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FEMINISM, WAR AND THE PROSPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT - HELENA SWANWICK AND THE LOST FEMINISTS OF INTERWAR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Abstract

From the early 1980s feminist theory has made steady inroads into IR theory. The standard view, both amongst IR feminists and other scholars in IR, is that prior to this there was little or no feminist theory in IR. Yet, there was a distinct feminist IR prior to the 1940s that had its own particular take on the problems of global order. This paper seeks to reassess the ideas and impact of IR's first-wave feminism by concentrating on the works of one particular writer, H. M. Swanwick. Certainly, Swanwick was not the only feminist writing on international affairs in the period. She is interesting, however, both because of her earlier involvement in the feminist and suffragette movements, and because she constructed a clear analysis of the problems of security in IR. Her criticisms of collective security put her at odds with many of her left-wing colleagues, who supported military sanctions by the League. While she gave very sound reasons for rejecting so-called 'League wars' against aggressor states, her position in the late 1930s brought her closer to the appeasement policy of the Chamberlain government. Yet, despite this, her criticisms of both collective security and the old pre-1914 international anarchy are an interesting corrective to both the realist paradigm that emerged after the 1940s and the liberal-socialist paradigm that supported a tighter League system in the 1920s and early 1930s. It is also an indication of the extent to which a liberal feminist agenda had been part of mainstream IR prior to the realist ascendancy.

Keywords: Feminism, inter-war international relations, Helena Swanwick, collective security, pacifism.

Introduction

From the 1980s many different and radical approaches entered the mainstream of International Relations (IR). Amongst these was the new feminist IR. Starting with Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* in 1989 (Enloe, 1989) and a special issue of *Millennium* in 1988, by the 1990s feminist IR could boast a cluster of texts from authors who were usually, but not exclusively, inspired by postmodern feminism. Attacking the masculinist and gender-blind realist orthodoxy, it seemed that IR had finally come to terms with the gender biases within international affairs and security that had been so obvious to casual observers of the generally men-only foreign affairs establishment. Playing catch-up with developments in feminist

thought elsewhere, feminist IR even analysed the role and form of masculinity in IR (Zalewski and Parpart, 1989). Feminism is now a recognised part of the IR landscape, which would have been an unthinkable state of affairs before the 1980s.

As well as the opening up of theoretical possibilities, the 1980s also witnessed the beginning of another movement. Less popular, and involving smaller numbers, a small group within IR have argued that the realist hegemony from the 1950s had conveniently forgotten a full generation of IR authors, whose thought did not fit realist norms or historiography (See: Long and Wilson, 1995; Long, 1996; Ashworth, 1999; Ashworth and Long, 1999; Wilson, 2003; Wilson, 1998; Ashworth, 2002; Schmidt, 1998; Ashworth, 2006). The IR scholars from the interwar period, so often written off as unscientific idealists, had actually been a diverse group of thinkers with a series of different interpretations of the international sphere. Stretching from radical socialists to more communitarian conservatives, they espoused ideas, such as interdependence and psychological interpretations of IR, that were later 'discovered' by non-realist thinkers from the 1970s onwards. Amongst this vast host of discarded IR scholars, hardly noticed even by IR's new historiographers who were busy uncovering IR's inter-war past, were a cadre of feminists. In other words, feminism is not new to IR. In fact, along with other academic disciplines, IR had a liberal feminist phase in the 1920s and 1930s, and far from being marginal many IR feminists were influential in the foreign policy debates. Perhaps, as with many of their male colleagues, they rarely found their ideas acted upon, but crucially their voices were heard in the numerous public and academic debates on the problems of international affairs.

Not all the women writing on international affairs in the inter-war period were feminists, but with the perceived democratisation of the foreign policy debate after the First World War many different groups, including women, that had been silent on international issues now found a voice. Some women had been active during the war, while others had become involved soon after the peace treaties had been signed in 1919. Many were members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, an organisation that brought together groups from all around the globe, but especially from the very active British and American chapters. A significant group had come from the suffragette movements in both the UK and the USA. Former suffragettes often argued that there was a link between women's rights at home and the maintenance of peace abroad. As a result, it was not unusual to find pre-war advocates of women's rights shifting their focus to the study of change at the international level. In the English-speaking world these women writers of the Twenty Years' Crisis included Emily Greene Balch, Jane Addams and Mary Parker Follett in the USA, and Mary Agnes Hamilton, Helena Swanwick, Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Buxton in the UK. The lack of work on these writers

within the recent reappraisals of inter-war IR is an important lacuna in both IR's new historiography and our understanding of the role of feminism in IR. I would like to go some way to rectifying this by examining the work of one particular feminist writer, Helena Swanwick.

From Suffragette to International Expert

Helena Maria Swanwick was born in 1864. Her feminism developed after she read John Stuart Mill's *Subjugation of Women* at school, and this conversion led to a break with her parents over the role of women in society. Her father, the painter Oswald Sickert, refused to pay her fees to go to Girton College Cambridge, and it was only thanks to her godmother, who financed Swanwick's education, that she was able to attend Girton. After her marriage to the mathematician Frederick Swanwick in 1888, she wrote for the up-and-coming liberal paper *The Manchester Guardian*, and later she became active in the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). Before the First World War Swanwick was known for her writings and public addresses on women's issues, and particularly the right of women to participate in politics. In 1909 she became the editor of the NUWSS's journal *The Common Cause*, but resigned in 1912 over what she saw as the anti-male biase of the Pankhursts and their organisation the Women's Social and Political Union. Her major work during this period was her 1913 book *The Future of the Women's Movement,* which laid out her views on women, men and their place in politics.

Like many, but not all, of the pre-1914 suffragettes Swanwick made the transition during the war years from advocate of women's equality in society to peace activist. In Swanwick's case this was an easy and, in many ways, predictable transition. In fact, Swanwick saw this as no transition at all, since one issue was a part of the other:

> I regarded peace not as a state you could work for in the abstract, but as the condition which would result from a just and fair conduct of national and international relations. And I felt that in working for the emancipation of women, I was contributing to the cause of peace (Swanwick, 1935: 264).

During the war years Swanwick became heavily involved in both the Union of Democratic Control (UDC) and The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). She was the first woman member of the UDC, wrote some of its key pamphlets including *Women and War* in 1915, edited the UDC journal *Foreign Affairs* from 1924 after the death of E. D. Morel, and wrote the first history of the UDC earlier in the same year (Swanwick, 1924). Her work for *Foreign Affairs*, and trips to Geneva via her membership of the League of Nations Union, brought her into contact with the writers Winifrid Holtby and Vera Brittain

During the same period Swanwick became an active member of the Labour Party. One of the many middle class recruits to Labour, she was a sometime member of the Labour Party Advisory Committee on International Questions and part of the 1929-31 Labour Government's delegation to the League of Nations along with Mary Agnes Hamilton, Robert Cecil, Hugh Dalton and Philip Noel-Baker. An active participant in the debates on the role of sanctions in the League system, the 1930s saw her increasingly at odds with Labour policy and advocates of a tighter League sanctions regime such as William Arnold-Forster, Hugh Dalton, Philip Noel-Baker and Norman Angell. Her objections to what she saw as the fundamentally flawed and overly legalistic collective security system led her to write her two later books on IR, *Collective Insecurity* in 1937 and *The Roots of Peace* in 1938. Continuing health problems and the worsening international situation led her to commit suicide in 1939.

Generally speaking, Swanwick's contribution to inter-war IR falls into two categories. The first is her analysis of war and women's role in its prosecution and abolition. The second is her criticism of collective security. I will deal with these areas in the next two sections.

Women and the Problem of War

Swanwick's discussion of the relationship between women and war, while it was given impetus and a sense of urgency by the outbreak of the First World War, actually pre-dated 1914. In fact, the transition between the suffragette phase of her political agitation and her pacifist stage was a gradual one. The link can be found in Swanwick's response to the standard anti-suffragist refrain that women could not take part in public life because women lack the physical strength to defend their country in war. Swanwick shared the assumption of many early twentieth century liberals and socialists that the role of physical force in human society was in decline in relation to the use of less violent forms of dispute settlement. Here she mirrors Norman Angell's view of the decline of pugnacity and Leonard Woolf's definition of civilisation as the decline of force. Paraphrasing Angell, Swanwick regarded the utility of physical force as in decline, and that increasingly it was counter-productive (Swanwick, 1913: 35-6). There was also another weakness to the anti-suffragist physical force argument: that it had concentrated on only one form of physical force. Women also have a physical force, but it is the force to give life, in opposition to men's force to destroy life. Women, in this sense, also used physical force for a socially useful purpose, but it is a specialised form centred on the reproduction of the species (Swanwick, 1915a: 4). Swanwick pointed out that the assertion that women should not have voting rights was based not on their lack of

physical strength, but rather on a militaristic society's upholding of the force that takes life and the denigration of that which gives life (Swanwick, 1913: 38).

Thus there was a clear link between pacifism and suffragism. Since women's participation in political life was premised on their inability to contribute to the physical aspects of warfare, then if this aspect of society declined in relation to more peaceful methods of social intercourse it followed that the reasons for excluding women from the political life disappeared too (Swanwick, 1915a: 11). As a result the women's movement was part of the 'disappearance of barbarism' (Swanwick, 1913: 41). This also led Swanwick to be less harsh on men than the Pankhursts, and to see the many men who agitated against violence as natural allies of the women's movement. 'It is the civilised men who are going to enfranchise women, and it is with such men that women should ally themselves' (Swanwick, 1915a: 11). The flip side of this, however, was that Swanwick felt that women, as co-creators of human civilisation (albeit disenfranchised ones) also shared the responsibility for the cult of physical violence. 'If men have enjoyed fighting, and gloried in bloodshed… that is because their blood was hot within them, and the women of their age and race loved them for it' she argued before the war. 'Agriculture, manufacture, commerce, even finance have engaged men's hearts, and more often than not turned them from war'(Swanwick, 1913: 41. See also Swanwick, 1915a: 6).

Yet, while both men and women shared in the responsibility for the cult of physical violence, women were in a uniquely disadvantageous position in wartime. This gave them a particular viewpoint on, and contribution to, the question of war. The exclusion of women from the active fighting in war did not prevent women being affected by war, and actually had the negative consequence of removing them from the slim positive aspects of war such as its camaraderie and sense of adventure. 'The adventures of women in war are solitary and full of horror'(Swanwick, 1915a: 8):

> When aviators drop bombs, when guns bombard fortified towns, it is not possible to avoid the women and children who may chance to be in the way. Women have to make good the economic disasters of war; they go short, they work double tides, they pay war taxes and war prices, like men, and out of smaller incomes (Swanwick, 1915a: 1).

Even the claim that in wartime men take up arms to protect their women and children was spurious. Despite the hoary old chestnut thrown at every pacifist, the question of what you would do if an enemy soldier was raping your mother/wife/sister/daughter, Swanwick argued that armed forces are singularly ineffective at defending the home front:

> But when the enemy invades a country, the men who talked in time of peace of protecting their women cannot do it. Either the army fights over its own land, reducing it to smoking ruin, or it evacuates the place, leaving the non-combatants to the invader. Nothing that men suffer in war can compare in shuddering horror with what must be endured by a woman with child or a nursing mother who sees her home invaded (Swanwick, 1915b).

In another twist, the very existence of the war-fighting state that put physical force ahead of everything else – what, in common with Norman Angell, she called Prussianism – reduced women to a subservient role in society. They were called upon to make up the losses through childbirth after the bloodletting had killed so many of their menfolk. 'Militarist states always tend to degrade women to the position of breeders and slaves' (Swanwick, 1915a: 3). A state engaged or prepared for war would naturally be opposed to giving women equal treatment in society. Perhaps this points to British society at the time being less bellicose and martial than first glance might suggest, given that women were granted the vote directly after the war. Although, as Swanwick predicted (quoted in Cooper, 2002: 21), the end of the war saw women losing the wartime jobs they had held while the men were at the front, the essential war work done by women during hostilities led to a reversal of one particular barbarism.

Given the disadvantages faced by women and children in war, Swanwick argued that they had a vested interest, along with most men, in the development of peaceful tribunals for the settlement of international disputes. That if the advocates of the use of military force were serious about the high importance of protecting hearth and home then the avoidance of war through other arrangements for settling disputes could do it far better than the uncertainties of armed conflict (Swanwick, 1915a: 7). The struggle for these peaceful means she saw as part of the longer term effort by the women's movement to get men to stop using physical force. Raising physical force to the status of legitimate means would always benefit those men who controlled physical force, to the detriment of women who did not (Swanwick, 1913: 34). During the war she agreed with other UDC members like Arthur Ponsonby that part of the answer lay in the democratisation of foreign policy via parliamentary control and the reform of the foreign services (Swanwick, 1915a: 12). Increasingly, though, she saw hope in the proposals coming out of British and American liberal circles for a league of nations to entrench peaceful means of dispute settlement. She was, like many other pacifists, disturbed by the provisions in the Covenant of the League of Nations for the use of force in a system of collective security. Most of her inter-war work focused on what she saw as the ultimately self-defeating nature of a League collective security system based on the use of force.

The Criticism of Collective Security

Like much of centre-left thinking in Britain, Swanwick's attitude to the new League of Nations and its Covenant was mixed. On the one hand she, and others, had campaigned vigorously for a league of nations from the early years of the war. On the other hand, she was deeply unhappy with the result that emerged in 1919 and came into force in 1920. What Swanwick had in common with writers such as Norman Angell, H. N. Brailsford and Mary Agnes Hamilton was her dislike of the Versailles Treaty with which the Covenant was so worryingly linked, the refusal to allow the defeated Central Powers and Soviet Russia to join, and the domination of the League by governments and cabinets rather than peoples. Where Swanwick parted company with the supporters of League collective security was in her attitude to the sanctions provisions of the Covenant. Norman Angell, Philip Noel-Baker and William Arnold-Forster wanted the sanctions regime toughened, and with mandatory military sanctions against aggressors as the last resort. Swanwick, along with Arthur Ponsonby and Charles Roden Buxton, believed that the possibility of League sanctions and military action would actually undermine the League, and were based on a faulty understanding of current conditions. 'To my way of thinking' she recalled in 1935, 'there were two greatly crippling errors in the League as formed in 1919 – the exclusion of the vanquished powers and the inclusion of provisions for the waging of a League war' (Swanwick, 1935: 266). Beside these 'crippling errors' there were also other initial irritants that, according to Swanwick, undermined the League's credibility even before it was officially convened. These were the link between the Covenant and the Versailles Treaty; restricting League membership to states; and the insistence of French and British statesmen in continuing to act unilaterally in Russia, Hungary and within the reparations commission, which at least undermined the spirit of the Covenant (Swanwick, 1920: 12).

Yet, Swanwick, unlike Brailsford whose disgust at the 1919 Covenant led him to oppose the League until 1924, never lost hope. She may have described the League as 'half aborted' in her 1935 autobiography, but she was also certain that there was enough of substance in the Covenant that people of good will could make it work. She likened the League to a skeleton, which different groups had already been adding flesh to; 'the first Council has met; the first steps towards a Labour Bureau have been taken; women are organising to put forward the claims of women under article 7; commissions are being appointed to carry out certain work allotted to them by the Treaty' (Swanwick, 1920: 15). Since the alternative to the present League was not a new order, but rather a return to the pre-war international anarchy, the League had to be recognised as the best route towards a more cooperative and peaceful world.

> The Realist in us must admit that the League is in being; the Idealist must admit that it is not the League of his loyalty and his devotion and must ask himself how best this can be established (Swanwick, 1920: 16).

Following the same mix of realism and idealism, Norman Angell, Leonard Woolf, Philip Noel-Baker and William Arnold-Forster worked for what was called the 'closing of the gaps in the Covenant'. Even the strongest supporters of the League regarded the Covenant of 1919 as a thing half-formed and unready to take on the mantle of full-fledged collective security. Amongst these gaps were the lack of a definition of aggression, which was necessary in order to apply the machinery of the League in the event of the outbreak of violence, and weak provisions for sanctions in the event of a state disregarding the provisions of the Covenant or a League decision. Without a clear definition of aggressor it would be easy for states to wriggle out of their obligations by casting doubt on the aggressive intent of a state engaged in violence. While there were provisions for sanctions under Article 16 of the Covenant, which called on member states to sever all intercourse with a state in breach of the Covenant, the nature of these sanctions were never clearly spelt out, and there were no provisions for military sanctions. The answer, as far as Angell, Noel-Baker and Arnold-Forster were concerned was to lay out a clear definition of aggressor using a simple practical rubric (an aggressor was a state that refused to submit its dispute to arbitration, or refused to accept a binding arbitration decision, while continuing to engage in hostilities. See Arnold-Forster, 1927: 5n; Noel-Baker 1925: ch. 7; and compare Ponsonby, 1925: 106-9); and to make harsh sanctions, including military sanctions as a last resort and in a policing role, mandatory for all members in the event of a state being identified as an aggressor. Indeed, for many in this group the threat of military sanctions as a last resort was necessary if the League's system of collective security was ever to be taken seriously. Noel-Baker saw the threat of effective sanctions, even military sanctions, as an important deterrent to would-be aggressors (Noel-Baker, 1925: 133), while David Mitrany saw strong and effective sanctions as a necessary step towards arms control and disarmament. Without the prospect of effective armed collective security, he argued, smaller states would not be willing to give up their own means of self-defence (Mitrany, 1925: 2). During the 1930s this group felt vindicated as the failure to impose sanctions and offer security to smaller states undermined both the League and prospects for peace. In his memoirs Norman Angell recalls a conversation with the former Labour Foreign Minister and chair of the League's 1931-3 Disarmament Conference, Arthur Henderson. When asked by Angell what he thought was the root cause of the failure to get states to disarm, Henderson quipped that it was 'the failure to tackle security effectively before we started on disarmament.' Angell wholeheartedly agreed with Henderson's assessment (Angell, 1951: 252).

This is where Swanwick parted company with so many of her UDC and Labour Party colleagues. As she later recalled in her memoirs, she had already made up her mind during the First World War that a League-sponsored war would be counter-productive (Swanwick, 1935: 267). Generally, her objections revolved around three arguments. The first, a continuation of her wartime criticism of the use of war, that a 'League war' had the same effect on the ground as any other kind of war waged for less exalted reasons. Tied up with this was her criticism of the distinction, found in the arguments of Norman Angell amongst others (Angell, 1912: 16-7; 21; 47-9), between the use of military might for conquest and its use in a policing role. Second, she believed that the threat of sanctions weakened the League, because there was no will amongst states or publics to use these provisions. Third, she criticised what she saw as the highly legalistic approach promoted by the advocates of the closing of the gaps in the Covenant, arguing instead that the road to peace was through changes in psychology.

During the war years Swanwick had set out to show how war affected women and children, and how for whatever noble ideals a war was fought, its effect on society and civilians was the same. Advocates of military sanctions under the League argued that, when used by the League, military force would serve a policing role, which would be substantially different from the way that force was used under the old international anarchy. Swanwick strongly attacked this policing analogy, arguing that it hid the extent that a League war would have much of the same consequences as any war. A League 'police force' would not be operating under the same conditions as a domestic police force, but rather would be using military force against military force. Rather than taking a criminal nation into custody, a League army would be attacking the offending nation's people and infrastructure. War passions would have to be aroused in League states in order to justify the action, and any League army would be armed with the latest weapons for war and devastation. Also, while a policeman is meant to operate within a supportive community that he is required to protect, a League army would be invading a country whose inhabitants would be hostile to it (Swanwick, 1934: 23-4; Swanwick, 1937: 230-1). Swanwick also doubted whether, once a League war was begun, that the states contributing to the conflict could resist using the pretext of the war to pursue their own interests (Swanwick, 1937: 89-90). In addition, the active involvement of League powers in a local conflict would represent a widening and escalation of the conflict analogous to that of the 1914 crisis (Swanwick and Arnold-Forster, 1928: 22). Swanwick returned here to her earlier arguments about the dangers of a society based on physical force. The concept of a League war merely returned to the physical force argument, and the use of the threat of war by the League merely extended and legitimised arguments based on physical force (Swanwick and Arnold-Forster, 1928: 25).

Swanwick's most often used argument against League sanctions, however, was the more immediate issue that she did not think there was the will or the capability to use the League for military security. She was willing to concede that the threat of sanctions against smaller powers had brought an end to conflicts in the 1920s, but she argued that there was no will at all to bring effective, and military, sanctions against any great power should it break the provisions of the League Covenant (Swanwick, 1934: 6-7). By simultaneously threatening sanctions, while clearly not having the capability to make good on those threats, the League threatened to discredit itself. 'A League which threatens "I'll whip you" and never does, would be much stronger if it never threatened' (Swanwick, 1935: 268). She continued to see the sanctions provisions of the Covenant not as unfinished business in need of legal tightening up, as did the advocates of the closing of the gaps in the Covenant, but rather as compromise provisions that the state representatives at the Paris peace talks put in with the intention of leaving vague because they had no intention of using them in the first place (Swanwick, 1934: 16). As a result of this view, she rejected as idealistic the argument that they should be tightened up, and instead suggested that they should be abolished since the sanctions provisions got in the way of the far more important peace work undertaken by the League (Swanwick, 1938: 139-48; 1934: 9; Swanwick and Arnold Forster, 1928: 17).

So, if she opposed a 'League with teeth', what did Swanwick, who was after all a supporter of the League, suggest that the League should do? To answer this, we need to understand her final reason for rejecting League sanctions, namely that the idea of 'closing the gaps in the Covenant' was frequently based on misguided legalistic assumptions. What particularly surprised Swanwick about many of her 'sanctionist' colleagues was that they trusted in the agreement of legal formulae worked out in paper treaties. This seemed to her to be an amazing leap of faith. States had been breaking treaties and legal agreements for centuries, and many had been broken since 1919 alone, yet the more legalist supporters of sanctions (e.g. Noel-Baker) assumed that if the treaties and agreements were legally binding and precise that states would not be able to wriggle out of them (Swanwick, 1937: 19-20). Swanwick felt that, however strong the legal language, states would find a way to dodge their obligations:

> It would be very much easier to evade than to break their [ie: states'] obligations, and nearly all statesmen are clever enough, in case of need, to persuade their people that they have kept the letter of the law, although they have really evaded the spirit, if it seemed to be in the "national interest" to do so… If Governments think it is not to their "national interest" to keep an obligation to provide sanctions, they won't say outright – "We refuse," they will simply not keep it and they will find very good reasons for not doing so (Swanwick and Arnold-Forster, 1934: 20-1).

These words, written in 1928, anticipate the actions of the League powers during both the Manchuria and Abyssinia crises, where evasions, foot-dragging and half-measures were more common than concerted League action. Although to be fair to the supporters of sanctions and a legal machinery for the League, the 'gaps' in the Covenant remained open in 1931 and 1935-6, so evasion was far easier to justify.

What Swanwick proposed was an abandonment of the search for a legal formula, and instead the concentration on more psychological matters. Generally, she felt it was not legal obligations, but rather attitudes of mind that would bring about a more peaceful world. War fighting was based on a particular physical force mentality, which had largely disappeared from domestic politics. The same process could happen, she felt, at the international level. In the long term we had to try to understand why people fought wars. This was no easy step: 'Cut-and-dried little sets of laws are easier to understand and simpler to state than the strangely and irrationally mixed motives which cause men to act as queerly as they do' (Swanwick, 1937: 20-1). Furthermore there 'is no short-cut to the promised land of Security' using legality and force as a substitute for confidence building (Swanwick, 1934: 21-2). In the shorter term the League of Nations could foster a more peaceful international atmosphere through tendering 'its good offices for conciliation and bargaining and compromise; its incomparable Civil Service; its adroitness at saving face' (Swanwick, 1934: 21). This would help states to change their psychological attitude to international politics, leading to the replacement of the norms associated with physical force for the norms that underlie a post-physical force society (Swanwick, 1938: 78-82). The same process was charted in Swanwick's pre-World War analysis of society, and of course the implication was that this change from a physical force mentality would also lead to an international society more in tune with the needs of women. In the 1930s Swanwick's concentration on confidence building measures and longer-term changes to social attitudes came up against the rise of fascism and the claims of the so-called 'have-not' powers of Japan, Italy and Germany. Despite her personal distaste for fascism, she was still confident that her approach, rather than League sanctions, was the better way to deal with the challenge posed by fascism.

Like many of her generation on the left, Swanwick was deeply affected by what she saw as the unfairness of the Treaty of Versailles and the Allied treatment of Germany. This may have also had a personal aspect, since her family on her father's side came from Germany, but we must not overplay this argument. E. D. Morel was French on his father's side, and yet remained implacably anti-French. Swanwick's criticism of Versailles, as well as subsequent Allied treatment of the defeated Germany, became part of her wider interpretation of German actions after the rise of Hitler. While she prefaced her views on Germany by pointing out her implacable hatred for the Nazis, her interpretation of events put the blame for the crisis in the 1930s on the shoulders of the Allied governments. Arguing that 'evil breeds evil',

she suggested that the Nazi regime was a response to Allied poor faith and humiliation of Germany. The answer to the rise of the Nazis, therefore, was a more conciliatory attitude by the League powers such as Britain and France towards the German government. Only then would the cause of the problem – German resentment of the Allies – be dealt with. As late as 1938 Swanwick was interpreting German foreign policy as by-and-large limited to certain, often reasonable, goals that Germany would only pursue by violent means if it was not given the opportunity to accomplish them peacefully (Swanwick, 1938: 65-75). This view of Germany was consistent with the prevailing 'realist' and pro-appeasement view of Germany as a have-not nation that needed to be accommodated in order to avoid war. Indeed, Swanwick was happy to use the 'have' and 'have-not' phrases in her discussion of Germany.

Here, ironically, the pacifist and socialist Swanwick found herself, to a large degree, supportive of the Conservative-led National Government's policy of appeasement, and in opposition to many of her former pro-League UDC colleagues, who advocated standing up to Hitler and the fascist dictatorships. Like other socialist pacifists, such as Charles Roden Buxton and George Lansbury, she was convinced that Germany was appeaseable because the cause of German aggression was not an intrinsic part of Nazi ideology, but rather the ill-treatment Germany had received since 1919 (Swanwick, 1934: 11-13). By contrast, other writers on the left like Angell and Woolf saw the problem of German aggression as being an integral part of fascist, and particularly Nazi, ideology (See, for example, Angell, 1936; Angell, 1938; Woolf, 1935; Woolf; 1939). Rather than seeing German rearmament as a prelude for Nazi conquest, as many anti-appeasers did, Swanwick saw it as merely a reaction to the failure of the Allies to live up to their Versailles Treaty commitments to disarm to Germany's level. In effect, the Allies had taught the Germans the lesson that 'an armed State will "count for more in the councils of Europe" than a disarmed one' (Swanwick, 1938: 66). As it turned out the policy of appeasement did not work against Nazi Germany, and the work of the Chamberlain Government in offering concessions did not tame Hitler, despite Government assurances after Munich that, in the words of 'Cato' 'the tiger had been transmogrified into a tabby by that old wizard of Number 10 Downing Street' ('Cato', 1941: 61). For Swanwick this was the last straw. Dogged by ill health, and depressed by the looming storm clouds of war, she committed suicide in 1939.

Swanwick and the Liberal Feminist Moment in Inter-War IR

Swanwick's analysis of IR was a direct spin-off of her feminism, and there are clear links to her pre-war agitation for women's emancipation and enfranchisement in domestic politics. In this sense she is clearly an IR feminist scholar. Her criticism of physical force as a basis of society is the link between her feminism and her international thought. This criticism led her to reject not just the institutionalisation

of war as a part of the regular interaction between states, but also the use of force as part of collective security sanctions. Her attack on legalistic approaches, and her related concern that sanctions threatened but not applied would weaken the League, were a good response to her colleagues who urged the closing of the gaps in the Covenant. To a certain extent her prediction that there would be no support amongst governments and peoples for sanctions (a view she shared with the Labour leader and Prime Minister James Ramsay MacDonald, see MacDonald, 1925: 5) was vindicated by the Manchurian crisis in 1931 and the subsequent crises of 1935-6. It was in the colder atmosphere after 1936 that Swanwick's ideas came unstuck. While 'sanctionists' such as Woolf, Angell and Noel-Baker urged action against the fascist powers, in a line consistent with their earlier arguments for collective security, Swanwick assumed that her psychological approach would bare fruit in the longer term. Unfortunately Swanwick misread Hitler's intent (although her view of Mussolini's ambitions was closer to the mark), and her pacifism led her into the uncomfortable position of supporting the appeasement policies of the self-declared realists in the right-wing National Government. The former sanctionists, on the other hand, assumed rightly that only force, or hopefully just the threat of force, could deter Hitler.

Yet, while we can criticise her for misreading the danger that Nazi Germany posed – a charge that can also be levelled at E. H. Carr and others – it is important not to let this distract us from the serious point that she was making about the weaknesses of the legalistic approach, and the need for a greater understanding of the way that psychological attitudes affect IR. Although she never developed it beyond a few vague statements, her analysis of domestic politics had shown her that the lasting developments in political life came from changes in attitude. These changes were linked to a reduction in fear and a growth in sympathy between people. To a large degree this is the initial building block of what would later be the idea of security communities, advocated by Karl Deutsch in the post-war era, and forming part of the communitarian approach to IR. It is also consistent with the views of Angell and Woolf on the need to change attitudes to international affairs Legal agreements could not reduce the sense of security threat, but it was possible to reduce that threat through changes in attitude. Nor were these changes necessarily slow and long-term. Swanwick was well aware of how attitudes to women had changed in her lifetime. If she had lived for another fifteen years she would have seen the first steps towards the building of a European security community, where the idea that there ever could be a war between Germany, France, Britain and Italy was just preposterous. That many groups of states do not live in fear of warfare breaking out between them, even in the absence of legally binding security arrangements, does demonstrate that Swanwick was on to something. Often, in order to bring a state into a security community, it is necessary to appease them: to give them more than is asked from them. Swanwick may have misjudged the immediate problem posed

by the rise of fascism, but she had not necessarily misread the problem of modern IR in general.

There are two points that I take from my analysis of Swanwick that are relevant to our understanding of the history of the discipline of IR. The first is that she demonstrates the wide variety of approaches in IR at the time. The awful tendency to lump interwar IR scholars into the general, and misleading, category of idealism is further undermined by the demonstration of the major differences between Swanwick, on the one hand, and Angell, Woolf et al., on the other (for more on the criticism of idealism as a category see: Ashworth, 2006). The second is that while her male colleagues found dishonourable graves in the footnotes to Carr and realism, Swanwick and a generation of feminist IR scholars have been completely written out of IR's disciplinary history. I have concentrated on Swanwick in order to flesh out her ideas, but she was not alone. There were other feminists writing on IR at the time. One at least, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Emily Greene Balch, shared Swanwick's liberal feminist views and strong pacifism. The effect of feminism on the IR work of other women of the time, such as Mary Parker Follett or Dorothy Buxton, needs to be explored. More work needs to be done in fleshing out this forgotten aspect of IR thought. What seems clear, however, is that the appearance of feminism in IR in the late 1980s was not an arrival so much as a return.

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Notes