frau* 12, no. 12 (1905), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 256.

<sup>360</sup> Alice Salomon, "Ausbildung zur sozialen Hilfsarbeit" [Training for social assistance work], *Centralblatt des Bundes deutscher Frauenvereine* 6, no. 21 (1905), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 246.

<sup>361</sup> Salomon, "Ausbildung zur sozialen Hilfsarbeit," 245.

<sup>362</sup> Salomon, "Ausbildung zur sozialen Hilfsarbeit," 246.

Salomon's early projects in the Groups for Social Assistance was the Working Girls' Club, a program that offered working girls a space in which could recover from their strenuous eleven-hour workday in "clean, warm, and bright rooms."<sup>363</sup> The Club aimed to serve three goals: (1) to provide immediate relief for working girls, (2) to offer learning possibilities for middle-class women, and (3) to connect women across classes. The last goal, especially, produced considerable ambiguities, as funding and planning power was exclusively in the hands of the social workers and concerns about working girls' moral behavior guided the project. An article from 1900, published in a social welfare journal, illustrated how at times Salomon constructed the middle-class social workers as morally superior, for example when she warned against the "serious moral, health, and also economic damage that can grow from the misguided desire for pleasure," and praised how the Groups for Social Assistance offered "animating occupation and relationships with understanding, warm, and educated people" (meaning herself and her bourgeois co-workers).<sup>364</sup>

Reflecting on her work with the Club in her autobiography, Salomon critically remarked that the educational benefit for middle-class women probably outweighed the support it provided for working girls. She wrote that her attempt to impose middle-class culture on working-class girls was somewhat ill-guided and she was unsure if "the factory girls gained more than material advantages."<sup>365</sup> That inequality between classes was real, however, was part of the learning experience Salomon hoped to provide in the Groups for Social Assistance. She hoped that in-the-field training helped students to "guide the view from the narrow to the broad and from the

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<sup>363</sup> Alice Salomon, "Klubs und Erholungsheime für jugendliche Arbeiter" [Clubs and recreation homes for young workers], *Die Jugendfürsorge* 1, no. 9 (1900), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 68.

<sup>364</sup> Salomon, "Klubs und Erholungsheime," 69.

<sup>365</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 29.

abstract to the concrete,” so that the women could see that they could not solve the social question not just through individual social work but that structural problems also needed to be addressed.<sup>366</sup>

As other authors have shown, Salomon’s concept reflected some of the pragmatist ideas produced in British and American settlement work, visible especially in her intentional combination of theory and praxis.<sup>367</sup> She had indeed visited Toynbee Hall, a settlement house in London, in 1896 and had reported about it, and she also published articles about American women’s settlement work in German women’s and social welfare journals.<sup>368</sup> The settlement house idea, however, was not directly applicable to the very different political and social conditions in Germany. For one, German cities were organized very differently, and neighborhoods were not as socio-economically homogeneous as their British or American counterparts.<sup>369</sup> Secondly, Germany’s conservative parenting culture made it impossible for young, middle-class women to leave their homes and move elsewhere, let alone in areas deemed physically or morally dangerous.<sup>370</sup>

Feustel remarks, however, that pragmatism was just one of the philosophical influences on Salomon’s theory-praxis approach.<sup>371</sup> German idealism, especially the work of philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, certainly played a role in Salomon’s thinking as well. It is visible, for example, in Salomon’s emphasis on the importance of critical thinking and on the understanding

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<sup>366</sup> Salomon, “Was die Mädchengruppen bedeuten,” 209.

<sup>367</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 48; and Schröder and Schüler, “In Labor Alone is Happiness,” 130.

<sup>368</sup> Alice Salomon, “Settlementsbewegung und Gruppen für soziale Hilfsarbeit” [Settlement movement and the Groups for Social Assistance], *Die Jugendfürsorge* 2, no. 8 (1901), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 79–85; Salomon, “Soziale Hilfsfähigkeit” *Soziale Frauenpflichten* (Berlin, 1902), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 109–21.

<sup>369</sup> Salomon, “Soziale Hilfsfähigkeit,” 118.

<sup>370</sup> Schröder and Schüler, “In Labor Alone Is Happiness,” 136.

<sup>371</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 54–56.

of the world informed by observation, and vice versa—the need to test and adjust thinking in the light of practical application. Quoting Goethe’s protagonist Wilhelm Meister, Salomon explains that “thinking and doing, doing and thinking . . . both has to move back and forth like breathing in and out,” and that “one should not happen without the other.”<sup>372</sup>

Training in economics was central to Salomon’s social education concept in her work with the Groups for Social Assistance. Since she understood social science knowledge as grounded in theory, observance, and application, her curriculum included theoretical and practical parts. Building on her own biography, in which social and economic knowledge provided her with the key to position herself in relation to others and gain civic agency, she imagined middle-class young women as mediators between classes, who, equipped with social and economic knowledge, offered their labor in service of the greater good while also finding purpose. In praxis, however, the powerful difference between middle-class and working-class women made such collaboration unequal from the beginning and limited Salomon’s vision of collaboration. Moreover, the Groups for Social Assistance could never fully shake that they were initiated as a project in which male social reformers hoped to mobilize middle-class women for male social reform efforts with the goal of gaining control over working women in the hopes of averting social crisis.

***“Labor Loomed High on My Social-Work Horizon”: Studying and Reconciling Labor Conflict, 1894–1903***

Salomon’s educational concept for the Groups for Social Assistance and her subsequent efforts to institutionalize women’s social education developed alongside her expertise in

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<sup>372</sup> Salomon, “Ausbildung zur sozialen Hilfsarbeit,” 244.

economics. Between 1896 and 1906, when she graduated with a PhD in economics, she immersed herself in labor studies, a field that was particularly open for women. Intellectually driven but formally barred from entering a university program because of her gender, Salomon immersed herself in British and American studies, read works from the likes of Charles Booth, Sidney Webb, and Beatrice Webb, and grounded her analysis in astute observations and rigorous data collection. Indirectly connected with the Historical School through the Groups for Social Assistance's close collaboration with Berlin's social reform movement, she emulated the historical method and historically situated her analyses—an approach that helped her highlight the malleability of socio-economic structures and their openness to change over time.

Salomon regularly published articles that conveyed the dire situation of workers, often putting the spotlight on specific areas such as child labor, the situation of waitresses in the restaurant industry, or women's working conditions in the textile and chocolate industries.<sup>373</sup> The articles were written in accessible language, combined individual “real-life” examples with more abstract, structural analysis and developed clear suggestions for possible paths forward. In an 1896 publication in the journal of the German Women's Clubs Association, for example, she presented the case of a working mother whose child drowned because of a lack of childcare. Pushing back against middle-class stereotypes that judged working women's lack of responsibility, Salomon explained how the individual tragedy was a result of unfair structures

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<sup>373</sup> Alice Salomon, “Kinderarbeit in Fabriken” [Child Labor in Factories], *Die Frau* 7 (1899/1900), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 17–28; Alice Salomon, “Die Kellnerinnenfrage auf dem Fachkongress der Gastwirts-Gehilfen” [The Waitresses Question at the Restaurant Staff's Congress], *Centralblatt des Bundes Deutscher Frauenvereine* 1 (1900), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 46–50; and Alice Salomon, “Arbeitsverhältnisse in den Schokoladenfabriken” [Work Conditions in Chocolate Factories], *Soziale Praxis* 14, no. 13 (1904), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 241–43.

and thus redirected the reader's attention to the responsibility of the employer and a society that tolerated such conditions.<sup>374</sup>

Salomon's labor research reflected the "conciliatory" character of social work, that is, she hoped that social work could mediate between classes. She applied similar ethics to her labor studies. Following the combination of a historical approach, a value-driven framework, and rigorous empirical methods proposed by the Historical School, she hoped her work contributed to the amelioration of class conflict. When the perhaps biggest labor dispute of early twentieth-century Germany erupted in Crimmitschau, Saxony, in 1903, Salomon traveled there to report on the five-months-long strike of textile industry workers. She published two consecutive articles about the strike, in which she sided firmly with workers and unions. Grounding her thoughts in a thorough analysis that explored the arguments of both sides, she compared the strike in Crimmitschau with those in other regions and thoroughly described the workers' miserable situation.<sup>375</sup> Salomon ended her article with a plea for the ten-hour-workday, arguing that the fight had become solely about power and was bare of any logic. The cost of the strike for employers, she showed, now by far outweighed the extra cost of reduced work time, and the systemic damage to the economy loomed large. Salomon's attempts to enable mutual understanding and to mediate between the parties as well as her call to action, however, were not successful. Migrant workers poured into the city, and factory owners were able to reopen production on their conditions, keeping the eleven-hour day and letting go of 500 workers.

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<sup>374</sup> Alice Salomon, "Das Kaiser- und Kaiserin-Friedrich-Kinderheim in Bornstedt" [The Emperor and Empress-Children's Home in Bornstedt], *Die Frau*, vol. 4 (1896/97), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 3–7.

<sup>375</sup> Alice Salomon, "Crimmitschau!" *Centralblatt des Bundes Deutscher Frauenvereine* 5 (1904), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 212–18; Alice Salomon, "Crimmitschau," *Soziale Praxis* 13 (1904), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 218–28.

Salomon's immersion in labor studies and her increasing knowledge about poor labor conditions made her more sympathetic to the workers' movement and open to socialist ideas. However, her focus on peaceful reform and reconciliation led her to reject Marxist theory. She continued to remain skeptical towards radical approaches to social change. When in the early twentieth century the head of the German Socialist Party, August Bebel, approached her to ask if she wanted to join the party, she declined. "I would not join a movement that rejected the principle of conciliation," she recalled in her autobiography.<sup>376</sup> At the same time she refused Manchester liberalism, which promoted laissez-faire politics, and thus politically she found herself between a rock and a hard place. "We had to contend with Liberals who wanted liberty for the strong to exploit the weak, Socialists who wanted a new order or nothing, Conservatives who were ready for concessions so long as they served their own aims," she described the situation in her autobiography.<sup>377</sup>

Rejecting both, big business-led capitalism and the kind of socialism that rested on the idea of revolution, Salomon found her political home in Germany's woman's movement. It was a space that allowed her to develop and apply an understanding of the individual and the community as interdependent and to see the pursuit of justice as a dynamic, conciliatory process. Despite her desire for mediation, however, no real collaboration between working and middle-class women never materialized. Unlike in the United States, where middle-class women and women workers developed alliances and collaborated in unions, at least to some degree, the rift in Germany's women's movement was deep. Working women organized under the umbrella of the Social Democratic Party, and their loyalty always stood with the party, despite its sexist

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<sup>376</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 42.

<sup>377</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 43.

structures, and not with the women's movement, resulting in socialist women's outright rejection of any form of collaboration with the bourgeois women's movement.

***“The Reasons for Unequal Pay Are Not Natural Law”: Doctoral Studies at the University of Berlin, 1902–1906***

After almost a decade of self-training, Salomon was finally admitted to the University of Berlin in 1902, where she studied economics, history, and philosophy. Despite Prussia's ban on women in higher education she was able to get permission to audit lectures. Personal connections and the cautious opening of the economics discipline to women helped her in this difficult endeavor. Else von Richthofen, who had graduated with a PhD in economics from the University of Heidelberg the year prior, personally encouraged her to apply. In addition, some of the professors already knew Salomon through their shared social reform work, and Professors Gustav Schmoller and Max Sering, especially, ensured that Salomon's publications and independent research counted as an equivalent for the formal secondary school degree she lacked. Berlin's Historical School had become increasingly interested in the work of women economists. As Marynel Ryan Van Zee explains, the school's male social scientists hoped that women would bring their “womanly” qualities to provide a more comprehensive look at the labor problem and get better access to study the women's workspaces.<sup>378</sup> Despite all of this support, however, Salomon continued to face formal obstacles as well as hostile behavior from faculty members and administrators but was finally able to graduate with a doctoral degree in economics in 1906.<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Van Zee, “Womanly Qualities,” 342.

<sup>379</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 44–45; and Kuhlmann, *Alice Salomon und der Beginn Sozialer Berufsausbildung*, 67–70.

Salomon's dissertation titled "The Causes of Inequality in Wages between Men and Women" was arguably the first feminist dissertation in Germany and most likely not exactly the kind of work the economists of the Historical School had envisioned.<sup>380</sup> They hoped that women social scientists would examine the "woman worker question" and deliver the data necessary to advance their social reform agenda in this area. While Salomon generally agreed that working women needed to be protected against exploitation and exhaustion, her research connected the "labor question" to the "woman question" in a much broader way. She asked why women's work was underpaid across class and professions rather than focusing exclusively on the working class. Using surveys, factory inspection reports and statistical data in combination with a historical analysis, she explored the effect of the modern economic order on gender roles. Vice versa, she examined how gender roles reinforced economic structures. Salomon demonstrated that the gender pay gap was not the result of direct (personal) discrimination by employers, but a product of culturally established gendered and classed economic structures. She argued that the modern economic order had propelled the separation of home and production, which made women responsible for (unpaid) care work and established the male breadwinner model. This, in turn, shortened or dismissed the necessity for women's job training, weakened women's mobility, and created an understanding that women's work was cheap labor in a profit-oriented business world.

Salomon did not exclusively subscribe to the Historical School. For her dissertation's theoretical framework, she used the theory of marginal utility, developed by the Austrian School of Economics. The two schools had been in a public feud over methods for most of the 1880s, but by the time Salomon wrote her dissertation the dispute had passed its peak and

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<sup>380</sup> Alice Salomon, *Die Ursachen der ungleichen Entlohnung von Männer- und Frauenarbeit* [*The causes of men and women's unequal pay*] (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1906).

scholars chose more freely between methods. The marginal theory proved to be particularly useful for Salomon's understanding of unequal pay as a socially constructed "vicious cycle," in which societal expectations—developed in tandem with economic structures—decreased the value of women's work, which then in turn influenced employers' decisions. Because wage inequality followed historically developed economic principles and not natural laws, Salomon argued that intervention was possible and necessary. However, Salomon stopped short of suggesting that housework should be paid work or that men should participate in it. Instead, she hoped change would come through new perceptions of women's work on the one hand, and the professionalization of women's work on the other hand. To support the latter, Salomon hoped to establish and secure women's leadership in women-specific work fields, including the washing, sewing, and cleaning industries. The strategy also informed her efforts to establish social work as a women's profession.<sup>381</sup>

Salomon's graduate training produced a general shift in her research interests that helped theoretically ground her efforts to professionalize social work and emancipated her work from the strong grip that male social reformers had on women's work. Where her early research had focused mostly on women workers, she now examined the effects of a gendered and classed economy on a diverse group of women. In 1908–9 she wrote a series of sixteen articles about "The Woman in Modern Economic Life" in the journal published by the *Association of German Women's Clubs*, where she laid out the history of the modern economy and the different forms of women's labor, ranging from urban and rural domestic work to craft and trade work, industrial work, and public service.<sup>382</sup> She further examined the

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<sup>381</sup> Salomon, *Die Ursachen der ungleichen Entlohnung*, 129–30.

<sup>382</sup> Alice Salomon, "Die Frau im modernen Wirtschaftsleben" [The woman in the modern economy], a series of articles in *Neue Bahnen* 1908–1909; reprinted in Adriane Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation und Soziale Verantwortung, Ausgewählte Schriften*, Band 2, 1908–1918 (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 2000), 3–53.

responsibilities and problems of women consumers, debated the consequences of cartels on women's work and elaborated on the significance and role of women as taxpayers. In these articles, Salomon reiterated her analysis of gender wage inequality, maintained earlier calls for work hour reductions for women and protective laws for mothers, and emphasized once more the economic value of women's reproductive work in the house.

Salomon's broader view on gender and labor encouraged her to understand women as economic agents, which added an economic dimension to her concept of women's citizenship, even as she clearly identified the oppressive effects of the modern economy on women. To make informed economic decisions, she proposed that women needed to be educated about the interdependencies of the local and national economies. As consumers who made daily decisions for their households, she explained, women held much power.<sup>383</sup> By explaining local and global economic interdependencies, she drew a roadmap for women to navigate the highly complex landscape of social and economic relations, for example by showing how tariff politics were directly relevant to their household decisions.<sup>384</sup>

Although Salomon was driven by a desire to create understanding for women's different work conditions and to establish solidarity between working and middle-class women, she could not shed her hierarchical thinking that granted middle- and upper-class women intellectual and cultural superiority. She spoke, for example, of the "lowest cultural class" in which she argued that only a little amount of housework needed to be done because of limited resources, and that "higher classes" in which housework was more extensive because women had to oversee and manage more goods and tasks.<sup>385</sup> Reflective of the progressive narrative which framed bourgeois

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<sup>383</sup> Salomon, "Die Frau im modernen Wirtschaftsleben," 36–37.

<sup>384</sup> Salomon, "Die Frau im modernen Wirtschaftsleben," 42–43.

<sup>385</sup> Salomon, "Die Frau im modernen Wirtschaftsleben," 12.

culture as “developed” and working-class culture as “backward,” Salomon’s analysis of women’s work perpetuated class differences by attaching a higher economic value to bourgeois women’s reproductive work. Moreover, she elevated middle-class women’s capacity for emotional and moral work and dismissed working-class and rural women’s care work as less culturally valuable. Salomon wrote, for example, about women farmers: “Also, the motherly responsibilities usually are, despite the usual high number of kids, not very absorbing. Maybe the children are born under less pain than women who are physically less fit. But they also put forth less care towards their children. The feeling of responsibility for the produced life is usually not very high; they face death with a certain degree of indifference.”<sup>386</sup> Although statements like this are rare in Salomon’s portrayal of working women, they show that she did not completely break away from social work’s origin story which connected middle-class women’s civic agency with the protection of working-class women.

In addition to a renewed focus on gender and labor, Salomon’s graduate studies helped her rethink and theoretically ground the ethical framework for social work. In addition to the economic expertise, she had gathered theological insight during her graduate studies as well. While studying at the University of Berlin she regularly attended the lectures of Adolf Harnack, professor of the History of Christian religion, who further shaped the ethics of care that had guided her work from the beginning.<sup>387</sup> Harnack challenged ahistorical, dogmatic readings of the gospels and called for an adjustment of religious-ethical practices to the modern society, which resonated with Salomon who had long been skeptical of calls for private charity. Salomon believed that the industrialized capitalist economy produced

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<sup>386</sup> Salomon, “Die Frau im modernen Wirtschaftsleben,” 10.

<sup>387</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 109–11.

structural inequality that left whole groups of people poor, and that injustice needed to be structurally addressed.<sup>388</sup> The ahistorical understanding of Christian ethics had consequences for education, Salomon argued further. Clearly, religious education in Germany had not generated the kind of moral responsibility (especially not amongst the wealthy) required to solve social problems. Salomon believed that a modernized education in which science-guided understanding of poverty incited social responsibility and guided ethical praxis would be more effective.<sup>389</sup>

Salomon's insistence that charity needed to be replaced by a vision of social justice was not solely driven by her Protestant schooling, as Feustel illustrates, but incorporated elements of Jewish ethics as well. Although she only occasionally referred to Jewish traditions in her writings, as she did for example in a welfare guide from 1921, Feustel shows that Salomon integrated the Jewish concept of social justice, *tzedakah*, in her work, which further propped up her focus on justice instead of charity.<sup>390</sup> "The Hebrew language does not know the word *Barmherzigkeit* [charity] in the sense of the German language," Salomon wrote in 1921, "but only has one word, one term that means justice as the source of care."<sup>391</sup> Such understanding, Salomon argued further, put welfare on a much broader basis and allowed to frame state intervention, such as workers' protection laws, as a means to create social justice on a structural level, rather than perform charitable acts towards the individual.

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<sup>388</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 103.

<sup>389</sup> Alice Salomon, "Die soziale Ausbildung in der Frauenschule" [The social training in the Women's School], in Alice Salomon, *Soziale Frauenbildung* (Leipzig und Berlin: Verlag B.G. Teubner, 1908).

<sup>390</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 106–7.

<sup>391</sup> Alice Salomon, "Die sittlichen Grundlagen und Ziele der Wohlfahrtspflege," [The moral foundation and goals of welfare], *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des 37. Deutschen Fürsorgetages des Deutschen Vereins für öffentliche und private Fürsorge am 28. und 29. Oktober 1921 in Weimar* [Report about the negotiations of the 37th German Welfare Day of the German Association for public and private welfare on October 28 and 29 in Weimar]; cited in Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 106.

*Professionalizing Women's Work: Training in Economics at the Social Women's School, 1908–1914*

Salomon's analysis of economic and social relations, especially as they pertained to gender and labor, fundamentally shaped her biggest educational project: The Social Women's School. The interdenominational school opened in October of 1908, two years after Salomon had received her doctoral degree. After years of preparation and advocacy, Prussian school reform propelled Salomon's plans to open a school, and she was able to put the educational concept she had developed over a decade's work with the Groups for Social Assistance in solid institutional form. Her educational goals remained similar: She wanted to provide young women of the middle classes with a social education that prepared them for volunteer and professional social work, and for citizenship. On the school's opening day Salomon declared that the school would teach the students to understand "the bigger contexts of our community life, . . . the inseparable relations between the owning and non-owning classes, . . . the economic and cultural development of our nation and the link between poverty and responsibility."<sup>392</sup>

Young women, Salomon explained, needed a "modern education" that differed from the purely aesthetic and abstract education that young women had received in their school education heretofore—without relevance for the real, practical problems of the world that resulted from economic injustices.<sup>393</sup> Salomon's educational concept stood in sharp contrast to the newly introduced public women's schools that opened in the same year.<sup>394</sup> School reform, Salomon explained, demanded a "new education without giving up the old" and sought to "prepare girls for citizenship duties without making them citizens." It supported, she continued, a mostly

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<sup>392</sup> Salomon, "Zur Eröffnung der Sozialen Frauenschule," 481.

<sup>393</sup> Salomon, "Zur Eröffnung der Sozialen Frauenschule," 482.

<sup>394</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the Prussian school reform see for example, James C. Albisetti, "Compromise and Containment."

aesthetic education and, at the most, trained students to become “charitable women” of the old times and not the socially educated women that she had in mind.<sup>395</sup> Salomon’s critique of the public women’s schools was moderate in tone, but in hindsight, after she had seen the Nazi’s rise to power, she called the school reforms “reactionary.”<sup>396</sup> While she had already pointed out that her own understanding of women’s citizenship was conceptually different from that of the Prussian state, her retrospective critique took on a sharper form when she saw that a concept of citizenship, which was rooted solely in women’s roles as wives and mothers, was conducive of fascist structures.

At the time, however, Salomon herself used a rather state-centered rhetoric to promote her school. This stemmed partly from German social reformers’ general belief in state intervention, which Salomon shared, and partly from a need to appease the public, including the parents of potential students. Salomon responded to parents’ fears about their daughters’ fate in rapidly changing circumstances, when their traditional expectations of a “higher daughter’s” place in the family were confronted with new ideas of the professional woman. Moreover, anxieties that their daughters could remain unmarried and without financial security ran high due to the demographic surplus of women in the early twentieth century.<sup>397</sup> Salomon reassured parents that education and engagement in social work would only strengthen young women’s

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<sup>395</sup> Alice Salomon, “Das Projekt der Frauenschule [The Project of the Women’s School],” *Frauenbildung, Zeitschrift für die gesamten Interessen des weiblichen Unterrichtwesens* 8 (1909), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 2, 54.

<sup>396</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 70.

<sup>397</sup> Catherine L. Dollard, *The Surplus Woman: Unmarried in Imperial Germany, 1871–1918* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009).

filial and future maternal responsibilities.<sup>398</sup> She extolled that to make girls “healthy, productive, and happy,” they needed to be educated.<sup>399</sup>

Salomon continued to emphasize the centrality of economics not just in her school but for all women’s schools now implemented through school reform. “The social science subjects should ideally be a fully comprehensive piece not reduced to one to two hours per week or to half of the school year but be the center of the curriculum over a long period of time,” she wrote.<sup>400</sup> She suggested four subjects contributed to the kind of social knowledge she envisioned: economics, government studies, social ethics, and social pedagogy. “Economics,” Salomon wrote, “is now in first place, because it is the most essential for all social thinking; for fair action towards the people with whom life sets us in relation with.”<sup>401</sup> Salomon reiterated the importance of social and economic awareness for the development of social responsibility but now emphasized the importance of social science knowledge for critical thinking. Only when young women were educated enough to truly understand the complex economic relations at the root of these social problems, Salomon argued, were they able to come to their own conclusions and could respond rationally and adequately to the “political agitation” coming from conservative and socialist parties.

To reach this level of understanding, Salomon suggested an economics curriculum that taught the long history of modern economics, with a closer look at the history of the nineteenth century, including industrialization and the development of big industries, as well as the development of class and gender in the economy. A pioneer in the field of teaching economics in

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<sup>398</sup> Salomon, “Jugend- und Arbeitserinnerungen,” 383–402.

<sup>399</sup> Alice Salomon, “Was sollen wir mit unseren Töchtern anfangen?” [What should we do with our daughters?], *Die Welt der Frau* 28 (1908): 433–34, reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 2, 456.

<sup>400</sup> Salomon, “Soziale Ausbildung,” 382.

<sup>401</sup> Salomon, “Soziale Ausbildung,” 382.

a women's school, Salomon textbooks or other teaching materials were not readily available. In response, she published her own textbook, *Introduction to Economics*, in 1908. The book was in high demand and was republished in multiple new editions until the late 1920s.<sup>402</sup> In short chapters and accessible language, Salomon laid out what constituted the basic knowledge necessary to understand economic and social relations in Germany. It included definitions of important terms, and indicative for her human-centered approach to economics, she started with the term "need." The term was also foundational for her concept of social justice: It was based on the primacy and dignity of human existence and therefore linked to the ability to cover basic and advanced individual needs.<sup>403</sup> It further encompassed not just individual but also the collective needs as a nation.<sup>404</sup>

### ***Educating the Public about Women's Work: Exhibitions on Women and Labor, 1906 and 1912***

Salomon's educational vision went beyond her work with students. As a social reformer, she also strongly believed in the education of the public as a means for social change. Two important major pedagogical projects she oversaw in this context were exhibitions on women and labor, one in 1906 and one in 1912, both in Berlin. The first one, the called the "Home-Production Exhibit" (Heimarbeits-Ausstellung), was organized in collaboration with politicians and university professors, amongst them economics professor

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<sup>402</sup> Alice Salomon, *Einführung in die Volkswirtschaftslehre* [Introduction to Economics] (Berlin und Leipzig: Teubner Verlag, 1909).

<sup>403</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 141; also discussed in Staub-Bernasconi, "Unterschiede im Theorieverhältnis von Sozialarbeit/Sozialpädagogik: Auf der Spurensuche nach einem gesellschaftlichen Geschlechterverhältnis," [Differences in the theoretical relationship between social work and social pedagogy: searching for societal gender relations], in *Sozialpädagogik and Geschlechterverhältnis 1900 und 2000* [Social pedagogy and gender relations 1900 and 2000] (Berlin: Alice-Salomon Fachhochschule, 2002), 35–45.

<sup>404</sup> Salomon, *Einführung in die Volkswirtschaftslehre*, 2.

Gustav Schmoller, and sought to bring attention to the miserable living conditions of home-production workers. The exhibition was intentionally hosted in the space of Berlin's Academy of the Arts to attract a middle-class audience *and* to juxtapose the conditions of women workers with the privileged world of the middle class. The tension that arose from the two worlds colliding, Salomon hoped, would bring awareness to the effects of a capitalist economy on women workers and expose how the comfort of the middle-class hinged on the exploitation of workers. To such ends, the exhibition displayed goods produced by homeworkers alongside production time and price, so that visitors could calculate the wage.<sup>405</sup>

The second exhibition, held in 1912, titled "The Woman in the House and the Workplace" (the woman in the house and the workplace) was a direct response to the public's increasing skepticism towards women's work outside of the house, specifically middle-class women's increasing access to the professions. Salomon addressed the backlash women experienced with a comprehensive display of women's work that intentionally included women's paid and unpaid, productive and reproductive work in and outside of the house and across class and cultures. The exhibits ranged from teaching visitors about women's work in the industries, crafts, nursing, education, higher education, agriculture, housekeeping, service, women's organizations, parenting and more.<sup>406</sup> She hoped the exhibit would display the value of women's work in Germany in its diversity and showcase its massive value to the economy and society. It was therefore important for her to show not only outstanding pieces of women's work but also the broad variety of women's daily work, visible and invisible. By

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<sup>405</sup> Alice Salomon, "Was lehrt die Heimarbeitsausstellung" [What does the home-production exhibit teach us], *Centralblatt des Bundes Deutscher Frauenvereine*, vol. 7 (1906), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 1, 304–8.

<sup>406</sup> Alice Salomon, "Zur Eröffnung der Ausstellung 'Die Frau in Haus und Beruf'" [For the opening of the exhibit "the woman in house and profession"], *Centralblatt des Bundes Deutscher Frauenvereine* 13, no. 22 (1912), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 2, 199–208.

demonstrating how women's work both in and outside of the house were part of women's economic and cultural contributions, Salomon thought that women's roles in society would become more tangible and the need for the professionalization of women's work would be understood better.

***“To Prepare for Peace During the War”: Safeguarding Women's Education During World War I***

The outbreak of World War I violently disrupted Salomon's personal and professional life and forced her to adjust her economic research and educational work. Aptly, the onset of the war caught the internationally minded social worker and women's rights' activist while traveling. Alarmed by the threat of an impending war, Salomon had rushed to Ireland to get a signature from the president of the International Council of Women (ICW), Lady Ishbel Aberdeen. The organization that connected national women's organizations across the Western world had played an important role in Salomon's life ever since she attended the ICW Congress in London in 1899 and had joined the board as secretary in 1909. With the borders now closed, she was trapped in Ireland for months, which only strengthened her ties with Aberdeen and the international community and furthered her belief in global unity and peace.

When Salomon was finally able to return to Germany in September of 1914, it was exactly her international and pacifist spirit that caused massive backlash, with real consequences for her work. During her absence, a “hurrah-patriotism” had swept away big parts of the German public, including many of Salomon's colleagues at the Social Women's School and in women's organizations. Her international work was now met with great hostility. The Association of German Women's Clubs publicly condemned her efforts to attend the Women's Peace Conference in The Hague were publicly condemned by and she had to cancel her travel plans to

keep her position on the board. At the same time, the war also seriously endangered Salomon's efforts to institutionalize women's education. The urge to participate in national war efforts drove young women to abandon schools and vocational education in droves, and she rushed to do damage-control.

Salomon sought to counteract women's abandonment of their education with a mixture of essentialist, moral and economic arguments, delivered in often patriotic language. War was a "men's affair," she explained in an article from 1915, and young girls needed protection from the sexualized physical and moral danger of the war. Men died so that women could live, she continued, and it was therefore women's national duty to serve the common good in the best way possible. Salomon introduced a distinctly economic rationale for women's reorientation in the war situation and argued that it would hurt the national economy if young women wasted their value as future, trained workers for short-time war-work, for which they were of not much use anyways (with no medical or technical training).<sup>407</sup> Although (emotional) patriotism incited in young women the urge to directly participate in the war efforts, she argued that their professional work skills were more essential for the post-economy and future of society and thus needed to be protected. Women, she claimed, kept "spinning the threads of the professional and intellectual life that men now have to let pause."<sup>408</sup> Salomon further suggested that women also needed to maintain the morality that the war threatened to destroy not just for their own protection but also in preparation of the return of the soldiers. Anticipating a difficult process of reintegration, Salomon made women aware of their roles in the moral and emotional post-war economy.

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<sup>407</sup> Salomon, "Die weibliche Jugend im Krieg" [The female youth during the war], *Die Frauenfrage: Zentralblatt des Bundes Deutscher Frauenvereine* 17, no. 16 (1915), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 2, 379.

<sup>408</sup> Salomon, "Die weibliche Jugend im Krieg," 380.

On a practical work level, after weighing her options, Salomon agreed to lead the National Women's War Service in her province, the war welfare center of Brandenburg, which directly involved her in the war efforts.<sup>409</sup> During Salomon's absence, the military administration had negotiated with the leadership of the Association of German Women's Clubs, and they had agreed to collaborate and participate in war efforts through the coordination of women's work. The National Women's War Service placed women in civil war work such as phone service, administration, kitchens, or work in munition factories. Salomon struggled with the decision to assume this position. What eventually swayed her decision was that it allowed her to take some control over the forms of war responses and women's role in it. While she ultimately made herself an active supporter of war efforts through this, the decision was pragmatic and is testament to her double strategy of protecting women's leadership in social work while also serving the needs of the German people. Certainly, Salomon's rhetoric in her publications and practical work at the time did not directly reflect the sharp criticism of militarism she later displayed in her autobiographical accounts.<sup>410</sup>

Salomon also strategically used the disruption the war had caused and urged Germans to change long-standing patterns of thinking. She hoped that the war, at the very least, would lead Germans to revisit community-oriented values and become more critical of individualistic tendencies. She also hoped that Germans would critically examine their economic behavior and reconsider consumption culture, especially the need for luxury goods, in the light of deprivation and suffering as well as a declining economy. Salomon openly rejected the call of "a number of

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<sup>409</sup> Kuhlmann, *Alice Salomon und der Beginn Sozialer Berufsausbildung*, 123.

<sup>410</sup> Wieler argues that Salomon's perspective changed through the experience in Nazi-Germany, but Feustel counters that Salomon wrote about this already in her autobiographical notes from 1926; see Feustel, "Nachwort" [Epilogue] in Adriane Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation und Soziale Verantwortung, Ausgewählte Schriften*, Band 3, 1919–1948 (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 2004), 520.

politicians, national economists, intellectuals, industrialists, [and] leaders of our people” who argued that a functioning economy relied on continued consumption.<sup>411</sup> In this moment of crisis, she asserted that it was a “total distortion of the values and terms of economics to assume that humans existed to ensure particular businesses or industries.” Instead, she showed that the war had made it clear that the economy needed to serve the people and not the other way around, and that the myth that the luxurious lifestyle of the rich was necessary for a healthy economy needed to be dismantled.<sup>412</sup>

Salomon also used the effects of the war as a teaching moment on gender and labor, as the war heavily changed economic gender relations. Women now started to fill in for the missing male labor force in agriculture, industrial production, trade, transportation, and other fields of work, and often became the sole breadwinners in their families. Salomon used this phenomenon to argue against essentialist takes on women’s labor, showing that women were successfully able to fill almost all work areas that had previously been occupied by men. However, she did not fundamentally challenge the existing gender order, but appeased readers by conceding that this would not lead to the complete transformation of gender roles. Rhetorically she walked a fine line, assuring that women would return to their original responsibilities once the men came back, while also deliberately leaving the door open for women who wanted or needed to continue their career paths.

Overall, Salomon concluded, the experience of the war economy had made millions of women aware of their work abilities. Not only did they understand the monetary and social value of their labor—often for the first time—they also gained economic agency and identified

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<sup>411</sup> Alice Salomon, “Krieg und Luxus,” *Die Frau* 22 (1914/15): 708–18, reprinted in Adriane Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 2, 370.

<sup>412</sup> Salomon, “Krieg und Luxus,” 370.

themselves as part of the nation through their work. This knowledge, she claimed, would make it easy for women to find productive, non-competitive ways to cooperate with the men once they came back from the war.<sup>413</sup> She further hoped that the changes in the economy could stimulate new women-led industries and help fill gaps in the economy. Salomon was specifically interested to show that the increase in women's gainful work would not drive down wages, reiterating an argument she had previously articulated in her academic writings.<sup>414</sup> Most importantly, perhaps, she understood this moment of crisis as an opportunity for a collective reckoning about values and goals: if something good came from the war, it was that the nation realized how collective action and individual wellness were intimately connected and that the business-oriented, laissez-faire capitalism was not sustainable in the face of war.

### ***Tumultuous New Beginnings: Rethinking Women's Education After the War, 1918–1920***

In November of 1918, the population's constant suffering from the war and Germany's impending defeat escalated into powerful civil unrest, resulting in the replacement of Germany's constitutional monarchy by a democratic parliamentary republic known as the Weimar Republic. While a strong socialist movement had propelled these events, the moderate wing within the social democratic party ultimately prevailed in the tumultuous end of the war. Radical socialist ideas were pushed aside, and the revolutionary energy was funneled into social reform. Still, a good number of socialist goals were accomplished: women received the right to vote, and many of the new labor laws honored the demands of the labor movement. Employers and unions formed the Central Joint Committee (Zentrale Arbeitsgemeinschaft) immediately after the war,

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<sup>413</sup> Alice Salomon, "Die Berufsarbeit der Frau im Kriege" [Women's professional work during the war], *Frauendienst im Kriege* (Berlin, 1916), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 2, 399.

<sup>414</sup> Salomon, "Die Berufsarbeit der Frau im Kriege," 397.

in which the two groups sought to cooperate on labor questions such as arbitration and collective bargaining. The Ministry of Labor introduced the eight-hour day and workers joined unions in high numbers. Salomon considered the new labor laws a great success. She celebrated the establishment of the *Central Joint Committee*, which she called an outstanding example of “industrial democracy” in her autobiography, stating that “it was a Magna Carta of labor, a triumph of social reform.”<sup>415</sup>

The November revolution of 1918 and the shifting political grounds in post-war Germany renewed heated discussions about socialism and urged Salomon, who was still shaken by the war, to reevaluate her ideas on socialism. In the hopes to create unity, she sought to turn the conflict between those in favor of the revolution and those in fear of Soviet-style communism into a productive discussion about values. In a piece published in a women’s journal from 1919, she discussed the position of social workers who, on the basis of their work experiences, anticipated that class struggle and communist revolution, in other words, putting the working class in power, would not automatically erase social problems and human hardship. At the same time, they also feared that radical individualism and an economic laissez faire system would seriously increase social problems. “One has to generally choose between individualism and socialism,” she stated, and “as a living, feeling human” she knew this could not be individualism.<sup>416</sup> She thought social work needed to line up behind the community-oriented, relational values of socialism, even if opinions about the strategies to change the capitalist order differed. If capitalist techniques were thought to be adequate tools, she argued, they had to be put in service of socialism. Instead of the rule of the workers, Salomon therefore reconceptualized

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<sup>415</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 128.

<sup>416</sup> Alice Salomon, “Soziale Arbeit and Sozialismus” [Social work and socialism], *Die Frau* 26, no. 9 (1919), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 3, 38–39.

socialism as “the rule of social justice” and the task of social workers was to “replace the idea of class struggle with the idea of human solidarity.”<sup>417</sup>

In addition to her efforts to strengthen social workers’ identity in politically contentious times, Salomon also pushed for women’s political education. The proclamation of the Weimar Republic in November of 1918 had brought the enfranchisement of women, much to the surprise of many men and women.<sup>418</sup> Salomon realized that women’s political education was of immediate urgency as women now suddenly built the majority of voters, and as such they were heavily mobilized by political parties from both ends of the spectrum. Salomon feared that many women were not prepared for their new civic responsibilities and needed to be equipped to hold their ground against demagogical agitation. Still, she was confident that suffrage was an opportunity for women’s increasing civic agency now that they had additional, powerful tools to work towards change. If prepared, Salomon hoped that women’s collective entry into the public and political realm would advance a spirit of care, connectedness, and community in politics and help counteract the ideas of ruthless competition and profit.

Although women’s suffrage was based on the idea of universal rights, including gender-equality, Salomon still used a rationale based on gender difference for women’s citizenship as she continued to seek women’s control over the field of social work. Her rhetoric was only partly grounded in essentialist assumptions about the nature of women, however. Salomon argued that women’s care-oriented thinking was rooted in historically developed gender roles that had been propelled by industrialization. In a booklet published in 1919, Salomon linked the quality of

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<sup>417</sup> Salomon, “Soziale Arbeit und Sozialismus,” 40.

<sup>418</sup> Julia Sneeringer, *Winning Women’s Votes: Propaganda and Politics in Weimar Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2002).

women's thought to their position in the modern capitalist economy.<sup>419</sup> She explained that direct participation in a capitalist economy had shaped a competitive and individualistic mindset in men (at least in those in positions of economic power). Women on the other hand, who had historically been primarily concerned with reproductive work, only indirectly profited from the reckless focus on competition and the accumulation of wealth, but the corresponding ideology had not taken over their thinking and inner being to the degree it had done in men. She hoped that women's historical exposure to care work had made them skeptical towards the destructive nature of a profit-oriented ideology. If women were able to carry an ideology of care into politics, and "grow into politics with their *inner* [sic] being," she hoped they could expose the close connection between business and politics that supported individual greed and fueled the war.<sup>420</sup>

The atmosphere of new beginnings in post-war Germany and the political and ideological reorganization that the newly implemented democracy brought also helped Salomon to advance a project she had envisioned for a long time: a program for women workers at her Social Women's School. After decades of hardened fronts and non-communication between the Bourgeois and the Socialist women's movements, workers' representatives now agreed to work with Salomon and government institutions to create a social work program specifically for women workers. Salomon's Social Women's School spearheaded a six-months-long, fully funded, full-time training in 1920.<sup>421</sup> That working-class women were able to enter a women's school was

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<sup>419</sup> Alice Salomon, *Die deutsche Frau und ihre Aufgaben im neuen Volksstaat [The German woman and her tasks in the new nation]* (Leipzig und Berlin: Teubner, 1919), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 3, 3–24.

<sup>420</sup> Salomon, "Die deutsche Frau und ihre Aufgaben," 21.

<sup>421</sup> Alice Salomon, "Schulung von Arbeiterinnen für Berufsarbeit in der Wohlfahrtspflege" [Training of women workers for professional work in welfare], *Concordia* 27 no. 3 (1920), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 3, 54–7.

unparalleled in Germany, and the project served as a pilot for other cities. The opening of the school also reflected a global development. In the United States, for example, a similar program opened in 1921 with Bryn Mawr College's summer school for women workers.<sup>422</sup>

Salomon and the planning committee saw the program as an interim solution until women workers would be regularly included in the school via a change in entry prerequisites. The evaluation of the pioneer program showed great results, and Salomon concluded that the women's life experiences compensated sufficiently for their lack of academic education.<sup>423</sup> Ultimately, the program helped push new entrance regulations for public women's schools which allowed more and more working-class students to join. By 1932, 30–40 percent of the Social Women's Schools' students entered with the secondary school degree typical for children of workers, indicating a growth in working class students.<sup>424</sup>

### ***Integrating Economics in a Multidisciplinary Approach: Social Work Education at the Social Women's School, 1921–1933***

Over the course of the interwar period, Salomon's research interest shifted once more. Navigating Germany's altered socio-economic conditions, the expansion of the welfare state, and the diversification of the social sciences into subdisciplines, she developed a multidisciplinary approach to social problems in which economics remained important but lost its preeminent position. While the Weimar Republic had brought new labor laws and the promise of a functioning democracy, the situation in Germany became increasingly difficult. Soon, inflation

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<sup>422</sup> Hilda Worthington Smith, *Women Workers at the Bryn Mawr Summer School* (New York City: Affiliated Summer Schools for Women Workers in Industries and American Association for Adult Education, 1929).

<sup>423</sup> Alice Salomon, *Bericht über den Sonderlehrgang* [Report about the special program], Alice Salomon Archive, Berlin.

<sup>424</sup> Kuhlmann, *Alice Salomon und der Beginn sozialer Berufsausbildung*, 145.

spiraled out of control, and in combination with impossible reparation demands imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, the German currency collapsed. All social reform measures could not prevent the dire economic situation in which Germans across class found themselves between 1921 and 1923, the years of hyperinflation.

As the head of the Social Women's School, Salomon faced a rapidly changing socio-economic landscape and a new quality of social problems, which required new knowledge and new social work methods. In Berlin and other cities, the war had left the population struggling with the trauma of war, the embarrassment of defeat, and a spiraling inflation that left both the working and the middle class without means. Immediately after the war, social work had gone into emergency mode and focused exclusively on direct material relief. When the long and brutal inflation came to an end in 1924, work became available again, but the war and inflation had lasting consequences for Germany's socio-economic order. New work opportunities for those who had previously been poor leveled out some of the previously existing class differences. At the same time, the psychological trauma of the war left others struggling and unable to create stable living conditions, generating a new class structure that was no longer strictly tied to family wealth and education. Consequently, old social work knowledge that had been based on labor studies and focused primarily on the effects of industrialization no longer applied to this situation.

The shift in Salomon's focus over the course of the 1920s corresponded with changes in the social reform movement. The implementation of new labor laws, the recognition of unions, and the expansion of the welfare state had taken the edge off the "labor question," and in combination with the reshaped class structure, these developments urged political movements and the social sciences to rethink their agenda. Social reform now became a project of the

democratic welfare state, in which the economic expertise formerly claimed by social reformers and delivered by political economists became obsolete. The middle-class social reformers of pre-war Germany, who had been intimately tied to the Imperial State, were unable to regain their leadership positions in Germany's new political landscape.<sup>425</sup>

The decreasing influence of the "old" cohort of social reformers went hand in hand with the declining power of the Historical School. The group had already started to disintegrate after the death of one of their leading thinkers, Gustav Schmoller, in 1917. It also found itself increasingly sidelined within a discipline that reorganized itself in the increasingly diversifying field of the social sciences and the changing job market.<sup>426</sup> Jobs to which economists had previously had easy access were now flooded with new applicants; returning soldiers entitled to be integrated into the job market and women social workers added to the surplus. In response, economists turned their attentions to new fields, propelled also by the reform of the educational system. As the welfare state with its institutions claimed authority over social reform, Van Zee explains, "economists had even more incentive to leave pre-war ideas behind and reorient their training towards the private sector."<sup>427</sup> Business-oriented economics, already in the making since the beginning of the century was on the rise now, and business schools opened across the country.

The diversification of the social sciences further marginalized labor studies as a field to which Salomon had significantly contributed. In the process of educational reform, sociology was fully established as a discipline and now absorbed many of the subjects that had previously been covered by the Historical School. However, leading sociologists emphasized theory-

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<sup>425</sup> Florian Tennstedt, "Sozialreform in Deutschland," *Zeitschrift für Sozialreform* 1 (1986): 18.

<sup>426</sup> Van Zee, "Shifting Foundations," 107.

<sup>427</sup> Van Zee, "Shifting Foundations," 107.

building and followed the rising positivist paradigm, which made them eager to disentangle science from policy-building and political efforts.<sup>428</sup> The loss of heterodox economic thought production, which had previously served as the scientific foundation for women's work and social work added another layer to Salomon's readjustment of social work research and education. It supported her turn towards a more dynamic, systemic view on social problems that combined economic, sociological, psychological, and pedagogical perspectives.

Salomon's international connections and her interest in other countries' social work approaches also heavily contributed to changes in her approach. In her efforts to professionalize social work in Weimar Republic Germany, Salomon drew extensively from ideas she gathered through her growing international social work networks. During the 1920s, Salomon traveled frequently abroad and published about her experiences in newspapers and women's and welfare journals.<sup>429</sup> She was especially impressed by American social work methods and reported extensively about them. Mary Richmond's *Social Diagnosis* was a fundamental influence on her work, and Salomon adapted her casework method to German conditions and introduced it to German social workers.<sup>430</sup> Salomon's own book *Soziale Diagnose* (Social diagnosis), published in 1926, was based on Richmond's work.<sup>431</sup>

Richmond's casework approach, often misrepresented as a direct application of a medical case approach to social work, proposed a systemic view on the individual as situated within a specific environment, but placed interventions on the individual level. Her work did not dismiss economics as a relevant discipline—in fact she considered structurally produced economic

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<sup>428</sup> Van Zee, "Shifting Foundations," 110.

<sup>429</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 135.

<sup>430</sup> Mary Richmond, *Social Diagnosis* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1917).

<sup>431</sup> Alice Salomon, *Soziale Diagnose* [Social diagnosis] (Berlin: Carl Heymann Verlag, 1926).

conditions as part of the context of a “social case”—but with the methods and scientific knowledge available to her, she foregrounded individuals and their relations, especially familial relations.<sup>432</sup> Richmond’s work provided Salomon with a theoretical framework for her multidisciplinary approach and a method specific to social work. In particular, it helped her redefine the relationship between social worker and client, as the method was grounded in an understanding of the client’s agency and the idea that clients needed to make their own decisions. Salomon had started to embrace a similar emphasis on individual agency since her doctoral studies.<sup>433</sup> However, Salomon’s use of social diagnosis and casework did not lead her to abandon her economic perspective. Instead, she insisted to see how both, individual and structural effects worked together and needed to be considered in social work.

The integration of Richmond’s casework approach helped Salomon bring together the German traditions of social work on the one hand, generated by Salomon and her colleagues in the tradition of poor relief programs, and social pedagogy on the other hand, an approach promoted by educational philosophers that highlighted social integration through pedagogical instruction. However, Salomon insisted that pedagogy could and should not replace social work and represent just one dimension of social work in addition to economic, health-related and all other conditions serving the welfare of people who cannot do so themselves.”<sup>434</sup> Still firmly

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<sup>432</sup> Susan Kemp, *Social Work and Systems of Knowledge: The Concept of Environment in Social Casework Theory, 1900–1983*, PhD Diss., Columbia University (1994): 104–6.

<sup>433</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 139–141.

<sup>434</sup> Alice Salomon, “Die Deutsche Akademie für soziale und pädagogische Frauenarbeit und die Geistesschulung der Wohlfahrtspflegerinnen” [The German Academy for Social and Pedagogical Women’s Work and the education of the spirit of women welfare workers], *Soziale Berufsarbeit* 8, nos. 11,12 (1928), reprinted in Feustel, *Alice Salomon: Frauenemanzipation*, Band 3, 429.

rooted in her identity as a social reformer and poor relief worker, she continued to define both individual case work *and* reform work as pillars of social work.<sup>435</sup>

The curriculum Salomon implemented at the Social Women's School also reflected her changing research focus and social work approach. In addition to economics, she elevated pedagogy and psychology to become equally important disciplines. The turn towards the integration of more individual-oriented sciences into systemic analyses also found expression in the hiring process for the new head of the Social Women's School in 1925. Because Salomon's health had declined—a consequence of unhealthy living conditions during the war—her friends urged her to scale down her numerous responsibilities, and she decided to step back from her position as head of the school. Carola Kuhlmann notes that Salomon and the board selected the new principal, Charlotte Dietrich, because she had studied history, psychology and pedagogy rather than social sciences.<sup>436</sup>

### ***Creating a Space for Women's Knowledge Production: The German Academy for Social and Pedagogical Women's Work, 1925-1933***

The tumultuous 1920s were also a time in which Salomon developed a new project: The German Academy for Social and Pedagogical Women's Work (Akademie für Soziale und Pädagogische Frauenarbeit, in the following abbreviated as "Academy"). Opening its doors in 1925, the institution, which was housed in the rooms of the Social Women's School, offered training for leaders in women's professions. In 1926, the Academy added a research institute. The project was born in response to the increasing difficulties women social workers

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<sup>435</sup> Carola Kuhlmann, "*Nicht Wohltun, sondern Gerechtigkeit*": *Eine Theorie sozialer Arbeit* [Not Doing Good but Justice": A Theory of Social Work] (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2008): 65.

<sup>436</sup> Kuhlmann, *Alice Salomon und der Beginn sozialer Berufsausbildung*, 166.

experienced in the rapidly expanding and professionalizing welfare system. The Weimar Republic's promises of gender equality ran into traditional conservative stereotypes, exacerbated by economic destabilization and population decrease.<sup>437</sup> As women were prepared to assume positions in the welfare state, now even equipped with the legal right to civil service positions, their competition on the job market was met with resistance. Some of Salomon's students had stepped into new municipal leadership positions, which had caused a backlash from male administrators, who directly targeted women's institutional power. She was afraid that women social workers were now stuck on the middle level of an institutionalized welfare system and were forced to take schematic orders from male administrators. This, she feared, suffocated the innovative, caring spirit women brought to the welfare system. It also meant conceding control over an area of the public to which women had gained access.<sup>438</sup>

Salomon's efforts to secure women's leadership in the field of social work, while forging a praxis-oriented approach to research, mirrored similar endeavors by women scholar-activists in the United States, especially the second generation of the women at Hull House, who also worked closely with the University of Chicago. Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott, particularly, sought to combine research and the education of social workers to ensure women's influence as administrators and policy leaders as they built and led the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. Battling expectations that they would train social workers for individual-centered practice, Breckinridge and Abbott included casework in the

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<sup>437</sup> See for example, Helen Boak, *Women in the Weimar Republic* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2013).

<sup>438</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 156–7.

schools' curricula, while maintaining a strong research and teaching focus on social and economic structures.<sup>439</sup>

If Breckinridge's and Abbott's project was already exceptional in the landscape of American institutions of higher education, it was unthinkable in conservative Germany that women would lead a university department. Not attempting to compete with universities, Salomon conceptualized her Academy as a space decidedly different. In her effort to secure a space for women's knowledge production and public leadership, the Academy was a professional development school for all professions dominated by women, including nursing, home economics and vocational teachers.

Not reserved to women (a few men studied there as well), the Academy offered a one-year-long, full-time program as well as evening courses, professional development courses, courses for mothers, and lectures offered to the public. Situated outside of the control of universities, the research performed at the Academy did not have to succumb to the positivist methodological principles now dominating the social sciences and could advance interdisciplinary, practice-based research. In its specific integration of research and praxis, the Academy's explicit intention was not to compete with universities, but to advance women's specific contributions to social knowledge. As such, Salomon suggested, it constituted a *cultural* contribution.<sup>440</sup> The curriculum at the Academy emulated Salomon's multi-disciplinary approach and encouraged interdisciplinary works. No longer the sole guiding discipline, economics was on equal footing with neighboring disciplines such as medicine, law, sociology, methods of social

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<sup>439</sup> For a more detailed account see Steven J. Diner, "Scholarship in the Quest for Social Welfare: A Fifty-Year History of the *Social Service Review*," *Social Service Review* 5, no. 1 (1977): 2–8; Susan P. Kemp and Ruth Brandwein, "Feminisms and Social Work in the United States: An Intertwined History," *Affilia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 341–364; and Linda Shoemaker, "Early Conflicts in Social Work Education," *Social Service Review* 72, no. 2 (1998): 182–191.

<sup>440</sup> Salomon, "Deutsche Akademie."

work, pedagogy, and psychology.<sup>441</sup> Salomon continued to teach economics at the Academy but also held lectures in family studies and a class on the philosophies of historical and contemporary social leaders.

The Academy produced exceptional contributions to interdisciplinary research. Under Salomon's guidance, a group of scholars worked on and published an extensive study about the state of the family in the Weimar Republic, most likely the first empirical study about the family in Germany.<sup>442</sup> The ambitious project planned twenty-seven studies, of which thirteen were finalized and published before the Nazis' rise to power forced Salomon to close the school. The researchers also worked with multiple methods, including a comprehensive study examining 182 families, a statistical study, and twenty-five individual family case studies.<sup>443</sup> Salomon not only hoped to provide empirical knowledge about the family—a perspective which the none of the university disciplines provided—and hoped to show possible paths forward for family-related policies. The most important conclusion that Salomon drew from the study was that despite signs of erosion, the family proved to adapt to the changing social and economic changes and still functioned as a productive economic and educational community. She further highlighted that it was women's productivity that upheld the quality and effectiveness of parent-child relations.<sup>444</sup>

### ***Internationalizing Social Work Education: 1919–1933***

In addition to Salomon's development of a multidisciplinary approach, Salomon also increasingly focused on international work, both in research as well as in activism. Invested in

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<sup>441</sup> Deutsche Akademie für Soziale und Pädagogische Frauenarbeit, *Bericht über die Entwicklung von 1925–1930* [Report on the development between 1925 and 1930] (Aldus Druck Berlin), Alice-Salomon-Archiv, Berlin.

<sup>442</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 150–51.

<sup>443</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 150.

<sup>444</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 154.

international women's networks since her work with the International Council of Women—work she continued as she was alienated from the German women's movement because of her international relations and as a result of rising anti-Semitism—she was also instrumental in the building of international social work networks throughout the 1920s.<sup>445</sup> Salomon educated an international audience about Germany's socio-economic conditions and its social welfare system, for example in a series of articles about German youth welfare and education in the American *The Survey*.<sup>446</sup> And, she also informed Germans about social work abroad.<sup>447</sup> She published numerous articles about welfare and social work education in other countries, most notably in the United States, Poland, England, France, and Belgium.

Even though labor questions were no longer at the center of her work, she still maintained an economic perspective in her work. Invited by American social reformer Julia Lathrop to give a lecture on “Mutual Aid as a Law of Life” at the National Conference of Social Work in Washington, DC in 1923, for example, she dissected the “doctrine of individualism” in the context of international relations.<sup>448</sup> Much like an economic rationale of self-interest had led to inequality and poverty in national economies, she contended, it had also led, in its most extreme form, to war. Instead of prioritizing the self, Salomon suggested to reintroduce the “new-old gospel of mutual aid” and to instill in children the spirit of cooperation to enhance equality and peace on national and international levels.<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 133–35.

<sup>446</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 133–4; and Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 133–49.

<sup>447</sup> Her decision to stay out of party politics and decline offers to run for public office made her trustworthy to the international community, and she put much effort in representing Germany as a transformed, “new” country, for example in a series of articles about German youth welfare and education in the American journal *The Survey*.

<sup>448</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 140.

<sup>449</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 142.

In her own international work Salomon hoped to model the spirit of international cooperation, against increasing nationalism in her home country. She co-organized, for example, an international social work conference in Paris in 1928 and cofounded the International Committee of Schools for Social Work in June of 1929, in the rooms of her Berlin Women's School.<sup>450</sup> After 1933, when the Nazis ended her work in Germany, international work was the only place to which Salomon had still access. Funded by the Russell Sage Foundation, she kept working on a comparative study which she published under the title *Education for Social Work: A Sociological Interpretation Based on an International Survey* for the International Work Office in Zurich in 1937.<sup>451</sup>

***“The Only Hope Lies in a Rediscovery of Human Relations”: Salomon’s View from American Exile***

In honor of her sixtieth birthday in April of 1932, Salomon received the Prussian State Medal for her lifelong work, and her Social Women's School was officially named the Alice Salomon School. Exactly one year later, the Nazis forced all Jewish teachers at the school to resign, and Salomon and her colleagues decided to formally close the Academy. Salomon remained in Germany and lived off the grant she got from the Russel Sage Foundation as well as a small salary from a few teaching and conference organizing jobs. On May 26, 1937, the Gestapo, Nazi-Germany's secret police, interrogated Salomon, who had just returned from a trip to the United States, for four hours and gave her a warning to leave the country or else she would

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<sup>450</sup> Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 157.

<sup>451</sup> Alice Salomon, *Education for Social Work: A Sociological Interpretation Based on an International Survey* (Zürich: Verlag für Recht und Gesellschaft, 1937).

face deportation to a concentration camp.<sup>452</sup> She had three weeks to give her farewells to family and friends and to settle the projects she had built over the past forty years. She cleared her home in Berlin, left Germany, and, after a transitional stay in England, reached the United States in late September.

The now sixty-five-year-old Salomon arrived in New York City and faced the challenge of building a new life in a new country, without any means and in bad health. Now a refugee instead of the celebrated guest from Germany she had been during her numerous travels to the United States, she struggled to find work. She completed her autobiography and occasionally gave lectures but was never given a real professional opportunity in the United States. Although she did not feel lonely—she welcomed many visitors and received numerous letters—Salomon, who had lived her life with the purpose of “doing things,” now often felt “a void,” as she described in a letter to a friend in 1945.<sup>453</sup> In 1948, at the age of seventy-six, just three years after the Nazi regime ended, Alice Salomon passed away in her home in New York City.

Salomon’s legacy, the autobiography in which she laid out her life and work in the context of the social, political, and economic conditions of Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic, stands as a warning to recognize early “the germs of aggressive nationalism” which, in Germany’s case “had long been latent in the German organism.”<sup>454</sup> In her closing words she returned once more to the principle of interdependence and positioned it as an ethical principle: “The only hope for a cure of Germany’s delirium lies in the potential growth of her moral forces

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<sup>452</sup> A transcript of Salomon’s memory minutes of the cross-examination can be found in Joachim Wieler, *Er-Innerungen eines Zerstörten Lebensabends: Alice Salomon während der NS-Zeit (1933-1935) und im Exil (1937-1938)* [Memories of a destroyed eve of life: Alice Salomon during the Nazi time (1933-1935) and in exile (1937-1938)] (Darmstadt: Lingbach Verlag, 1984), 165–176. Original document at Leo Baeck Institute, New York, collection “Alice Salomon.”

<sup>453</sup> Alice Salomon to Emmy Wolf, April 8, 1945, Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Soziale Fragen, Berlin, cited in Feustel, *Das Konzept des Sozialen*, 171.

<sup>454</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 229.

and a rediscovery of the basic law of human relations: the law of interdependence. Or as it was expressed two thousand years ago: the law of human brotherhood.”<sup>455</sup>

***Summary: Alice Salomon’s Economic Thought and Its Role for Education for Social Responsibility***

Today Alice Salomon stands tall in the history of German social work. The study presented in this chapter showed that her legacy as an economist is worth remembering, too. Moreover, her training and expertise in economics distinctly shaped her educational work. Trained by her teachers and peers at Berlin’s Women and Girls’ Groups for Social Assistance and the economists at the University of Berlin, Salomon made significant contributions to labor studies, focusing mostly on the situation of women workers and their children. In her research, Salomon applied rigorous methods and followed strong moral standards. She hoped that her knowledge would inform the public, especially the people of the middle class, and help develop empathy for workers’ situations, recognize the structural (and thus man-made) causes for economic injustice, and provide a scientific and moral foundation for reform. Her economic knowledge was thereby part of a bigger project of reconciliation between classes that stood in contrast to Marxist ideas of class struggle.

Strongly influenced by the Historical School, Salomon integrated other heterodox schools of thought into her economic work as well. It was important to her to highlight individual agency, while also exposing the historical and social nature of economic relations. Her pioneering doctoral study on the gender wage gap, for example, showed how gender roles influenced employers’ decisions and created unfair situations for women. While Salomon

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<sup>455</sup> Salomon, *Character Is Destiny*, 229.

maintained a focus on structural economic injustice throughout her life, she increasingly understood these structures as historically and socially constructed and thus changeable through individual and political action.

The analysis of Salomon's work between 1893 and 1933 further showed that economics played a significant role in her educational work, from early conceptualizations of women's social education to her later versions of professional social work education. The study showed that Salomon used her economic expertise in three ways: (1) to provide the analytical skills to understand economic injustice and develop a sense of responsibility; (2) to theoretically undergird the efforts to professionalize social work, institutionalize social work education and qualify social work as a women's profession; and (3) to establish a framework for a dynamic concept of social work that understood the individual as situated within social and economic structures.

Based on her own experience of the emancipatory power of social science knowledge, Salomon hoped to pass a similar knowledge on to her students. She sought to provide them with the analytical skills to understand economic injustice, support their development of empathy across class, and initiate a sense of social responsibility and will to engage in social change. Salomon thought that economic knowledge was the missing piece which could scientifically substantiate a rather vague feeling of responsibility and adjust the charity idea inherent to religion(s) to the conditions of the modern industrialized society, substituting it with the idea of social justice. The strong sense of social justice that guided her own life was based on an understanding that economic structures were rigid but changeable and that her own position within economic relations were a result of historical conditions and came with the moral responsibility to engage in social change. Social justice work did not only entail a moral duty but

was also an opportunity for civic agency and thus personally liberating. After the war, Salomon highlighted specifically the importance of economic knowledge for women's critical thinking. In the newly implemented democracy, she argued, hitherto politically unexperienced women were now exposed to political agitation from all sides and needed to be able to make informed decisions.

Economic knowledge also provided the theoretical grounds for Salomon to advocate for middle-class women's work outside of the house. By showing how middle-class women's unused labor potential could be leveraged to alleviate social problems, she helped build a rationale for social work as a women's profession and secure a gender-conforming space in the public realm for middle-class women. The economic rationale for women's education went hand in hand with a moral indication for middle-class women's *social* education, which married the need to end women's "parasitic" subsistence through gender-conforming work with the possibility for civic agency and participation in the state. Although changing gender roles and educational reform made this justification obsolete, Salomon continued to employ economic arguments for women's education, for example to secure women's education during World War I or to justify women's entrance into men's professions.

With a changed socio-economic structure, a new set of war-related psychological and social conditions, and the influence of American casework during the 1920s, Salomon modified her concept for the highly professionalized social work training. She now developed a multi-disciplinary approach in which economics lost its position as the leading discipline. However, the more individualized social work method and the interdisciplinary research she implemented at her Women's Social School and at the newly established Academy were still significantly informed by her dynamic, environmental understanding of the individual as situated within

socio-economic and political conditions. Salomon never abandoned her position that social work needed to work with the individual *and* address structural injustice through advocacy, demonstrating the lasting influence of her training in economics on her educational work.

## CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

To this day, neoclassical economics has maintained the ideological predominance in economics departments and business schools it had established by the 1920s, perpetuating the idea that economics is a science that focuses solely on the market—its logic and predictabilities—as if it existed outside of social relations. In the face of environmental disasters, rising global inequalities, and anti-democratic movements that have shaken the world for the past few decades, however, resistance to the near-hegemony of neoclassical economics has gained momentum and approaches such as “ecological economics,” “feminist economics,” or “economics for the common good” have gathered attention.<sup>456</sup> These heterodox schools of thought question the doctrine of the autonomous, rationally acting individual, who enters the market to buy and sell independently from environmental and historical conditions. Moreover, they expose neoclassical economics’ underlying ethos of unrestrained individualism, declared to be “naturally” healthy for the economy, which strips economic decisions from social and environmental responsibility and naturalizes personal gain, domination, and greed. Challenging neoclassical economics’ claim of disinterested objectivity, its critics point to its historical nature, that is, that neoclassical thought evolved in the context of capitalism and is not a universal, “natural” law. To avert the continuation of social injustice and the destruction of the natural world, these new schools of thought develop alternative economic approaches that propose a more holistic understanding of the economy, abandon the individualistic axiom, and instead highlight interdependent relations between individuals, the social, and the natural environment.

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<sup>456</sup> For example, Michael Common and Sigrud Stagl, *Ecological Economics: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Edith Kuiper and Drucilla Barker, *Toward a Feminist Philosophy of Economics* (London: Routledge, 2003); and Christian Felber, *Change Everything: Creating an Economy for the Common Good* (London: Zed-Books, 2019).

The cases presented in this dissertation showed that a rich, pluralistic debate about economic approaches and methods—not unlike the one we encounter today—existed in the Progressive Era. In the 1890s and early 1900s, especially, a wide range of economic ideas coexisted and rivaled, producing a heterodox discussion in which women participated substantially. Anna Julia Cooper, Emily Greene Balch, and Alice Salomon, this dissertation showed, were three economic thinkers who used the intellectual space available to them as white middle-class women (Balch and Salomon) and, even more restricted, as a woman of color (Cooper) to generate groundbreaking, interdisciplinary, and intersectional economic analyses that challenged the mainstream economic discourse. Leaning into the pragmatist spirit of the time, the three women developed pioneering methods, drawing heavily from their practical work experiences and vice versa, applied their knowledge in their work as social reformers and educators. More specifically, the women used economic thought to conceptualize education as education for social change and justice and sought to equip their students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills to understand the historical nature of economic relations, examine power structures, and engage in social change.

Cooper, Balch, and Salomon developed complex models of the economy that offered promising alternatives to the abstract, individualist, market-focused models advanced by neoclassical economists. But they also spoke back to collectivist economic theories that dismissed the individual rights of some in the name of the common good. They warned (although to different degrees) not to perpetuate gendered and racialized power structures under a new banner. Instead they proposed *relational and cooperative models* of the economy that historicized and challenged the preposition of *homo economicus* and the self-regulating forces of the free market which, to use Cooper's words, propelled the capitalist ideology of "gain and

greed and grasping selfishness.”<sup>457</sup> Instead of making the individual economic agent their unit of analysis, the women examined the relationship between individuals and the social, assuming that mutual dependence and care, as well as the productive use of difference, functioned as the drivers of societal growth.

Today the pluralism in economic perspectives existing in the late nineteenth century has narrowed substantially and the predominance of neoclassical economics is equally ubiquitous as it is unnoticed. A phenomenon that paralleled the loss of pluralism was the sidelining of women scholars and the continued marginalization of scholars of color in the discipline. The decline of women in the field, which followed the promising rise of women in the discipline in the 1890s, has not been reversed since then, and women’s broad representation in economics departments’ teaching and research positions, especially for women of color, has yet to materialize. Women are still significantly underrepresented in economics and business departments around the world, and their work does not get widely published.<sup>458</sup>

This dissertation has added four major insights to the history of higher education, the history of the social sciences, as well as the intellectual history of education, with important implications for today. For one, the closer look at Cooper’s, Balch’s, and Salomon’s work showed that the establishment of neoclassical economics’ paradigmatic predominance and

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<sup>457</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, “The Status of Woman in America (1892),” in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, eds. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 113.

<sup>458</sup> For statistics on gender and racial representation in economics see for example Hans Henrik Sievertsen and Sarah Smith, “Male and Female Voices in Economics,” *Discussion Paper Series*, IZA Institute of Labor Economics, March 2022, <https://docs.iza.org/dp15133.pdf>; Leah Platt Boustan and Andrew Langan, “Variation in Women’s Success Across PhD Programs in Economics,” *NBR Working Paper Series*, National Bureau of Economic Research, January 2019, [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w25444/w25444.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25444/w25444.pdf); and Guido Friebel, Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln, and Alisa Weinberger, “Statusbericht zum Frauenanteil in der Volkswirtschaftslehre an deutschen Universitäten” [Status report about women’s representation in political economy at German universities], *Perspektiven der Wirtschaftspolitik* 22, no. 2 (2021): 142–55, <https://doi.org/10.1515/pwp-2021-0005>; and American Economic Association, *Report of the Committee in the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession*, December 2019, <https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=11547>.

women's marginalization were related historical phenomena. The women not only denaturalized and historicized economic relations but also theoretically connected them to questions of race and gender (although to different degrees), generating what I call "dangerous knowledge" that unsettled the intertwined rule of capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy. Moreover, their economic expertise undergirded their efforts to advance social change through their educational practices. The reconstruction of American universities (and to some degree, German universities) as a project of business corporations and the capitalist state was far-reaching: it not only effectively disrupted the critique of capitalism but also its connection with questions of race and gender—a theoretical disconnect whose consequences we still face today.

Second, the in-depth studies of the women's ideas extend our knowledge on the far-reaching effects of universities' modernization process in which the reformers of higher education divorced science and morality and banned ethical questions from scientific discussions. The nexus between facts and values that characterized economic ideas in the late nineteenth century allowed the women to treat economic, social, and political questions as inextricably intertwined and make economic knowledge relevant for social change. The neoclassical understanding of economics as a "neutral" science has effectively disrupted this theoretical connection with the effect that to this day economic questions are treated as detached from social, political, and ethical issues.

Third, the juxtaposition of the three women's work showed that social locations shape economic perspectives. Although the three women were roughly born around the same time, their respective racial, socioeconomic, and geopolitical backgrounds deeply informed their economic views and produced significant differences in their theoretical standpoints, with consequences for their educational practices. The understanding of these differences supports

today's demands for pluralism and representation in economics, encourages us to identify whose voices (and ideas) are missing in the economic discourse, and calls on decision makers to make space for women and scholars of color in universities and academic networks and equip them with resources and power.

Fourth, this dissertation calls attention to the historical significance of economics as a discipline relevant for educational philosophy and practices. Although the rise of neoclassical economics ruptured the connection between the two fields, I argue that its recovery can greatly inform contemporary discussions about education. As educators, Cooper, Balch, and Salomon used economic knowledge to theoretically undergird educational concepts that formulated civic education as education for social responsibility (Balch and Salomon) and education for solidarity (Cooper), or, more broadly, as education for social and racial justice. Similarly, the teaching of economics became a central piece of citizenship education that helped students understand themselves in relation to others—a connection that is much needed today.

### ***Dangerous Economic Knowledge: Women Challenging Power Structures***

The examples of Cooper's, Balch's, and Salomon's work show how women used the opportunity that emerged from the changing structures of higher education in the late nineteenth century—women's increasing access to higher education, the development of the modern research university, and the emergence of the social sciences as an independent discipline—to develop “dangerous” economic knowledge. Their economic ideas unsettled existing power relations through intersectional, historical analysis; questioned ideologies that naturalized individualism, greed, and domination; and inspired visions of new economic orders. The women's knowledge, although still removed from the powerful centers of economic knowledge

production, exuded transformational power as they distributed this knowledge through discussions in social reform circles and women's networks, in writings, speeches, lectures, and teaching.

The transformational potential of the women's economic knowledge underscores the urgency for those in power at the time to regulate economic knowledge production and restore ideologies that secured capitalism in conjunction with naturalized gendered and racialized hierarchies. It is therefore not surprising that the women's intersectional economic knowledge production as well as their dissemination of critical knowledge was disrupted by the reconstruction of universities in the early decades of the twentieth century—a project propelled by powerful capitalist and state interest groups. The latter increasingly gathered control in universities through funding and influence in hiring processes, as described by Clyde W. Barrow in *Universities and the Capitalist State*.<sup>459</sup>

The cases of these three women illustrate how the project of constructing economics as an ahistorical and depoliticized science went beyond the borders of university departments and reached into the alternative intellectual space that women like Cooper, Balch and Salomon had created. The backlash that each of them experienced at some point in their careers as teachers, causing all three to lose their jobs in the early decades of the twentieth century, indicates that the joined efforts of corporations and the state to install neoclassical economics as the predominant school of thought in economics departments, spilled into college and school administrations. It also signals that capital's control over knowledge production at universities generated a broader countermovement to curb the increasing expertise that women as well as African Americans had gained via their training in women's colleges and Black colleges.

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<sup>459</sup> Clyde Barrow, *Universities and the Capitalist State, Corporate Liberalism, and the Reconstruction of American Higher Education, 1894–1928* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

The support of their intellectual, activist, and educational work, which Cooper, Balch, and Salomon all experienced in the 1890s dissipated over the course of the next decades. The alternative space that women had created for themselves between the margins of academia, social reform, women's colleges, and schools turned out to be a precarious place for each of them, even if at different points in time and to different degrees. While they had produced their knowledge with little to no funding and lack of institutional support (although Cooper faced much greater obstacles in both areas from the beginning), the educational institutions they worked for had also provided them with a space in which they had experienced relative intellectual freedom. Over the course of the first three decades of the twentieth century, however, the governing entities of these institutions responded to the women's dangerous knowledge and its application in their practical and political work by dismissing each of them from their respective positions and by doing so created precarious living situations that restricted their intellectual productivity.

Washington DC's white school board fired Cooper from her position as principal of M Street High School following an aggressive discrediting campaign—a response to her insistence on and success in providing outstanding classical education to Black students. She also increasingly faced obstacles to get her intellectual work published. While she had been able to publish her magnum opus, *A Voice from the South*, in 1892, publishers continued to reject her request and forced her to self-publish her work. In the 1920s Oberlin College, her alma mater, even denied her request to distribute her remarkable dissertation. Balch lost her professorship at Wellesley in 1919 just shortly before she would have gained her pension—the board's response to her peace activism and likely also to her earlier support of socialist ideas. As a result, she lived in unstable financial situations and lost the institutional structure for her intellectual work.

Salomon's successful efforts to institutionalize women's knowledge production via the founding of the Women's Academy was violently interrupted by the Nazi's rise to power. She not only lost her job but had to flee the country and was never able to regain a position that allowed her to continue with her intellectual work in the same way.

### ***The Historical Consequences of the Separation of Science and Morality and the Divorce of Economic and Social Questions***

The analysis of these three women's ideas expands our knowledge about the far-reaching effects of universities' modernization process, which launched the divorce of science and morality, and effectively separated economic questions from social and political issues. The studies show how the nexus between science and morality that was specific to the economics discipline in the late nineteenth century, made economic knowledge particularly attractive and useful for women. Emerging as an independent discipline at universities, economics was soon implemented as a standard subject across women's colleges, and economic knowledge circulated widely within social reform networks, increasing its accessibility for women. Coinciding with women's rapidly increasing access to higher education and their growing participation in social reform work, the combination of scientific methods and moral impetus to serve the betterment of society made economics a powerful tool for women's engagement in social change through social reform and teaching.

The three studies show how women took the economic expertise they acquired in universities, women's colleges, and social reform networks, and further developed it. They demonstrate that these women did not just reproduce the concepts and methods they studied in institutions of higher education but transgressed them in two ways. For one, their economic

analyses were intersectional, that is, they did not only focus on class but considered the intertwined nature of class, gender, race, and ethnicity (even though to different degrees), and challenged the interlocking powers of capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy. Secondly, their economic expertise informed their social reform and educational practices. Leaning into pragmatism, they applied their economic knowledge to their work in various ways. Cooper, for example, used it to deconstruct the myth of white superiority, establish the centrality of Black work for the American economy, and infuse the project of Black liberation through education. Balch employed it to dismantle xenophobia and anti-immigration ideologies, disentangle the “unholy alliance of cannon and capital” and educate for peace. Salomon brought awareness to class privilege in Germany, exposed gender inequality in the modern economy and educated women for social reform work.

The closer look at women’s approaches to economics also lays bare the effectiveness of the project that pushed for the de-historicization of power relations and promoted an ideology of individualism that to this day separates the individual from their socio-economic and political context. Over the course of the last decade, questions of economic, gender, and racial injustice have kept boiling up, yet dominant public and political discourses treat them as if they were separate. In fact, mainstream economics argues that addressing racial or gender injustice would threaten the markets and therefore destabilize the economy, suggesting that “neutral” mathematical approaches to market developments are naturally good for people, while questions of redistribution, fairness, or justice are considered “moralizing” and “irrational”. As a discipline, economics has treated social questions as moral questions rather than economic questions, and subsequently has excluded them from curricula and research. Likewise, students in K-12 schools rarely encounter knowledge that questions the hegemony of neoclassical economics. The

women's approaches to economic questions, created during a transformational time in universities, offered an opportunity to fundamentally shape the public and political discourse in a way that could have defined the topics of economics differently and perhaps could have produced approaches to the solution of the daunting problems we are still confronted with.

The divorce of economics from moral, social, and political questions has deep reaching effects on education. Today, the historical analysis of race, gender, and class relations is often perceived as a niche project of individual teachers or as morally loaded, “unscientific” topics that present subjective and partial opinions rather than hard facts. As such, the argument continues, it has no place in an educational system that aims to prepare students for the market economy. This rationale then builds the ideological grounds on which political interest groups, interested in preserving power structures, can dismiss projects that teach the intertwined histories of capitalism and racism in America's history. *The New York Times*' 1619 Project, for example, which unveils the racist history of the American economy, has caused massive political backlash followed by successful efforts to ban the book's teaching in schools, claiming that the project is a subjective, moralistic undertaking of the Left rather than foundational knowledge that can inform civic agency.<sup>460</sup> By historicizing and denaturalizing such rationales that frame economics as “neutral” we can show that the separation of morality and science, of economic and social questions is in itself a political project. This helps reintroduce a discussion about ethics as a matter of economic and social structures, rather than individual behavior, in schools and universities. The recovery of the women's contribution to economic thought unsettles beliefs that neoclassical economics is the only scientific version of economics. It helps understand that the ubiquity of neoclassical economics is itself the product of historical developments, pushed by

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<sup>460</sup> Nikole Hannah-Jones, Jake Silverstein, Ilena Silverman, *The New York Times Magazine*, and Caitlin Roper, *1619 Project* (New York: One World, 2021).

representatives of corporations and the capitalist state, in which alternative understandings of the economy and the economic order were marginalized. The work of women like Cooper, Balch, and Salomon reminds us that there is more than one way to understand what “the economy” is and that “the market” is not something that exists independent from human (and environmental) relations.

***“Unequal Intersectionalities”: Differences in Cooper’s, Balch’s, and Salomon’s Intersectional Economic Thought***

The studies presented in this dissertation revealed similarities and substantial differences in Cooper’s, Balch’s, and Salomon’s economic thought as well as in the ways they translated their ideas in their educational work. On the one hand, they all shared a historical understanding of power relations; challenged abstract, universalized understandings of the economy; insisted on the use of economic research to advance social change; and developed holistic and relational understandings of the economy. Moreover, they moved beyond a single focus on class and put forth pioneering intersectional analyses that interrogated the interlocking hierarchies of class, gender, race, and ethnicity. On the other hand, the juxtaposition of the women’s thoughts illuminated that the intersectionalities that the women examined were not the same. By embedding the women’s intellectual work in the context of their biographical experiences, this dissertation shows how the women’s social locations, distinctly shaped by race, class, and gender, enabled different ways of seeing.

Historian of women’s networks Laura Nelson recently coined the term “unequal intersectionalities” to describe the coalition and conflict between women of different

backgrounds.<sup>461</sup> In her analysis of women's networks in Progressive Era Chicago, Nelson examines how women with different racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds not only united around similar issues but also generated divisions, leading to conflict and mistrust. Borrowing this concept to look at individual women's intellectual work, my own study illustrates how women of different racial, class and geopolitical backgrounds, while pronouncing their alliances across difference, at times did not see, neglected, or willfully ignored the power dynamics that played out in issues removed from their own experience.

Most glaringly, the direct comparison of Cooper's work exposes the marginal treatment of race as a category of analysis in Balch's and Salomon's work, who often neglected or dismissed how racist ideology and violence had been historically intertwined with economic interests. Cooper, who had been born into slavery and experienced continued and intensifying regimes of white supremacy during the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, analytically connected the categories of class, race, and gender in her studies, and astutely explained how white settlers had employed capitalist and racist ideologies in conjunction to justify the exploitation and domination. The theoretical connection allowed her to demonstrate the historical reliance of the American economy on Black labor and deconstruct the myth of white economic superiority as natural. Balch, by contrast, had grown up in the comfortable space of a white, middle-class, New England family. She gradually expanded her intersectional view from an early focus on class and gender to include ethnicity in her work on immigration, but only later, paid attention to race. While she acknowledged the US history of racism in her peace work during World War I, it was only in 1927, when she studied the effects of the American occupation in

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<sup>461</sup> Laura K. Nelson, "The Inequality of Intersectionalities in Chicago's First-Wave Women's Movement," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 47, no. 4 (2022): 905–30.

Haiti, that she conceptually included race in her work—when she was encouraged to do so by Black women in the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

Because of their respective backgrounds and perspectives, the women’s use of class differed starkly in their theoretical and practical work. Balch and Salomon, similar in their socio-economic backgrounds despite different geo-political locations, were part of a cohort of white women in Germany and the United States who collectively forged an entrance into the public sphere via social reform work and an economics discipline that wanted their help in averting social unrest. In this context, the women’s focus on gender and class entailed tensions, as middle-class women’s agency built on their advocacy for poor, working women, increasing the chasm that they sought to transcend. Both Salomon and Balch hoped to establish cooperative relationships between middle- and working-class women while facing this contradiction. In the United States, the vision of a cross-class alliance materialized to some degree, for example in the interracial work of the Women’s Trade Union League, but in Germany the class divide within the German women’s movement made any collaboration impossible despite Salomon’s continuous efforts. Cooper, on the other hand, understood herself as connected with poor African Americans via her biographical experience as the daughter of an enslaved mother and her struggle for financial independence, allowing her to clearly see the connection between race and class.

The women’s different perspectives on class, race, and gender led to different foci in the women’s theoretical as well as activist and educational work. Salomon and Balch both foregrounded *difference* in their understanding of social and economic relations and made conflict, mutual understanding, and mediation central elements in their visions of new economic orders. Difference, they argued, was a driver of growth; it invigorated new ideas and advanced

social justice. While Cooper shared this understanding of difference as a driver of progress, her approach was much more aware of the deep-reaching consequences of power difference as well as the emotional ground on which ideologies were built, which, she thought, effectively impeded efforts to facilitate white Americans' understanding of difference via knowledge and facts.

Cooper was acutely aware of the way difference had been naturalized and used to establish and cement racial hierarchies in combination with class and gendered hierarchies. Her focus was therefore on the education of Black Americans, aimed at the deconstruction of myths of white superiority and the support of Black solidarity on the grounds of *shared experience*.

Building on unequal intersectional perspectives, Cooper, Balch, and Salomon developed different concepts of labor and the economy. Even though all three women transgressed narrow concepts of labor by insisting that reproductive work was a pillar of the modern economy, Cooper reconceptualized labor in an even more far-reaching way. For one, she radically foregrounded the human nature of work, which allowed her to understand labor as the product of not only one's own merit but also the investment of others. Salomon and Balch, too, paid attention to the effects of poor labor conditions on the well-being of workers, especially women and their children, but for Cooper, these conditions started with the birth of a human being rather than with a workers' entrance into the labor market. Secondly, Cooper understood the economy as the collective organization of community through the exchange of all goods and services, defining all contributions to the greater good as labor, including cultural and religious work as well as military service.

Differences can also be found in the women's understandings of the relationship between the individual and the social. While they all developed relational concepts of economics built on humanity's ontological unity, they also all granted theoretical attention to the importance of

individual agency. However, the women's different perspectives led them to highlight the dynamic between the individual and the social in different ways. Speaking from the position of a Black woman from the South, Cooper was acutely aware of how rationales of the greater good brushed over African Americans' individual rights, risking the perpetuation of racist ideologies and policies that deindividualized and dehumanized the Black worker. She rejected socialist or communist movements, which, in her perspective, sought to produce equality simply by putting the working class in power.

The women's geopolitical location also influenced their economic thinking. Salomon, who lived in a constitutional monarchy with a general cultural belief in authority for more than half of her life, believed in a strong state and its capacity to care for its people, which stood somewhat in opposition to the belief in democratic rights and individual agency that both Balch and Cooper highlighted in their work. Neither of them believed only in individual agency or state responsibility, but their emphases laid on different sides of this spectrum. However, Salomon, too, had to recalibrate her understanding of the responsibility of the state during World War I, and then again with the rise of the Nazis to power, who perverted the meaning of community in their white supremacist ideology and politics.

The comparison of the women's economic thinking and the understanding of how their respective backgrounds shaped their ways of seeing, support calls for more gender and racial diversity in the economics discipline. While one's background does not determine one's thinking, social locations alongside their biographical and educational experiences shape economic perspectives and inform how they are put to use. The view from the margins, the cases presented show, encouraged the women to identify power structures not directly visible to others. The juxtaposition of the three women's intellectual work, especially, shows the blind spots in

relation to questions of race and class in white, middle-class women's economic thought, with consequences for their educational work. Cooper's work, especially, illustrates that women of color provide crucial, intersectional views on economic and social problems, uncover the ideological contradictions at the heart of Western democracies and delineate possible ways towards more equality and freedom for all.

### ***The Relevance of Economic Thought for Educational Ideas and Practices***

The studies of Cooper's, Balch's, and Salomon's work provide ample evidence that their economic expertise significantly shaped their educational ideas and practices and indicate a productive intellectual overlap between economics and education particular to the Progressive Era. The openness of the economics discipline to a broader range of ideas and methods, the understanding of economic relations as historically built and thus changeable, as well as the nexus between the social sciences and morality allowed women like Cooper, Balch, and Salomon to make economic thought theoretically and practically relevant for education. Because they situated economics squarely at the interface of the individual and society, economics was especially instructive for civic education as it prepared students to think about their own position within societal structures and informed their own visions of a fair society.

As a result of the women's different perspectives, the use of economic thought in their educational concepts differed significantly. Cooper conceptualized education distinctly as education for Black solidarity and liberation, while Balch and Salomon framed it as education for social responsibility and cooperation across difference, developed for the young, white, middle-class women they worked with. For all three women, knowledge about economic power relations—their historical production, and how they intersected with racial and gender

relations—was a prerequisite for civic agency. They understood this knowledge as fundamental to their students’ understanding of themselves and the world and enabled them to envision new societal structures. For Cooper, economic knowledge helped deconstruct ideologies that naturalized racial hierarchies and informed the reconceptualization of labor. Her insistence on the human nature of labor as developing and dependent enabled her to formulate education as a prerequisite for human growth. Education provided Black students with the opportunity to develop their full human potential, improve their economic and social mobility, and subsequently allow them to reinvest monetary, cultural, and social capital in the Black economy. Education had transformational power by helping students deconstruct the myth of meritocracy, resituate themselves at the center of the American economy as economic agents and as citizens, and live in solidarity with the Black community. For Balch and Salomon, economic knowledge helped their students understand power structures from the perspective of the privileged, so that they could develop social responsibility and engage in social change. To such ends, they both instructed their students to establish an understanding across difference and develop empathy.

The historical examination of how economic expertise shaped education for social and racial justice can help us think about, and perhaps reestablish, the flow of ideas between economics and education that has been cut with the de-historization of economics and the exclusive view on economic questions as mathematical, abstract problems. The examples presented in this dissertation remind us, that economic knowledge, specifically knowledge about the historical nature of economic structures and their overlap with the histories of colonialism and imperialism, can provide a fundament for students to examine power structures, understand their own position within these complex structures, and define civic agency.

More specifically, the flow of ideas between economics and education that existed in the Progressive Era can inspire how we can make economics part of the social studies curriculum in new ways. Although economics is currently defined as one of the four corner disciplines of social studies in American K-12 classrooms, economic knowledge is rarely offered in a way that serves social studies' civic mission, that is, to support students to "make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world."<sup>462</sup> Recent studies of economics curricula conclude that the framing of economics within an exclusively neoclassical paradigm runs counter to this mission.<sup>463</sup> Neoclassical economics' underlying individualistic rationale in fact highlights the opposite: that focusing on maximum individual gain and happiness is the economic behavior that produces equality. Questions of economic inequality—especially as they relate to structural racism and sexism—remain unaddressed in such teaching of economics or are presented in noneconomic subjects, for example in the humanities or political theory.

The cases presented in this dissertation can help us take a step back and make the discussion of economic models a topic of social studies. The historical knowledge about women's economic thought makes us aware that a debate about economic approaches and an appreciation for pluralism are important topics for students at K-12 schools as well as in colleges. Cooper's, Balch's, and Salomon's work inspires us to think anew how we can talk about economic questions as concerns that are inextricably intertwined with social and moral issues, including injustice and oppression. They can help debunk myths of meritocracy that neoclassical economics help cement and generate new ways of thinking. Economics, the three

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<sup>462</sup> National Council of Social Studies, cited in Erin C. Adams, "Economics and the Civic Mission of Social Studies Education: Two Critiques of Neoclassicism," *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education* 18, no. 1 (2019): 17.

<sup>463</sup> Adams, "Economics and the Civic Mission," 17.

women teach us, makes us think about how we want to structure our society, share resources, and make our communities thrive in sustainable ways.

A more pluralistic discussion of economic approaches in schools responds to students' demands to make today's burning questions a part of economics curricula. In a recent survey amongst first-year students of economics at universities in twelve countries, asking what they thought to be the most pressing problem economists should address, students named "inequality" as their highest concern, closely followed by "unemployment" and "poverty."<sup>464</sup> Economics curricula and textbooks are slow to change, but a push to renew the economics curriculum is underway. Scholars and students around the globe have started to call for the end of the monopoly of neoclassical thought in economic research and teaching and have proposed a "pluralism in the teaching and methodology of economics," supported for example by the International Student Initiative for Pluralist Economics.<sup>465</sup> The diversification of economic intellectual history can be one part in the project of deconstructing the ideological hegemony of neoclassical economics and establishing new perspectives.

On the level of educational policies and administration, the cases presented in this dissertation can also help challenge neoliberal concepts of education as a market currency; an individualized image of education as one that enables individual social mobility, wealth, and private happiness rather than an education that inspires societal growth and a sustainable future. Rather than concluding that education can have *either* an individual *or* a social mission, that is, that it can prepare students either for individual social mobility in a competitive market economy *or* a socially just society, the women's holistic, relational models can encourage us to

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<sup>464</sup> Samuel Bowles and Wendy Carlin, "What Students Learn in Economics 101: Time for a Change," *Journal of Economic Literature* 58, no. 1 (2020): 176–214.

<sup>465</sup> Chukwuemeka Onyebuchi Onyimadu, "Beyond the Neoclassical Paradigm: A Real World Economics Proposal," *Journal of Sustainable Social and Management Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2015): 73–83.

conceptualize the economy in ways in which the two are not mutually exclusive. It can push us to critically weigh in on current debates about the privatization of education, the importance of public schools for a stable democracy, and the place of moral education in schools and universities.

## Chronology: Anna Julia Cooper



- 1858 Born in Raleigh, North Carolina
- 1865 Starts school at St. Augustine's Normal School
- 1877 Graduates High School and starts teaching at St. Augustine; marries George A.C. Cooper
- 1879 Her husband dies
- 1881 Graduates from St. Augustine College
- 1884 Graduates with a B.A. in Math from Oberlin College
- 1885 Teaches at St. Augustine
- 1887 Receives M.A. in Math from Oberlin College; moves to Washington D.C. and starts teaching at M Street High School
- 1892 Publishes *A Voice from the South*
- 1894 Cofounds the Colored Women's League in Washington D.C.
- 1900 Attends Pan-African Congress in London
- 1901 Becomes principal at M Street High School
- 1906 DC's Board of Education Dismisses her from her position as principal
- 1906 Moves to Missouri and teaches at Lincoln University
- 1911 Returns to M Street High School as a teacher
- 1914 Enrolls in doctoral studies at Columbia University
- 1915 Becomes foster mother of 5 children
- 1924 Begins doctoral work at the Sorbonne, Paris
- 1925 Defends her thesis
- 1930 Retires from M Street/Dunbar High School; Become principal of Frelinghuysen University
- 1964 Anna Julia Cooper dies at home in Washington DC

## Chronology: Emily Greene Balch



- 1867 Born in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts
- 1880 Attends School of Miss Catherine Innis Ireland in Boston (Girls' Academy)
- 1885 Travels to Europe
- 1886 Starts at Bryn Mawr College
- 1889 Graduate with a B.A. from Bryn Mawr
- 1890 Studies in Paris, France, for one year (with European Fellowship from Bryn Mawr)
- 1892 Co-founds Denison Settlement House
- 1895 Studies in Berlin, Germany, for one year
- 1896 Starts teaching at Wellesley College
- 1903 Founds and presides over Boston Women's Trade Union League
- 1904 Conducts Field Studies in immigrant communities in the US
- 1905 Conducts Field Study in Austria-Hungary
- 1913 Becomes Professor and Chair of Economics and Sociology Department at Wellesley
- 1915 Attends the International Women's Peace Congress in The Hague, becomes actively involved in peace work
- 1919 Wellesley College board terminates her contract
- 1919 Becomes secretary-treasurer of the WILPF
- 1922 Ends position as secretary-treasurer
- 1926 Travels to Haiti with a WILPF committee
- 1946 Receives Nobel Peace Prize
- 1961 Emily Greene Balch dies at home in Cambridge, MA

## Chronology: Alice Salomon



- 1872 Born in Berlin, Germany
- 1878 Attends the Higher Daughter School in Berlin
- 1893 Joins the Girls' and Women's Groups for Social Assistance in Berlin
- 1898 Cofounds the First Club for Young Women Workers
- 1899 First year-long course offered by the Girls and Women's Groups
- 1900 Joins board of Association of German Women's Clubs
- 1902 Starts doctoral studies at University of Berlin
- 1906 Defends thesis
- 1908 Opens the Social Women's School in Berlin
- 1914 Travels to Ireland and back during the beginning of war
- 1920 Resigns from Association of German Women's Clubs and becomes vice-chair of International Council of Women
- 1925 Opens the German Academy of Social and Pedagogical Women's Work
- 1929 Founds of International Association of Social Schools of Social Work
- 1933 Rise of Nazis forces her to resign from all public positions and close the Academy
- 1937 Cross-examination by the Nazis; they force her to leave Germany and emigrate to the US
- 1948 Alice Salomon dies in New York City

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